



Federal Ministry  
for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,  
Women and Youth

# ***Thematic Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention***

*“Building trust by delivering support,  
protection and justice”*

*(1st thematic evaluation round)*

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# Introduction

In accordance with Article 66 (1), the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) is to monitor the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (short Istanbul Convention, IC). Following its baseline evaluation procedure which provided an overview of the implementation of the full spectrum of provisions of the convention by each state party, Article 68 (3) of the convention and Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure of GREVIO (the Rules of Procedure) mandate GREVIO to carry out subsequent evaluation procedures divided into rounds.

For its first thematic evaluation round, GREVIO adopted this questionnaire to be sent to all states parties which have undergone the baseline evaluation procedure according to an order approved by GREVIO.

GREVIO decided to focus its first thematic evaluation round on the theme of building trust by delivering support, protection and justice. To address this overarching theme, the present questionnaire aims, in the first section, to identify developments in key areas such as comprehensive and coordinated policies, funding and data collection that have ensued following the completion of the baseline evaluation procedure. In the second section, it sets to obtain more in-depth information on the implementation of selected provisions in the area of prevention, protection and prosecution, in respect of which baseline evaluation procedures and the Conclusions on the Recommendations of the Committee of the Parties to the IC have revealed significant challenges and the need for further sustained implementation. In the third section, it focuses on emerging trends in the area of violence against women and domestic violence. The fourth and last section requests annual statistics for two complete calendar years prior to receiving this questionnaire on specific administrative and judicial data.

The structure of the document follows the sections, articles and questions as presented by GREVIO in the thematic questionnaire. All questions have been answered in detail, however there were instances where a joint comprehensive answer for subsequent questions or sections was provided. For the purposes of clarity and in order to avoid repetition, reference between questions was made explicitly.

Germany ratified the IC on 12 October 2017 and it entered into force in Germany on 1 February 2018. Since then, the Convention has been applicable federal law in Germany. As Germany did not renew its reservations regarding Art. 44 and 59, the Convention has been in force in Germany without restriction since February 2023.

This state report on the first thematic evaluation round “Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice” on the implementation of the IC in Germany was prepared under the leadership of the Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ) with the involvement of the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection (BMJV), the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), the Federal Ministry of Defence (BMVg), the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS), the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG), the Federal Ministry for Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR), the Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB), the Federal Government Commissioner for Integration (IntB), the Federal Commissioner for the Acceptance of Sexual and Gender Diversity (QB) and the Independent Federal Commissioner Against Child Sexual Abuse (UBSKM).

Wherever possible, the federal government provides support within the scope of its constitutional competence and in line with budgetary reservations. Due to Germany’s federal system, responsibility for implementing the IC largely lies with the sixteen *Länder* (federal states) and over 11,000 municipalities. This includes, in particular, the provision, expansion, and financing of assistance and support facilities for women affected by violence. The sixteen German *Länder* (federal states) were therefore also involved in the preparation of the report, and their extensive contributions have been incorporated into the main part of the report. Individual measures at the state level are presented as examples in the main report; these examples represent the breadth of implementation practices in the states or represent best practice approaches in individual states. To reflect the scope of the measures at the state level, Appendix 2 also contains detailed reports on the implementation of the IC from the individual *Länder*.

Explanatory Note: The questionnaire focuses primarily on developments since 2020 (beginning of the baseline evaluation for Germany). The fact that a Land (federal state) is not mentioned in response to a question does not mean that no corresponding measures exist in that Land. Only measures that have been newly adopted or further developed since adopting the first baseline evaluation report are explicitly mentioned.

Furthermore, the summarised contributions by the *Länder* presented in this report are intended as examples and should not be regarded as a comprehensive account of all measures. For detailed information, please refer to appendix 2.

Appendix 2 was compiled by the BMBFSFJ and contains the collected contributions from the *Länder*. It has not been reviewed or agreed upon by the federal government.

# Part I: Changes in comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection in the area of violence against women and domestic violence

## Article 7: Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies

1. Please provide information on any new policy development since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country to ensure comprehensive policies covering the areas of prevention, protection, and prosecution in relation to stalking, sexual harassment and domestic violence, including their digital dimension, rape and sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilisation, thereby demonstrating further implementation of the convention. Please specify the measures taken particularly in relation to those forms of violence against women that have not been addressed in past policies, programmes and services encompassing the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention.

Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence has been and still is a priority of the federal government. Therefore, since GREVIO's first baseline evaluation of Germany in 2020, various laws, regulations, policies have been adopted and resources allocated to implement the IC at all levels.

One milestone in the implementation of the IC in Germany was the adoption of the first **federal government strategy to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence based on the Istanbul Convention 2025–2030** (in line with Article 7 of the IC) in December 2024.<sup>1</sup> The strategy sets out clear objectives to combat violence against women and domestic violence. The objectives are underpinned by concrete measures, resources, timelines and responsibilities to meet current challenges and effectively combat and prevent gender-based violence. The comprehensive strategy addresses all forms of violence contained in the IC, including violence against women, domestic violence with a special focus on its gender-based component, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. In

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1 Protection against Violence Strategy based on the Istanbul Convention, <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/257164/6c90795e9e59264b58bb6949099b560f/gewaltschutzstrategie-der-bundesregierung-englisch-data.pdf>.

addition, it takes account of new forms such as digital violence/cyberviolence. It contains over 120 measures adopted by different ministries/commissioners. In the run-up to the drafting process, the BMBFSFJ held a consultation with relevant actors from civil society, the *Länder*, municipal authorities and academia. To this end, a consultation was held on 14 November 2023 to develop a strategy of the federal government to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence, with around 90 participants from civil society, academia, the *Länder*, municipal authorities, federal ministries and the secretariat of the Council of Europe.

At the same time, a **coordinating body in accordance with the Istanbul Convention** (in line with Article 10 of the IC) was established in the directorate general “Women and Gender Equality” in the BMBFSFJ in February 2025 to implement the IC. It is responsible for coordinating measures of the federal government to combat gender-based violence and will promote their implementation. The federal ministries/commissioners of the federal government have designated Focal Points for interministerial coordination.

Since November 2022, the German Institute for Human Rights (DIMR) has been mandated by the federal government to monitor the implementation of the IC in Germany. For this purpose, it established the **Berichterstattungsstelle geschlechtsspezifische Gewalt (National Rapporteur Mechanism on gender-based violence)**.<sup>2</sup> This independent body is funded by the BMBFSFJ.

The National Rapporteur Mechanism on gender-based violence collects and analyses data to identify trends and developments in the field of gender-based violence. It supports policy-makers and administrators at both federal and state level, maintaining close dialogue with associations and counselling centres, and issuing recommendations to both governmental and non-governmental actors with the aim of improving the protection of those affected. Up until 2026, two periodic reports will be published on the scope and extent of gender-based violence and the implementation of the IC in Germany.<sup>3</sup> To this end, the National Rapporteur Mechanism on gender-based violence gathers data at federal and state level as well as from civil society, compiles it in the new indicator-based monitoring database, and analyses the findings.

In addition, one focus topic is selected each year to raise awareness of gender-based violence and stimulate expert discussion in politics and society. In 2023 the annual topic was protection against violence in custody<sup>4</sup> and access arrangements; in 2024 it was access to protection and counselling. The focus topic for 2025 is “femicides”.

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2 <https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/en/das-institut/abteilungen/national-rapporteur-mechanism-on-gender-based-violence>.

3 Monitoring Report Violence Against Women, [https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere\\_Publikationen/Summary\\_Monitoring\\_Report\\_Violence\\_Against\\_Women.pdf](https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere_Publikationen/Summary_Monitoring_Report_Violence_Against_Women.pdf).

4 <https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/publikationen/detail/haeusliche-gewalt-im-umgangs-und-sorgerecht> (German).

At the beginning of 2025, the **Violence Support Services Act (Gewalthilfegesetz – GewHG)** was passed by the Bundestag and the Bundesrat.<sup>5</sup> The Act is primarily intended to improve the situation of women (and their children) affected by gender-based or domestic violence by:

- The obligation of the *Länder* to provide a nationwide, needs-based network of protection and counselling services sufficient in capacities by 2027.
- Setting binding standards for protection facilities and specialised counselling centres, e.g. concerning staff, facilities and professional work.
- Regulating mandatory state recognition for providers of protection facilities and specialised counselling centres.
- The introduction of a legal entitlement to protection and professional counselling for all women and their children affected by gender-based and domestic violence by 2032. Women affected are given access to services at low-threshold and support will be provided free of charge.
- The *Länder* assured the federal government to reliably fund the support services with approx. €2.6 billion at least for the period from 2027 to 2036. The federal tax distribution has been adjusted accordingly.

With regard to the improvement of preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence, the Coalition Agreement between the leading parties for the 21th legislative period 2025–2029 envisages several new measures.<sup>6</sup> For example, it stipulates that, in implementation of the IC and the EU Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, the implementation of the Violence Support Services Act will be closely monitored and the federal government’s Protection against Violence Strategy based on the Istanbul Convention will be developed into a National Action Plan. Further protective measures are to be taken for affected women, including strengthening prevention, education and work with perpetrators, as well as strengthening the coordinating body in its work.

Moreover, Germany has recently passed a **law to strengthen institutions responsible for combatting sexual violence against children and young people**. The new legislation (entry into force: 1 July 2025) aims to improve the protection of children and young people from sexual abuse and exploitation. Institutions that contribute to the prevention of sexual violence will be strengthened: The Independent Federal Commissioner against Child Sexual Abuse, as well as the Survivor’s Board and the Independent Inquiry are now underpinned by law. The Independent Federal Commissioner and the Independent Inquiry will regularly report on the extent of child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as the current state of protection, assistance, research and historical reappraisal in Germany so that the federal and *Länder* governments and other actors, can respond appropriately.

On 2 August 2024 the law on the further development of the **Code of Crimes against International Law (Völkerstrafgesetzbuch – VStGB)**<sup>7</sup> was set into force. A centrepiece of the new legislation is the strengthening of the rights of victims of VStGB crimes. These crimes

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5 The Act was promulgated in the Federal Gazette (Bundesgesetzblatt) on 27 February 2025 (BGBl. 2025 I Nr. 57 dated 27.02.2025).

6 Coalition Agreement between CDU, CSU und SPD: “Verantwortung für Deutschland” for the 21th Legislative Term, page 103, line 3269-3275, [https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/1063922/2c20ad4d0d961734db48abec10914e45/kw19\\_koalitionsvertrag.pdf](https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/1063922/2c20ad4d0d961734db48abec10914e45/kw19_koalitionsvertrag.pdf) (German).

7 Code of Crimes against International Law – Völkerstrafgesetzbuch (VStGB): [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_vstgb/englisch\\_vstgb.pdf](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_vstgb/englisch_vstgb.pdf).

can protect the same rights as crimes that tackle gender-based violence, i.e. the rights to physical integrity, freedom, sexual or reproductive self-determination or undisturbed physical and mental development in childhood (Sections 6–8, 10–12 VStGB).

Due to the new legislation victims of VStGB crimes are able to join criminal proceedings conducted in Germany as private accessory prosecutors (Section 395 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, StPO).<sup>8</sup> At the same time victims of VStGB crimes that have been admitted as private accessory prosecutors are entitled to be assigned a victims' lawyer without any further requirements, in particular, this does not depend on the requirements for legal aid (Section 397a (1) StPO). In addition, these victims are also entitled to be assigned a psychosocial assistance in legal proceedings upon application without any further requirements (Section 406g StPO).

A law that came into force on 1 October 2023 explicitly provides for the inclusion of the crime motives “gender-specific“ and “against sexual orientation“ as further examples of inhuman motives and goals in the list of circumstances to be particularly taken into account in sentencing according to Section 46 (2) (2) of the Criminal Code (StGB).<sup>9</sup>

The Law on Equality between Female and Male Soldiers prohibits harassment, sexual harassment, and instructions to do so (Section 7, Paragraph 2). Possible consequences include disciplinary proceedings or dismissal. Moreover, a new internal regulation (A-2610/2) was issued in 2023 (updated in 2024) that regulates the handling of sexuality and sexualized misconduct within the Bundeswehr and the Federal Ministry of Defence. It includes measures for prevention, victim protection, and information on contact points and support services for those affected. The BMVg pursues a “Zero tolerance” approach on sexual assaults, suspected cases of crimes against sexual self-determination are among the offenses that are regularly referred to the public prosecutor's office under regulation A-2160/6. The Coalition Agreement for the 21st legislative term states that the best interests of the child will be the guiding principle in the reform of family law (page 91, line 2921–2924).<sup>10</sup> In particular, it stipulates that domestic violence constitutes a risk to the child's best interests and must therefore be taken into account to the detriment of the perpetrator of violence in parental custody and contact proceedings (page 90, line 2904–2906).

It is also planned to create a new legal basis on the federal level, in the Act on the Protection of Violence (Gewaltschutzgesetz – GewSchG), that will allow family courts to order electronic monitoring via a GPS tracker. The monitoring process is envisioned as to follow the two-component or “Spanish model”, where both the person in need of protection and the perpetrator are equipped with a GPS tracker. The tracker automatically informs the monitoring unit and warns the person in need of protection in case of a breach of the order by the perpetrator. The introduction of this model is expected to reduce the risk of breaches, while early interventions by the police and timely warnings of the person in need of protection are secured. This is particularly helpful for people with special needs and disabilities, for whom contacting the police in case of a breach can be challenging. In this way, electronic monitoring goes hand in hand with the general aim of improving the protection of violence in the

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8 [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_stpo/](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_stpo/).

9 [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_stgb/](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_stgb/).

10 Coalition Agreement between CDU, CSU und SPD: “Verantwortung für Deutschland” for the 21th Legislative Term, page 91, line 2921–2924, [https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/1063922/2c20ad4d0d961734db48abec10914e45/kw19\\_koalitionsvertrag.pdf](https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/1063922/2c20ad4d0d961734db48abec10914e45/kw19_koalitionsvertrag.pdf) (German).

sector of disability assistance. In addition, the maximum penalties for violations, ranging up to two years in prison today (Section 4 GewSchG), will be further increased. These initiatives can build on profound expertise acquired in a Working Group between the 16 *Länder* and the federal level set up in June 2024 with a focus on electronic monitoring in domestic violence cases (Bund-*Länder*-Arbeitsgruppe, BLAG: “Gewaltschutz – Einsatz der elektronischen Aufenthaltsüberwachung”).

The Coalition Agreement moreover foresees that family courts should soon be able to require perpetrators to take anti-violence training courses under GewSchG. Such training courses have been shown to help perpetrators develop strategies to deal with aggression and violent behaviour, thereby breaking the cycle of violence in intimate relationships.

In order to improve the situation of victims of digital violence and law enforcement in this area, the Coalition Agreement (page 91, line 2936–2942) envisages a new “Act on the Protection against Digital Violence” (Digitales Gewaltschutzgesetz).<sup>11</sup>

Unless the outcome of the negotiations on the recast of the Directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children (CSA Directive) requires an immediate adaptation of the national law, Germany plans to have the criminal offence of Section 177 of the StGB (Sexual assault; sexual coercion; rape) scientifically evaluated. Subject of the evaluation will be the effectiveness of Section 177 of the StGB, which was revised in 2016, and in particular the ‘no means no’ solution. Among other things, it will be analysed whether gaps in protection have been closed or whether there is a need for further reform.

The crime prevention commission (KPK) has set up a project group to address domestic violence in all areas of life, age and social structures, led by its Central Bureau (ZGS). Its members are the *Länder*, the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) and the Federal Police (BPol).

It has drawn up a strategy and a range of measures which are recommended for implementation by the *Länder* to counter domestic violence. The planned measures are currently at the implementation and evaluation stage.

Furthermore, several of the *Länder* **have issued federal state action plans (Länderaktionspläne – LAP)/strategies for the implementation of the IC since 2020**, for example, Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony and Thuringia. Mecklenburg-West Pomerania (by the beginning of 2026) and Saarland are currently working on a state strategy for the implementation of the IC. Others have developed action plans to combat violence against women, children and domestic violence (Hesse in 2022, Baden-Württemberg has a revised edition planned for 2025, North Rhine-Westphalia is planning to publish its new action plan in 2026). In addition, **some of the *Länder* have established coordinating bodies** in accordance with the IC, e.g. Saxony (2020), Thuringia (2021), Hesse (2022), Bremen (2022), North Rhine-Westphalia (2023), Saarland (2023), Lower Saxony (2025) and Schleswig-Holstein (2025).

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11 Coalition Agreement between CDU, CSU und SPD: “Verantwortung für Deutschland” for the 21th Legislative Term, page 91, line 2936 – 2942, [https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/1063922/2c20ad4d0d961734db48abec10914e45/kw19\\_koalitionsvertrag.pdf](https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/1063922/2c20ad4d0d961734db48abec10914e45/kw19_koalitionsvertrag.pdf) (German).

### Flagship projects in the *Länder*

In 2023, the state of Saxony-Anhalt introduced a **state-wide policy on police responses to domestic violence, stalking and child endangerment**, which includes **binding instructions and institutionalised high-risk management**.

The Bavarian Ministry of Justice is strengthening **child protection in family court proceedings through the “Child Protection Competence Partners”** concept – a Bavaria-wide network of experienced female family court judges. It also supports the research project *Safety first!*, which conducted a scientific study on risk assessment in domestic violence cases.

In the Higher Education Act (HochSchG) of 23 September 2020 (GVBl. p. 461), last amended by Article 1 of the Act of 17 June 2025 (GVBl. p. 202), BS-223-41, of Rhineland-Palatinate, the comprehensive commitment of universities to non-violence is enshrined in law in Section 2 (3). It ties in with the Council of Europe Convention of 11 May 2011 on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (“Istanbul Convention”, Federal Law Gazette 2017 II of 26 July 2017), but its wording, ‘Universities are committed to non-violence’, is comprehensive and goes significantly further. The pact against sexualised violence against children and young people is also included here.

In Thuringia, an interdisciplinary working group on digitalised violence” developed an “Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Gender-Specific Violence in Digital Spaces”.

2. Where relevant, please provide information on any measures taken to ensure the alignment of any definitions of domestic violence and of violence against women in national legislation or policy documents with those set out under Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention and provide the relevant applicable provisions in English or French.

For the first time, the federal government’s Protection against Violence Strategy based on the Istanbul Convention has succeeded in defining a variety of terms relating to gender-based violence (e. g. femicide) at the federal level.<sup>12</sup> This is an important step towards clarity and more efficient co-operation between the ministries. Likewise, the Violence Support Services Act of 2025 contains definitions of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence against women, which are aligned to the definitions of the IC.<sup>13</sup>

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12 Protection against Violence Strategy based on the Istanbul Convention, <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/257164/6c90795e9e59264b58bb6949099b560f/gewaltschutzstrategie-der-bundesregierung-englisch-data.pdf>, p. 74.

13 According to Section 2(1), gender-based violence means violence against women – that is, any physical, sexual or psychological act of violence committed by one or more persons that is directed against a woman because she is a woman, or that disproportionately affects women and causes or may cause harm or suffering. Section 2(2) defines domestic violence as any physical, sexual or psychological act of violence against a woman by one or more persons from within her family environment – whether within existing or former marriages, registered civil partnerships or relationships, or by other persons living in the same household as the woman affected by violence. Fixed residence or formal membership of the household is not required.

The **nationwide situation report on gender-specific crimes against women**, which was published in 2023 for the first time, provides detailed data on gender-specific crimes against women which is collected in a uniform manner across Germany. It covers misogyny crimes (prejudice against women and girls) and crimes which generally target women or primarily affect women. The situation report<sup>14</sup> is based on the following definition of “gender-specific criminal offences targeting women” (including both analogue and digital offences):

Hate crime offences, which are committed on the basis of prejudices against women or the female sex. The offences may also be directed at a random target, as long as the underlying motive is misogynistic prejudice. In particular, such prejudices can take the form of a rejecting attitude displayed by offenders towards the concept of gender equality and equivalence. With regard to the classification of the circumstances of the offence and the identification of the motive for the offence, the victim’s perspective, among other aspects, is particularly important. There might be further motives, too.

Specific offences which are predominantly committed to the detriment of women or primarily affect women. Such offences can comprise, in particular, all criminally relevant activities, which may cause physical, mental or economic damage or involve sexualised violence.

“**Women**” includes girls under the age of 18.

The following definitions are used in the nationwide situation **report on domestic violence**<sup>15</sup>:

**Definition of “domestic violence”:** Domestic violence comprises all forms of physical, sexual or mental violence and includes violence within the family and within a partnership. Domestic violence is defined as violence between individuals who live together as family members or in a partnership. Violence which occurs within the family or in a current or former partnership is also referred to as domestic violence even if the individuals involved do not have a joint household.

**There are thus two forms of domestic violence:** intimate partnership violence and intrafamilial violence. In cases of intimate partnership violence, the focus is on the victims and suspects who were or still are in a relationship, whereas in cases of intrafamilial violence, the focus is on the victims and suspects who are related to each other (excluding (former) partners).

**Definition of “Intimate partnership violence”:** In the context of the report, intimate partnership violence offences are offences according to a predefined catalogue; in the Police Crime Statistics of Germany (PCS), it was recorded that the victim(s) and suspect(s) were in a relationship. This refers to married couples, registered partners (civil partnership) and unmarried couples as well as former partners.

**Definition of “Intrafamilial violence”:** In the context of the report, intrafamilial violence offences are offences according to a predefined catalogue; in the PCS, it was recorded that the victim(s) and suspect(s) were “family members or other relatives (other than married couples, (former) partners)”.

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14 [https://www.bka.de/DE/AktuelleInformationen/StatistikenLagebilder/Lagebilder/StraftatengegenFrauen/StraftatengegenFrauen\\_node.html](https://www.bka.de/DE/AktuelleInformationen/StatistikenLagebilder/Lagebilder/StraftatengegenFrauen/StraftatengegenFrauen_node.html) (German).

15 [https://www.bka.de/DE/AktuelleInformationen/StatistikenLagebilder/Lagebilder/HaeslicheGewalt/haeuslicheGewalt\\_node.html](https://www.bka.de/DE/AktuelleInformationen/StatistikenLagebilder/Lagebilder/HaeslicheGewalt/haeuslicheGewalt_node.html) (German).

This refers to children (including foster, adoptive and step-children), grandchildren (including great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren), parents (including foster, adoptive and step-parents), grandparents (including great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents), siblings (including half-, step-, foster or adopted siblings), parents-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, other relatives (such as affinity, relatives of the husband/wife) as well as uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces and cousins, including half-relatives.

In addition, several *Länder* explicitly align their action plans or strategies with the IC and adopt its definitions of domestic violence and violence against women (Hamburg, Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg, North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony). In Hamburg, the 2024 Violence Protection Concept is based on the IC, as is North Rhine-Westphalia's State Violence Protection Concept for refugees. Schleswig-Holstein and Bremen also use the IC definition of domestic violence in their guidelines for high-risk management, for example.

Bavaria, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saxony-Anhalt and Berlin apply the 2021<sup>16</sup> nationwide definition adopted by the Conference of Interior Ministers (IMK) for recording and combating domestic violence. Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia are pursuing the recognition and definition of femicide in legal practice and legislation (in line with the 33rd Conference of Ministers for Gender Equality resolution dated 8 January 2023<sup>17</sup>). These nationwide definitions contribute to better comparability between the *Länder*.

### **3. Please provide information on how your authorities ensure that policies on violence against women and domestic violence put women's rights and their empowerment at the centre and on any measure taken to enhance the intersectionality of such policies, in line with Articles 4 paragraph 3 of the convention.<sup>18</sup>**

For policies that put women's rights and their empowerment at the centre see question 1.

Persons affected by intersectional discrimination face an elevated risk of experiencing gender-based violence. The federal government's Protection against Violence Strategy based on the Istanbul Convention, therefore, addresses in particular the intersectional attributes of victims of violence. All policies envisaged in this strategy are to take the principle of intersectionality and the attributes of all women into account. Dedicated support is to be given to the victims with intersectional needs, mainly with regard to the individual assessment to determine the protection needs of and the special support required by victims.

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16 Report of Findings by the Federal-State Working Group on domestic violence issued by the Criminal Investigation Department Working Group (AG Kripo), with the involvement of the Subcommittee on Crime and Crime Control (UA FEK) and the Police Leadership Conference (PL PK), dated 31 August 2021, [https://www.innenministerkonferenz.de/IMK/DE/termine/to-beschluesse/20211201-03/anlagen-zu-top-11.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=2](https://www.innenministerkonferenz.de/IMK/DE/termine/to-beschluesse/20211201-03/anlagen-zu-top-11.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2) (German).

17 [https://www.gleichstellungsmministerkonferenz.de/documents/33-gfmk-beschluesse-und-entschliessungen-neu\\_1687343772.pdf](https://www.gleichstellungsmministerkonferenz.de/documents/33-gfmk-beschluesse-und-entschliessungen-neu_1687343772.pdf)

18 The concept of intersectionality refers to the fact that "individuals (and groups) are affected by multiple inequalities based on various grounds of distinction rather than by discrimination based on one ground at a time. Therefore, discrimination, inequality and gender-based violence cannot be examined in relation to only one category of difference – for instance, gender – while precluding others – such as race, class, age, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity – because social categories intersect and interlock in multiple systems of discrimination that simultaneously affect an individual's life." See in this respect the study Ensuring the Non-discriminatory Implementation of Measures against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence: Article 4 (3), of the Istanbul Convention, A collection of papers on the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, p.12-13.

The primary aim of the Violence Support Services Act (see Question 1) is to ensure that women can live their lives without experiencing violence. The network of protection and counselling services provided by the *Länder* must be geared towards the needs of women affected by violence. In particular, the needs of women with disabilities or with migrant background, needs concerning gender and gender identity, sexual orientation and the special needs of accompanying children must be taken into account. The Act grants women affected by violence a legal entitlement to protection and professional counselling, which is enforceable as an individual right.

The aim of the federal funding programme “Together Against Violence towards Women“ (2020–2024) was to close known gaps in the support system for women and their children affected by violence and to further advance the needs-based expansion of the support system in Germany. In particular, the aim was to improve access for women with disabilities through the barrier-free expansion of women’s shelters, counselling centres, and safe spaces.

Two studies financed by BMBFSFJ and BMAS and released in 2024 revealed that the majority of people with disabilities – and women with disabilities more so – have experienced or are experiencing violence.<sup>19</sup> The studies focus mostly on persons that live or work in facilities for people with disabilities.

To address this matter, in December 2024, a Federal Government-*Länder* Working Group on violence prevention was established with the active involvement of people with disabilities and their representative organisations.

Its mandate is to ensure comprehensive and effective protection against violence against people with disabilities. The group is discussing key action areas, e. g.

- Minimum standards for protection concepts,
- Awareness-raising and empowerment measures,
- Staffing resources and support systems (internal/external),
- State law.

No results are available yet. The working group is following an intersectional perspective due to the findings of the studies mentioned beforehand.

As part of the participation process of the federal LGBTIQ\* action plan, associations and the LGBTIQ\* community formulated recommendation papers for its implementation. The recommendation paper of the Working Group on the Protection of Violence emphasises the necessity of taking intersectional aspects in protection and prevention measures into account.<sup>20</sup>

**All *Länder* pursue an intersectional and holistic approach to protecting particularly vulnerable groups, such as women with impairments and disabilities, refugee women, LGBTIQ\* persons and older women, who are often affected by multiple forms of discrimination.** These groups are increasingly being taken into account in the LAPs (*Länder* action

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19 Violence and Protection from Violence in Disability Support Institutions (2024) <https://www.bmas.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/Forschungsberichte/gewalt-und-gewaltschutz-in-einrichtungen-der-behindertenhilfe-lang.pdf> (German), and Sexual Harassment, Violence and Protection from Violence in Sheltered Workshops <https://www.bmbfsfj.bund.de/bmbfsfj/service/publikationen/sexuelle-belaestigung-gewalt-und-gewaltschutz-in-werkstaetten-fuer-behinderte-menschen-241796> (German).

