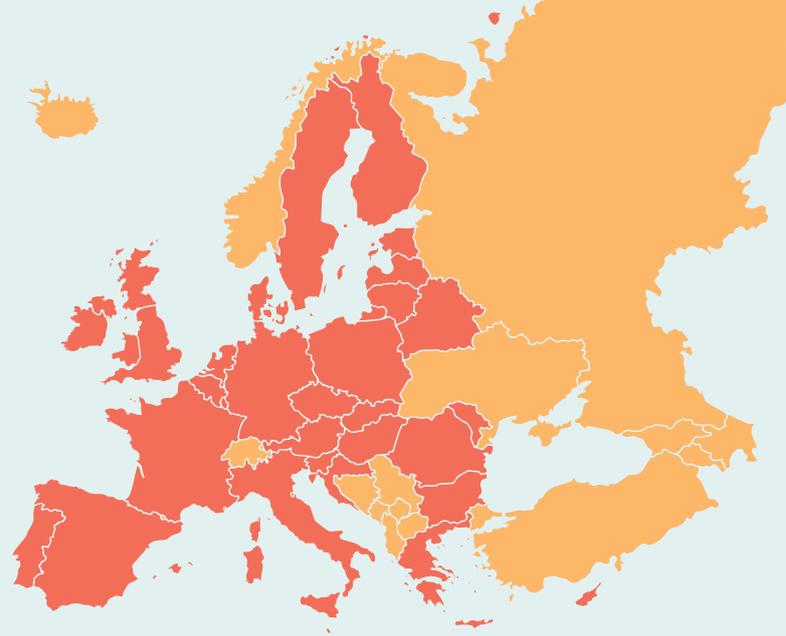




# COUNTRY REPORT 2019

## Statistical Factsheet



● EU and ● Non-EU WAVE Member States

### About WAVE

For the past 25 years the WAVE Network has been in a unique position to address and prevent violence against women (VAW) and their children. WAVE continues to be the only European-wide network focusing exclusively on gender-based violence (GBV) and its work continues to be of vital importance. This year the WAVE Network celebrates its 25th anniversary building a world free from gender-based violence. Since WAVE was established in 1994, the Network became a movement for change by campaigning, advocacy, capacity building, research, networking and information exchange. Data collection has been conducted by WAVE since 2008, when the first WAVE Country Report was published. Since that time, it is published regularly in order to monitor the situation of women's specialist support services.

### The Dataset

The WAVE Country Report 2019 gives an overview of the situation of women's specialist support services in Europe, putting an emphasis on four key areas of service provision – women's helplines, shelters accessible to women, women's centres and specialist services for survivors of sexualised violence. The data analysed in the report were collected from WAVE Delegates of each country, with the support of staff from the WAVE office. The data collection includes the 28 Member States of the European Union and 18 other European countries. The report presents data and information on women's specialist support services covering the year 2018. This time, the methodological approach expanded to include a specific section for specialist services for survivors of sexualised violence and another section for femicide victims.

### The Istanbul Convention

An important document setting standards for the provision of women's specialist support services in Europe is the Istanbul Convention. The Convention is the most comprehensive inter-

national treaty to tackle gender-based violence and aims at zero tolerance for such violence. This is the status of signatures and ratifications of the Istanbul Convention (IC) among the 46 European countries as of 21 November 2019:

- **The Convention has been signed by 45 countries:** Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, UK, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine.
- **The Convention has been ratified by 34 countries:** Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey.
- **The Convention was signed by the European Union in June 2017.**

Despite the Istanbul Convention not being signed or ratified by all European countries, the Convention sets a critical standard for service provision which all countries should follow. The standards laid out in the Istanbul Convention are also reinforced and supported by the Council of Europe through the 2008 report on minimum standards for support services.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Council of Europe report "Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services" (2008) can be found online here: [https://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/EG-VAW-CONF\(2007\)Study%20rev.en.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/EG-VAW-CONF(2007)Study%20rev.en.pdf)

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## National women's helplines

A helpline qualifies as a national women's helpline if it is a service provided specifically for women and if it only, or predominantly, serves women survivors of violence. A national women's helpline should operate 24/7, should be free of charge and should serve survivors of all forms of GBV. Other important elements of a national women's helpline are to have a widely advertised public number and provide referrals to other relevant services. It should operate nationally and provide adequate support to women from all regions; this means the staff must be properly trained and have a gender-specific approach towards violence against women, offer effective communication skills and be knowledgeable about regional situations and all relevant provisions.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1: Overview of findings on national women's helplines in Europe**