20 <https://www.bmbfsfj.bund.de/resource/blob/244210/ef7be68dfb94553af190fdde64f6a895/empfehlungspapier-ag-gewaltschutz-data.pdf> (German).

plans) and strategies. Specific measures and guidelines have been adopted and representatives of these groups are being involved so as to better identify and meet their needs (Lower-Saxony, Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Brandenburg, Hamburg, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia).

### Flagship projects in the *Länder*

Rhineland-Palatinate places emphasis on **accessibility when building or expanding support facilities for women** in order to improve access for women with disabilities. Its action plan also includes targeted measures for diverse groups such as women with a migration background, women affected by addiction, homeless women, sex workers, children, girls and queer people.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, particular focus is placed on **supporting LGBTIQ\* persons**, notably through specialised counselling centres and expert organisations that adopt intersectional approaches and address the diverse experiences of discrimination. The state coordination offices for trans\* and inter\* issues, and also the specialist unit #MehrAlsQueer, receive financial support for their work.

Saxony-Anhalt commissioned with the **WEMO research project**<sup>21</sup> to improve available support services and is implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Saxony-Anhalt State Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 'Just do it. Our path to an inclusive society' 2.0).

## Article 8: Funding

4. Please provide information on any new development since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country concerning the allocation of appropriate and sustainable financial and human resources for the implementation of integrated policies, measures and programmes to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.

A consolidated overview is not feasible or meaningful due to the lack of a comparable system. In implementing action plans and strategies, the federal and *Länder* governments allocate the necessary funding for each individual measure and support programmes from their respective budgets. Some of the budget allocations for the measures mentioned in this report are listed under the relevant section. The federal government's Protection against Violence Strategy based on the Istanbul Convention includes a comprehensive catalogue of measures, each linked to responsible authorities and corresponding resources.<sup>22</sup> Overall, the

21 <https://zoom-gmbh.de/wirkungsorientierte-evaluation-monitoring-und-ombuds-vertrauensfunktion-wemo/> (German).

22 Protection against Violence Strategy based on the Istanbul Convention <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/257164/6c90795e9e59264b58bb6949099b560f/gewaltschutzstrategie-der-bundesregierung-englisch-data.pdf>.

strategy includes measures to combat violence amounting to approximately €400 million per year. The *Länder* in particular also provide substantial funding to implement the measures set out in their respective action plans and ensure the long-term financing of women's shelters and counselling centres. Details of the measures taken by the *Länder* that fall within the scope of the IC are to be found in the individual state contributions compiled in the appendix.

Under the federal funding programme “Together against Violence towards Women” (*Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt an Frauen*)<sup>23</sup>, a federal investment programme ran from 18 February 2020 to 31 December 2024. Up to €140 million in funding was allocated for the period 2020 to 2024. Funding was provided for the expansion, conversion, new construction, refurbishment and acquisition of support facilities through innovative projects. The primary goal of these projects was to further improve the accessibility and usability of protection and counselling facilities for women affected by violence. The main beneficiaries were women who became victims of violence for whom there were not yet sufficient capacities or a sufficient number of specialised support services nationwide, for example for women with disabilities who are reliant on accessible forms of support. The programme funded 68 construction projects throughout Germany with good regional distribution. The funding enabled the creation of 191 new places for women and their children in women's shelters as recommended under Article 23 IC as well as the improvement of 376 existing places for women and their children, for example by making them barrier-free.

For the Violence Support Services Act (*GewHG*) see answer to Question 1.

The BMFTR has launched a major initiative supporting research for improving the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care on mental health. The future “German Center for Mental Health” (*DZPG*) is a national virtual network of excellence, involving almost 40 universities, university hospitals and non-university research institutions. Thematically there is, among other aspects, a focus on early trauma, including neglect and violence against women. New concepts for evidence-based treatment and care are envisaged to derive from the research activities. The *DZPG* is currently (since 2023) funded for a startup phase and will, from 2025 to 2030, be funded for rolling out its scientific activities. The BMFTR funds the related activities with a total budget of €120 million.

In several *Länder*, **funding for various protection and support services** (women's shelters, counselling centres, and specialised support organisations) – has been **significantly and continuously increased** (Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Hamburg, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia, Bavaria, Bremen, Saarland, Berlin, Brandenburg and Baden-Württemberg).

The federal government has also provided the human resources needed to establish a coordinating body in accordance with the Istanbul Convention within BMBFSFJ. Staffing levels at the respective state coordinating bodies and administrations have also been increased to support implementation of the IC (Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bremen, Berlin, Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg, Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Thuringia, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Hesse).

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23 <https://www.gemeinsam-gegen-gewalt-an-frauen.de/> (German).

Other key focus areas:

- **Expansion and funding of offender intervention centres and specialist outpatient clinics** (Saxony, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Brandenburg, Bavaria, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia and Bremen); psychotherapy, training and prevention programmes for perpetrators are already established or in development in many *Länder*.
- **Implementation of pilot projects, training courses, and public awareness campaigns on violence prevention, often also in schools** (Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Hesse, Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia, Bavaria, Berlin).
- **Victim protection / free forensic evidence collection and trial support** (Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt).
- **State-level commissioners for victim protection** (Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Bremen, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein).
- **Victim protection officers at public prosecutors' offices** (Baden-Württemberg, Schleswig-Holstein).
- **Victim protection officers at police stations** (Saxony)
- **Networking and innovation/NGO involvement, digital protection measures, specialised protection strategies:** support for and networking of NGOs, local round tables, and regional networks (Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Brandenburg and Saxony); protection strategies for refugee shelters (Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein); digital protection measures (Saxony-Anhalt); and innovative projects such as support apps for those affected (Berlin and Lower Saxony).
- **Strengthening child and youth protection:** Funding is provided for staff, network coordination, training programmes, and supraregional initiatives such as prevention projects (Bavaria, Thuringia).
- **Parenting and family counselling, youth work.**

A list of the projects and their funding is provided in Appendix 2.

## 5. Please provide information on any development concerning the provision of appropriate and sustainable financial and human resources for women's rights organisations that provide specialist support services to victims, including those supporting migrant women and girls.

Germany has implemented a series of targeted projects that aim to strengthen and sustainably support women's rights organisations, especially those providing specialist services to victims of gender-based violence, including migrant women and girls.

Each project contributes to a broader framework that ensures sustainability, intersectionality, and accessibility in specialist support services across Germany. The combination of federal funding, long-term planning, and targeted thematic focus areas reflects an institutional commitment to upholding women's rights and supporting organisations working on the ground.

Part I: Changes in comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection in the area of violence against women and domestic violence

The following initiatives are particularly noteworthy:

Title	Ministry	Time frame	Funding in €	Project Description
<b>Networking of the women's support system at federal level: funding of the Federal Coordinating Body for Women's Shelters (FHK)</b>	BMBFSFJ	2022–2024	€1,294,000	This project focuses on improving the coordination and integration of women's support services across federal levels. It aims to enhance collaboration and knowledge exchange between stakeholders to create a more resilient and cohesive support infrastructure.
<b>Networking of the women's support system at state level: Funding for the coordinating body of Women's Counselling and Rape Crisis Centres (bff)</b>	BMBFSFJ	2022–2024	€1,192,000	This project supports the development of regional networks, ensuring that local support structures for women affected by violence are better connected, more effective, and sustainably resourced.
<b>Funding of the Suse Project – Protection against violence in facilities: living and working violence-free by the Federal Association of Rape Crisis Centres and Counselling Centres (bff)</b>	BMAS	2024–2027	€757,836	This initiative addresses the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities, with a focus on intersectionality and inclusivity. By enhancing accessibility and specialist support, the project strengthens the capacity of organisations serving particularly vulnerable groups.
<b>Weibernetz e. V. – Project on political representation of the interests of disabled women in the context of intersectionality, sexism, ableism and protection against violence</b>	BMBFSFJ	2024–2027	€754,582	The project empowers women with disabilities, especially those facing multiple forms of discrimination, to engage politically and advocate for their rights
<b>Funding of measures and model projects on promoting effective violence prevention</b>	BMBFSFJ	2025–2027	€850,000	These model projects are designed to develop and test evidence-based approaches in violence prevention. They include targeted support for migrant women and girls and aim to scale up proven methods in the broader support landscape.
<b>#together – United against sexism and racism (DaMigra project)</b>	BMBFSFJ/ BAMF	2022–2025	€1,167,000 plus co-funding	Combats intersectional discrimination through public awareness, training, and empowerment.
<b>Countering digital violence in women's shelters (FHK – Women's Shelter Coordination project)</b>	BMBFSFJ	2023–2026	€1,069,000	Trains staff in women's shelters to deal with digital forms of violence and strengthens digital infrastructure.
<b>Concepts against digital violence in the social environment and public sphere (in short: Aktiv gegen digitale Gewalt (Active against Digital Violence) (bff project)</b>	BMBFSFJ	2023–2026	€1,024,000	Develops new tools and methods to support victims of digital violence in their social settings.

Part I: Changes in comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection in the area of violence against women and domestic violence

<b>Make it work – then make it better! Help is available for violence in the workplace. Focus: training programmes, quality assurance, counselling (bff project)</b>	BMBFSFJ	2023–2026	€1,015,000	Addresses sexual harassment at the workplace with support services and awareness training.
<b>App for low-threshold help with domestic violence from the association Gewaltfrei in die Zukunft e. V. (Violence-free into the Future)</b>	BMI	2023–2026	€3,722,000	Provides digital access to counselling and help for people affected by gender-based violence.
<b>HateAid gGmbH – Counselling for victims of digital violence</b>	BMJV	2025 (A continuation is being checked.)	€600,000	Offers legal and psychological support for those facing online hate and gender-based abuse.
<b>LGBTIQ+ Counselling and Self-Empowerment (LSVD+)</b>	IntB	2024–2025	~€506,811 total	Supports queer individuals, including trans women, in accessing specialist support and empowerment resources.
<b>Asylum Procedure Counselling (AVB)</b>	BAMF	since 2023	€25,000,000	Funds organisations providing counselling and legal assistance to asylum seekers, including vulnerable women and girls.
<b>DaMigra’s project Gemeinsam MUTig</b>	IntB	till 2024	€100,342	The project reached several thousand women with a history of flight and migration by the end of 2024 with information and empowerment to strengthen their individual action skills in order to reduce the disadvantages faced by refugee girls and women in all areas of society and to empower them.
<b>Women’s Computer Centre Berlin Mikado Open Up project</b>	IntB	till 2024	€313,275	The project aims to train trainers and providers of IT training for refugee women throughout Germany and to accompany them on their way to digital sovereignty.
<b>Women in Action project by the Iranian Community of Germany (IGD e. V.)</b>	IntB	2022 - 2025	€1,204,063	The initiative supports refugee women and their children in Berlin, Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig in gaining access to sports and leisure clubs and also helps these women to establish themselves as trainers in the clubs.
<b>‘Nationwide Community – Networking for the transcultural empowerment of FGM victims’</b>	BMBFSFJ	2024		The initiative analysed the mental health of women affected by FGM.

### Summary of measures and funding by the *Länder* (2022–2025)

Many *Länder* have increased their **financial and human resources** for women’s rights organisations and specialised counselling centres, including for migrant women and girls. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Schleswig-Holstein, Rhineland-Palatinate, Berlin and Baden-Württemberg are significantly increasing their funding budgets. Saxony is promoting research and digital data collection, while Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia are providing targeted support for networking and integration projects. Bremen and Saarland are expanding specialised services, for example for pregnant women and migrant women. Brandenburg is promoting municipal women’s shelters and waiving usage fees. Overall, there is increased support, but sustainable institutional funding remains insufficient in some areas, particularly for projects specifically targeting migrants.

Federal state	Focus areas/measures	Financing/funding (selection)
<b>Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania</b>	Counselling, help network, State Women’s Council (Landesfrauenrat)	Counselling network: ~€2.6-2.9 million/year, State Women’s Council (Landesfrauenrat): ~€106.000/year
<b>Saxony</b>	Studies on gender-based violence, digitalisation of statistics	Several studies (also on femicide); digitalisation ongoing since 2022
<b>Saxony-Anhalt</b>	Funding for LIKO	LIKO: Increasing funding up to €203.900 (2025)
<b>Schleswig-Holstein</b>	Women’s shelters, counselling centres, legal advice for refugees	Women’s shelters: >€6,8 Mio (2025), counselling centres: ~€2,8 Mio (2025), funding for MYRIAM/Contra stabil
<b>Thuringia</b>	Personnel and material costs of women’s shelters are 100% subsidised in accordance with ChancGfFöG TH <sup>24</sup> , project funding for protection facilities, interpreting services, state advisory council for survivors	Project-based funding (e.g. SAIDA, State Women’s Council (Landesfrauenrat)), state advisory council active since 2024
<b>Rhineland-Palatinate</b>	Funding for specialist counselling centres, anti-FGM measures, projects for multiply marginalised women	Increasing funds (e.g. intervention centres: €2 million in 2025), FGM project raised to €70,000
<b>Bremen</b>	Wide range of counselling services, including in the fields of health and pregnancy	State-funded women’s shelters, no specific figures available
<b>Saarland</b>	Staff increases in counselling centres (e.g. NELE), prevention work for migrant women	Expansion of counselling centre staff, state share of funding: 40%
<b>Berlin</b>	Significant budget increases for protection measures, expansion of the child protection network	2022: €23.9 million → 2025: €37.9 million; incl. earmarked funds for new measures and specialist centres
<b>Baden-Württemberg</b>	Revision of administrative regulations, extensive project funding for protection from violence	2023-2024: €12.6 million/year, 2025/2026: €16.1 million/year
<b>Brandenburg</b>	Women’s shelters, abolition of user fees, investment support for family spaces	€2.99 million/year in state funding; municipalities contribute 40%

24 <https://landesrecht.thueringen.de/bsth/document/jlr-ChancGfFöG%C3%B6GTHV1P5> (German).

Federal state	Focus areas/measures	Financing/funding (selection)
Lower Saxony	Women's shelters, counselling and intervention centres, violence counselling centres	Guideline on the granting of subsidies to promote measures for women and girls affected by violence' of 31 January 2022: 46 women's shelters with 454 places for women and around 900 places for children (cf. 2022: 398 places for women and around 800 places for children), 47 violence counselling centres and 29 counselling and intervention centres (BISS) with 19 branch offices. (2024, 2025: EUR 10.275 million each; cf. 2020: EUR 9.2 million)
Hamburg	Women's shelters, counselling centers for victims of violence	2021/2022: 13.7 million/ for two years 2023/2024: 14.4 million/ for two years 2025/2026: 16.5 million/ for two years
North Rhine-Westphalia	women's shelters, specialised counselling (against sexualised violence, human trafficking, forced marriage, FGM); increased personnel and material support; support for refugee accommodation	Funding in € millions: 2020: 25; 2021: 30; 2022: 35; 2023-2025: ~33/year; Personnel subsidies are dynamically increased by 1.5% annually, with a one-time additional raise of 3.3% in 2024, while material funding has been raised by €2,500 per institution. €6 million funding for refugee accommodation and violence prevention (2025)

## Article 11: Data collection and research

6. Please provide information on any new development since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country on the introduction of data collection categories such as type of violence, sex and age of the victim and the perpetrator, the relationship between the two and where it took place, for administrative data of relevance to the field of violence against women and domestic violence emanating from law enforcement agencies, the justice sector, social services and the public health care sector.

Since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, the way in which police crime statistics (PCS) are compiled by the police has been adjusted as follows:

- In each case, the location of the crime is recorded along a catalogue of sites. The field values include among others house, street, park, green space, retirement or care home, bus or tram stop, bus or train station.
- The event during which the crime was committed is recorded (e.g. demonstration, cultural event (concert, etc.).
- The degree of the victims' injuries is recorded.

Since 2022 the nationwide situation report on intimate partner violence is supplemented by intrafamilial violence to a comprehensive report on domestic violence.

Last year, the BKA published the nationwide situation report on gender-specific crimes against women in 2023 for the first time, see question 2.

In addition to administrative data the authorities conduct two victimisation surveys Sicherheit und Kriminalität in Deutschland (SKiD) and Lebenssituation, Sicherheit und Belastung im Alltag (LeSuBiA) to detect unreported crime. SKiD is a longitudinal victimisation survey that examines the development of crime in Germany over time and thereby also asks questions about violence and sexual offenses.<sup>25</sup> The title of the victimisation survey LeSuBiA can be translated as “Life Situation, Safety and Strain in Everyday Life”.<sup>26</sup> LeSuBiA is a victim survey carried out by the BMI, BMBFSFJ and the BKA which analyses the forms and extent of violence among all genders. The survey examines victimisation in various forms of violence (esp. psychological violence in (ex-) relationships, physical abuse in (ex-) relationships, sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, digital violence). A particular focus is on collecting information about their experiences of violence in (ex-) partner relationships, of sexualised violence and of violence in the digital space. Among other factors, it takes into account victims’ gender and age, and the offender-victim relationship as well as data on socio-structural factors and the respondents’ living environment. The study also takes into account persons’ experiences with the police, judicial authorities and victim support services. The aim of the survey is to gain insights into gender-specific differences with regard to unreported violent crime. The results are scheduled to be published in 2025.

BMBFSFJ commissioned a “Study on the Support System for Victims of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence” in 2023, the results of which were published in 2024.<sup>27</sup> The reference year for the underlying data is 2022. For the first time, the study determined the annual costs and financing of the support system for gender-based and domestic violence in Germany on a scientifically sound basis. Furthermore, it forecasts what a support system that has been further developed according to the needs of all affected persons would cost annually. The study served as a scientific basis for political discussions in preparation for the Violence Support Services Act (GewHG), which was passed in February 2025.

The German Institute for Human Rights (DIMR) has been tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe’s IC in Germany since November 2022. The Institute has set up the National Rapporteur Mechanism (NRM) for this purpose. This independent organisation is funded under a project by the BMBFSFJ. An interdisciplinary advisory board accompanies the work of the NRM.

The core task of the NRM is human rights-based monitoring of gender-based violence in Germany in order to assess the scope and extent of gender-based violence and the status of implementation of the IC. It also monitors legislation and case law and promotes public discourse on this topic. The NRM contributes to the creation of a broad and reliable data

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25 [www.bka.de/skid](http://www.bka.de/skid) (German).

26 [https://www.bka.de/DE/UnsereAufgaben/Forschung/ForschungsprojekteUndErgebnisse/Dunkelfeldforschung/LeSuBiA\\_EN/lesubia\\_EN\\_node.html](https://www.bka.de/DE/UnsereAufgaben/Forschung/ForschungsprojekteUndErgebnisse/Dunkelfeldforschung/LeSuBiA_EN/lesubia_EN_node.html).

27 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/kostenstudie-zum-hilfesystem-fuer-betroffene-von-haeuslicher-und-geschlechtsspezifischer-gewalt-240218> (German).

basis on gender-based violence in Germany. Firstly, the data is intended to visualise trends and developments, and secondly it serves to shape evidence-based policy. Two fundamental publications have been issued on the data situation:

- First report on the data situation on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence in Germany<sup>28</sup>
- Monitor Violence against Women<sup>29</sup>

The Violence Support Services Act (GewHG) provides for the introduction of federal statistics on facilities offering protection and counselling under the Act as well as the utilisation rate of protection and counselling services. The first survey year is 2028, prior to which a regulation on the statistical survey characteristics is to be issued.

Since 2022/23, several *Länder* have improved and standardised their data collection, particularly with regard to recording forms of violence, victim and perpetrator characteristics (age, gender, gender identity, relationship, cohabitation) and crime scenes. Significant developments have taken place across various areas in recent years:

#### **Developments in legislation and criminal law:**

- Hesse and Saarland have adapted definitions and data collection relating to domestic violence in line with the IC.

#### **Statistical recording and data monitoring:**

- Since 2022, Saxony has been digitising statistics for protection and counselling centres.
- North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate and Berlin are expanding their digital monitoring systems.
- Since 2023, Thuringia has maintained a police situational report on domestic violence.
- Nationwide, there are initiatives to record hate crimes and femicides in a more differentiated way.
- Brandenburg in 2023, updated the state's women's shelter statistics to include data on occupancy, special needs, origins, length of stay, non-admission reasons, and counselling, with further adjustments planned following the implementation of GewHG.

#### **Research and studies:**

- Saxony is funding studies on victimisation, protection facilities and femicides (results expected from 2025 onwards).
- North Rhine-Westphalia published the study "Quer durch NRW – Lebenslagen und Erfahrungen von LSBTIQ\*" ("Queer through North Rhine-Westphalia – Life situations and experiences of LGBTIQ\* people") in April 2025 on violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ\* people.

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28 <https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/publikationen/detail/bericht-ueber-die-datenlage-zu-geschlechtsspezifischer-gewalt-gegen-frauen-und-haeuslicher-gewalt-in-deutschland> (German).

29 Long version: [https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere\\_Publikationen/Monitor\\_Gewalt\\_gegen\\_Frauen.pdf](https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere_Publikationen/Monitor_Gewalt_gegen_Frauen.pdf) (German); Summary: [https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere\\_Publikationen/Summary\\_Monitoring\\_Report\\_Violence\\_Against\\_Women.pdf](https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere_Publikationen/Summary_Monitoring_Report_Violence_Against_Women.pdf).

**Justice and law enforcement:**

- In Saxony-Anhalt, prosecution data is collected with the victim's consent.
- Brandenburg's Public Prosecutor General's Office is revising its outdated definition of domestic violence to align with the IC, with changes expected to take effect in 2026 and significantly impact organisational structure.

**Flagship project in the *Länder***

In North Rhine-Westphalia, the replacement of the previously used software tool for programme funding control (formulardb.de) with the new **tool fachdatenerhebung.nrw** has also involved a substantive revision of the data being collected. For example, a new query on the accessibility of facilities has been added, and for counselling centres, the data collection on **types of counselling has been expanded and differentiated** (face-to-face, telephone, video conferencing, email, and chat counselling). For women's shelters, the recording of admission and rejection reasons has been made more nuanced and tailored to individual cases.

Data collection using fachdatenerhebung.nrw has begun in 2024.

**7. Where relevant, please provide information on any new development since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country to enable disaggregated data collection:**

**a. on the number of emergency barring and protection orders and the number of breaches and the resulting sanctions;**

LeSuBiA, the cross-gender survey of victims already mentioned in response to Question 6, collected data on the use and enforcement of measures to protect persons from violence, and the level of protection they actually provided. The results are scheduled to be published in 2025.

**Statistical recording and data situation:**

On a federal level, there are no detailed statistics dedicated specifically to court decisions and procedures concerning violence against women and domestic violence.

Some basic data regarding measures under the Act on Protection Against Violence (Gewaltschutzgesetz – GewSchG) is available on a federal level from the statistics of the family courts. Data for the family court statistics is collected by the *Länder* based on jointly drafted uniform instructions for data collection and subsequently compiled into an overview for the whole of Germany by the Federal Statistical Office.

There is also data on the number of persons convicted by criminal courts in Germany for breaches of protection orders and obligations from settlement agreements under the GewSchG. However, this data cannot be disaggregated with regard to the sex of the victim.

With regard to protection orders, in many *Länder*, there are significant gaps in the statistical recording of measures under the Act on Protection Against Violence (Gewaltschutzgesetz – GewSchG) as well as of violations of protection orders. Hesse does record proceedings under the Act on Protection Against Violence (Gewaltschutzgesetz – GewSchG), but highlights systematic shortcomings in differentiating types of case resolution. Other *Länder* – such as Saxony-Anhalt (with a 13 % increase in 2023) and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania – are also reporting rising case numbers, but offer little differentiation regarding the type of outcome or the gender of those involved. In Brandenburg, there is no centralised statistical recording. In 2024, Potsdam Local Court handled 72 proceedings under Section 1 of the Act on Protection Against Violence (GewSchG) and 24 under Section 2 GewSchG, plus eight summary proceedings relating to the matrimonial home, but it remains unclear how many involved violence protection cases, violations or sanctions, since administrative fine procedures are rarely used and not separately recorded.

Almost all *Länder* state that violations of protection orders or resulting sanctions are not systematically recorded. In Hesse, a more differentiated recording of court measures under the Act on Protection Against Violence (Gewaltschutzgesetz – GewSchG) was agreed in 2020 – but it has hardly been implemented in practice.

Many of the *Länder* are unable to provide precise information on the reasons behind family court decisions, as judicial statistics focus on case closures rather than the substance of rulings.

#### **Police measures and issues of data validity:**

Evictions and emergency protection measures are sometimes recorded by police (e.g. in Lower Saxony), but are often not categorised in detail or systematically documented. In Lower Saxony and Bremen, violations are recorded, but due to the high number of unreported cases the data is of limited reliability. Sanctions are imposed by the judiciary, meaning that comprehensive data is not available. For example, in Bremen, there are also specific police-ordered removal and barring orders as protective measures in cases of domestic violence, which may apply for up to 10 days.

#### **b. on the number of times custody decisions have resulted in the restriction and withdrawal of parental rights because of violence perpetrated by one parent against the other.**

With regard to family court statistics, the BMJV has urged the *Länder* to re-examine possibilities of collecting additional data on the relationship between the parties involved. A panel of representatives from the justice departments of the *Länder* responsible for the coordination of judicial statistics concluded that the collection of data on the relationship between the parties is not feasible within the framework of the family court statistics.

Data collection for family court statistics is organisationally and technically designed to provide standardised and comparable information on the courts' workload rather than personal details of the parties involved. Moreover, relationships other than spouses or registered partnerships may be difficult to categorise and the parties' assessment of the relationship status may differ.

Since data collection for judicial statistics is automated, information can only be gathered in predefined categories. Free text cannot be processed by the automated data collection systems.

In many *Länder*, custody decisions made in the context of domestic violence are not separately recorded in statistical terms. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Schleswig-Holstein, Bremen and Brandenburg report that no differentiation is made with regard to the causes of violence.

**8. Please provide information on measures taken to allow cases of violence against women and domestic violence to be tracked from reporting to conviction, at all stages of the law-enforcement and judicial proceedings.**

A nationwide, cross-procedure statistical recording system does not currently exist, that is, seamless tracking of cases from initial report to conviction.

In most *Länder*, no new measures have been adopted beyond existing federal legal provisions. Some *Länder* have introduced **specialised risk management systems, training, and documentation tools within the police authorities to systematically identify high-risk cases and coordinate protective measures** (e.g. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Berlin, Bremen, Saxony and Hesse).

Overall, it can be stated that most measures to date have focused on individual cases, police reporting or victim support. A systematic, coordinated approach to prosecution across all procedural stages has not yet been implemented in most *Länder*.

# **Part II: Information on the implementation of selected provisions in priority areas in the field of prevention, protection and prosecution**

## **Article 12: General obligations**

- 9. Please provide information on any primary prevention measures aiming to change mentalities and attitudes in relation to violence against women and to reduce women's exposure to gender-based violence by:**
  - a. addressing harmful gender stereotypes and prejudices, customs and traditions based on the idea of the inferiority of women;**

The "Together against Sexism" alliance is funded by the BMBFSFJ and is implemented in co-operation with the European Academy for Women in Politics and Business (EAF Berlin). The alliance's objective is to identify sexism and sexual harassment and implement effective measures against it. As of June 2025, the alliance has around 850 members, including high-ranking members from business, government and society.

Various events, materials, recommendations, public relations initiatives and the involvement of alliance partners serve to establish and expand the alliance, allowing companies and organisations to counter sexism and effectively support affected people. The alliance has developed a print-on-demand exhibition which can be used by municipalities and companies to provide information on the topic of sexism and thus help break the taboo about sexism.

The alliance focuses on the areas most affected by sexism: the workplace, public spaces, culture and the media. The alliance has a particular focus on small and medium-sized companies and their needs. Specific recommendations were developed and published.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> [www.gemeinsam-gegen-sexismus.de](http://www.gemeinsam-gegen-sexismus.de) (German).