	Total number of countries with national women's helplines	Free of Charge	Operating 24/7	National women's helplines which are both free of charge and operating 24/7 (= meeting the standard of the IC)
Europe (46)	35	32	27	25
EU Member States (28)	21	20	17	16
European countries outside the EU (18)	14	12	10	9

Compared to the last WAVE Country Report 2017, 25 of 35 countries with at least one national women's helpline (71%) meet Istanbul Convention standards, which is a 5% increase from 2017. However, of all 46 European countries including those without a national women's helpline, the number is significantly lower, with only 25 out of 46 (52%) European countries meeting Istanbul Convention requirements for provision of national women's helpline. Ten countries with a national women's helpline do not meet Istanbul Convention standards (Belarus, France, Hungary, Latvia, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovenia and Turkey) and five of these countries have ratified the Istanbul Convention (France, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovenia and Turkey). This demonstrates that, despite some countries having ratified the Convention, there remains a gap between ratification of the Convention and effective implementation of the Convention. In addition to this, in several countries, women's helplines are unable to rely on the state for sufficient support, or support at all, and therefore must seek financial aid from other sources. This results in often unsustainable (and unstable) operational income.

### National Women's Helplines – Key Findings

- › 75% of EU countries and 78% of countries outside the EU have at least one national women's helpline.
- › 32 out of 35 European national women's helplines operate free of charge, while 27 out of 35 operate 24/7.
- › 71% of the national women's helplines existing in Europe meet Istanbul Convention standards, meaning they are free of charge and operating 24/7.
- › Only 52% of all European countries meet Istanbul Convention standards for provision of a national women's helpline.

2 WAVE Report 2017 Glossary p. 11.



## Shelters accessible to women

Women's shelters are essential services which provide women and their children, if any, with a safe haven when fleeing from violence. When subjected to GBV, women need to resort to a support system in order to regain their lives and independence. Women's shelters which provide not only safe accommodation, but also specialised support such as psychological counselling, legal advice, representation at court and employment advice, are important services which save women's lives.

The Istanbul Convention Article 23 calls for the provision of appropriate, easily accessible shelters for survivors (and their children) of domestic violence in sufficient numbers and recommends that safe accommodation should be available in every region. The Explanatory Report specifies that one family space<sup>3</sup> be available per 10,000 inhabitants<sup>4</sup>. The shelter spaces should also allow immediate and safe accommodation, preferably around the clock. However, it further specifies that the number of shelter places should depend on the actual need. When determining in the analysis if a country meets Istanbul Convention standards, the number of beds available in shelters accessible to women (rather than women-only shelters) are compared with the standard. This is because the Istanbul Convention requires that support be made available to all survivors of GBV, while also recognizing that women are the primary users of shelters which support survivors of domestic violence.

**Table 2: Overview of findings on shelters accessible to women in Europe**

	Total Population	Shelters accessible to women	Number of bed spaces needed	Existing number of bed spaces	Number of beds missing	Number of countries which meet IC minimum standard
Europe (46)	840,919,693	2,350	84,092	31,943	52,149 (62%)	5
EU Member States (28)	512,379,225	1,914	51,238	24,962	26,276 (51%)	3
European countries outside the EU (18)	328,540,468	436	32,854	6,981	25,873 (79%)	2

This table demonstrates that although shelter accommodation is available in a wide number of European countries, most nevertheless fall short of Istanbul Convention requirements. Data collected from 46 European countries shows that **62% of needed beds are missing**. In EU member states, 51% of needed beds are currently missing, while in the other European countries outside of the EU, 79% of beds are missing.

Overall these figures demonstrate that within Europe, only **five countries meet Istanbul Convention** requirements for shelter provision (Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway and Slovenia).

3 One family shelter place is considered to be the equivalent of one shelter bed space in the methodology of this report. WAVE is aware that the Istanbul Convention and its Explanatory Report refer to family places when assessing whether a country meets the minimum standards for women's shelters – the minimum requirement being one family place (covering two beds, one for a woman and one for a child) per 10,000 head of population. Nevertheless, the decision was made to use the term 'bed spaces', to avoid any confusion regarding the number of persons that can be accommodated in one family shelter place.

4 Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence: Explanatory Report (2011), p. 81.