UBSKM and the BMBFSFJ developed and promoted the campaign “Don’t push the thought away!” (Schieb den Gedanken nicht weg) from 2023 onwards. This campaign raises awareness of sexual violence against children and young people, particularly in the context of families and in close social circles. The goal is to activate the public and ensure that children and young people encounter adults who know how to respond and where to get help in cases of sexual violence.<sup>31</sup>

The *Länder* deploy a variety of measures to combat gender stereotypes and misogynistic bias, and to promote gender equality. A key focus lies on **high-visibility campaigns and public initiatives aimed at raising awareness of violence against women and promoting moral courage** (e.g. Bavaria, Lower Saxony, Berlin, Hesse, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia). At the same time, **educational programmes and prevention programmes** are being expanded, particularly for children, adolescents and young adults. These include projects to strengthen children’s self-confidence (e.g. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania’s “My Body Belongs to Me”), gender-sensitive education plans (Bavaria), and training on sexualised violence and anti-racism (Saarland, Lower Saxony). In Lower Saxony, the Swiss programme Herzsprung is being adapted for the prevention of violence in teenage relationships. In addition, integration programmes for refugees contribute to violence prevention (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Thuringia).

At the institutional level, the *Länder* are promoting the expansion of specialist units, counselling services, and state-wide networks, many of which work with an intersectional and culturally sensitive approach (Hesse, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt). Efforts are also being made to systematically apply gender mainstreaming (Schleswig-Holstein). One particular focus lies on **combating female genital mutilation (FGM) through awareness-raising, counselling, and training** (Lower Saxony, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Rhineland-Palatinate).

The **empowerment of women and practical support for those affected** are also central priorities. Various projects aim to dismantle traditional gender roles and promote women’s self-determination (Saxony-Anhalt), while police and social services carry out preventive outreach and awareness-raising (Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia). Inter-linked training programmes and formats for professional dialogue help ensure qualified, diversity-aware support services.

Overall, these efforts are characterised by a broad spectrum of preventive education, structural support and direct assistance, with intersectional perspectives and culturally sensitive communication increasingly forming an integral part of the measures.

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31 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/schieb-den-gedanken-nicht-weg--205052> (German).

### Flagship projects in the *Länder*

Since 2023, the project **StoP© – Neighbourhoods Without Intimate Partner Violence** has been funded in two districts in the state of Bremen. StoP© is a **prevention project that uses a community-based approach to raise awareness of domestic violence and use social networks to stop intimate partner violence**. Self-assertion courses for women and girls are funded from central resources allocated to the implementation of the IC.

In Saarland, two educational **media kits** have been developed – **Gender and Diversity KIDS** and **Gender and Diversity YOUTH** – containing age-appropriate materials for children and adolescents. These kits enable young people to independently engage with topics such as gender dimensions, stereotypes, role expectations and power structures, with a particular focus on body and sexuality. In addition, a model project on sexual education is being run in Neunkirchen at two comprehensive schools. Aimed at pupils in year 6, the project fosters primary prevention by raising awareness of gender stereotypes.

#### **b. addressing the heightened exposure to gender-based violence by women and girls at risk of intersectional discrimination;**

In April 2025, the QB launched the “What is queer?” campaign to raise awareness of hate violence against queer people and how LGBTIQ+ people can be supported. The testimonials included a lesbian, a bisexual and a transgender woman. The Commissioner advocates an understanding of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic violence as gender-based violence.

The German parliament has passed a law to prevent so-called “sidewalk harassment” by abortion opponents in the immediate vicinity of counselling centres for pregnant women and abortion clinics. The law aims to protect women effectively from the unacceptable harassment of this nature, something that has been occurring increasingly in Germany. The law is intended to ensure that pregnant women can freely take advantage of counselling services and have access to facilities that carry out abortions. The law came into force on November 2024.

The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (ADS) provides free nationwide counselling to women who experience sexual harassment in the workplace, including in cases of intersectional discrimination. From 2022 to 2024 more than 900 people contacted the agency for support related to workplace sexual harassment.

The ADS also offers the general public a wide range of information materials explaining how to take action against workplace sexual harassment from an intersectional perspective. Guides, flyers and posters are available, including also in plain language.<sup>32</sup> The collection “Examples of Good Practice in Preventing Sexual Harassment at the Workplace” also serves a preventive purpose, showing how both prevention and intervention measures can be implemented across different sectors and business sizes.<sup>33</sup>

32 [https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/Leitfaeden/leitfaden\\_was\\_tun\\_bei\\_sexueller\\_belaestigung.html](https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/Leitfaeden/leitfaden_was_tun_bei_sexueller_belaestigung.html) (German).

33 [https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/DE/was-wir-machen/good\\_practice/good\\_practice\\_sex\\_belaestigung/good\\_practice\\_sex\\_belaestigung\\_node.html](https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/DE/was-wir-machen/good_practice/good_practice_sex_belaestigung/good_practice_sex_belaestigung_node.html)

*Länder* measures to address the heightened risk of gender-based violence faced by women and girls exposed to intersectional discrimination focus on inclusive and accessible counselling services, awareness-raising, and preventive projects.

**Intersectional approaches are incorporated in prevention initiatives, professional training, and awareness-raising campaigns** (Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony). The needs of women with a migration background are also addressed – for example, through migration counselling centres in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Women with disabilities are supported through empowerment initiatives and inclusive prevention projects (Thuringia, North Rhine-Westphalia), and accessibility to women’s shelters and counselling centres is being improved (Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate). In Hesse, the project “Model Regions for Hesse” is establishing a networked counselling system specifically for women and girls with disabilities.

For further examples, see also the answers to Questions 9a and 9b.

#### Flagship projects in the *Länder*

The Anti-discrimination office (Hamburg) offers counselling from an intersectional perspective. Since 2023, the office has expanded its services to include counselling in cases of discrimination on the grounds of all characteristics protected under the German General Act on Equal Treatment. Moreover, the office has dedicated additional resources to the issue of sexual harassment at the workplace through networking activities and counselling.

- c. **encouraging all members of society, including men and boys, to contribute actively to preventing all forms of violence against women covered by the scope of the Istanbul Convention, and promoting the empowerment of women and girls in all areas of life, notably their participation in politics at all levels and in the labour market.**

The Violence Support Services Act (GewHG) obliges the *Länder* to take measures in order to prevent gender-based and domestic violence against women, including measures directed at perpetrators as well as public campaigns.

Overcoming traditional gender roles is at the core of the BMBFSFJ’s equality-oriented men’s policy. BMBFSFJ supports the Federal Forum for Men’s project “Promoting Sustainable Masculinity – Overcoming Toxic Masculinity”. The goals are to further develop equality-oriented work and counselling for boys, men and fathers, as well as to combat anti-feminist attitudes. The Federal Forum for Men advocates for equality-oriented men’s policy and seeks to win men as supporters and allies for equality policy.

BMBFSFJ also supports further education for counsellors with a focus on men-focused counselling, as well as the SKM Federal Association’s online clearing centre “Men-Focused Counselling”, which aims to establish an innovative digital platform as a central point of contact for boys and men in crisis situations. Men-oriented counselling is intended to offer men help and support, thus opening up alternative conflict resolution options to violence against others (often women) and themselves.

BMBFSFJ also supports the awareness-raising project “Cliché-free in sport”, the “Cliché-free initiative” and the Girls’ Day and Boys’ Day, which aim to reduce stereotypes in sport and in the context of career orientation.

BMVg and several other federal ministries are committed to an appreciative and respectful working environment in which violence against women has no place. They participate in the “Together Against Sexism” campaign, the UN “Orange the World” campaign for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Diversity Charter’s “German Diversity Day,” the UN AIDS campaign “Zero Discrimination Day,” and the “Girls’ Day and Boys’ Day,” to send a clear message against violence and all forms of discrimination.

The *Länder* are coordinating their efforts around prevention, empowerment and structural support. On the one hand, targeted efforts are being made to involve **men and boys in order to ensure sustainable violence prevention**. On the other hand, **women and girls are being empowered through projects promoting political, social and economic participation**. Training and networking among professionals help ensure the quality of the measures. Innovative approaches, public awareness campaigns and legislative improvements round off the set of measures.

Three clusters of activity can be identified:

### 1. **Prevention through awareness-raising and education for boys and men**

In Hamburg, projects such as comMIT!ment and StoP specifically support boys’ and neighbourhood networks that aim to dismantle patriarchal structures and embed violence prevention in everyday life. The campaign 600 Minuten Nachspielzeit – Echte Männer holen sich Hilfe is also explicitly aimed at men as perpetrators or potential perpetrators of domestic violence. Similar approaches are found in Hesse (#1coolermove), Schleswig-Holstein (school prevention concepts, OMÄGA network), Berlin (engaging men in reflecting on gender roles) and North Rhine-Westphalia (raising awareness among men about female genital mutilation), all of which offer educational programmes, workshops and training that actively involve boys and men. In Saarland, workshops address violent male role models, for example in rap music.

### 2. **Empowering women and girls and promoting their participation in politics, employment and society**

In Saxony-Anhalt, the State Women’s Council (Landesfrauenrat) receives institutional support to strengthen women’s political and social participation. The state also funds ESF-supported projects aimed at improving the social and professional involvement of young women.

Thuringia promotes initiatives dedicated to career choices free of stereotypes, support for female entrepreneurs through ThEx FRAUENSACHE. Thuringia, Saxony and other regions support projects encouraging political participation such as Aktionsprogramm Kommune – Frauen in die Politik. Saarland pursues a comprehensive strategy for women’s socio-economic independence through its state labour market programme Frauen in Arbeit – Familien stärken.

Hesse and Hamburg also support gender equality policy through targeted initiatives (e.g. Hamburg Gleichstellungspolitisches Rahmenprogramm and the PINKSTINKS campaign on sexism and gender stereotypes). Bavaria supports initiatives for the political and

professional empowerment of women through the campaign *Jede anders stark!*, which highlights female role models, and the initiative *Klischeefrei*, which promotes career choices free of gender stereotypes.

In Brandenburg, empowering women and girls is a priority, focusing on participation in politics, the labour market and education. Key activities include supporting girls' confidence especially in relation to STEM careers, mentoring female scientists, ensuring fair wages, improving care professions, and aiding the labour market integration of migrants. Vocational training programmes help young women, especially in non-traditional fields.

Saxony also promotes the economic and political independence of women, e.g. via the programme *"\*in Führung – Führungskräfteförderung für Frauen"* (in leadership – leadership development for women), the ESF Plus guideline on equality in working life 2021–2027 and the Saxony Female Founders Award. In order to encourage more women to take up positions in local politics, Saxony is currently implementing a catalogue of measures for the equal participation of women in elected office, has commissioned a study on women's involvement in politics from the EAF Berlin, and is currently funding the model project *"Bürgermeisterinnen im Fokus"* (Focus on Women Mayors) by the organisation *Frauen aufs Podium e.V.*

### **3. Structural and institutional support, networking and further training**

The GFMK passed a resolution on the alliance *"Together Against Sexism"* at its 34th conference in 2024. With the unanimous support of all ministers and senators for equality and women's issues in the *Länder*, the GFMK has sent a clear signal against sexism in all relevant areas.

Many *Länder* offer training programmes, specialist conferences and guidance materials to raise awareness among professionals and strengthen interdisciplinary cooperation (Hamburg, Thuringia, Schleswig-Holstein, Rhineland-Palatinate). Hamburg also hosted a specialist dialogue on violence against women entitled *Gewalt gegen Frauen*, which led to practical recommendations.

Innovative digital solutions such as *My Protectify* (Hamburg) offer low-threshold access to support for those affected. Brandenburg issued a guideline for media reporting on domestic violence as a preventive measure.

Legal and institutional prevention measures – such as perpetrator programmes and protective legislation – are being advanced at both federal and state level.

For further examples, see also the answers to Question 9a.

## Article 14: Education

### 10. Please provide a few examples of promising teaching or prevention programmes, materials, or initiatives for use in formal education (from pre-school to higher education) that:

Responsibility for education policy in Germany lies with the *Länder*, the elaboration of the curricula is the responsibility of the universities (university autonomy). In all *Länder*, programmes **promoting gender equality, respect and non-violent conflict resolution** are an integral part of educational curricula and training – from early childhood education through to higher education. **Protection concepts, prevention programmes and school-based support structures** such as crisis teams and projects like OMÄGA in Schleswig-Holstein address the **handling of gender-based violence** in line with the IC. Bremen promotes participatory violence prevention in schools and youth services. In Rhineland-Palatinate, all schools are required to develop a protection scheme against sexual violence by 2028. **Digital media literacy and the prevention of digital violence** are being further strengthened, for example through teacher certification programmes (Rhineland-Palatinate), digital campaigns (Hesse and Bavaria) and the promotion of digital media skills in schools (Bremen). **Teaching materials seek to avoid gender stereotypes**, and anti-discrimination content along with gender-sensitive selection processes are embedded in curriculum frameworks. **Across the *Länder* there are empowerment and “train the trainer” programmes** as well as higher education gender equality measures (Berlin, Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, in some cases with a participatory approach in Bremen).

- a. **educate children and youth about equality between women and men, the right to personal integrity, mutual respect and non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, including the notion of freely given consent;**

The Federal Institute of Public Health (BIÖG) has a legal mandate under the Pregnancy Conflict Act (SchKG) to develop media and materials for sexuality education and sexual education. These media and materials are aimed at various target groups, in particular children and young people.

The media and materials provided are a free and voluntary offer from the BIÖG and can be used by educational establishments, institutions and members of the public.

The BIÖG offers media and materials, especially on Article 14: Education, which enable children and young people to be educated in the areas of equal rights for women and men, the right to personal integrity, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships and the concept of consent.

The following media and materials from the BIÖG can contribute to this:

- the youth website “Loveline”<sup>34</sup>
- the website “Herzfröh”<sup>35</sup>
- the SEX&TIPPS modules “My rights” and “Sexual orientation”
- the theme booklet from herzfröh 2.0 “The stupid note ...”
- the media package “The Kindergarten Box: Discover. Look. Feel.”

As federalism in Germany means that education and school matters are the responsibility of the individual *Länder*, BIÖG has no say in the teaching materials used and can only provide a voluntary offering.

In the *Länder*, **children and young people receive comprehensive education on gender equality, personal integrity, mutual respect and non-violent conflict resolution**. In Hamburg, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is placed at the centre of educational work in nurseries and schools. Participation and protection from violence are binding principles here, supported through safeguarding concepts and quality development. Saxony is pursuing a state-wide prevention strategy (Prävention im Team) which supports schools with targeted training and materials and promotes networking with the police and youth services. The focus here is on empowerment programmes to strengthen the self-determination of young people. In Brandenburg, education laws require qualified youth workers and protection against violence and discrimination in schools. Schools promote gender equality, diversity and violence prevention.

In Saxony-Anhalt, the education programme Bildung: elementar promotes diversity, inclusion and non-violent interaction from the early childhood stage. Thuringia and Saarland specifically support class cohesion and preventive measures against bullying and sexualised violence, for example through the programme Gemeinsam Klasse sein! and training sessions on gender-inclusive language for teaching staff.

Hamburg’s universities also organise workshops, awareness teams and awareness-raising formats aimed at preventing abuse of power and promoting equality, while Saxony offers its own event series and self-assertion courses at universities. In Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, universities implement measures against abuse of power and sexualised violence.

Overall, the education plans and pedagogical concepts of the *Länder* place strong emphasis on ensuring that children and young people understand the importance of equality, respect and non-violent conflict resolution from an early age and are supported in developing their personal integrity.

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34 [www.loveline.de](http://www.loveline.de) (German).

35 [www.herzfröh.loveline.de](http://www.herzfröh.loveline.de) (German).

### Flagship project in the *Länder*

In support of gender-sensitive education in schools, North Rhine-Westphalia has issued an **educational guide** that clarifies the legal foundations regarding gender-sensitive education in the state: *Pädagogische Orientierung für eine geschlechtersensible Bildung an Schulen in Nordrhein-Westfalen*<sup>36</sup> [Educational Guidance for Gender-Sensitive Teaching in Schools in North Rhine-Westphalia]. This publication helps schools design teaching and school life in a gender-sensitive way.

#### **b. address some or all the forms of gender-based violence against women and girls covered by the Istanbul Convention;**

The BMFTR has promoted measures in the field of higher education and research to overcome gender stereotypes and to raise awareness of gender-based violence and its prevention. The BMFTR has undertaken measures in order to contribute to raising awareness of gender-based violence at German universities. It has commissioned a study<sup>37</sup> “Expertise on sexualised and gender-based violence in academia with special consideration of diversity and intersectionality” based on selected results and further analyses of data from the EU-funded project UniSAFE.<sup>38</sup> The study focused in particular on intersectional aspects in order to draw a more detailed picture of the situation at universities and research organisations in Germany in order to provide a basis for practical approaches at universities, research organisations and in science policy. To this end, the study statistically analysed which types of violence occur in 46 German universities and research institutions and the impact of gender-based violence. It also analysed whether and how misconduct is reported. The study confirms that a broader understanding of violence can limit measures against sexual violence. Furthermore, it shows that a discussion based solely on the questions of legal violations and legal consequences presents a communication barrier about the considerable impact of gender-based forms of violence, which are not tangible in terms of labour, disciplinary or criminal law. The results were also presented at a round table discussion “Sexism in Science” in June 2024, to which 20 multipliers from research institutions, universities, counselling centres and interest groups were invited by the Ministry for knowledge transfer on gender-based violence.

The project “Digital Hate – Digital violence against female professors in contested fields of knowledge” is funded by the BMFTR (Duration: 2024–2027) and develops measures to combat digital violence against female professors. It investigates gender-specific digital violence against female professors in gender, migration and climate research and contributes to the further development of counter-strategies and support structures at colleges and universities. The target groups are: female professors in gender, migration and climate research, stakeholders at colleges and universities (e.g. university management, equal opportunities/women’s representatives), the wider academic and practical public. The funding volume amounts to around €500.000.

36 [https://www.schulentwicklung.nrw.de/q/upload/Gender/Padagogische\\_Orientierung\\_2022\\_web.pdf](https://www.schulentwicklung.nrw.de/q/upload/Gender/Padagogische_Orientierung_2022_web.pdf) (German).

37 Lipinsky, A. (2024): “Expertise on sexualised and gender-based violence in academia with special consideration of diversity and intersectionality” <https://doi.org/10.21241/ssoar.97554>.

38 “UniSAFE – ENDING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE” <https://unisafe-gbv.eu/>.

As one of the measures against the “leaky pipeline“ in science, the federal and state governments launched the “Programme for Women Professors” (PP) in 2008 and have since provided a total of €820 million, which have funded a total of 910 professorships. Within the programme gender equality structures at universities are strengthened. Some universities have implemented prevention and protection measures in their equality concepts, e.g. anonymous and confidential initial counselling for those affected by discrimination, gender-based violence or harassment and bullying; guidelines against gender discrimination and sexual harassment; action days, workshops and panel discussions to campaign against gender-based discrimination and violence.

Various *Länder* are implementing a wide range of measures to prevent gender-based violence against women and girls. In Hamburg, universities offer counselling centres, awareness-raising activities and binding anti-discrimination policies, in Rhineland-Palatine counselling centres and information services also exist at universities. Thuringia ensures that school textbooks are free from discrimination, while Rhineland-Palatinate supports prevention programmes in nurseries and schools along with interactive projects promoting sexual self-determination. North Rhine-Westphalia strengthens schools through specialist portals, guidance counsellors and training on topics such as female genital mutilation and human trafficking. In Saarland, professionals receive practical training to help them identify and prevent violence at an early stage. Overall, the focus lies on prevention, counselling and empowerment in order to create safe learning environments.

It is clear that preventing and tackling gender-based violence in education involves a combination of institutional safeguarding measures, targeted awareness-raising programmes and professional training, as well as low-threshold counselling services and empowerment initiatives.

For further details, see the responses to Question 10a.

**c. promote the inclusion of digital literacy and online safety in formal curricula as foreseen under GREVIO General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women;**

Several *Länder* are **promoting digital literacy and online safety in schools and higher education institutions in order to prevent gender-based violence in digital spaces.**

For this reason, digital skills and protection against digital violence have been embedded in education plans and accompanied by the provision of teaching materials (Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia, Berlin). **Training and seminars on topics such as digital safety, digital sexualised violence and cyber grooming** are offered in several *Länder* (Hesse, Schleswig-Holstein, North Rhine-Westphalia). In accordance with Section 15 of the Brandenburg Child and Youth Act, which ensures protection of children from harmful electronic media, youth welfare providers collaborate with police regulators and schools, supported by state-funded specialist units.

**d. ensure that teaching material used in school does not convey negative gender stereotypes of women and men of all ages;**

Even at primary school age, children associate many professions with a specific gender. The initiative Klischeefrei, funded by the BMBFSFJ, aims to break down gender stereotypes with its method set Klischeefrei durch die Grundschule (“Breaking Stereotypes in Primary Schools”). It presents methods for pedagogical work with children, guides for raising awareness and self-reflection among teachers, and for involving parents. The method set is supplemented with two reading books for beginners and advanced learners. The method folder and the individual methods are also available for download.<sup>39</sup>

For lower secondary school, the method set Klischeefrei macht Schule (“Breaking Stereotypes in Schools”) is offered, which includes 12 interactive teaching methods for students. It also offers two methods that can be used in parent-teacher work and for school-internal development processes for career and study choices free of gender stereotypes.

The initiative YouCodeGirls, also funded by the BMBFSFJ, offers a manual for primary school teachers.<sup>40</sup> A manual for secondary school teachers is currently being developed. The manuals are designed to introduce girls to programming activities in a playful way. Initially, the focus was on a learning platform for girls to inspire them to pursue programming. Since 2024, the BMBFSFJ has been funding YouCodeGirls learning modules with gender-equitable didactics and career-oriented content, a YouCodeGirls blog for career-oriented exchange, and a career check. The Federal Ministry for Digital Transformation and Government Modernisation (BMDS) is supporting the further development of the online portal.

A number of *Länder* are also taking action to ensure that teaching materials used in schools and universities do not convey harmful gender stereotypes and that they actively counter discrimination. This includes the **promotion of gender-sensitive language, awareness-raising and training for teaching staff, as well as the integration of diversity into teaching content** (e.g. Hamburg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Schleswig-Holstein).

In addition, **prevention and safeguarding concepts aimed at tackling violence – particularly sexualised violence – are being embedded in both schools and early childhood settings and are supported through counselling services and information campaigns** (e.g. Schleswig-Holstein, Baden-Württemberg). Universities also offer complementary services such as counselling, awareness programmes and low-threshold support for those affected, promote gender-sensitive language and allow for identity changes within the university context. In some *Länder*, the approval of school textbooks is subject to criteria that exclude discriminatory content. In Berlin, teachers select teaching materials independently which must be age-appropriate, non-violent and free from gender stereotypes, with subject-specific committees deciding on their introduction (e.g. Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia). In Brandenburg, various guidance documents and action frameworks have been published. Overall, the goal is to create gender-sensitive, discrimination-free educational and protective spaces through a broad range of measures.

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<sup>39</sup> [https://www.klischee-frei.de/de/klischeefrei\\_92804.php](https://www.klischee-frei.de/de/klischeefrei_92804.php).

<sup>40</sup> <https://youcodegirls.de/portal/> (German).

**e. offer tailored interventions aimed at preventing gender-based violence and empowering all girls, including those at risk of intersectional discrimination.**

Various *Länder* and universities offer targeted measures to prevent gender-based violence and empower girls. These include **self-assertion courses, workshops, safeguarding concepts in schools and awareness-raising programmes for teachers and students**. These are complemented by prevention campaigns, specialised career guidance programmes, training in child protection and initiatives against sexism and discrimination – all of which aim to strengthen and protect girls and groups at risk of discrimination.

For further information, see also the responses to Questions 9 and 10 a, b and d.

## Article 15: Training of professionals

**11. Please complete tables I and II included in the Appendix in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the professional groups that receive initial and in-service training on the different forms of violence against women and domestic violence. Please specify the frequency and scope of the training and whether it is compulsory.**

For detailed information see Table I and Table II in Appendix 1.

The project Schutz und Hilfe bei häuslicher Gewalt – ein interdisziplinärer Online-Kurs (“Protection and Help in Cases of Domestic Violence – An Interdisciplinary Online Course”) was a joint initiative funded by BMBFSFJ under the Federal Innovation Programme from 1 May 2019, to 30 April 2022. Project activities included the development of an interdisciplinary e-learning curriculum aimed at the (further) training of professionals who encounter the issue of domestic violence in their daily work.

Since June 2022, when the federal funding ended, the *Länder* have taken on the responsibility of financing the course jointly, ensuring its continued availability to professionals free of charge.<sup>41</sup>

Section 2.2 of the Violence against Women Monitor compiled by the NRM provides an overview of the training and further education courses.<sup>42</sup>

The BMBFSFJ supports the networking centres Frauenhauskoordinierung e.V. and the Bundesverband der Frauenberatungsstellen und Frauennotrufe (federal association of women’s counselling centres and women’s hotlines) as well as their projects. Numerous further education and training courses are initiated, particularly as part of the projects on digital violence or sexual harassment in the workplace.

<sup>41</sup> <https://haeuslichegewalt.elearning-gewaltschutz.de/> (German).

<sup>42</sup> [https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere\\_Publikationen/Monitor\\_Gewalt\\_gegen\\_Frauen.pdf](https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere_Publikationen/Monitor_Gewalt_gegen_Frauen.pdf), p. 145 f. (German); Summary: [https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere\\_Publikationen/Summary\\_Monitoring\\_Report\\_Violence\\_Against\\_Women.pdf](https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere_Publikationen/Summary_Monitoring_Report_Violence_Against_Women.pdf) (p. 15).

The UBSKM digital training course ‘What’s wrong with Jaron?’<sup>43</sup> is aimed at teachers and other school employees. This interactive training course is free and easily accessible in order to train as many professionals working in schools as possible about sexual violence against children and young people. The goal is to enable professionals to respond to children and young people disclosing the experience of sexual violence. So far 6 % of German teachers have participated in at least part of the training course.

Judges are subject to a general training obligation in accordance with the law on public service. As a result of their judicial independence, judges decide individually on the specific way in which they comply with these requirements, such as through a specialist reading, or participation in face-to-face or online events. Their employer ordinarily cannot order a judge to take part in a particular training course. By contrast, public prosecutors are required to follow to instructions. Training courses are primarily the responsibility of the *Länder*.

The training of all soldiers in the German military (Bundeswehr) includes content on dealing with sexuality, protection against (sexual) harassment, protection against discrimination based on sexual identity and the legal framework for protection against violence as a preventive measure to prevent violent and sexual crimes. In addition, there are specific awareness-raising measures and targeted training for military personnel in peace missions available on the topics of sexual exploitation and abuse as well as sexual harassment. Training measures are also available for specialists in the Bundeswehr’s social services to improve the counselling and support provided to soldiers and their families who have become victims of domestic violence or victims of psychological or physical violence in their professional or private environment.

The individual *Länder* have differing requirements on the type and scope of training, but as a rule, prosecutors can also choose events from a set programme. The *Länder* have developed a wide range of training programmes.

The German Judicial Academy, a cross-regional educational facility funded jointly by the federal government and the *Länder*, offers regular training courses, such as those listed in Table II.

Several *Länder* offer training and continuing professional development for different occupational groups on how to deal with gender-based violence, based on the IC. Most training programmes are not mandatory, and participation is normally subject to a general training requirement or recommended as optional. Attendance is rarely recorded in a systematic way.

### **Police:**

In Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Thuringia, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Bavaria, Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Baden-Württemberg, topics such as domestic and sexualised violence, victim protection and intercultural communication are firmly embedded in police training and continuing education. In Hesse, the topics of domestic violence, sexual violence, victim protection and intercultural competence are also content in various police trainings. There is a separate training for victim protection officers and victim protection coordinators. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania also uses realistic role-plays and involves civil society actors.

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43 <https://www.was-ist-los-mit-jaron.de/> (German).

**Justice:**

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Thuringia offer targeted training for judges and public prosecutors.

**Education:**

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Thuringia, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bremen, Bavaria, Hamburg and Berlin offer regular training for teachers and educational staff on violence prevention, sexualised violence and cyberbullying. Teacher training programmes include relevant curricula, for example in North Rhine-Westphalia and Berlin.

**Healthcare and social services:**

Lower Saxony, Thuringia, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate and Berlin offer specialist training on topics such as violence during pregnancy, female genital mutilation and culturally sensitive care. In Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the nationwide online course *Schutz und Hilfe bei häuslicher Gewalt* is widely used, focusing on protection and help in the event of domestic violence. The online course is jointly funded by the 16 *Länder* and is accessible to all interested parties.

**Social work and facilities:**

Hamburg provides voluntary awareness-raising programmes and in Saxony-Anhalt training through state-funded projects is presented by the *Landeskoordinierungsstelle zivilgesellschaftlicher Akteurinnen und Akteure zur Umsetzung der Istanbul-Konvention (LIKO – State Coordination Office for Civil Society Actors on the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention)* in a compilation. In addition, legal requirements apply to qualifications in child protection.

**Interdisciplinary and digital training:**

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt use digital formats such as the national online course and interdisciplinary conferences. Saxony and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania promote state-wide networks and cooperation between police, the judiciary and social professionals.

### Flagship projects in the *Länder*

**Rhineland-Palatinate:** State project on FGM/C including training for professionals in asylum accommodation.

**North Rhine-Westphalia:** Training oversight and monitoring in counselling centres and women's shelters. Minimum training hours for professionals: >75 % target achievement.

**Berlin:** Coordination of training activities began centrally in 2024 through BIG e.V.

**Baden-Württemberg:** Mandatory content on victim protection and witness psychology is included for early-career professionals in the judiciary.

**Brandenburg:** A professional and structured initial response is ensured, combined with high standards in the course of the filing of criminal charges are guaranteed. No adjustments were required in connection with the conduct of investigations. The possibilities for audio-visual questioning were expanded.<sup>44</sup>

## 12. Please specify if the expertise of women's rights organisations or specialist support services is integrated in the design and/or implementation of the training.

During the project *Schutz und Hilfe bei häuslicher Gewalt – ein interdisziplinärer Online-Kurs* ("Protection and Help in Cases of Domestic Violence – An Interdisciplinary Online Course") (see Question 11), a project advisory board was established including women's rights organisations (*Frauenhauskoordination e.V.*, *bff*, *ZIF*, *DaMigra*, and *Weibernetz*). The advisory board contributed to the design and content of the course.

The expertise regarding women's rights organisations or specialised support services is incorporated into the Federal Police's (BPol) central and internal training programs, those related to police victim protection.

Across the *Länder*, **expertise on women's rights organisations and specialised support services is being systematically integrated into the training and continuing education of police, judiciary and other professional groups.** In some *Länder*, specialist organisations are not only consulted but are actively involved in designing and delivering training programmes (Hamburg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia and Bremen). Hesse and Saxony mainly report project-based or one-off collaborations, in which expertise is used particularly in training on victim protection and police violence prevention. Other *Länder* integrate the topic of domestic violence more broadly into police training and continuing education with external experts (Bavaria, Brandenburg) and into legal training programmes (Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate). Berlin and Baden-Württemberg focus on work with perpetrators and specialist training programmes, also in close cooperation with expert agencies.

For detailed information from the *Länder*, see Appendix 2.

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44 [https://www.bmj.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Gesetzgebung/RefE/RefE\\_StrafStatG.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=2](https://www.bmj.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Gesetzgebung/RefE/RefE_StrafStatG.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2) (German).

## Article 16: Preventive intervention and treatment programmes

### 13. Please provide information on measures taken to increase the number of available preventive intervention and treatment programmes for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence both for voluntary and mandatory attendance.

The federal government attaches great importance to the prevention of violence and training programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence and has given high priority to prevention and work with perpetrators in the federal government's Protection against Violence Strategy based on the Istanbul Convention. The coalition agreement states: "We are taking further protective measures for affected women: We are strengthening prevention, awareness training and perpetrator work [...]"<sup>45</sup> According to the Violence Support Services Act (GewHG), which came into force in 2025, the *Länder* are to take measures to prevent violence against women, including measures aimed at people who perpetrate violence.

Responsibility for the prevention of violence against women and for programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence lies with the *Länder* and local authorities. In principle, the federal government should not support individual perpetrator work centres due to its limited funding competence. Measures such as the funding of the "Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Täterarbeit Häusliche Gewalt e.V." (see answer to 14a.) seek to support the strengthening and professionalisation of perpetrator work in Germany, which will increase the number of available preventive programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence.

The *Länder* adopt different priorities in their work with perpetrators and domestic violence prevention. For example, Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, Schleswig-Holstein, Bavaria, Lower Saxony, Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt support **state-wide perpetrator programmes with a focus on social-therapeutic group work, forensic outpatient services and offence-oriented treatment within the prison system.** Rhineland-Palatinate runs a network of nine perpetrator intervention centres under the programme *Contra Häusliche Gewalt!* serving mainly self-referrals and court-mandated participants. North Rhine-Westphalia follows a state-wide approach with at least one funded counselling centre per regional court district, supported by state-level coordination offices. Bremen is expanding perpetrator programmes through the training of anti-violence coaches and by funding mandatory court-imposed measures. Saarland supports the perpetrator programmes *Neue Wege* (focused on sexualised violence) and *Perspektive* (focused on domestic violence), integrates perpetrator work into the prison and probation systems and cooperates closely with civil society actors. Baden-Württemberg is currently evaluating its perpetrator programmes and developing a quality assurance framework, led by a consortium of nine organisations. Brandenburg has been expanding its counselling provision since 2020 through the state-supported violence protection centre *Gewaltpräventionszentrum BB*, which is supplemented by police directives requiring participation in violence prevention counselling.

<sup>45</sup> Coalition Agreement between CDU, CSU und SPD: "Verantwortung für Deutschland" for the 21th Legislative Term, page 103, line 3272-3273, [https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/1063922/2c20ad4d0d961734db48abec10914e45/kw19\\_koalitionsvertrag.pdf](https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/1063922/2c20ad4d0d961734db48abec10914e45/kw19_koalitionsvertrag.pdf) (German).

The programmes include group and individual sessions, both mandatory and voluntary participation, social-therapeutic and offence-oriented interventions and comprehensive support before, during and after imprisonment. The diversity of approaches reflects regional needs, legal frameworks and the aim of achieving the most effective possible violence prevention.

#### **14. Please provide information on measures taken to:**

Across Germany, a variety of measures are in place to support and assist victims of domestic violence and to work with perpetrators. In Baden-Württemberg, follow-up counselling is provided by the police, who inform victims of their rights and refer them to support services. North Rhine-Westphalia funds perpetrator programmes that focus on prevention and behavioural change, involving close cooperation between authorities and support services. Hamburg has enshrined perpetrator-related police work in law through an amendment. Saxony runs state-wide campaigns, training and standards for working with perpetrators of violence, in close cooperation with victim support services. Overall, these measures aim to protect victims and prevent violence through targeted interventions and coordination between actors.

##### **a. increase the number of men and boys attending perpetrator programmes for domestic and sexual violence;**

In recent years the importance of offender work has increased, partly due to the Act to Strengthen Perpetrator Responsibility (Gesetz zur Stärkung der Täterverantwortung – TätVerstG).<sup>46</sup> The Act contains regulations to improve and expand the options for assigning perpetrators to qualified perpetrator programmes via instructions from the public prosecutor's office or court as part of preliminary or criminal proceedings.

In cases of domestic violence, the police can refer perpetrators to perpetrator work facilities. The local and public prosecutor's offices and criminal courts can issue instructions on participation in the perpetrator programme. Moreover, the federal government examines the possibility to create a uniform federal legal basis in the Act on Protection Against Violence (GewSchG) for the court-imposed use of electronic ankle bracelets based on the so-called Spanish model and for mandatory anti-violence training for perpetrators.

The BMBFSFJ supports perpetrator work by funding the Federal Association for Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Täterarbeit Häusliche Gewalt e.V., BAG TäHG). The BAG TäHG is a pro-feminist, inter-institutional, intercultural umbrella organisation for domestic violence perpetrator work facilities in Germany. One of the aims of the federal funding is to achieve a professionalisation of the representation of perpetrator work at federal level and thus indirectly an improvement in perpetrator work nationwide.

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<sup>46</sup> [https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger\\_BGBl&start=//\\*\\*%5b@attr\\_id=%27bgbl112s2298.pdf%27%5d#/switch/tocPane?\\_ts=1751276771673](https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&start=//**%5b@attr_id=%27bgbl112s2298.pdf%27%5d#/switch/tocPane?_ts=1751276771673) (German).

To increase participation by men and boys in perpetrator programmes related to domestic and sexualised violence, various *Länder* are focusing on **stronger networking, improved public outreach and proactive engagement**. In Saarland, information about perpetrator programmes is shared during police investigations and materials are handed out to potential perpetrators. Thuringia supports the project ORANGE at several locations and uses proactive approaches, including passing on data to counselling centres and involving youth welfare offices and courts to ensure low-threshold access. Schleswig-Holstein is expanding its specialist services and cooperating with networks and public campaigns to increase reach. Hesse has been supporting perpetrator work for many years and also funds services for female perpetrators. Berlin is implementing the pilot project Beratungszentrum zum Schutz vor Gewalt, a counselling centre on the prevention of violence which is widely promoted and follows recognised standards to ensure the safety of those affected. In Brandenburg there are close co-operations with the regionally established Violence Prevention Unit working with perpetrators. The services are publicised as part of the police's task management and as part of the police's public relations work. The increasing public relations and local networking work of the Violence Prevention Unit is taking effect.

**b. ensure that the perpetrator programmes apply standards of best practice;**

The BAG TàHG has developed the standard “**Working with perpetrators in cases of domestic violence**”.<sup>47</sup> To this end, many years of practical experience and scientific findings were collated. The standard was agreed with representatives of the women's support system and academics. The key points are specifications for the content and duration of social training programmes and the qualifications of staff. Among other things, the standard focuses on the protection of those affected by violence and co-operation with other organisations and institutions in alliances. The standard serves as an authoritative basis for work with perpetrators of domestic violence for all members of the BAG.

Measures to ensure that perpetrator programmes meet best-practice standards include the use of **qualified staff, regular training, standardised procedures and continuous evaluation**.

In the prison system, quality assurance is ensured through the employment of qualified professionals such as psychologists and social workers who use established, nationally recognised programmes. In addition, regular training, supervision and exchange between institutions is carried out to maintain high standards.

In Bavaria, annual conferences are organised for the heads of social therapy facilities, and external expert organisations are involved in treatment measures. Lower Saxony has introduced a tiered model that assesses the effectiveness of interventions using objective criteria and ensures quality through evaluations. Schleswig-Holstein has defined service provision standards under the state's Resocialisation Act which are implemented across the state. Thuringia is currently revising its funding guidelines to clarify the professional requirements for staff and ensure they are qualified. Bremen has also implemented the standard of the BAG for the perpetrator programmes funded by the state.

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<sup>47</sup> <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/95364/b8e655a98504ca7aa3e3cc4e1b7e16c0/standards-taeterarbeit-haeusliche-gewalt-data.pdf> (German).

**c. ensure the safety of victims and co-operation with specialist support services for victims;**

The standard of the BAG TäHG is mandatory for all members of the BAG (see above 14 b). It states:

*“In terms of victim protection, close co-operation with the regional women’s support centres and the development of joint procedures against domestic violence are necessary and should be promoted. [...] The perpetrator support centre endeavours to reach co-operation agreements with the responsible local women’s support centre, in which a procedure for the referral of women is defined. These co-operation agreements should clarify: (1) whether and how information can be exchanged between the perpetrator programme and the women’s support centre in individual cases, and (2) whether and under what conditions joint discussions should be held with the perpetrator and victim to clarify safety-related issues. “*

Several *Länder* are pursuing **comprehensive strategies for victim protection and perpetrator work, which are closely coordinated with each other** (Lower Saxony, Bavaria, Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony-Anhalt, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Berlin). In the prison system, the safety of victims is a central focus: in Bavaria, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and other regions, attempts by perpetrators to contact their victims from prison are consistently monitored and prevented. Restrictions on contact are also imposed during temporary release or on release from prison in order to avoid unwanted encounters. In addition, clear regulations exist for the protection of victims’ personal data.

Alongside the physical separation of perpetrators and victims, the *Länder* promote **victim-offender mediation and perpetrator counselling as key instruments for protecting victims**. In Bavaria, for instance, victims who seek redress can turn to recognised mediation centres. In Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Schleswig-Holstein, perpetrator counselling is systematically integrated into support networks that work closely with victim counselling services. Police measures such as involving suspects in support programmes complement prevention efforts and help reduce the risk of reoffending.

Another priority is the **close cooperation and networking between various actors, including the judiciary, police, social services, youth welfare offices and specialised support organisations**. In Bremen, Hesse, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony and Rhineland-Palatinate, for example, professionals take part in inter-agency high-risk and case conferences to strengthen protection in cases of domestic and other forms of violence. In Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the coordination of measures within probation supervision takes place in close cooperation with community-based offender support services and specialised providers.

**d. ensure that the outcomes of the programmes are monitored and evaluated.**

Funded by the BMBFSFJ, the BAG TäHG is currently developing a programme for continuous data collection and evaluation in perpetrator work in order to gain in-depth knowledge about work with people who use violence in Germany. In the first phase of the project, a programme for recording case data was developed. This enables members and the BAG TäHG to collect and analyse data on a continuous and differentiated basis. The data can be used to make statements about socio-demographic data, characteristics, developments,

differences and continuities in offender work and its target group and to adapt counselling services. In addition, such data can provide information on dynamics and developments in the area of domestic violence.

Many *Länder* ensure that **perpetrator treatment programmes are based on scientific standards and that they are standardised, monitored and subject to evaluation** (Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Thuringia, Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony-Anhalt, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Hesse). Under its State Prison Act, Rhineland-Palatinate is required to submit regular reports to the state parliament and assesses the success of its measures. Thuringia provides financial support for perpetrator programmes and monitors the use of funds and achievement of objectives annually using detailed reports and performance indicators, while Schleswig-Holstein uses annual reports, systematic documentation, risk assessments (ODARA) and internal evaluations. Saxony-Anhalt requires annual reporting from the funded counselling centre ProMann. In Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the programmes are monitored under the general supervisory framework for the prison system. Hesse has had a uniform system for statistical monitoring of perpetrator work since 2015 and has commissioned several evaluations from the Criminological Research Institute. Lower Saxony currently supports 11 perpetrator intervention programmes and is developing guidelines for perpetrator intervention.

## Article 18: General obligations

### 15. Please provide information on any multi-agency co-operation mechanisms, structures or measures in place designed to protect and support victims of any of the forms of gender-based violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention (e.g., interdisciplinary working groups, case-management systems, cross-sectoral protocols/ guidelines...). Please describe:

Throughout Germany, there are many interdisciplinary and cross-level collaborations that take place in various formats and in different constellations. For information on co-operation and networking see Section II. C. “Integration of the work of NGOs and other civil society actors“ in the “First State Report Germany“ (p. 5 et seq.). The measures described in the “First State Report Germany“ have been continued or further developed to encompass any of the forms of gender-based violence covered by the IC.

The federal coordinating body in accordance with the IC facilitates multi-agency co-operation mechanisms as one of its core objectives. It contributes to and supports co-operation on the federal, *Länder* and local level and encourages the inclusion of diverse, cross-level, and interdisciplinary perspectives.

The federal government, the *Länder* and the municipalities implement a wide range of cross-agency cooperation mechanisms at their own discretion. In every federal state, there are **round tables, working groups, networks or other forums at various levels where professionals from public and non-governmental sectors come together and engage in regular dialogue**. Some *Länder* have established **interministerial formats for implementing the IC** (Hesse, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia, Saarland, Saxony, Berlin and Lower Saxony). In addition, specialist dialogues, conferences and events are held to promote interdisciplinary and cross-level cooperation. In several *Länder*, **guidelines, quality standards and similar**

**frameworks** have been developed for different areas of protection against violence (Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland, Bremen).

**In some Länder, high-risk case conferences are held on a case-by-case basis** (e.g. Lower Saxony, Bremen, Bavaria, Hesse, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Rhineland-Palatinate). Schleswig-Holstein also conducts structural case conferences which do not focus on individual cases and has developed a guideline within the framework of interdisciplinary professional exchange on high-risk management.

In Bremen, Bremerhaven and Saxony, special service regulations were introduced in 2022 to ensure that high-risk cases of domestic violence are identified and dealt with systematically. These regulations provide for a structured risk management approach that ensures early protective measures and close cooperation between the police and other relevant agencies. A multi-stage model guarantees a binding and transparent process aimed at preventing further acts of violence.

Many Länder have **victim protection officers and designated coordinators or contact persons trained in dealing with domestic violence**, often based at police departments or public prosecutors' offices (Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Berlin, Bremen, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein).

In Schleswig-Holstein, several authorities cooperate under the "Kiel Security Scheme for Sex Offenders", which aims to reduce the risk of reoffending by improving information gathering and optimising joint measures.

In Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the "MV Emergency Plan" defines state-wide standards for handling emergencies through binding action guidelines and coordinated measures involving key actors, particularly schools, the police and youth welfare services.

#### Flagship project in the Länder

In Hesse there are various inter-agency cooperation mechanisms in place to protect victims of gender-based violence, including working meetings and a structured risk assessment process within the case management system using forms such as an "Assessment aid for relationship violence". Specialised units for risk and threat management are involved in these processes. Police prevention and investigation activities are coordinated across the state and supplemented through interdisciplinary exchange with other authorities and civil society actors.

**a. the state agencies involved in their functioning (law-enforcement agencies, judiciary, public prosecutor, local authorities, healthcare services, social services, educational institutions etc.);**

At the federal level, coordinating divisions or units are designated as Focal Points in all ministries in order to ensure an exchange of information under the coordination of the coordinating body in accordance with the IC in the BMBFSFJ.

The National Council against child sexual abuse (Nationaler Rat gegen sexuellen Gewalt an Kindern und Jugendlichen) was founded in Germany in 2019 by UBSKM and the BMBFSFJ. Through the “Joint Agreement” of June 2021, the members of the National Council developed goals and concrete implementation steps. They identified key challenges that would result in lasting improvements with respect to the fight against sexual violence against children and young people. The central goal of the National Council is to significantly reduce the number of cases through improvements in prevention, intervention and support, as well as conduct research into sexual violence against children and young people.

The initiative “School against Sexual Violence” is a joint measure by UBSKM and the education ministries of the *Länder*. The portal of the initiative provides schools with information and assistance in developing safeguarding policies for the protection against sexual violence. *Länder*-specific programmes and regulations are also explained on this website.<sup>48</sup>

The various networks at federal, state, municipal and local level involve the police, judiciary, public prosecutors, ministries, gender equality officers, health and social services, social security agencies, youth welfare offices and other municipal authorities (including public health departments, weapons authorities, school authorities and immigration offices), educational institutions (such as schools and universities) and accommodation facilities offering protection. Cooperation also takes place with victim support officers, state-run counselling centres, court assistance and psychosocial support services during legal proceedings. The coordinating bodies at state level and the federal coordinating body in accordance with the IC endorse these structures.

The support system is designed to ensure comprehensive support for those affected, which means many government bodies are involved. Regional differences exist, however, and finding the right point of contact can be challenging.

#### **Flagship project in the *Länder***

In Bavaria, a first point of contact has been set up for victims of abuse and sexual violence. It receives the concerns of those affected, assesses their needs and refers them to the appropriate point within the assistance system, whether governmental or non-governmental.

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48 <https://www.schule-gegen-sexuelle-gewalt.de/start> (German).

**b. whether they involve specialist support services provided by civil society organisations, especially women’s rights organisations;**

Specialised support services run by civil society organisations – in particular women’s shelters, women’s counselling centres, perpetrator programmes and child protection services – form an integral part of these co-operation structures. Networking formats such as round tables and working groups generally include the expertise of civil society organisations, particularly women’s rights organisations, which are actively involved as members.

**Flagship projects in the *Länder***

In Hesse, **police authorities work closely with victim support organisations** such as WEISSER RING e.V. and participate in joint training sessions and prevention events.

In order to facilitate cooperation between the education sector and civil society, **civic organisations in Saxony can submit proposals for violence prevention activities via an online portal and implement them in schools**, with financial support available for these initiatives.

**c. how they adopt a gender-sensitive approach to violence against women, including the prioritisation of the safety of women and girl victims, their empowerment and a victim-centred approach;**

In accordance with the IC, the presented co-operation mechanisms attribute due importance to a gender-based approach when combatting and preventing violence against women. Especially the involvement of civil society and women’s rights organisations ensure the implementation of a gender-sensitive approach in all areas of the women’s support system.

The aim of these cooperation mechanisms – based on a victim-centred and gender-sensitive approach – is to ensure the protection of those affected, to continue developing the structures and measures, to hold perpetrators accountable, to raise mutual awareness, and to improve and coordinate cooperation. The LAPs and the federal government’s Protection against Violence Strategy based on the Istanbul Convention are both aligned with this approach, which informs how the respective measures are implemented.

**d. the financial and human resources dedicated to their implementation;**

It is generally not possible to quantify the network and cooperation structures in terms of financial and human resources, as most of the measures are implemented within a broader context and cannot be assessed as individual measures, particularly within government bodies.

In 2022, the total cost of the support system – including women’s shelters and specialised counselling centres – amounted to €270.5 million, also including cooperation mechanisms.<sup>49</sup> One example is the funding provided in Schleswig-Holstein for the cooperation and intervention network (€150,000 per regional office for the period 2022–2025), which is primarily responsible for ensuring interdisciplinary collaboration.

The state of North Rhine-Westphalia provides dedicated funding for cooperation structures aimed at combating violence against women, with 40 local cooperation partnerships funded in both 2023 (€500,000 in total) and 2024 (€750,000 in total). In Bremen, a full-time position for network coordination and risk management receives annual funding of €75,000. In Bavaria, the first point of contact for victims of abuse and sexual violence is funded with around €500,000 per year and staffed by nine employees.

**e. any available information on the evaluation of their outcome or impact.**

Systematic evaluations of cooperation mechanisms have not yet been carried out or results are still pending. Efforts are being made to build a reliable data infrastructure to support inter-agency and interdisciplinary cooperation.

In Schleswig-Holstein, for example, an evaluation of the high-risk management system is planned for the end of 2025. Initial data and reports (e.g. on perpetrator programmes) are available but do not yet provide a full impact assessment as defined by the IC. In Saxony the framework concept for managing high-risk cases of domestic violence and stalking was developed in 2020 under the leadership of the State Criminal Police Office and with the participation of police stations and the relevant departments. An initial evaluation was carried out in 2023, on the basis of which the concept was revised. Regular evaluations are foreseen.

State and non-governmental actors within the support system are demonstrating a growing commitment to coordinated, sustainable and victim-centred strategies to tackle gender-based violence against women.

**16. Please detail whether any such co-operation mechanisms or structures set up for the delivery of support services for a specific form of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention is based on a legal or policy document advocating for or requiring such approaches.**

The Violence Support Services Act (GewHG) obliges the *Länder* to take measures in order to support co-operation and networking: 1) between the support services according to the Violence Support Services Act and 2) between the violence support services and other assistance services as well as authorities, health care institutions, child and youth welfare providers, police and regulatory authorities, the judiciary as well as with educational institutions, civil society structures and other relevant institutions or professions.

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/240216/969bd2f27283109c202a07928c0aa480/kostenstudie-zum-hilfesystem-fuer-betroffene-von-haeuslicher-und-geschlechtsspezifischer-gewalt-data.pdf>, p. 10 (German).

The federal government's Protection against Violence Strategy based on the Istanbul Convention has recognised the need for co-operation mechanisms or structures and addresses this issue. However, responsibility for providing protection and support measures lies with the *Länder* and local authorities.

The LAPs place a strong emphasis on various forms of cooperation (Hesse, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate, Bremen, Berlin, Brandenburg). In addition, Hamburg's protection against violence strategy and the specific strategy for identifying vulnerable individuals at initial reception centres provide for cooperation mechanisms. Legal regulations at state level are to be found in laws on the resocialisation of offenders (Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein) and in police legislation (Bremen).

**17. Please explain whether all or some of the services of protection and support offered for victims of the different forms of violence against women are provided on the basis of a one-stop-shop approach.**

The services of protection and support offered for victims of violence against women are generally not provided on the basis of a one-stop-shop approach due to the legal framework and structural reasons in Germany.

BMVg has a contact point for "Discrimination and Violence in the Bundeswehr," which is available to all active and former civilian and military personnel who feel affected by bullying, discrimination, or physical or psychological violence. The contact point follows information from those affected, including on sexual discrimination and violence, provides advice and can initiate an individual case review (professional and administrative supervision) so that the necessary investigation, prosecution, protection or assistance measures can be recorded and followed up.

Some *Länder* have established support services based on a one-stop-shop model for minors affected by violence and neglect, known as the "Childhood House" (Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Schleswig-Holstein, Bavaria, Lower Saxony, Berlin and Hesse). At these interdisciplinary centres, medical and forensic examinations, interviews necessary for investigations and psychological or social support are provided in child-friendly environments.

Other *Länder* support networking and coordination between the relevant support structures. The goal is for all services within the support system – both specialised and general – to work together and coordinate across regions with police and the justice system. This is achieved in part through umbrella organisations, such as the Saxony-wide working group Gewaltfreies Zuhause e.V and Sexualisierte Gewalt – Prävention, Intervention.

## Article 20: General support services

### **18. Please provide information on programmes and measures aimed at ensuring, through general services, the recovery of victims of violence, including in the health and social areas, financial assistance, education, training and assistance in finding employment and affordable and permanent housing.**

Across Germany, there are numerous programmes and measures provided by general support services that assist victims of violence. These are designed to ensure access to healthcare, psychosocial support, financial security, education, employment and safe housing.

In Germany, a socio-cultural minimum existence level is guaranteed by the allowance of a means-tested Basic Needs Assistance. This covers costs for food, clothing, social inclusion and electricity, for example. The amount depends on the age and household of the beneficiary. In addition, costs for accommodation and heating are allowed directly if reasonable. All employable persons who are in receipt of basic minimum income are supported and activated with counselling placement and support services according to their individual needs. Moreover, recipients who face particular difficulties in integrating into the labour market, for example due to individual or social problems, can receive holistic support through coaching. Coaching takes the individual's overall circumstances into account, including family circumstances, and fundamentally develops and stabilizes their employability. Counsellors and coaches can also refer beneficiaries to locally provided services such as childcare support and psycho-social counselling.

Additional needs allowances for extra expenses not covered by the basic allowance are allowed in cases such as pregnancy, disability and expensive nutrition if demonstrably required for medical reasons.

Supported by the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the ESF Plus federal programme MY TURN (2022–2028) assists women with migration experience and low formal qualifications who face additional support needs. The programme aims to promote their access to training, education and regular employment (subject to social security contributions), thereby reducing dependency on welfare. In the current funding phase, the target group includes EU citizens, third-country nationals and women recognised as refugees.

MY TURN ensures a gender-based and needs-based approach, providing tailored information, referrals and long-term, individual support. The programme modules include access to mainstream support services, empowerment activities, advice on balancing family and work, networking with employers and personalised mentoring. Ideally, any necessary training measures are approved by job centres or employment agencies. An additional module – the Lotsenstelle Kinderbetreuung (“Childcare Navigator”) – supports mothers with a migration background in accessing childcare services. The continuous and comparatively long-term nature of support increases the likelihood of successful participation and sustainable integration into employment.

BMWSB published its “Guidelines for Gender-Sensitive Urban Development” in March 2025. The guideline explicitly includes the action area “Ensuring high-quality housing and safety in the home environment”, which addresses the need for protection and counselling facilities for women affected by and/or threatened by domestic violence. In this way, the

BMWSB addresses the issue of domestic violence in the context of urban development and presents approaches for dealing with it. In order to identify and reduce domestic violence, better framework conditions for community-oriented housing and neighbourhoods are needed that enable social encounters (to combat loneliness), shared care and support, and social control.<sup>50</sup>

Several *Länder* also offer supplementary financial assistance beyond statutory entitlements. Special state funds provide individual emergency support for victims of violence (e.g. the Niedersachsen Victim Support Foundation). National support mechanisms are also referenced frequently, such as the Fund for Victims of Sexual Abuse.

In a number of *Länder* there are **specialised programmes for the professional reintegration of victims of violence** (Hamburg, Saarland, Baden-Württemberg). These include individual guidance, vocational orientation and skills development to help victims return to an independent and economically stable life. Many programmes apply an intersectional approach, offering tailored support to women with a migration background and single mothers.

One key element of many support measures is the **provision of long-term, affordable housing** for women affected by violence and their children. Several *Länder* have launched **“second-stage” projects** that support women after their stay in a shelter as they transition into their own accommodation and receive further stabilising support (Bavaria, Saarland, Baden-Württemberg). Other *Länder* cooperate with housing associations to provide transitional or long-term housing (Hesse, Brandenburg, Hamburg), with a strong focus on long-term social integration. The focus here is often on long-term social integration.

In many *Länder*, **central contact points** (e.g. commissioners for victim’s interests) have been set up to advise victims of violence and help them access existing support structures. These institutions often also perform a guidance function, for example by arranging admission to women’s shelters, referrals to specialist counselling centres or support during legal proceedings. Such services exist in Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia and Thuringia. In addition to general counselling services, there are often targeted programmes for specific groups such as girls and young women, people with disabilities or LGBTIQ\* individuals.

Many measures aim to offer particular protection to vulnerable groups. These include homeless women, refugees, victims of human trafficking or people with insecure residence status.

Some *Länder* are also working to **structurally improve general support services**. These efforts include the development of recommendations and protection guidelines for hospitals (Saarland), internal guidance for public authorities (Berlin) and state-wide prevention strategies that help identify violence at an early stage and ensure that appropriate support is made available quickly and in a coordinated way.

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50 [https://www.nationale-stadtentwicklungspolitik.de/NSPWeb/SharedDocs/Publikationen/DE/Publikationen/gendergerechte\\_stadtentwicklung\\_leitlinien.pdf;jsessionid=C4117C832D6DBD3A5C421D40A1ABC304.live21323?\\_blob=publication-File&v=3](https://www.nationale-stadtentwicklungspolitik.de/NSPWeb/SharedDocs/Publikationen/DE/Publikationen/gendergerechte_stadtentwicklung_leitlinien.pdf;jsessionid=C4117C832D6DBD3A5C421D40A1ABC304.live21323?_blob=publication-File&v=3) (German).

**Questions specific to the public health sector:**

19. Have specific measures been taken to ensure that public health services (hospitals, health centres, other) respond to the safety and medical needs of women and girls' victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention on the basis of national/regional standardised protocols?
20. Do such protocols detail the procedure to:
- a. identify victims through screening;
  - b. provide treatment for all the medical needs of victims in a supportive manner;
  - c. collect forensic evidence and documentation;
  - d. ensure that a clear message of support is conveyed to the victim;
  - e. refer to the appropriate specialist support services that form part of a multi-agency co-operation structure; and
  - f. identify children who may have been exposed to domestic violence or other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls and require further support.
21. Please provide information on the procedures in place for the documentation and collection by actors of the public health sector of forensic evidence in relation to victims of domestic violence, victims of sexual violence, including rape, and victims of female genital mutilation.

Questions 19-21 are answered jointly.

In public healthcare, the aim is to establish structured, professionally coordinated care models that provide early and needs-based support for victims of violence. Several *Länder* have introduced specific measures to ensure that public health institutions are able to respond to the medical and safety needs of women and girls affected by violence.

These measures include **standardised procedures for documentation and forensic evidence** collection in cases of domestic and sexual violence, as well as female genital mutilation. The aim is to ensure that evidence can be used in court while upholding the victims' autonomy and confidentiality. One key instrument in this context is **confidential forensic examination**, which is available nationwide in a court-admissible form and respects the rights of those affected. In some cases, forensic evidence is collected without a police report having been filed (e.g. Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia,

Baden-Württemberg or Lower Saxony). These services are based on **national medical guidelines**, such as the child protection guideline published by the AWMF (Association of the Scientific Medical Societies in Germany<sup>51</sup>) and the recommendations of the German Medical Association.<sup>52</sup>

They are delivered in cooperation with hospitals, counselling centres and youth welfare offices.

There are different regional protocols pertaining to the process of documenting and securing of evidence. The confidential trace evidence service generally covers the following:

- a. Collection of forensic evidence and documentation based on cohesive guidelines to ensure the forensic standards
- b. Treatment of all medical needs
- c. Ensuring that a clear message of support is conveyed to the victim and referral to support services upon consent
- d. Verbal referral to victim support organisations, contact mediation on request
- e. Any regular and mandatory examinations carried out by child and youth medical or dental services may reveal risks to a child's welfare. Furthermore, in some *Länder*, there are specialist services for suspected cases in place. Procedures for dealing with violence towards children are described in violence protection guidelines.

In numerous *Länder*, forensic evidence is collected by specially trained professionals in accordance with established standards (e. g. Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, Berlin, Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Württemberg, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, Thuringia, Brandenburg). These procedures generally include a structured medical history, written and photographic documentation of injuries, and the collection and secure storage of trace evidence (e. g. DNA, blood, hair, clothing). Several *Länder* have also developed **state-wide protocols or protection guidelines** (e. g. Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen, Lower Saxony).

In addition, **regular training sessions** are provided for healthcare personnel – for instance, Saarland offers a certificate course for doctors on conducting confidential forensic examinations.

Moreover, several *Länder* provide **digital support systems** to standardise documentation, enable secure transport of forensic samples, and offer legal guidance (e. g. North Rhine-Westphalia).

The Quality Management Guideline of the Joint Federal Committee on Health (Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss (G-BA)) already includes principally binding requirements for statutory health insurance medical care – contract doctors, medical care centres – and approved hospitals, generally uniform for all patients, for the 'prevention of and assistance in cases of abuse and violence' (Part A, Section 4(2)(6)) with the aim of preventing, recognising and adequately responding to abuse and violence, in particular with regard to vulnerable patient groups, and also of preventing abuse and violence within the facilities. Depending on the size of the facility, the range of services and the patient clientele, information materials,

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51 <https://www.awmf.org/leitlinien/detail/ll/027-069.html> (German).

52 [https://www.bundesaerztekammer.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/\\_old-files/downloads/pdf-Ordner/Empfehlungen/2016-04\\_Empfehlungen-zum-Umgang-mit-Patientinnen-nach-weiblicher-Genitalverstummelung.pdf](https://www.bundesaerztekammer.de/fileadmin/user_upload/_old-files/downloads/pdf-Ordner/Empfehlungen/2016-04_Empfehlungen-zum-Umgang-mit-Patientinnen-nach-weiblicher-Genitalverstummelung.pdf)

contact addresses, training/education, codes of conduct, recommendations for action or comprehensive protection concepts can be used. In addition, facilities that provide care for children and young people must specifically address the prevention of and intervention in cases of (sexual) violence and abuse (risk and hazard analysis) and develop protection concepts. Part B, Section 1(9) of the above-mentioned Guideline specifies requirements for hospitals regarding protection concepts against (sexual) violence against children and adolescents.

According to the above-mentioned requirements of the G-BA, the protection concepts against (sexual) violence against children and adolescents in hospitals should at least include prevention measures (including information and further training of employees, development of effective prevention measures, voluntary commitment and code of conduct, age-appropriate complaint options, being a trustworthy contact person, special requirements for staff selection), intervention (intervention plan, e.g. in suspected cases, cases that have occurred, misconduct by employees) and analysis (including developing recommendations for dealing with cases that have occurred).

#### Flagship project in the *Länder*

Since March 2025, confidential forensic examinations have been legally offered in clinics in North Rhine-Westphalia, and the successful pilot project YUNA53 for the prevention of female genital mutilation has been included in regular funding.

#### 22. Are all women victims of violence, irrespective of any of the grounds listed in Article 4 paragraph 3 of the Istanbul Convention, in particular asylum-seeking women, refugee women, migrant women, women from national or ethnic minorities, women with irregular residence status, women with disabilities and LGBTI women, able to benefit on an equal footing from existing healthcare services? Please describe any measure taken to reduce legal or practical barriers to their accessing regular healthcare services.

In principle, all women with health insurance have equal access to services covered by statutory health insurance or the respective private health insurance plan. This applies regardless of origin, nationality, degree of existing disability or sexual orientation. In cases of acute medical need – such as following sexual or domestic violence – access to medical care is legally guaranteed across Germany. Services such as confidential forensic examinations or emergency medical assistance are often free of charge and accessible regardless of origin, residence status or insurance entitlement. For asylum-seeking women, health treatment is regulated in Section 4 and Section 6 of the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz – AsylbLG). Practical barriers are addressed through targeted projects, advisory services and structural funding.

The multilingual portal “Migration and Health”<sup>54</sup> aims at improving the health literacy of the refugee and migrant population by providing target group-specific information on the healthcare system in Germany in general as well as various health related topics (i.e. preventive and long-term care, addiction, childrens’ and women’s health etc.). Aside from German, portal navigation is available in English, Russian, Turkish and Arabic, while the brochures and information material linked are available in over 40 languages. This offer is ongoing and constantly updated.

Several *Länder* have introduced specific measures to **integrate vulnerable groups** – including asylum-seeking women, migrant women, LGBTI persons or women with disabilities – in the regular healthcare system (e.g. Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein). In addition, **low-threshold, multilingual and culturally sensitive psychosocial support services** are available in some *Länder*, for instance via psychosocial centres in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. Accessibility and awareness of the needs of women with disabilities or LGBTI persons are structurally embedded in several *Länder* (e.g. Saxony, Lower Saxony, Bremen), and some provide specialised medical services for undocumented persons (e.g. Berlin, Bremen).

There are no formal legal barriers to LGBTI women accessing health services. However, according to the Saxony’s state study “Lebenslagen von lsbtqi\* Personen in Sachsen” (Living Conditions of LGBTIQ\* People in Saxony) (2022), there are informal practical barriers due to a lack of awareness and knowledge within the healthcare system about the needs and realities of LGBTI women. This is particularly true for gynecological care and care for trans, intersex, and non-binary women. Based on Saxony’s state action plan for the acceptance of diverse lifestyles, the Ministry of Health is in dialogue with queer self-advocacy associations and the Saxony State Medical Association to raise awareness among professionals in training and continuing education. In addition, the state government has funded awareness-raising and educational projects on the needs of tin persons in healthcare.

### **23. Please provide information on the measures in place to facilitate the identification and care of victims of violence against women in institutions for persons with disabilities and for the elderly as well as for those in closed reception facilities for asylum-seekers and to respond to their safety and protection needs.**

The protection, identification and support of individuals in institutional settings who are affected by violence and face multiple vulnerabilities are systematically addressed in order to ensure comprehensive care.

This includes specific measures in a number of *Länder* aimed at **identifying and supporting women affected by violence in facilities for people with disabilities, in care homes for the elderly and in closed reception centres for asylum seekers** (e.g. Lower Saxony, Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Berlin). Key priorities here include protection policies, staff awareness and the development of low-threshold, often culturally sensitive support services.

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54 <https://www.migration-gesundheit.bund.de/en/homepage>

In closed accommodation for refugees, medical and social services are available around the clock and tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups (e.g. Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt). These services identify signs of violence, provide initial assistance and, if needed, refer individuals to specialist support such as psychosocial centres. To address the specific needs of women refugees travelling alone and single parents, Berlin has established two dedicated refugee accommodations

Since 10 June 2021, Section 37a of Book IX of the German Social Code (SGB IX) has, for the first time, placed a **legal obligation on providers to take appropriate measures to protect people with disabilities** – and those at risk of disability – from violence, regardless of the form or location in which services are delivered. Suitable measures may in particular include the development and implementation of a violence prevention and protection policy tailored to the specific institution or service.

Section 37a of Book IX of the German Social Code (SGB IX) places special emphasis on such measures for women and children with disabilities and those at risk of disability.

In their respective laws governing residential, support, participation and care services, the *Länder* have established regulatory requirements for providers as well as the allocation of responsibilities and powers among supervisory authorities.

Since the introduction of Section 37a SGB IX, some *Länder* have fundamentally revised their existing regulations and issued more specific provisions on protection against violence – including minimum requirements for violence prevention concepts to be issued by the providers of services. Several state regulations also include obligations for supervisory authorities to provide counselling.

Originally introduced in 2017 as a mandatory measure in workshops for persons with disabilities, the role of women's officers is now being extended in some *Länder* (e.g. Bremen) to special residential settings.

The Federal Government Commissioner for Matters relating to Persons with Disabilities, together with the German Institute for Human Rights (DIMR), which serves as the national monitoring body for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), has issued recommendations for policy and practice on preventing and responding to violence in residential facilities.<sup>55</sup>

In the context of **institutional elderly care**, some *Länder* have included specific provisions in their residential care legislation to prevent and respond to violence. These may cover awareness-raising measures and protection concepts addressing physical, psychological or sexual violence, as well as the use of measures that restrict personal freedom (e.g. Bavaria, Hamburg, Hesse and Bremen). Regardless of specific provisions, local supervisory authorities in all *Länder* are authorised to intervene in response to specific incidents.

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55 <https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/publikationen/detail/schutz-vor-gewalt-in-einrichtungen-fuer-menschen-mit-behinderungen-handlungsempfehlungen-fuer-politik-und-praxis> (German).

In addition, Bavaria has established Pflege-SOS Bayern – a dedicated contact point for lodging complaints about the quality of care in residential facilities. In Berlin, Brandenburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg, emergency helplines for care situations offer anonymous and free advice on any type of crisis within the care system. Hamburg’s emergency care helpline is notable for its cooperation with an outpatient care service and access to a small number of short-term care places. This arrangement ensures that people in acute care crises can continue to receive care until a longer-term solution is found.

**24. Please provide information on how the authorities ensure that different groups of women and girls, inter alia women with disabilities, Roma women and other women belonging to national or ethnic minorities, migrant women and intersex persons are fully informed, understand and freely give their consent to procedures such as sterilisation and abortion.**

Invasive procedures such as sterilisation or abortion are accompanied by comprehensive counselling. Culturally sensitive, accessible and low-threshold advisory services aim to reach all women – regardless of origin, status or identity – to ensure their informed consent and to safeguard their freedom of choice.

This is based on the nationwide legal requirement to provide information under Section 630e of the German Civil Code (BGB) – and the provisions of the Pregnancy Conflict Act (Schwangerschaftskonfliktgesetz – SchKG). Counselling on abortion is provided by certified advisory centres – which are accessible anonymously and without bias, and in some cases are barrier-free and multilingual (Thuringia, North Rhine-Westphalia, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg).

To protect intersex children from irreversible and medically unnecessary interventions, the German federal government passed the Act on the Protection of Children with Variations in Sex Development in 2021. The law (Section 1631e BGB) prohibits any treatment of such children targeted only at a more male-like or female-like body and sex characteristics, as well as those surgical interventions on internal or external sex characteristics of such children whenever the intervention could wait for an informed own decision of the child or – in more urgent cases – the Family Court does not give an approval for the treatment. Sterilization of children is prohibited in all cases without exceptions (Section 1631c BGB) including of children having a variant of sex development.

Several *Länder* have introduced specific measures to ensure that women from particularly vulnerable groups – including women with disabilities, migrants, Roma women and intersex persons – give informed consent to medical procedures only after receiving information in a form they can understand (Hamburg, Thuringia, North Rhine-Westphalia). These measures are complemented by empowerment initiatives – awareness-raising projects – and peer-supported counselling services on sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities (North Rhine-Westphalia, Saxony).

## Article 22: Specialist support services

### 25. Please describe the type of specialist support services dedicated to women victims of the forms of gender-based violence covered by the Istanbul Convention (e.g., stalking, sexual harassment and domestic violence, including their digital dimension, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced sterilisation, forced abortion), including those specialist support services providing:

The support system in Germany is a specialised and multifaceted network that addresses all forms of gender-based violence covered by the IC. These include stalking, sexualised violence, domestic violence (including in digital form), forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced sterilisation and abortion. Services across the country follow comparable structures, with regional variations, and meet a range of support needs: emergency accommodation, medical, psychological and psychosocial assistance, trauma support, helplines, advice on a wide variety of issues, empowerment and employment-related support.

#### a. shelters and/or other forms of safe accommodation

All *Länder* provide women's shelters or protected accommodation with psychosocial counselling. Many *Länder* have increased the number of shelter places in recent years (e.g. Hamburg, Berlin, North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony). Some also offer specialised accommodation for people with mental health conditions or for LGBTIQ\* individuals, as well as protected housing for those at risk of forced marriage (e.g. Hamburg, Berlin and Lower Saxony).

#### b. medical support

Almost all *Länder* offer initial medical care, including confidential forensic evidence collection following sexualised violence (e.g. Brandenburg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saxony-Anhalt). Some *Länder* have added services such as victim support clinics or gynaecological care in cooperation with hospitals (e.g. Lower Saxony, Saarland).

#### c. short- and long-term psychological counselling

#### d. trauma care

Short- and long-term psychological support and trauma clinics have been established in several *Länder* (e.g. Saxony, Thuringia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Bremen, Berlin, Lower Saxony). In some cases, there are also specialised services for refugees (e.g. Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Thuringia).

### e. legal counselling

Legal counselling is provided in many *Länder* through women's counselling centres or by funding specialist lawyers (e. g. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Berlin, Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate). In major cities, counselling on asylum, family and residency law is sometimes available specifically for marginalised groups.

### f. outreach services

Several *Länder* provide outreach counselling, for example in refugee accommodation or in red-light districts (e. g. Saxony, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia and Berlin). In Rhineland-Palatinate, there is cooperation with addiction and homelessness services for women facing multiple challenges. Lower Saxony funds mobile counselling specifically for those affected by FGM or forced marriage.

### g. telephone helpline

The **Violence against Women Helpline** advises women affected by all forms of violence: domestic and sexual violence, forced marriage, human trafficking and genital mutilation. Advice is provided 24/7 anonymously, confidentially and with the help of interpreters in 19 languages, barrier-free and free-of-charge. The female advisors are qualified experts who are experienced in giving advice to women affected by violence. They provide a psychosocial initial consultation and crisis intervention and arrange contact with a local support institution where required. Acquaintances, relatives and specialists supporting women can also contact the Support Hotline. The advisory service is available to anyone seeking help, irrespective of social and ethnic origin, religion as well as sexual orientation and identity.<sup>56</sup>

On the subject of reproductive rights, there is a broad counselling and support infrastructure in Germany, which includes a helpline for pregnant women in need. According to the Pregnancy Conflict Act (Schwangerschaftskonfliktgesetz – SchKG), the *Länder* must ensure that there is a sufficient number of counselling centers close to where people live. The **Help hotline “Pregnant Women in Need“** (Hilfetelefon Schwangere in Not) offers help and support anonymously, free of charge and around the clock.<sup>57</sup>

UBSKM funds a helpline on the topic child sexual abuse as well as a help portal.<sup>58</sup> The help portal provides a nationwide database with counselling centres, emergency services as well as therapeutic, medical and legal support services. It also provides general information on sexual abuse in childhood and adolescence. The sexual abuse helpline run by N.I.N.A e.V. provides anonymous, free, multilingual and sign-language support on all issues relating to sexual abuse.<sup>59</sup> A confidential and data-secure online written counselling service is also available and used particularly by young people.<sup>60</sup>

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56 <https://www.hilfetelefon.de/en/>.

57 <https://www.hilfetelefon-schwangere.de/en/>.

58 <https://www.hilfe-portal-missbrauch.de/en/home>.

59 <https://www.hilfe-portal-missbrauch.de/en/helpline>.

60 <https://www.schreib-ollie.de> (German).

Many *Länder* also operate additional 24/7 hotlines (e.g. Berlin, Thuringia, Hesse), specialised helplines for girls (Berlin), LGBTIQ\* individuals or people at risk of forced marriage (Lower Saxony).

#### **h. other forms of support (e.g. socio-economic empowerment programmes, online assistance platforms etc.)**

Within the German federal system, the responsibility for accommodating refugees lies with the *Länder* and the municipalities. Since 2019, the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz – AsylbLG*) has obliged the *Länder* to ensure the protection of women and vulnerable groups in reception accommodation through “appropriate measures”. In 2016, the BMBFSFJ, together with UNICEF and national and international CSOs, launched the “Joint Initiative for the Protection of Refugees in Refugee Accommodation Centres” to improve the protection, care and support of children, women and vulnerable persons living in refugee accommodation and to contribute to their well-being and integration. In 2022, the fourth edition of the “Minimum Standards for the Protection of Refugees in Refugee Accommodation Centres” was published with annexes on the implementation of the minimum standards for LGBTIQ+ refugees and migrants, implementation for refugees and migrants with disabilities and implementation for refugees and migrants suffering from traumatic disorder.<sup>61</sup>

The “Minimum Standards for the Protection of Refugees in Refugee Accommodation Centres” are non-binding, but serve as guidelines for the development, implementation and monitoring of individual protection plans. Within this context, since 2025 the BMBFSFJ has been funding three model projects on protection against violence and three model projects on participation, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, including refugee women.

The Violence Support Services Act (*GewHG*) obliges the *Länder* to provide a nationwide, needs-based network of protection and counselling services sufficient in capacity for women affected by gender-based or domestic violence by 2027.

Regarding the victims' lawyer and the psychosocial assistance in criminal proceedings, see the answers given in section 7.

Several *Länder* are adopting innovative formats such as **second-stage projects** for follow-up support after leaving a women's shelter (e.g. North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Hamburg, Baden-Württemberg), or **online platforms for counselling and an overview of support services and shelter places** (e.g. Berlin, North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony). In addition, projects promoting social and professional integration (e.g. Saxony-Anhalt) or initiatives supporting victims of violence with substance use disorders are funded in *Länder* such as Hamburg and Rhineland-Palatinate. There are also specialised services focusing on digital violence, FGM, forced marriage, and LGBTQ+-sensitive counselling (e.g. in Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Lower Saxony). Awareness-raising and training measures for professionals are being implemented nationwide.

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61 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/184702/8c9c4cf873963d1ffcb51d1370222d1a/minimum-standards-for-refugees-and-migrants-english-data.pdf>.

**26. Which type of specialist support service includes child psychologists or other professionals specialised in supporting children who have been exposed to domestic violence, including violence perpetrated by one parent against the other?**

See in this respect the statements in response to Question 25. The network of protection and counselling services provided by the *Länder* must take into account the special needs of accompanying children.

Numerous regional specialist support services (e.g. psychosocial support) available from different organisations for children and adolescents who have been exposed to domestic violence; people from different specialist disciplines work here, e.g. psychological consultants, social educators, psychotherapist for children and adolescents. Paediatricians play an important guiding role here. They are often the first contact and arrange further help, especially with low-threshold access. Child psychiatrists and psychotherapist for children and adolescents can provide support and treatment in coping with psychological stress as a result of violent experiences.

All *Länder* have child protection centres that specifically support children affected by violence, offering psychological and social pedagogical assistance (e.g. Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Berlin, Rhineland-Palatinate, Bremen and Lower Saxony). There are also trauma clinics specifically for children (e.g. Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saarland) and specialised child intervention centres (e.g. Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Berlin, Thuringia).

In many *Länder*, women's shelters employ qualified professionals to care for children, with backgrounds in education or psychology (e.g. Bavaria, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saxony-Anhalt, Berlin, Hesse and Lower Saxony).

**27. Do specialist support services exist that cater to the specific needs of migrant women and girls or those belonging to national or ethnic minorities who are victims of violence against women, including women and girls seeking asylum and those granted refugee or international protection status?**

In 2023, the BMBFSFJ funded the creation of a short film in connection with the federal government's Schutzbrief ("letter of protection") against FGM. In 2024, the targeted distribution of the short film was funded to raise awareness of the film and the protective pledge within the communities of women and girls affected. Funding will continue in 2025.

Furthermore, in 2024, a project aimed at nationwide networking of communities to trans-culturally empower women and girls affected by or at risk of FGM.

See answer to Question 25. The network of protection and counselling services provided by the *Länder* must be geared towards the needs of women affected by violence. This includes the needs of women with a migrant background.

Services include culturally sensitive counselling, psychosocial support, accommodation for refugee women, and specialised support centres (e.g. SOLWODI<sup>62</sup>, Refugio<sup>63</sup>, NADIA<sup>64</sup>, S.H.E.<sup>65</sup>). Professionals with intercultural training often work in multiple languages and collaborate with women's shelters, public authorities and health services. Particularly vulnerable groups such as victims of forced marriage, human trafficking or genital mutilation receive targeted support.

In individual cases and as required, the local branch offices of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) provide information on specialised counselling centres, or name a suitable specialised counselling centre which women and girls can get in touch with.

## Article 25: Support to victims of sexual violence

**28. Please indicate if any of the below services are available in your territory:**

- a. sexual violence referral centres (e.g. specialist support services offering immediate medical care, forensic examination and crisis intervention to victims of sexual violence);**
- b. rape crisis centres (e.g. specialist support services offering long-term counselling, therapy and support to victims of sexual violence regardless of whether the sexual violence occurred recently or in the past);**
- c. any other specialised services offering short-term and/or long-term medical, forensic and psycho-social support to victims of sexual violence.**

The Violence against Women Helpline advises women affected by all forms of violence: e.g. domestic and sexual violence, forced marriage, human trafficking and genital mutilation. See answer to Question 25 for more information about the Violence against Women helpline.<sup>66</sup>

The BMBFSFJ supports the Federal Association of Women's Counselling Centres and Women's Refuges in Germany (bff), which brings together over 210 women's helplines and counselling centres. The bff organises seminars and conferences, disseminates expertise from practice and research and develops information material on the topic of violence against women. Numerous further education and training courses are initiated, particularly as part of the projects on digital violence or sexual harassment at the workplace.

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62 <https://www.solwodi.de/texte/seite.php?id=482244&lang=en>

63 <https://www.refugio-muenchen.de/>

64 [https://www.eva-stuttgart.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/2\\_unsere\\_angebote/armut\\_wohnen\\_migration/Flyer\\_NADIA\\_Zuflucht\\_und\\_Clearing\\_für\\_junge\\_Migrantinnen.pdf](https://www.eva-stuttgart.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/2_unsere_angebote/armut_wohnen_migration/Flyer_NADIA_Zuflucht_und_Clearing_für_junge_Migrantinnen.pdf)

65 <https://www.fff-leipzig.de/en/domestic-violence/safe-house-she/>

66 <https://www.hilfetelefon.de/en/>

The member organisations of the bff focus on combating violence against women such as sexualised violence, violence by (ex-)partners, psychological violence, stalking, physical violence, structural violence, economic violence, etc. They offer low-threshold psychosocial support to help women cope with their experiences of violence. They also contribute to the removal of taboos surrounding violence against women through public relations work and are active in the prevention of violence.

The DIMR has set up the NRM to monitor the implementation of the IC in Germany. The independent organisation is funded through a project being run by the BMBFSFJ. Section 2.2 of the Violence against Women Monitor compiled by the reporting centre provides an overview of the training and further education courses.

Women's shelters and specialist counselling centers for gender-based and domestic violence offer psychosocial support for victims of sexual violence. All *Länder* also offer specific support services for women and girls affected by sexualised violence, including emergency medical care, specialised clinics, crisis intervention, confidential forensic evidence collection, trauma clinics, women's helplines, and counselling centres.

#### Flagship project in the *Länder*

In Lower Saxony, confidential, anonymous evidence collection has been carried out since 2012 via the ProBeweis network, which is affiliated with Hannover Medical School (MHH). As of 31 December 2024, the network has 40 partner clinics with 45 examination centres that examine victims of domestic violence and collect evidence using standardised procedures and standardised examination kits. The examination documents are stored centrally at the MHH for at least three years. All partner clinics must be available 24/7, have gynaecology and trauma surgery facilities, and receive regular training from the ProBeweis network. Since 1 January 2024, confidential evidence collection has been a service covered by statutory health insurance. Lower Saxony was the first federal state to conclude negotiations and covers additional costs incurred for the examination of persons who are not insured or are privately insured.<sup>67</sup>

From 1 January 2025, Rhineland-Palatinate will become the eighth federal state to offer **confidential forensic evidence collection for victims of sexualised and domestic violence, even without a formal police report**. This independent procedure enables victims to preserve evidence and take their time in deciding whether to press charges. The state is working with twelve clinics, which document the medical examination and evidence in a manner that is admissible in court and securely stored.

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67 <https://probeweis.mhh.de/> (German).

**29. Please provide information on the number of such services and the number of women and girls supported annually.**

The BMBFSFJ commissioned a “Study on the Support System for Victims of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence” in 2023, the results of which were published in 2024.<sup>68</sup> The study shows that 7,786 places were available for women and their children in 2022. In 2022, 14,070 women and 15,770 children were admitted to women’s shelters and protective apartments, while 403,110 counselling sessions were conducted at specialised counselling centres for gender-based and domestic violence.

Beyond this, no uniform nationwide data is available so it is not possible to present a comprehensive picture. In particular, the variation in naming conventions for the various services makes consistent reporting more difficult.

The number of women and girls supported varies depending on the state and the type of service. For example, in 2023 Bavaria recorded 8,058 counselling cases, in 2024 Saxony-Anhalt recorded 1,563, and Brandenburg 707. In Berlin, 1,900 people affected received support. Shelters in Saxony took in 557 women and 642 children. Emergency medical care was provided in *Länder* such as Hesse (290 cases) and Rhineland-Palatinate (50 cases). Confidential forensic evidence collection is available in 70 clinics in North Rhine-Westphalia and 13 clinics in Brandenburg, for example.

**30. Please indicate the procedures and time frames for collecting and storing forensic evidence in cases of sexual violence (e.g. existence of protocols, use of rape kits) in the relevant services.**

See in this respect the statements in response to Questions 19-21.

In several *Länder*, procedures for securing evidence are regulated by law or institutionally established, sometimes in cooperation with forensic medicine services (e.g. Lower Saxony, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, North Rhine-Westphalia, Hamburg, Berlin). Standardised rape kits are used in some cases (Berlin, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, Schleswig-Holstein).

There is no uniform national regulation on retention periods for collected evidence – they range from one to thirty years. In some *Länder*, the evidence is stored centrally in forensic medical institutions (e.g. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Brandenburg).

**31. Please describe any applicable access criteria for use of these services (e.g. affiliation with a national health insurance, residence status, prior reporting of the case to the police, other).**

In principle, all women with health insurance have equal access to services covered by statutory health insurance or the respective private health insurance plan in Germany.

For counselling and other support services not primarily provided by the healthcare system, see Question 18.

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<sup>68</sup> <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/240216/969bd2f27283109c202a07928c0aa480/kostenstudie-zum-hilfesystem-fuer-betroffene-von-haesuslicher-und-geschlechtsspezifischer-gewalt-data.pdf> (German).

Since March 2020, victims of sexual and physical violence have been entitled to confidential evidence collection covered by statutory health insurance (SGB V § 27 and § 132k). The confidential evidence collection after experiencing violence includes documentation, laboratory tests, and storage of the findings. For people who are not covered under statutory health insurance, there is no access to these evidence collections, unless other means are available, such as in some *Länder* at university hospitals. In this case, everyone has access to confidential evidence collection.

In some *Länder*, low-threshold access to medical care following sexualised violence is available regardless of insurance status, residency status or background (e.g. Hamburg, Bremen, Berlin, Schleswig-Holstein, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Brandenburg, and in part North Rhine-Westphalia). In most of these *Länder*, services can also be accessed anonymously or without reporting the incident to the police (e.g. Hamburg, Bremen, Berlin, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Lower Saxony, Saarland, Brandenburg, Thuringia and Hesse).

In Bavaria and Lower Saxony access to medical services in cases of sexualised violence generally depends on health insurance. In Lower Saxony, the state covers the cost of treatment for those without insurance.

In addition, access to psychosocial support during criminal proceedings is regulated nationwide (e.g. under Section 406g of the German Code of Criminal Procedure – Strafprozessordnung – StPO).

## Article 31: Custody, visitation rights and safety

**32. Please indicate whether under national law incidents of violence covered under the scope of the convention must be taken into account in the determination of custody and visitation rights of children. If this is the case, please clarify to what extent these provisions:**

See in this respect the “First State Report Germany” on rights of custody and visitation (p. 48).

The training brochure “Child Matters and Domestic Violence” (Kindschaftssachen und häusliche Gewalt) was created in connection with the BMBFSFJ-financed e-learning project<sup>69</sup> “Protection and Assistance in Cases of Domestic Violence – An Interdisciplinary Online Course” and is aimed at family court judges and all other actors in family court proceedings who are involved in regulating access, parental custody, and determining the child’s welfare (following domestic violence).

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69 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/kindschaftssachen-und-haeusliche-gewalt-185890> (German).

**a. explicitly list domestic violence as a criterion to be taken into account when deciding on custody and/or visitation rights in the applicable legislation. If so, please clarify whether this criterion is/has been applied in practice in the determination of both custody and visitation rights;**

The family court has to take into account cases of domestic violence in decisions on parental care (the right to make decisions for the child), custody (the decision where the child mainly resides) and contact. It is, however, not yet listed as an explicit criterion to be taken into account, as the legal provision is very general. Several decisions by higher regional courts on parental care, custody and contact in case of domestic violence have been published during the last years.

The coalition agreement between the parties SPD, Grüne and FDP for the 20th legislative period (2021-2025) provided that proven domestic violence has to be considered in proceedings relating to custody and contact. However, it was not possible to realise the proposals put forward by the Federal Ministry of Justice because the coalition ended prematurely.<sup>70</sup>

The coalition agreement between the parties CDU, CSU und SPD for the 21st legislative period (2025-2029) stipulates that domestic violence must be taken into account in proceedings on parental care, custody and contact to the detriment of the parent who exercised violence.

**b. acknowledge the harm that witnessing violence by one parent against the other has on a child;**

Children have a right to be raised without violence. Physical punishments, psychological injuries and other degrading measures are inadmissible (Section 1631 (2) German Civil Code (Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch – BGB<sup>71</sup>). It is acknowledged in the practice of family courts that a child can also be harmed by bearing witness to domestic violence.

**c. ensure that custody with the non-violent parent is preferred over foster-care;**

German law provides that the removal of parental care and the placement in a foster family is only allowed if the well-being of the child is in danger and only if the danger cannot be countered in another way, not even through public support measures. If transferring sole custody to the parent affected by violence is a way of ending the threat to the child's welfare, this should be ordered as a matter of priority over the complete withdrawal of custody from both parents and over placing the child in foster care. A general provision that custody with the non-violent parent is preferred over foster care would, however, be problematic if the behaviour of a non-violent parent endangers nevertheless the well-being of the child, for example if the parent has an illness or if the child is neglected.

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<sup>70</sup> [https://www.bmj.de/SharedDocs/Gesetzgebungsverfahren/DE/2024\\_Reform\\_Kindschaftsrecht.html](https://www.bmj.de/SharedDocs/Gesetzgebungsverfahren/DE/2024_Reform_Kindschaftsrecht.html) (German).

<sup>71</sup> [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_bgb/](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_bgb/).

**d. foresee the screening of civil proceedings related to the determination of custody or visitation rights for a history of domestic violence among the parties;**

Pursuant to Section 26 of the Act on Proceedings in Family Matters and in Matters of Non-Contentious Jurisdiction (Gesetz über das Verfahren in Familiensachen und in den Angelegenheiten der freiwilligen Gerichtsbarkeit – FamFG)<sup>72</sup>, the court is to establish the facts relevant to its decision ex officio. If a history of violence is presented by the parties or becomes known to the court in any other way, it is to take this into account when organising the proceedings and reaching its decision.

**e. foresee that judges conduct risk assessments or request the disclosure of risk assessments drawn up by law-enforcement agencies or other competent stakeholders for victims of domestic violence, with a view to taking them into account and determining the best interest of the child in the context of custody and visitation decisions.**

Under its obligation to establish the facts relevant to its decision (see above, Section 26 FamFG) the court may, for example, utilise information obtained from law enforcement authorities and question other competent authorities at its discretion. To ensure that important information on risk assessment is passed on to the family court, the federal government and the *Länder* have launched an initiative to improve communication between family courts and other stakeholders, especially the police.

**33. Please describe the measures in place to ensure that judges, courtappointed experts and other legal professionals:**

**a. have sufficient knowledge of the law and understanding of the dynamics of intimate partner violence, including the psychological impact of witnessing violence on the child;**

According to Section 23b (3) of the Courts Constitution Act (Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz – GVG)<sup>73</sup>, a judge to be appointed as judge in family cases must have proven knowledge in the fields of family law, particularly the law on parent and child matters, procedural law in family matters and the parts of the law on child and youth welfare services required for proceedings in family matters, as well as proven basic knowledge of psychology, particularly child development psychology, and communication with children.

According to Section 158a (1) FamFG, a person to be appointed as guardian ad litem is professionally suitable if that person has basic knowledge in the fields of family law, particularly the law on parent and child matters, procedural law in parent and child matters, and the law on child and youth welfare services, as well as knowledge of child development

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72 [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_famfg/](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_famfg/).

73 [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_gvg/](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gvg/).

psychology and child-friendly dialogue techniques. Pursuant to Section 158a (2) FamFG, the individual is personally suitable if they guarantee to represent the child's best interests conscientiously, unbiasedly and independently.

According to Section 163 (1) FamFG, an expert who is commissioned as an expert in a child custody case shall have at least a psychological, psychotherapeutic, child and adolescent psychiatric, psychiatric, medical, educational or socio-educational professional qualification. If the expert has an educational or socio-educational professional qualification, the acquisition of sufficient diagnostic and analytical knowledge must be proven by a recognised additional qualification.

All *Länder* implement measures to improve the qualifications of legal professionals in dealing with domestic violence, particularly where women and children are involved. Family court judges are expected to have sound knowledge of both the law and psychology, especially concerning child development and the effects of violence. Considerable efforts are being made to establish and further develop interdisciplinary qualification standards to ensure victim protection and child-sensitive proceedings in cases of domestic violence.

Several *Länder* offer specific training programmes to sensitise professionals to the dynamics of intimate partner violence and its psychological impact on children (e.g. Hamburg, Bremen, Schleswig-Holstein, North Rhine-Westphalia, Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, Berlin, Thuringia). Some of these training programmes also include interdisciplinary approaches and formats for exchange with youth welfare offices, police forces or psychotherapeutic institutions (e.g. Berlin, Bremen, Rhineland-Palatinate).

#### **b. duly take into account victims' grievances in cases of domestic violence and hear children victims/witnesses, where applicable, in the determination of custody and visitation rights;**

In all custody and contact proceedings, it is the responsibility of the court to conduct necessary inquiries *ex officio* to establish the facts that are relevant to its decision in accordance with Section 26 FamFG. In these cases, it carries out an in-depth assessment of all aspects relating to the best interests of the child, taking into account in particular the extent to which, following incidents of domestic violence in which children are victims or witnesses of such incidents, the transfer of parental custody to one parent or the authorisation of contact between one parent and the children can be justified in terms of their best interests.

In proceedings to regulate parental custody or contact, the child concerned is a participant to the proceedings and is to be heard by the court regardless of their age, Section 159 FamFG. Pursuant to Section 158 FamFG, the child is also provided with a professionally and personally suitable guardian *ad litem* to the extent necessary for representing their interests. The guardian *ad litem* shall determine the best interests of the child and shall assert these in the court proceedings, Section 158b (1) FamFG.

Many *Länder* offer targeted training for judges on child-sensitive communication, often in the context of traumatised children (e.g. Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Hesse, Thuringia, Berlin, Rhineland-Palatinate, Bremen, North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony).

**c. are informed of the unfoundedness of notions of “parental alienation”<sup>74</sup> or analogous concepts that are used to overshadow the violence and control exerted by perpetrators of domestic violence over women and their children.**

In its decision of 17 November 2023 (1 BvR 1076/23), the Federal Constitutional Court expressly clarified that the concept of parental alienation syndrome (PAS), which is now outdated and considered to be refuted by experts, may not be used and is not a sufficiently sound basis for a decision based on the best interests of the child. Decisions of the Federal Constitutional Court are published and printed and discussed in the relevant specialist journals. A number of articles have also since been published discussing the decision of the Federal Constitutional Court. Against this background, the family courts are aware that a suspected or alleged alienation syndrome can be misused to allow a parent with an affinity for violence to have contact with the child even if this cannot be justified in terms of the child’s welfare due to a history of violence, or only under certain restrictions (e.g. accompanied contact).

Within the scope of its discretionary power, the family court shall, if necessary, conduct a formal taking of evidence by examining an expert (Section 30 FamFG in conjunction with Sections 402 et seq. of the Code of Civil Procedure – Zivilprozessordnung – ZPO)<sup>75</sup>, in the course of which it can, among other things, ask the expert to what extent an exclusion or restriction of contact could lead to alienation that would be problematic in terms of the child’s welfare. Section 163 (1) FamFG must be observed with regard to the suitability of the expert.

With regard to the term “parental alienation” and similar concepts that may obscure violence and control by perpetrators, several *Länder* run training sessions which explicitly address the scientific discrediting of this type of concept and draw attention to current legal rulings (e.g. Hamburg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Thuringia, Bremen, Berlin).

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74 In its baseline evaluation reports GREVIO has consistently referred to the statement issued in December 2017 by the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP), which draws attention to the fact that the concepts of “parental alienation syndrome” (PAS) and “parental alienation” (PA) are unsuitable for use in any psychotherapeutic practice. This statement by the EAP, which is made up of 128 psychotherapy organisations from 41 European countries, acts as a guiding principle for European psychotherapists. Moreover, in February 2020 the World Health Organisation (WHO) published its new draft International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision (ICD-11) and confirmed that it had removed parental alienation from index term in the final ICD-11. See also the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform) statement of May 2019 “Intimate partner violence against women is an essential factor in the determination of child custody, say women’s rights experts”.

75 [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_zpo/](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_zpo/).

**34. Please provide details on the procedures in place to ensure that the competent court for family-related issues co-operate/communicate with other relevant bodies/professionals, including, but not limited to, criminal courts, lawenforcement agencies, health and education authorities and specialist women's support services when taking decisions on custody and visitation or when offering family law mediation. Please specify whether the law provides a legal framework for any of the procedures in place.**

In accordance with Section 162 FamFG, the court is to hear the Youth Welfare Office in proceedings concerning a child (this also includes proceedings concerning custody and access rights). If the subject of such proceedings is the endangerment of the child's welfare, the Youth Welfare Office is to be included as a participant to the proceedings and they are thus entitled to submit applications themselves. Regardless of whether the Youth Welfare Office is only heard or is included as a participant, it is entitled to file a complaint on appeal against the court's decision.

The family court is to conduct necessary inquiries to establish the facts of the case (Section 26 FamFG). It is to take the necessary evidence in a suitable manner in accordance with Section 29 FamFG. Communication with other agencies or professional groups can also take place within this framework. However, such communication does not make them parties to the proceedings. It should also be noted that rights to refuse to give evidence or official secrecy under civil service and other service or occupational law may result in restrictions with regard to the scope or detail of the exchange of information, see Section 29 (2) FamFG in conjunction with Sections 376, 383 to 385 ZPO.

Whether psychologists are to be consulted as experts in order to obtain the knowledge required for the prognosis must be assessed by the court in the light of its duty to protect fundamental rights according to the circumstances of the individual case.<sup>76</sup>

In some places, local networks of relevant professional groups have been formed to agree on procedures for cooperation, including with family counselling centres.

#### **Flagship project in the *Länder***

Under Section 12 of the Act on the Further Development and Improvement of Child and Youth Protection in Schleswig-Holstein (*Kinderschutzgesetz – KSchG*), cooperation committees are established in the **administrative districts and independent cities of Schleswig-Holstein. Alongside the public youth welfare agencies, these committees are to include the public health departments, schools, police and regulatory authorities, public prosecutors and the family courts.** In addition to these cooperation committees, there are often other regional collaborations between courts and specific professional groups such as youth welfare offices or paediatricians.

<sup>76</sup> Volke, Münchener Kommentar zum BGB, 9th edition 2024, Section 1666 BGB para. 254

**35. Please provide detailed information on the procedures in place (including, if applicable, the relevant personnel used, the specific infrastructure available), in the exercise of custody and visitation rights, to:**

**a. eliminate the risk for the abused parent to be subjected to further violence;**

The family court has the option of minimising the risk to parties affected by violence by keeping their addresses secret from other parties and third parties. It can hear parties to the proceedings separately when necessary for the protection of the participant to be examined or for any other reason if they are present at the same time, see Section 33 (1) sentence 2 FamFG. If the conditions of section 1684 (3) sentence 3 BGB or the conditions of section 1684 (4) sentence 2 BGB are met, the access custodianship or the supervised contact ordered by the family court may also, in individual cases, result in a minimization of contact between the child's parents.

Supervised or protected contact arrangements to prevent violence or trauma are used in Berlin, Bremen, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg and North Rhine-Westphalia. Berlin also has the "Berlin Model", which provides gender-sensitive counselling for parents in situations involving violence.

**b. eliminate the risk for the child to witness or experience violence;**

The family court may order that contact will be supervised by the Youth Welfare Office or an association or that it may only take place at designated safe places. It can also exclude the right of a parent to contact for a long period or permanently if the best interests of the child are endangered.

**c. ensure that the responsible personnel are trained and that the facilities are suited to enable safe supervised visitation.**

With regard to the basic qualification requirements for judges in family matters, please refer to the answer to 33a. above. Professional training and further training is the responsibility of the *Länder* and is carried out through *Länder* training courses and further training measures organised by the German Judicial Academy (Deutsche Richterakademie, a supra-regional further training institution jointly supported by the federal government and the *Länder*).

Supervised contact is generally organised and implemented by suitable independent organisations, usually recommended by the youth welfare office (e.g. North Rhine-Westphalia, Bremen, Berlin, Brandenburg and Lower Saxony).

**36. Please indicate whether national provisions foresee the withdrawal of parental rights in criminal sentences if the best interest of the child, which may include the safety of the victim, cannot be guaranteed in any other way.**

There are no provisions in national criminal law that foresee the withdrawal of parental rights in criminal sentences. Only a family court can decide to withdraw parental care or to order sole parental care to one parent. However, where the enforcement of a sentence is suspended, the court may direct the person not to make contact with the injured party or specific persons or persons from a specific group who may induce the convicted person to commit further offences (Section 56c (2) Nr. 3 StGB). The court may also issue such a direction to convicted persons under a regime of supervision of conduct following a prison sentence or a placement in a psychiatric hospital or an addiction treatment facility (Section 68b (1) (3) StGB).

Where criminal proceedings or a criminal conviction offer reason to believe that measures to protect the child are necessary (e.g. withdrawal of parental rights) the prosecution service or the criminal court informs the authorities concerned, in particular the Youth Welfare Office and the family court.

**Article 48: Prohibition of mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes or sentencing**

**Criminal law:**

**37. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes are prohibited in criminal proceedings related to cases involving the different forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.**

See in this respect the “First State Report Germany” on prohibition of mandatory alternative dispute resolution procedures (p. 56-57).

As a form of out-of-court conflict resolution which can be taken into account in criminal proceedings, victim-offender mediation as provided in German criminal law can be seen as such an alternative dispute resolution process. However, victim-offender mediation is not mandatory. The victim cannot be obliged to participate. According to Section 155a StPO, the public prosecution office and the court have to examine at every stage of the proceedings whether it is possible to reach a mediated agreement between the accused and the aggrieved person. In appropriate cases, they should work towards such mediation. However, Section 155a (3) StPO expressly emphasises that the suitability of a case may not be assumed against the express will of the aggrieved person. Therefore, the victim’s willingness to participate must always be ascertained. If consent is not given, the public prosecution office and the court may no longer make any efforts with regard to victim-offender mediation.

**38. Where voluntary alternative dispute resolution processes exist for any criminal offences within the remit of the Istanbul Convention, such as conciliation or mediation, please provide information on the safeguards incorporated to ensure the free and informed consent of the victim to such processes and the measures taken to avoid that direct or indirect pressure is placed on the victim. Please also state whether the offer of alternative dispute resolution processes may result in the discontinuation of criminal investigation and prosecution or other consequences for the victim.**

Victim-offender mediation provided for in German criminal law is not limited to certain offenses from the outset. It can also be carried out in a variety of ways. A direct meeting between offender and victim is not necessarily required. The necessary communication process between offender and victim can also take place in writing or through a third party.

Victim-offender mediation cannot be carried out against the expressed will of the victim (Section 155a (3) StPO). The public prosecution office and the court must therefore also clarify the victim's willingness to co-operate as part of their examination of whether a procedure is suitable for victim-offender mediation. If consent is given, care must be taken to ensure that this is done on an informed basis and without pressure. In practice, this is regularly ensured by informing the victim in advance about the requirements and procedure of a victim-offender mediation, for example by the police handing out relevant information sheets as part of statutory early information obligations (Section 406i (1) (5) StPO).

At federal level, there are no legal provisions on the specific implementation of victim-offender mediation. The implementation and execution of victim-offender mediation is the responsibility of the *Länder*. When victim-offender mediation is carried out, it is always led by trained experts from specialised services (Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bremen) and is often executed according to specific guidelines or other administrative regulations (Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Bremen, North Rhine-Westphalia).

These can also contain specific guidelines on the criteria to be taken into account when the public prosecution office examines the suitability of a case for victim-offender mediation. For example, the particular importance of voluntary participation and the avoidance of pressure on the victim and secondary victimisation is pointed out. In some cases, explicit reference is made to Article 48 of the IC, stating that in cases of domestic violence, victim-offender mediation can only be considered in suitable individual cases (for example Section 3.4 of the Directive on the Implementation of Victim-Offender Mediation in Bremen).

In the case of less serious offenses (so called *Vergehen*), the criminal proceedings may be discontinued in view of the successful victim-offender mediation in accordance with Section 153a (1)(2)(5) StPO. In the case of serious offenses (*Verbrechen*), the successful implementation of victim-offender mediation can be taken into account when sentencing (Section 46 (2) StGB, Section 46a StGB).

**Civil law:**

**39. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that alternative dispute resolution processes such as mediation or procedures which can be considered tantamount to the latter are not used in family law proceedings such as divorce proceedings or proceedings related to custody and visitation of children, where there is a history of violence.**

Section 156 (1) FamFG, which regulates the family court's involvement in reaching an agreement between the child's parents has contained the restriction that the court shall only facilitate an agreement if this is not contrary to the child's best interests – such is the case if there has been domestic violence between the parents (BT-Drs. 16/6308, p. 236). In such cases, the court must examine particularly carefully whether and to what extent an agreement between the parents would at all be sensible and likely to be successful in the long term.

**Articles 49 and 50: General obligations and immediate response, prevention and protection**

**40. Please describe the human, financial and technical resources provided to law enforcement agencies to diligently respond to and investigate all cases of violence against women, including their digital dimension.**

The first point of contact in cases of domestic violence is often the local police authorities, which are then responsible for ensuring effective investigation of offences and immediate protection measures if needed. Police protection for victims is one of the ongoing tasks of all police officers. All police officers must carry out the relevant measures required by a specific situation. Currently (as of March 2025) the federal police has 87 victim protection officers, who are particularly qualified contact persons for police officers and victim support organisations. In addition, there are victim protection officers at *Länder* level

The financial and technical resources set aside for prevention and victim protection are not broken down by types of crime (e. g. violence directed against women).

Throughout Germany, the police headquarters, police inspectorates and the criminal investigation departments of the police directorates at state level are equipped with appropriately trained staff and technical resources to address violence against women. The public prosecutor's offices have special departments for proceedings relating to crimes against sexual self-determination and domestic violence. Furthermore, there are measures concerning public relations, criminal and prevention counselling, and training courses are provided.

### Flagship project in the *Länder*

In Hamburg the criminal justice building and the “Childhood House” Hamburg were equipped with **video interrogation technology** (€311,000), and in Bremen the **implementation of special audio and video interpreting services** has been begun, in order to effectively communicate with victims of violence.

#### **41. Which measures have been taken to ensure that the premises of police stations are accessible and suitable for receiving and interviewing victims of violence while ensuring their privacy? Is it possible to report cases of violence against women elsewhere than in police stations, including through digital means?**

Victims of crimes are interviewed on premises specially designed for or adapted to this purpose. Making sure that offenders and victims do not come into contact with one another on the premises is another important measure taken to protect victims. Interviews are diligently planned and prepared, taking into account the needs of the interviewee, the subject matter, the time and location of the interview, and the relevant victim protection concerns. The aim is to prevent the (re-)traumatisation of victims and to help victims be calm and stable for the interview.

In most *Länder* it is possible to contact the police, report facts or file a criminal complaint digitally, via the so-called Onlinewache or the police websites (Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bremen, Berlin, Saxony, Saarland, Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg and Hesse).

#### **42. Please explain whether specialist police/prosecution units exist to investigate and prosecute violence against women and specify:**

- a. which forms of violence against women they are competent for;**
- b. whether such units exist in all police/prosecution districts throughout the country.**

There is no uniform regulation at the federal level; the structure of police and prosecution offices varies throughout Germany. As things stand, most *Länder* have specialised units or agents for the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual offences, human trafficking and homicide, regardless of the gender of the victim. Those police and public prosecution's office units are in charge of all forms of violence against women. If there are no specialised police units on a local level or they do not have jurisdiction, usually the state Criminal Investigation Divisions (Landeskriminalämter) can support local units with specialised personnel.

### Flagship project in the *Länder*

In Baden-Württemberg, the prosecution of domestic violence cases is effectively organised through **specialised units within the public prosecutor's offices** and the targeted allocation of cases, including in smaller local authorities. Psychosocial support during criminal proceedings offers victims comprehensive assistance before, during and after the trial. It aims to reduce stress and prevent secondary victimisation and is available free of charge under certain conditions. A state-wide coordination office at PräventSozial gGmbH promotes the quality, networking and referral of this support and receives annual funding.

### 43. Please describe any measures taken to ensure swift investigation into and effective prosecution of cases of violence against women and domestic violence such as prioritisation through fast-tracking, benchmarking or other initiatives, without compromising the thoroughness of the investigation.

The principle of acceleration applies to all investigations and criminal proceedings. Standardised guidelines for danger assessment and high-risk management ensure the identification of relevant incidents that are followed by prioritised processing. Some measures previously described, such as documentation of forensic evidence, case conferences, psycho-social process support, professional training courses, the establishment of special departments and the associated specialisation of the agents, and interdisciplinary co-operation guarantee that cases of domestic violence and violence against women are prosecuted swiftly and effectively (see also Questions 9–12, 15, 18, 19–21, 42).

### Flagship project in the *Länder*

The Bremen Model is a nationally recognised, interdisciplinary intervention framework used to combat sexualised violence. It is based on a **structured and binding cooperation between the police, judiciary, specialist counselling centres, medical institutions and other support services**. The aim is to provide early, low-threshold, professional support for victims, using a consistent, victim-centred and protection-oriented approach. A key feature of the model is proactive outreach: **following a police intervention or report of a sexual assault, the counselling centres listed in the "Victim Support Guide" are notified – providing the victim consents**. These centres then typically contact the affected person within 24 hours, offering psychosocial support, legal information, and help with further steps such as filing a report or arranging protection measures. This approach seeks to ensure that those affected are not left to cope alone after a traumatic experience or discouraged from seeking help due to fear, shame or uncertainty. The Bremen Model relies on binding cooperation among all stakeholders, regular training, and clearly defined procedures to ensure high-quality support.

**44. Are any measures taken to encourage women and girls who experience any of the forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention to report incidents of violence to the authorities? Please provide examples of any measures taken to instill confidence in law-enforcement officials, including those aimed at addressing any language or procedural difficulties they encounter when lodging complaints, in particular those of migrant women, asylum-seeking women, women with disabilities, women with addiction issues and other women and girls at risk of intersectional discrimination.**

Victims are encouraged to report violence through publicity campaigns (e.g. Orange the World), public education, multilingual information services and anonymised reporting systems. Police officers are trained in dealing with victims and the intention throughout the relevant authorities is to have diverse teams to include various perspectives. There are specialised contact points and co-operation with women's advice centres and other help services. Perspectives of victims and experts on violence against women are considered when evaluating criminal prosecution procedures. The police and other public offices organise and actively take part in various activities and events promoting the prevention of and protection against gender-based violence. The needs and special requirements of migrant women, women with disabilities, women with addiction, or otherwise discriminated or disadvantaged women are considered within all these measures. The aim is to strengthen trust and lower the barriers to reporting violence for all victims.

To address language barriers, information is usually provided in different languages and easy language and there are interpreting services available for counselling and in investigation procedures, generally by a female interpreter.

The "Violence against Women helpline" also provides advice on reporting incidents to the police and on measures under GewSchG.

In 2024, the Federal Police launched a pilot project and opened its first contact point for female victims of violence at Berlin's Ostbahnhof, one of the city's major train stations. The contact point for violence against women is staffed by specially trained federal police officers and offers professional and sensitive support and advice. The contact point is signposted and easy to find, complementing the existing options for contacting federal police stations to report crimes and receive advice and support. In fall 2025, another contact point for female victims of violence will open at Cologne Central Station.

In addition, the Federal Police uses their ongoing press and media work to encourage victims or witnesses of crimes to come forward, report crimes, and act as witnesses. Also, the Federal Police publishes information on victim protection and the contact details of victim support organizations and providers of other support services (e.g. the "Violence Against Women" helpline) on its website.

Furthermore, the Federal Police is involved in the crime prevention programme run by the federal and state police forces (ProPK). All partners work together to draw up prevention campaigns, including campaigns to prevent violence against women (e.g. a flyer addressing victim protection and sexual violence). The above-mentioned topics are also addressed on the ProPK website, where they are available for consultation.<sup>77</sup>

The Federal Police co-operate with victim support organisations all across Germany. For example, in 2022, the Federal Police signed a co-operation agreement with the KOK, the German NGO Network against Trafficking in Human Beings, addressing the wide range of concerns held by victims of human trafficking, (sexual) exploitation and violent acts against female migrants.

#### Flagship project in the *Länder*

In North Rhine-Westphalia, violence protection coordinators are currently being introduced in state reception centres for refugees. These coordinators serve as contact persons for residents on issues of violence prevention and response. They are tasked with building and maintaining networks with counselling and support services, specialist organisations and law enforcement agencies.

45. Please indicate whether protocols/standard operating procedures or guidelines for police officers are in place providing guidance on how to receive reports, interview victims, investigate and collect evidence in cases of rape and sexual violence, domestic violence, psychological violence, stalking, sexual harassment (including their online manifestation), forced marriage, female genital mutilation and forced sterilisation/abortion. Please provide information on how the authorities ensure the comprehensive collection of evidence beyond the victim's testimony.

According to the principle of legality, police officers are generally obliged to intervene in all prosecutable criminal offences if there are sufficient factual indications.

There are framework conditions for receiving reports, interviewing victims, carrying out investigations and collecting evidence that vary from state to state. All *Länder* have a variety of framework service instructions, police service regulations, concepts, guidelines and/or regional standards drawn up in interdisciplinary networks. These cover various forms of violence and are more or less specific depending on the federal state; in some cases, several offences mentioned in the question are grouped together under domestic violence, for example.

Comprehensive collection of evidence, even beyond the victim's testimony, is achieved with due diligence, among other things through the confidential preservation of evidence and co-operation with counselling centres and help services (see also q. 19–21, 44).

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<sup>77</sup> <https://www.polizei-beratung.de/> (German).

The “Child-Friendly Justice” working group of the above-mentioned National Council against child sexual abuse (UBSKM/BMBFSFJ) has developed two guidelines on child-friendly questioning that can be used by the police and judiciary, one regarding criminal proceedings<sup>78</sup>, and the other guidelines concern proceedings by family courts.<sup>79</sup>

#### Flagship project in the *Länder*

In Brandenburg, a digitalised victim protection compass is available to all police officers at the police headquarters as a guideline for action, which provides certainty when making reports and for further investigations.

#### 46. Please describe the efforts taken to identify and address all factors that contribute to attrition (the process whereby cases drop out of the criminal justice system) in cases of violence against women and domestic violence.

All measures described so far serve the efforts to identify and address factors that contribute to attrition (e.g. Art. 7, 12, 15). For example, the use of standardised guidelines for the taking of evidence and the requirement that proceedings are processed as quickly as possible are important in order to reduce the burden on those affected. Victim support during proceedings is provided by the psycho-social process support. In addition, co-operation between the police, judiciary and victim support services is established.

A key component of efforts to improve prevention of violence against women and domestic violence is the use of so-called “surveys of unreported incidents”. Unlike official crime statistics, these surveys aim to capture offences that are not reported to the police. As such, they offer a more comprehensive picture of crime trends and patterns in the area of gender-based and domestic violence, including what forms this violence takes and how it comes about. The survey data provides key insights into such things as reporting behaviour and risk factors for victimisation, and help improve services for those affected.

Two national victimisation surveys are notable: SKiD and LeSuBiA (see Question 6).<sup>80</sup>

#### Flagship project in the *Länder*

At Hamburg Regional Court, a dedicated witness support centre staffed by social workers has been established that offers free support for all witnesses, explaining court procedures and addressing any fears or concerns they may have in connection with the ongoing criminal proceedings.

78 [https://www.nationaler-rat.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/dokumente/praxisleitfaden\\_kindgerechte\\_kriterien\\_strafverfahren\\_0308.pdf](https://www.nationaler-rat.de/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumente/praxisleitfaden_kindgerechte_kriterien_strafverfahren_0308.pdf) (German).

79 [https://www.nationaler-rat.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/dokumente/221101\\_praxisleitfaden\\_familiengerichtliche\\_verfahren.pdf](https://www.nationaler-rat.de/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumente/221101_praxisleitfaden_familiengerichtliche_verfahren.pdf) (German).

80 [https://www.bka.de/DE/UnsereAufgaben/Forschung/ForschungsprojekteUndErgebnisse/Dunkelfeldforschung/LeSuBiA\\_EN/lesubia\\_EN\\_node.html](https://www.bka.de/DE/UnsereAufgaben/Forschung/ForschungsprojekteUndErgebnisse/Dunkelfeldforschung/LeSuBiA_EN/lesubia_EN_node.html).

**47. Please indicate if legislative or other measures have been taken to issue a renewable residence permit to migrant women who have become a victim of any of the forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention if the competent authority considers that their stay is necessary for the purpose of their co-operation in investigation or criminal proceedings.**

See in this respect the “First State Report Germany” on residence status (p. 69).

If, in accordance with Section 59 (7) of the Residence Act (Aufenthaltsgesetz – AufenthG<sup>81</sup>), there is concrete evidence to suggest that a foreigner, whose obligation to leave the federal territory is enforceable, has fallen victim to a criminal offence within the meaning of Section 25 (4a) (1) of the Residence Act, the BAMF grants a deadline of at least three months for leaving the country. This extended deadline is intended to provide stability and to encourage the person concerned to give evidence to the law enforcement authorities. It is important to differentiate between the decision on the extended departure deadline taken by the BAMF and the decision on granting a temporary residence permit.

There is close dialogue with the relevant immigration offices if migrant women are affected by gender-based violence. These offices are responsible for assessing the options under immigration law with regard to the respective residence permit.

**Flagship project in the *Länder***

The **Brandenburg State Reception Act provides for the possibility of relocation to another municipality in order to eliminate a dangerous situation**, in particular from family members or other persons from the personal environment (Section 7 (1) Landesaufnahmegesetz)<sup>82</sup>.

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81 [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_aufenthg/](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/).

82 <https://bravors.brandenburg.de/gesetze/laufng> (German).

## Article 51: Risk assessment and risk management

48. Please describe any standardised and mandatory risk assessment tools in use by all relevant authorities in all regions for forms of violence against women such as stalking, violence committed in the name of so-called honour and domestic violence and to what extent these tools are being used in practice to assess the lethality risk, the seriousness of the situation and the risk of repeated violence with a view to preventing further violence. Please specify whether the following elements are considered as red flags when carrying out the risk assessment:

- a. the possession of or access to firearms by the perpetrator;
- b. the filing for separation/divorce by the victim or the break-up of the relationship;
- c. pregnancy;
- d. previous acts of violence;
- e. the prior issue of a restrictive measure;
- f. threats made by the perpetrator to take away common children;
- g. acts of sexual violence;
- h. threats to kill the victim and her children;
- i. threat of suicide;
- j. coercive and controlling behaviour.

Inevitably, the initial risk assessment is made by the police officers conducting the initial police measures. This assessment, together with the documentation produced in this context (concerns the risk assessment instruments of the *Länder*, see below), is the basis on which further targeted measures to help the victim are determined. This includes urgent measures that cannot be postponed, such as referring the victim to the relevant police authority, providing contact details for specialised victim support organisations, and involving external authorities and organisations.

Several *Länder* use **standardised risk assessment tools** to evaluate cases of domestic violence (e.g. Bavaria, Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland, Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Hesse and Saxony). Here, many *Länder* employ scientifically validated tools such as the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA), the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide (SARA), the Danger Assessment Scale (DAS), or the Historical-Clinical-Risk Management-20 (HCR-20) violence risk assessment scheme (e.g. Baden-Württemberg, Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Bremen, Saarland, Rhineland-

Palatinate). These assessments often include an evaluation of “red flags” (e.g. Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen, Lower Saxony, Saarland, Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate). Case conferences are held as a preventive measure in several *Länder*, including Bavaria, Bremen, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saxony and Lower Saxony.

### Flagship projects in the *Länder*

In Bremen and Bremerhaven, **special service regulations** were introduced in 2022 to ensure that **high-risk cases of domestic violence** are identified and dealt with systematically. These regulations provide for a structured risk management approach that ensures early protective measures and close cooperation between the police and other relevant agencies. A multi-stage model guarantees a binding and transparent process aimed at preventing further acts of violence.

In Hamburg, the “**Perpetrator-Oriented Prevention**” concept brings together **judicial and security authorities** to develop **tailored risk management plans** for offenders who, upon release from prison after serving a full sentence, are considered to pose a serious ongoing threat. These plans are implemented under supervision as part of post-release monitoring. The aim of this approach is to prevent further serious sexual and/or violent offences. Depending on the case, the needs of relatives, children, and former or potential future victims are also taken into account.

#### 49. Please specify how effective co-operation is ensured between the different statutory authorities and specialist women’s support services in making risk assessments and whether the risks identified are managed by law enforcement agencies on the basis of individual safety plans that include also the safety of the victim’s children.

Across Germany, there is a growing trend towards binding, structured and risk-oriented cooperation to protect women and their children effectively. In several *Länder*, risk assessments for domestic violence and the development of individual safety plans are carried out in the context of **interdisciplinary case conferences** (Berlin, Bavaria, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bremen, Rhineland-Palatinate, Brandenburg and Saxony). These involve **structured cooperation between the police, judiciary, youth welfare offices and women’s support services**. Risk assessments frequently draw on scientifically validated tools such as ODARA (Saxony), DAS or HCR-20 (Hamburg, Bremen, Rhineland-Palatinate, Bavaria). Bavaria and Bremen also use standardised questionnaires developed by specialist services. Children are explicitly included in safety planning in several *Länder* (Hamburg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Berlin, Lower Saxony, Baden-Württemberg). In Saxony, Lower Saxony, Bremen, Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Bavaria, specific structures or internal guidelines exist for managing high-risk cases, including threat management and coordinated measures.

**50. Please describe the efforts made to analyse retrospectively all cases of gender-based killings of women, in the context of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women to identify the existence of possible systemic gaps in the institutional response of the authorities with the aim of preventing such acts in the future.**

Germany currently lacks a legal definition of femicide for consistent analysis.

In response to GREVIO recommendations, some *Länder* have begun analysing court judgments that may involve femicide in order to examine motives and underlying causes and develop targeted approaches (e.g. Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Saxony). In addition, various *Länder* carry out monitoring of violent offences to determine whether femicides are involved – in the context of high-risk case management, internal case reviews, working groups, and institutionalised reporting processes – in order to identify possible areas for improvement.

At both federal and state levels, there are several statistical evaluations and research projects. Particularly noteworthy are the annual federal situation reports on domestic violence and on gender-based crimes against women (see also Question 6). In 2025, the National Rapporteur Mechanism on gender-based violence is also focusing on the annual theme of “femicide”.

The DFG-funded research project at the University of Tübingen entitled “Femicide in Germany – An Empirical Criminological Study on the Killing of Women” is examining the case files of all police-registered homicides of women committed in one year across four *Länder*. By the end of 2025, the project aims to analyse different offence scenarios, backgrounds, and types of gender-motivated killings.<sup>83</sup> In addition to funding from the DFG, Saxony supported this study in order to extend the investigation period to Saxony.

#### Flagship projects in the *Länder*

In Berlin, an **information sheet entitled “Femicide / Gender-Specific Killings of Women”** has been developed for police officers to help them identify femicide cases appropriately.

Another example is the **research project “Homicides of Women in North Rhine-Westphalia”**, which examined killings of women in general and femicides in particular. The aim here was to explore the prevalence and phenomenology of femicide in North Rhine-Westphalia based on a special analysis of police crime statistics from 2014 to 2023 and based on interviews with subject-matter experts. The results were published in August 2025.<sup>84</sup>

83 <https://uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/juristische-fakultaet/forschung/institute-und-forschungsstellen/institut-fuer-kriminologie/forschung/gewaltkriminalitaet/femizide-in-deutschland/> (German).

84 <https://lka.polizei.nrw/ergebnisbericht-toetungsdelikte-zum-nachteil-von-frauen-in-nordrhein-westfalen> (German)

## Article 52: Emergency barring orders

51. Have any legislative or other measures been taken to introduce and/or amend the legal framework governing emergency barring orders in order to align it with the requirements of Article 52? If yes, please specify whether:
- a. emergency barring orders may remain in place until a victim can obtain a court-ordered protection order in order to ensure that gaps in the protection do not arise;
  - b. support and advice are made available to women victims of domestic violence in a pro-active manner by the authority competent to issue an emergency barring order;
  - c. children are specifically included in contact bans issued under the emergency barring order;
  - d. any exceptions to contact bans are made and in which circumstances.

There have been no legislative changes concerning interim orders at the federal level.

In cases of acute danger, the police can provide protection and assistance. In most *Länder*, when responding to domestic violence incidents, the police are authorised to remove the perpetrator from the home and issue a ban on returning. These so-called removal orders or exclusion orders are regulated by the respective state police laws. The time limits for such police orders vary from state to state, but procedures are in place to ensure that no protection gap arises before a **court-issued protection order** under the Act on Protection Against Violence (GewSchG) is in place.

Women who are victims of domestic violence are informed of their rights by the police, as well as of the possibility of seeking advice from women's advice centres/victim support.

In order to safeguard legitimate interests, the person concerned (the person from whom the violence originates) can contact the police and request permission for an exception to the ban on contact and proximity. If contact is absolutely necessary to protect the absolute rights of the addressee, the police will be present when contact is made.

**52. Please provide information on the measures taken to enforce emergency barring orders and on responses to any violations of such orders.**

See in this respect the “First State Report Germany“ on issuing emergency barring orders (p. 61–63).

**Flagship project in the *Länder***

Since the end of 2024, the Hessian Public Safety and Order Act provides the possibility of using electronic monitoring in domestic violence cases. The **electronic ankle tags are based on the so-called “Spanish-model”**.

In Schleswig-Holstein, the **Act for Improved Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence and Stalking through Electronic Monitoring** was passed in March 2025 which allows for electronic tagging to protect against domestic violence and stalking.

**Article 53: Restraining or protection orders**

**53. Have any legislative or other measures been taken to introduce and/or amend the legal framework governing restraining and protection orders in order to align it with the requirements of Article 53? If yes, please specify whether:**

- a. restraining or protection orders are available – in the context of criminal proceedings and/or upon application from civil courts – to women victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, including domestic violence, stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, violence related to so-called honour as well as digital manifestations of violence against women and girls;
- b. children are specifically included in protection orders;
- c. any exceptions to contact bans are made and, if so, in which circumstances these may be made.

**54. Please provide information on the measures taken to enforce protection orders and on responses to any violations of such orders.**

Questions 53 and 54 are answered jointly.

All forms of violence covered by the IC are punishable by law in Germany. Victims of violence, including children, have the opportunity to seek judicial protection, among others interim injunctions and protection orders. The children of the person at risk can, under specific circumstances, also be covered by protection orders. Exceptions to contact bans are possible on a case-by-case decision.

The legal framework governing restraining and protection orders is laid down at federal level in the Act on Protection Against Violence (Gewaltschutzgesetz – GewSchG). The plan is to make this framework more efficient by establishing new enforcement measures and increasing the maximum penalties for violations. Therefore, the Coalition Agreement between CDU, CSU und SPD for the 21th legislative term aims to introduce a new two-component electronic monitoring process (also known as the “Spanish-model“) at the federal level.<sup>85</sup> If the restraining or protection order is breached, the system would automatically send an alarm to the monitoring unit as well as to the person in need of protection. This would make immediate police intervention possible and would function as an individual warning system for the person in need of protection. Experience with such systems in other countries, especially in Spain, has shown that these monitoring schemes can decrease the number of breaches and other criminal acts due to the high risk of detection and their deterrent effect, thereby making the enforcement of restraining or protection orders more efficient.

Even today, electronic monitoring via GPS tracker can be ordered in several *Länder* in case of police emergency barring orders as referred to in Art. 52 of the IC, which function as short-term crisis intervention measures. In addition, it is planned that family courts should be able to order this measure in restraining and protection orders passed on the basis of GewSchG. These restraining and protection orders passed on the basis of GewSchG complement Art. 52 measures, as they usually cover longer periods of time in order to stabilise the medium- and long-term situation between the person in need of protection and the perpetrator.

Another measure which family courts are envisaged to soon be able to order when passing restraining and protection orders is the obligation for the perpetrator to take part in a mandatory anti-violence training. Although ordering such trainings is already possible today in criminal proceedings (Sections 153a (1)(2)(6) StPO, Sections 59a (6), 56c StGB) and in cases where children are endangered (Section 1666 BGB), an explicit legal basis for doing so in the context of restraining and protection orders under the GewSchG currently does not yet exist.

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<sup>85</sup> Coalition Agreement between CDU, CSU und SPD: „Verantwortung für Deutschland“ for the 21th Legislative Term, [https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/1063922/2c20ad4d0d961734db48abec10914e45/kw19\\_koalitionsvertrag.pdf](https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/1063922/2c20ad4d0d961734db48abec10914e45/kw19_koalitionsvertrag.pdf) (German).

## Article 56: Measures of protection

55. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure the following:

- a. that the relevant agency informs the victim when the perpetrator escapes or is released temporarily, at least when they or their family might be in danger (paragraph 1 b);
- b. the protection of the privacy and the image of the victim (paragraph 1 f);
- c. the possibility for victims to testify in the courtroom without being present or at least without the presence of the alleged perpetrator, notably through the use of appropriate communication technologies, where available (paragraph 1 i);
- d. the provision of appropriate support services for victims so that their rights and interests are duly presented and taken into account (paragraph 1 e).

See in this respect the “First State Report Germany“ on victim protection under Article 56 (p. 66–67).

The law enforcement authorities carry out risk management and must inform the victim on request about the escape or release of the offender.

The German Code of Criminal Procedure (Strafprozessordnung – StPO) provides for criminal proceedings the following rules regarding 55.c.:

### Section 247

#### **Defendant’s removal from courtroom during examination of co-defendants and witnesses**

The court may order that the defendant leave the courtroom during an examination if it is to be feared that a co-defendant or a witness will not tell the truth when examined in the defendant’s presence. The same applies if, on examination of a person under 18 years of age as a witness in the defendant’s presence, considerable detriment to the well-being of such witness is to be feared or if an examination of another person as a witness in the defendant’s presence poses an imminent risk of serious detriment to that person’s health. The defendant’s removal may be ordered for the duration of discussions concerning the defendant’s condition and treatment prospects if serious detriment to the defendant’s health is to be feared. As soon as the defendant is brought back into the courtroom, the presiding judge is required to inform them of the essential content of the proceedings, including the testimony given, during their absence.

### Section 247a

#### **Order for witness examination via audiovisual means**

(1) If there is an imminent risk of serious detriment to the well-being of a witness who is to be examined in the presence of those attending the main hearing, the court may order that the witness remain in another place during the examination; such an order is also admissible under the conditions of Section 251 (2) insofar as this is necessary to establish the truth. The decision is not contestable. Simultaneous audiovisual transmission of the testimony is to be provided in the courtroom. The testimony is, as a rule, to be recorded if there is a

concern that the witness will not be available for examination at a future main hearing and the recording is necessary to establish the truth. Section 58a (2) applies accordingly.

(2) The court may order that the examination of an expert be conducted in such a manner that the expert is located somewhere other than the court and the examination is simultaneously transmitted audiovisually to the place where the expert is located and to the courtroom. This does not apply in the cases under Section 246a. The decision pursuant to sentence 1 is not contestable.

The FamFG provides for family courts the following rules:

- In appropriate cases, the family court may authorise the hearing of witnesses by video and audio transmission in accordance with Section 30 (5) FamFG.
- If this is necessary to protect a party, e.g. a child, the hearing of a party shall occur outside of the presence of the other participants in accordance with Section 33 (1) FamFG.
- Section 157 (2) sentence 2 FamFG also provides for a discussion in the absence of one parent specifically for child custody matters when necessary to protect a participant, for example.

Regarding the victims' lawyer and the psychosocial assistance in criminal proceedings see the statements relating to Article 7.

# Part III: Emerging trends on violence against women and domestic violence

56. Please provide information on new developments since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country concerning:

a. emerging trends in violence against women and domestic violence, including its digital manifestations (types of perpetration, groups of victims, forms of violence);

In general, the following trends have been observed in Germany: cyberstalking, digital surveillance, doxxing, deepfakes, image-based sexual violence against children, cyber-harassment and romance scams resulting in so-called sextortion.<sup>86</sup>

Last year, the BKA published the nationwide situation report on gender-specific crimes against women in 2023 for the first time. This situation report provides detailed data on gender-specific crimes against women which is collected in a uniform manner across Germany. It covers misogyny crimes (prejudice against women and girls) and crimes which generally target women or primarily affect women. In the reporting year of 2023, the largest increase in the number of female victims recorded in the PCS is that of victims of digital violence, alongside victims of sexual and domestic violence, human trafficking and homicides. The number of crimes committed online where women or girls were victims of sexual abuse or suffered a violation of intimate parts of their body by having photographs or other images taken of them, and above all where women and girls suffered harassment, threats and stalking was up by 25% compared to 2022.

In connection with a joint pilot study entitled "Mapping the Germanosphere", conducted by the SCRIPTS Cluster of Excellence at Freie Universität Berlin and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD Germany), the digital networks of misogynistically motivated actors and groups in the German-speaking world were systematically analysed.<sup>87</sup> The study reveals that the issue is not limited to individual opinions or anonymous hate comments, but involves

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86 See bff: Bundesverband Frauenberatungsstellen und Frauennotrufe / Prasad (eds.) (2021) "Geschlechtsspezifische Gewalt in Zeiten der Digitalisierung. transcript Verlag. See also Prasad (2025) Digitale Gewalt im sozialen Nahraum. 6. March. <https://www.bpb.de/themen/gender-diversitaet/femizide-und-gewalt-gegen-frauen/560023/digitale-gewalt-im-sozialen-nahraum/> (German). See also civil society demands for action to respond to digital violence: Robert Bosch Stiftung (2021) „Digitale Gewalt ernst nehmen!“ [https://www.bosch-stiftung.de/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/2024-10/241010\\_Forderungspapier-DigitaleGewalt.pdf](https://www.bosch-stiftung.de/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/2024-10/241010_Forderungspapier-DigitaleGewalt.pdf) (German).

87 <https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/publications/working-paper-series/Working-Paper-57-2025/index.html>.

structurally organised digital networks that deliberately target women, gender equality, and diversity. Misogynistic narratives circulate in digital subcultures – including platforms and networks of actors – often embedded within anti-democratic discourse, as well as antisemitism and racism. The findings clearly show that certain platforms and discourse spaces are creating a kind of parallel public sphere that is largely inaccessible to opposing opinions.

Key areas identified for action include further development of support systems for target groups with specific needs, expanding measures to address emerging forms of violence, and focusing on new manifestations of violence – such as digital violence and femicide.

Several *Länder* mention a sharp increase in digital violence against women, often as a continuation of offline violence, and a growing use of deepfakes, image manipulation and smart home technologies as tools of control and surveillance. Hamburg and Baden-Württemberg are actively funding training programmes for professionals on how to deal with digital violence.

In response, the federal government and several *Länder* are supporting an app developed by the association Gewaltfrei in die Zukunft e.V., which provides those affected by domestic violence with low-threshold access to information and support services, serving as a bridge into the existing support system.<sup>88</sup>

There is also a need to highlight the particular need for protection of children, whether directly or indirectly affected as victims.

### **b. emerging trends in domestic case law related to violence against women;**

See in this respect the statements relating to Article 7.

With regard to digital forms of gender-based violence, existing regulations are being examined for legal loopholes – for example in connection with Bluetooth trackers and deepfakes.

Motives of a gender-based nature or targeting sexual orientation have been added to the German Criminal Code (StGB) as aggravating factors in sentencing.

Some courts are increasingly taking domestic violence against the other parent into account in custody decisions (e.g. in Bavaria). A reform of family law is planned to ensure that domestic violence is properly considered in custody and contact proceedings.

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88 <https://www.gewaltfrei-in-die-zukunft.de/en/>.

**c. emerging trends in the allocation of funding and budgeting by your state authorities;**

See in this respect the statements in Question 4 in Article 8.

State-wide funding for protection against violence has increased and become more structured. The emphasis is on long-term structural provision rather than voluntary services – for example through the Act on Protection Against Violence (Gewalthilfegesetz – GewHG). Funding is based on local needs: e.g. Berlin is increasing support for child protection counselling centres, Lower Saxony is funding projects against FGM and pilot programmes for male victims of violence. Saxony, as well as in a few other *Länder*, there are men’s shelters that have long since moved from the pilot phase to regular funding. Baden-Württemberg is investing in new protection services with an intersectional focus.

**d. innovative approaches to primary prevention, for example new target audiences and means of communication, public/private partnerships etc.**

See in this respect the statements in response to Article 7, 8, 12, 14, and 16.

As stated in response to Question 1 on “prevention / establishment of a project group on domestic violence”, the crime prevention commission (KPK) set up a project group which has drawn up a strategy and a range of measures to address domestic violence. The measures are mainly tailored to young persons between the ages of 14 and 24 who have their first experiences in couple relationships. The project comes as a YouTube campaign with comprehensive video podcasts and accompanying shorts. The BMI funds the accompanying academic research.

Nationwide there is greater emphasis on digital prevention campaigns (via YouTube, apps and social media), on targeted campaigns for young people, and on involving men as allies.

Various prevention approaches are also in place: Baden-Württemberg uses mobile teams in rural areas, North Rhine-Westphalia offers interactive online resources, and Saarland commissions schools to develop risk assessments and protection plans. Brandenburg is establishing mother-tongue prevention services for migrant women across the state.

**e. emerging trends related to access to asylum and international protection for women victims of violence against women.**

The BAMF has not seen any new trends relating to access to asylum and international protection for women who are victims of violence since adopting GREVIO’s Baseline Evaluation Report, as protection was already granted in Germany under the existing legal provisions before the report was adopted.

Sections 3 and 4 of the Asylum Act (Asylgesetz – AsylG<sup>89</sup>) and Sections 60 (5) and 60 (7) of the Residence Act set out the legislative measures required under Article 60 (1) of the IC to ensure that, on a case-by-case basis, gender-based violence against women may be recog-

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89 [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_asylvfg/](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_asylvfg/).

nised as a form of persecution and as a form of serious harm justifying subsidiary protection. Section 3a (2) of the Asylum Act specifically states that persecution within the meaning of Section 3a (1) of the Asylum Act may include, among other things, the use of physical or psychological violence, including sexual violence, or acts linked to gender identity. The BAMF also follows the gender-sensitive interpretation of the grounds for persecution provided for under the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in accordance with Article 60 (2) and (3) of the IC by means of corresponding provisions. Examples include the function of so-called “special representatives” for vulnerable persons (e.g. torture, trauma, gender-based violence, trafficking in human beings, unaccompanied minors) who are experienced case worker with a thorough expertise in the field (e.g. interviewing techniques, detection of the phenomena), interviewing spouses separately, using female interpreters and case worker, and providing information on gender-based persecution from a range of sources (international and nongovernmental organisations).

Migrant and refugee women are addressed through a wide range of measures, and their needs are reflected in the state action plans (LAPs). For example, in Brandenburg, psychosocial support for refugee women is being strengthened through mother-tongue services, peer-based approaches, and digital access points. Berlin has introduced targeted information measures for women refugees travelling alone – especially those from Ukraine. In Saxony, there is a specialised shelter for refugee women and their children.

Structural challenges remain in ensuring safe access to protection for refugee women, particularly those with insecure residency status or no legal documents – such as residence restrictions.

# Part IV: Administrative data and statistics

57. Please provide annual statistics for two complete calendar years prior to receiving this questionnaire on administrative and judicial data on:

- a. the number of reports, investigations opened, prosecutions, final convictions secured and sanctions imposed in respect of all forms of violence against women and domestic violence covered by the Istanbul Convention;

The Domestic Violence Situation Report is published annually by the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) and contains data on partner violence and intra-family violence based on the Police Crime Statistics (PCS).<sup>90</sup> The PCS only records cases known to the police.

Offence(s)	Victims 2023			Victims 2022		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>256,276</b>	<b>75,561</b>	<b>180,715</b>	<b>240,547</b>	<b>69,471</b>	<b>171,076</b>
Murder & manslaughter (not including killing another at their own request)	758	249	509	702	248	454
Dangerous bodily injury	29,577	11,855	17,722	28,589	11,277	17,312
Serious bodily injury	97	32	65	97	22	75
Bodily injury resulting in death	25	9	16	23	11	12
Intentional simple bodily injury	144,343	43,495	100,848	135,502	39,766	95,736
Rape, sexual coercion, sexual assault	4,853	164	4,689	4,529	163	4,366
Threat*, stalking, coercion	62,291	14,854	47,437	57,376	13,332	44,044
Deprivation of liberty	2,722	528	2,194	2,575	437	2,138

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/HaesuslicheGewalt/HaesuslicheGewalt2023.html> (German).

Offence(s)	Victims 2023			Victims 2022		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Pimping	34	1	33	52	1	51
Forced prostitution	63	0	63	58	2	56
Sexual abuse of children, adolescents, and persons in care aged 14 and over	4,039	895	3,144	3,941	891	3,050
Promotion of sexual acts involving minors	14	3	11	7	2	5
Abduction of minors	2,222	1,233	989	1,973	1,094	879
Female genital mutilation	0	0	0	3	0	3
Mistreatment of persons in care	4,416	2,196	2,220	4,365	2,195	2,170
Forced marriage	60	0	60	51	3	48
Sexual harassment	762	47	715	704	27	677

While criminal prosecution statistics do provide information on whether the convicted offense theoretically constitutes a form of violence within the meaning of the IC, they do not provide information on whether it was directed against a woman. This is only possible for offenses that indicate that the person affected is a woman, such as Section 226a StGB (female genital mutilation) and Section 218 (2) (1) StGB (forced abortion). The statistics and IT programmes regarding Section 218 only cover Section 218 (2) (1) StGB since this is the only relevant case of the provision.

Prosecutions	2022	2023
Section 218 (2) (1) StGB (forced abortion)	3	6
Section 226a StGB (female genital mutilation)	0	0

Judicial data on violence against women is only available with regard to proceedings under GewSchG at the family courts. Other judicial statistics, especially with regard to the criminal courts, do not collect personal data (such as gender) on victims.

Data on proceedings under GewSchG at the family courts is set out in the tables below for the reference years 2022 to 2024. The tables show all proceedings together including emergency barring orders (total proceedings) as well as emergency barring orders separately. Data is disaggregated with regard to the sex of applicant and perpetrator.

**Measures under Section 1 of GewSchG  
(judicial measures to protect against violence and stalking)**

2022	Applicant female			Applicant male			Applicant diverse*		
	Perpetrator			Perpetrator			Perpetrator		
	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*
<b>Total proceedings</b>									
Completed proceedings	2,395	30,554	10	2,198	4,298	3	1	5	0
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	171	3,880	.	200	544	0	0	0	0
Completed by other means	2,224	26,674	10	1,998	3,754	3	1	5	0
<b>Emergency barring orders</b>									
Completed proceedings	2,224	28,896	10	2,007	4,022	2	0	5	0
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	170	3,766	0	188	524	0	0	0	0
Completed by other means	2,054	25,130	10	1,819	3,498	2	0	5	0

2023	Applicant female			Applicant male			Applicant diverse*		
	Perpetrator			Perpetrator			Perpetrator		
	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*
<b>Total proceedings</b>									
Completed proceedings	2,914	35,305	5	2,580	4,938	4	2	9	1
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	360	6,107	0	294	836	0	0	1	0
Completed by other means	2,554	29,198	5	2,286	4,102	4	2	8	1
<b>Emergency barring orders</b>									
Completed proceedings	2,729	33,592	5	2,402	4,618	3	1	7	1
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	349	5,954	0	285	806	0	0	1	.
Completed by other means	2,380	27,638	5	2,117	3,812	3	1	6	1

2024	Applicant female			Applicant male			Applicant diverse*		
	Perpetrator			Perpetrator			Perpetrator		
	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*
<b>Total proceedings</b>									
Completed proceedings	3,005	34,000	7	2,690	4,876	7	1	5	6
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	383	6,157	0	329	841	0	0	2	0
Completed by other means	2,622	27,843	7	2,361	4,035	7	1	3	6
<b>Emergency barring orders</b>									
Completed proceedings	2,833	32,256	7	2,506	4,555	6	1	5	6
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	372	5,973	0	318	799	0	0	2	0
Completed by other means	2,461	26,283	7	2,188	3,756	6	1	3	6

Source: Federal Statistical Office, special analysis of the family court statistics

\* The family court statistics differentiate between the characteristics "female", "male" and "variants of gender development".

### Measures under Section 2 of GewSchG (handover of jointly used housing)

2022	Applicant female			Applicant male			Applicant diverse*		
	Perpetrator			Perpetrator			Perpetrator		
	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*
<b>Total proceedings</b>									
Completed proceedings	92	8,030	1	432	266	0	0	0	0
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	4	885	0	29	28	0	0	0	0
Completed by other means	88	7,145	1	403	238	0	0	0	0
<b>Emergency barring orders</b>									
Completed proceedings	91	7,711	1	408	251	0	0	0	0
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	4	860	0	28	27	0	0	0	0
Completed by other means	87	6,851	1	380	224	0	0	0	0

2023	Applicant female			Applicant male			Applicant diverse*		
	Perpetrator			Perpetrator			Perpetrator		
	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*
<b>Total proceedings</b>									
Completed proceedings	187	9,729	0	654	346	0	0	2	1
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	26	1,501	0	55	62	0	0	0	0
Completed by other means	161	8,228	0	599	284	0	0	2	1
<b>Emergency barring orders</b>									
Completed proceedings	175	9,384	0	614	332	0	0	2	1
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	26	1,479	0	54	62	0	0	0	0
Completed by other means	149	7,905	0	560	270	0	0	2	1
2024	Applicant female			Applicant male			Applicant diverse*		
	Perpetrator			Perpetrator			Perpetrator		
	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*
<b>Total proceedings</b>									
Completed proceedings	174	9,318	0	603	372	0	0	0	2
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	14	1,553	0	62	61	0	0	0	0
Completed by other means	160	7,765	0	541	311	0	0	0	2
<b>Emergency barring orders</b>									
Completed proceedings	167	8,978	0	577	356	0	0	0	2
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	13	1,523	0	62	61	0	0	0	0
Completed by other means	154	7,455	0	515	295	0	0	0	2

Source: Federal Statistical Office, special analysis of the family court statistics

\* The family court statistics differentiate between the characteristics "female", "male" and "variants of gender development".

## Measures under Sections 1 and 2 of GewSchG together

2022	Applicant female			Applicant male			Applicant diverse*		
	Perpetrator			Perpetrator			Perpetrator		
	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*
<b>Total proceedings</b>									
Completed proceedings	2,487	38,584	11	2,630	4,564	3	1	5	0
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	175	4,765	0	229	572	0	0	0	0
Completed by other means	2,312	33,819	11	2,401	3,992	3	1	5	0
<b>Emergency barring orders</b>									
Completed proceedings	2,315	36,607	11	2,415	4,273	2	0	5	0
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	174	4,626	0	216	551	0	0	0	0
Completed by other means	2,141	31,981	11	2,199	3,722	2	0	5	0

2023	Applicant female			Applicant male			Applicant diverse*		
	Perpetrator			Perpetrator			Perpetrator		
	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*
<b>Total proceedings</b>									
Completed proceedings	3,101	45,034	5	3,234	5,284	4	2	11	2
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	386	7,608	0	349	898	0	0	1	0
Completed by other means	2,715	37,426	5	2,885	4,386	4	2	10	2
<b>Emergency barring orders</b>									
Completed proceedings	2,904	42,976	5	3,016	4,950	3	1	9	2
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	375	7,433	0	339	868	0	0	1	0
Completed by other means	2,529	35,543	5	2,677	4,082	3	1	8	2

2024	Applicant female			Applicant male			Applicant diverse*		
	Perpetrator			Perpetrator			Perpetrator		
	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*	female	male	div.*
<b>Total proceedings</b>									
Completed proceedings	3,179	43,318	7	3,293	5,248	7	1	5	8
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	397	7,710	0	391	902	0	0	2	0
Completed by other means	2782	35,608	7	2,902	4,346	7	1	3	8
<b>Emergency barring orders</b>									
Completed proceedings	3,000	41,234	7	3,083	4,911	6	1	5	8
Completed by a measure under GewSchG	385	7,496	0	380	860	0	0	2	0
Completed by other means	2,615	33,738	7	2,703	4,051	6	1	3	8

Source: Federal Statistical Office, special analysis of the family court statistics

\* The family court statistics differentiate between the characteristics "female", "male" and "variants of gender development".

\*\* The figures represent the total of the values for Section 1 GewSchG and for Section 2 GewSchG. A proceeding can have more than one subject.

**b. the number of emergency barring orders issued by the competent authorities, the number of breaches of such orders, and the number of sanctions imposed as a result of these breaches;**

The tables in Section a. above show how many emergency barring orders under GewSchG were concluded with violence protection measures ordered by the family courts in 2022 and 2023.

There is no data available on breaches of such orders and the number of sanctions imposed within the framework of the family court statistics.

The criminal prosecution statistics collect data on the number of persons prosecuted and convicted for breaches of protection orders and obligations from settlement agreements under GewSchG as the most serious charge. However, this data can neither be disaggregated with regard to the sex of the victim nor with regard to emergency barring orders.

Data for the reference years 2022 and 2023, disaggregated with regard to the sex of the perpetrator and the most serious sanction, is set out in the tables below.

## Persons prosecuted and convicted, where Section 4 of GewSchG was the most serious charge

2022	prosecuted						
	total	convicted					
		total	under general criminal law				under juvenile law
			total	most serious sanction		fine	
				imprisonment			
total	probation						
male	728	544	541	37	29	504	3
female	36	27	27	2	2	25	0
total	764	571	568	39	31	529	3

2023	prosecuted						
	total	convicted					
		total	under general criminal law				under juvenile law
			total	most serious sanction		fine	
				imprisonment			
total	probation						
male	719	535	533	24	19	509	2
female	72	49	49	0	0	49	0
total	791	584	582	24	19	558	2

Source: Federal Statistical Office, criminal prosecution statistics 2022 and 2023

- c. the number of protection orders issued, the number of breaches of such orders and the number of sanctions imposed as a result of such breaches;

The number of protection orders issued by the family courts under GewSchG is set out in the tables in Section a. above (proceedings completed by a measure under GewSchG).

Regarding data on breaches of such orders and sanctions imposed, please see Section b. above.

- d. data on the number of decisions issued by family courts on custody/visitation/residence of children that have expressly taken into account incidents of domestic violence.

There is no data available on the number of decisions issued by family courts on custody/visitation/residence of children that have expressly taken into account incidents of domestic violence. The family court statistics do not collect any information on the reasoning for court decisions.

Collecting this information would require service staff at the family courts to analyse decisions, which is not feasible considering the quantity of custody/visitation/residence proceedings.

# List of Abbreviations

<b>ADS</b>	Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes – Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency
<b>AG</b>	Arbeitsgruppe – Working group
<b>AsylG</b>	Asylgesetz – Asylum Act
<b>AWMF</b>	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Wissenschaftlichen Medizinischen Fachgesellschaften e. V. – Association of the Scientific Medical Societies in Germany
<b>BAG</b>	Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft – Federal Association
<b>BAG TäHG</b>	Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Täterarbeit Häusliche Gewalt e.V. – Federal Association for Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence
<b>BAMF</b>	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge – Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
<b>BAfT</b>	Bundesweite Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Psychosozialen Zentren für Flüchtlinge und Folteropfer e. V. – Federal Association of Psychosocial Support Centres for Refugees and Victims of Torture
<b>bff</b>	Bundesverband Frauenberatungsstellen und Frauennotrufe – Federal Association of Rape Crisis Centres and Counselling Centres – Women against Violence
<b>BGB</b>	Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch – Civil Code
<b>BIÖG</b>	Bundesinstitut für Öffentliche Gesundheit – Federal Institute of Public Health
<b>BKA</b>	Bundeskriminalamt – Federal Criminal Police Office
<b>BLAG</b>	Bund-Länder-Arbeitsgruppe – Federal Government-Länder Working Group
<b>BMAS</b>	Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales – Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>BMBFSFJ</b>	Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
<b>BMDS</b>	Bundesministerium für Digitales und Staatsmodernisierung – Federal Ministry for Digital Transformation and Government Modernisation
<b>BMFTR</b>	Bundesministerium für Forschung, Technologie und Raumfahrt – Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space
<b>BMG</b>	Bundesministerium für Gesundheit – Federal Ministry of Health

<b>BMI</b>	Bundesministerium des Innern – Federal Ministry of the Interior
<b>BPol</b>	Bundespolizei – Federal Police
<b>BMJV</b>	Bundesministerium für Justiz und Verbraucherschutz – Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection
<b>BMVg</b>	Bundesministeriums der Verteidigung – Federal Ministry of Defence
<b>BMWSB</b>	Bundesministerium für Wohnen, Stadtentwicklung und Bauwesen – Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building
<b>CDU</b>	Christlich Demokratische Union – Christian Democratic Union
<b>DaMigra</b>	Dachverband der Migrantinnenorganisationen – Umbrella association of migrant organisations
<b>DFK</b>	Deutsches Forum für Kriminalprävention – German Forum for Crime Prevention
<b>DIMR</b>	Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte – German Institute for Human Rights
<b>DAS</b>	Danger Assessment Scale
<b>DZPG</b>	Deutsches Zentrum für Psychische Gesundheit – German Centre for Mental Health
<b>ESF+</b>	European Social Fund Plus
<b>EUAA</b>	European Union Agency for Asylum
<b>FGM</b>	Female genital mutilation
<b>FHK</b>	Frauenhauskoordinierung – Women’s Shelter Coordination
<b>FamFG</b>	Gesetz über das Verfahren in Familiensachen und in den Angelegenheiten der freiwilligen Gerichtsbarkeit – Act on Proceedings in Family Matters and in Matters of Non-contentious Jurisdiction
<b>G-BA</b>	Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss – Federal Joint Committee
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GG</b>	Grundgesetz – German Basic Law
<b>GewSchG</b>	Gewaltschutzgesetz – Act on Protection against Violence
<b>GFMK</b>	Konferenz der Gleichstellungs- und Frauenministerinnen und -minister, -senatorinnen und -senatoren der Länder – Conference of Ministers and Senators for Equality and Women’s Affairs of the Länder
<b>GREVIO</b>	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
<b>GVG</b>	Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz – Courts Constitution Act
<b>HCR-20</b>	Historical-Clinical-Risk Management-20 Violence Risk Assessment Scheme
<b>IC</b>	Istanbul Convention
<b>IntB</b>	Beauftragte für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration, zugleich Beauftragte für Antirassismus – Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration, also Federal Commissioner for Anti-Racism

<b>IMK</b>	Ständige Konferenz der Innenminister und -senatoren der Länder – Standing Conference of the Ministers and Senators of the Interior of the Länder (Interior Ministers’ Conference)
<b>KoaV</b>	Koalitionsvertrag – Coalition Agreement
<b>KPK</b>	Kommission Polizeiliche Kriminalprävention – Crime prevention commission
<b>LAP</b>	Landesaktionsplan – Länder (federal state) Action Plan
<b>LeSuBiA</b>	Lebenssituation, Sicherheit und Belastung im Alltag – Life Situation, Safety and Strain in Everyday Life
<b>LGBTIQ+</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer persons
<b>LIKO</b>	<b>Landeskoordinierungsstelle zivilgesellschaftlicher Akteurinnen und Akteure zur Umsetzung der Istanbul-Konvention – Federal State Coordination Body for Civil Society Actors on the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention</b>
<b>NAP</b>	Nationaler Aktionsplan – National Action Plan
<b>N.I.N.A.</b>	Nationale Informations- und Beratungsstelle bei sexualisierter Gewalt in Kindheit und Jugend – National Information and Counselling Centre for Sexual Violence during Childhood and Adolescence
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>NRM</b>	National Rapporteur Mechanism on gender-based violence
<b>ODARA</b>	Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment
<b>PAS</b>	Parental alienation syndrome
<b>PCS</b>	Police Crime Statistics
<b>ProPK</b>	Programm Polizeiliche Kriminalprävention der Länder und des Bundes – programme police crime prevention of the Länder and the Federal Government
<b>QB</b>	Queerbeauftragter – Federal Commissioner for the Acceptance of Sexual and Gender Diversity
<b>SARA</b>	Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide
<b>SchKG</b>	Schwangerschaftskonfliktgesetz – Pregnancy Conflict Act
<b>SGB</b>	Sozialgesetzbuch – Social Code
<b>SKiD</b>	Sicherheit und Kriminalität in Deutschland – Security and Crime in Germany
<b>SKM</b>	Sozialdienst katholischer Männer – Social services for catholic men
<b>SPD</b>	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands – Social Democratic Party of Germany
<b>StGB</b>	Strafgesetzbuch – Criminal Code
<b>STEM</b>	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
<b>StPO</b>	Strafprozessordnung – Code of Criminal Procedure

<b>UBAD</b>	Unabhängige Bundesbeauftragte für Antidiskriminierung – Independent Commissioner for Anti-Discrimination
<b>UBSKM</b>	Unabhängige Bundesbeauftragte gegen sexuellen Missbrauch von Kindern und Jugendlichen – Independent Federal Commissioner against Child Sexual Abuse
<b>UNCRPD</b>	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>VStGB</b>	Völkerstrafgesetzbuch – Code of Crimes against International Law
<b>WEMO</b>	Wirkungsorientierte Evaluation, Monitoring und Ombuds-/ Vertrauensfunktion – Impact-oriented evaluation, monitoring and ombudsman/trust function
<b>WfbM</b>	Werkstatt für behinderte Menschen – Workshops for Disabled Persons
<b>ZGS</b>	Zentrale Geschäftsstelle – Central Bureau
<b>ZPO</b>	Zivilprozessordnung – Code of Civil Procedure
<b>ZQP</b>	Zentrum für Qualität in der Pflege – Centre for Quality in Care

# APPENDIX 1

## Table 1: Initial training (education or professional training)

Please fill in the table and list the professionals (in the area of healthcare, law enforcement, criminal justice, social welfare, education, asylum and migration, media/journalism and support services) which have received initial training on violence against women. Please place each category of professional in a separate line.

The licensing regulations, the training and examination regulations, and the study and examination regulations, which regulate the requirements for training in medical and other health professions, provide the framework that is further specified by the *Länder*, universities, and training institutions through the detailed specifications of the training content in the curricula. Existing legal requirements certainly allow for the topic of violence against women and domestic violence to be addressed in the curricula.

The National Competency-Based Catalogue of Learning Objectives for Medicine, which describes the graduate profile of physicians as a non-binding model curriculum of medical studies, includes, for example, the teaching of competencies for the topic of sexualised and domestic violence. These topics are also anchored in the recently revised training programmes for the nationally regulated nursing professions, midwifery training and psychotherapy.

The BMG will consider this topic in future revision projects within the framework of the required training. The *Länder*, which must approve the national regulations on training in medical and other health professions via the Federal Council, are free to submit their own proposals through the usual participation procedures.

Explanatory note: The following tables in the annex pertain exclusively to the Federal Police. The *Länder*, which are not included here, likewise have comprehensive curricula specifying content and allocated hours for initial training (school-based or vocational) and for the continuing professional development of police personnel.

Professionals	Do they benefit from initial training on violence against women and domestic violence?	Is this training mandatory?	Are training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols?	Who funds the training?	Please describe the content and the duration of the training
<b>Criminal prosecution – police officers (Federal Police)</b>	Yes, especially when it comes to their role awareness in the discharge of their tasks.	Yes, for the victim protection officers in the district offices.	Framework Strategy on Police Protection for Victims (Federal Police) EU Victims' Rights Directive, Third Act to Reform Victims' Rights	Federal Police	Victims' Rights – theoretical basis (EU Victims' Rights Directive, etc.) Practical aspects of police protection for victims Victim protection officers – tasks Drawing up presentations or other media for in-house training
<b>Clerks in administration (Federal Police)</b>	Yes	Yes		No cost	Duration: three hours; aim is to raise awareness of victims and enable participants to speak to them in a sensitive manner. Recommendations for action are provided.
<b>Administrative officers for asylum (decide on asylum applications at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees).</b>	Yes, as part of EUAA training modules (Interviewing Vulnerable Persons).	Yes, as part of the European Union Asylum Agency Core Module.	Yes, curriculum is developed by the EUAA and updated periodically.	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees	How to speak to vulnerable persons. Duration: 30h online and three days' in-person training.
<b>All staff of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.</b>	Yes, as part of the training on anti-discrimination and diversity awareness.	Offer for all staff.	Yes, according to the curriculum.	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.	Awareness-raising measure. Duration: three days in person.

Table 2: In-service training

Please fill in the table and list the professionals (in the area of healthcare, law enforcement, criminal justice, social welfare, education, asylum and migration, media/journalism and support services) which receive in-service training on violence against women. Please place each category of professional in a separate line.

Professionals	Number of professionals trained	Is this training mandatory?	Frequency	Training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols	Please describe the content and duration of the training
Criminal prosecution zF-31-137 Advanced specialist training course on police protection for victims (Federal Police)	7	No	One-off training	Yes	5 days
Criminal prosecution Basic specialist training course on police protection for victims (Federal Police)	2	No	One-off training	Yes	10 days Theory/legal framework/practical aspects
Criminal prosecution S-31-900, Point of contact for female victims of violence ("Anlaufstelle Gewalt gegen Frauen") (Federal Police)	24	Yes	Adaptation/ supervision is provided for.	Yes	3 days Legal and psychological basis, network partners
Criminal prosecution police officers (Federal Police)	4	Yes	Every 2-3 years	EU Victims' Rights Directive Third Act to Reform Victims' Rights Framework Strategy on Police Protection for Victims (Federal Police)	Familiarising participants with legal basis, organisational framework and objectives of police protection for victims; enabling them to apply and convey knowledge and skills in practice Role awareness for the appropriate discharge of tasks Enabling participants to identify psycho-traumatological symptoms and speak to victims in a systematic and sensitive manner
Criminal prosecution Point of contact for female victims of violence ("Anlaufstelle Gewalt gegen Frauen") In-house training (Federal Police)	10	Yes	Twice a year	Yes	1 day Exchanging experience in the fields of victim protection, domestic violence, processing and documenting victim protection cases, getting to know network partners
Criminal prosecution Victim protection officers In-house training (Federal Police)	23	Yes	Twice a year	Yes	1 day Exchanging experience in victim protection; basic and advanced training of victim protection officers, network partners, updating legal and technical basis

Professionals	Number of professionals trained	Is this training mandatory?	Frequency	Training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols	Please describe the content and duration of the training
Clerks in administration within the Federal Police Regional Office in Munich (Federal Police)	25	No	At irregular intervals		Duration: five hours; aim is to raise awareness of victims and enable participants to speak to victims in a sensitive manner Recommendations for action are provided.
Criminal prosecution Control and patrol officers (Federal Police)	1710	No	At irregular intervals		Duration: five hours; aim is to raise awareness of victims and enable participants to speak to victims in a sensitive manner Recommendations for action are provided.
Criminal prosecution Contact persons for police protection for victims (Federal Police)	9	No	As required	Yes, through Framework Strategy on Police Protection for Victims, etc. (Federal Police)	1 day Legal basis, Framework Strategy on Police Protection for Victims Victim support Police protection for victims who are children or young persons disabled persons persons with a migrant background Victim protection interviews
Administrative officers for asylum who are prospective special officers for gender-based persecution. (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees)	No figures available	Yes, EUAA module on Gender, Identity and Sexual Orientation Training is mandatory for staff to serve as special officers in gender-based persecution cases.	One-off training according to the EUAA curriculum.	Yes, curriculum is developed by the EUAA and updated periodically.	How to speak to vulnerable people, with a particular emphasis on gender identity and sexual orientation. Duration: 30h online and three days' in-person training.
Special officers for gender-based persecution. (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees)	392 (as of 27.03.2025)	Yes, for special officers for gender-based persecution.	Regular intervals.	Yes, in particular through internal administrative instructions on asylum matters.	Detailed information on various forms of gender-based persecution in the asylum procedure. Training sessions are provided by external trainers (e.g. medical specialists, counselling services). Duration: three days.
Judges and prosecutors		No	Once a year		5-day-training: origins of domestic violence, femicides, German Protection against Violence Act, sexual child abuse

Professionals	Number of professionals trained	Is this training mandatory?	Frequency	Training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols	Please describe the content and duration of the training
Judges		No	Every two years		5-day-training: Nature and extent of damage caused to the child due to domestic violence between parental partners, Criteria and methods for assessing endangerment of child welfare, Investigative techniques to interview children, Reconciliation of protection against violence and child protection, Social training courses for parental partners engaged in domestic violence to promote parenting skills
Judges and prosecutors		No	Once a year		3-day-training: Serving the understanding for victims and appropriate treatment of them, as well as to optimise proceedings; phenomenon of forced prostitution as well as the role of the victim in investigation and criminal proceedings; Investigation tactics and technology, trauma research and testimony psychology as well as the special features of victim protection
Lawyers		No			Numerous training courses are offered for lawyers in which the relevant topics are also covered. These training courses typically address specific issues within a particular specialist area. The teaching content is presented within this framework. These are mainly courses in family and criminal law.
Education	63,257 professionals working in schools (49,444 teachers, 13,813 other education professionals)	No	Available 24/7		<a href="https://www.was-ist-los-mit-jaron.de/">https://www.was-ist-los-mit-jaron.de/</a> The training course is a ca. 4 hours long digital interactive course, geared towards teachers and other school professionals. The course aims to teach the basics about child sexual abuse, thereby enabling the participants to better help and respond to students who might have become victims of child sexual abuse.

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