## Shelters accessible to women – Key Findings

- › Currently 2,350 shelters are available for women experiencing domestic violence in Europe, providing a total of 31,943 bed spaces to women and their children.
- › Out of 46 European countries, only five meet the minimum standards of the Istanbul Convention for bed spaces for shelter provision.
- › 25 out of 28 EU Member states (89%) and 16 out of 18 countries outside of the EU (89%) fail to meet IC standards on minimum required bed spaces in shelters accessible to women survivors of domestic violence.



### Women's centres

The WAVE Network understands 'women's centres'<sup>5</sup> as women's services providing non-residential specialist support to women survivors, serving only or predominantly women survivors of violence and their children. The following are examples of services subsumed under the term: women's counselling and women crisis centres, supporting women survivors of all forms of gender-based violence; regional crisis centres on domestic violence; pro-active intervention centres serving survivors as a follow-up to police interventions; specialist services for black, minority ethnic women, migrant and refugee women survivors of GBV; outreach services; specialist services supporting survivors of human trafficking, female genital mutilation and so-called 'honour-based' killings; and other types of services.

According to the Council of Europe<sup>6</sup>, the minimum standard for provision of counselling services to survivors of violence against women is one per 50,000 women. This is the standard that has therefore been applied to the data when determining the number of women's centres missing in Europe; however, it is important to note that not all women's centres necessarily provide counselling services (most do however), and this is one limitation in the data collection and analysis.

**Table 3: Overview of Findings on Distribution of Women's Centres in Europe**

	Total Female Population	Total Number of Women's Centres	Number of women's centres needed	Number of women's centres missing
Europe (46)	433,715,059	3,323 <sup>7</sup>	8,675	5,352 (62%)
EU Member States (28)	261,832,242	2,594	5,237	2,643 (50%)
European countries outside the EU (18)	171,882,217	729	3,438	2,709 (79%)

42 of 46 countries have at least one women's centre, which is approximately 91%. Most of the women's centres exist in

5 Please view the Glossary in Section III for a full definition of women's centres.  
 6 Council of Europe (2008), Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services, Council of Europe: Strasbourg.  
 7 This number is likely much higher, since some countries could not provide an exact number of women's centres and are indicated in the profiles as N/A (Germany, Poland, Denmark, Romania, Switzerland, Norway, Malta). In other cases, such as the United Kingdom and Russian Federation, an estimated number of women's centres is provided.

EU countries (2,594) while approximately 729 are in countries outside of the EU. Four countries do not have specialist women's centres (Cyprus, Hungary, Netherlands and Belarus), and in some of these cases, other organizations such as women's shelters provide non-residential support to women survivors of GBV.

Of all women's centres reported in Europe, there are a great variety of types of centres available. Nine countries (Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Iceland, Kosovo, Lithuania, Norway, Slovenia and Ukraine) report having women's centres which are accessible to all survivors of GBV, without a gender-specific approach. However, 14 countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain and UK) report having centres which offer specialist support only to women survivors of GBV, and 19 countries report having both types of centres available, catering to all survivors of GBV as well as to women-only.

Most women's centres, as the basis of their work, provide counselling, advice and advocacy, and other support services, e.g. representation at court, police or social services. 23 out of 41 European countries (56%) with at least one women's centre have services providing only specialist support, e.g. for a particular form of GBV, such as for survivors of forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so-called 'honour-based' violence or trafficking.

Despite the vast majority of countries provide at least one women's centre, this does not reflect an adequate level of service provision. Applying the minimum Council of Europe standard of one counselling centre per 50,000 women, a consistent lack of adequate support services for survivors of GBV emerges. In the 46 countries analysed, 62% of the recommended women's centres are missing. Specifically, in 28 EU Member States, 50% of the recommended centres are missing, while in 18 European countries outside of the EU, 79% of the recommended women's centres are missing.

### Women's Centres – Key Findings

- › There is currently a minimum of 3,323 women's centres in Europe.
- › 42 European countries have at least one women's centre, while four countries do not have any specialised women's centres.
- › 78% of these centres are in EU countries, while 22% are in countries outside of the EU.
- › Overall there is a wide variety of women's centres throughout Europe, however the most prevalent types of services provided are: counselling, advice and advocacy support, including regarding legal options, housing, employment, other support services, and representation at court, police or social services.
- › Only seven countries have women's centres available in all regions of the country; however, 18 countries have women's centres in most regions.



### Specialist services for survivors of sexualised violence

Article 25 of the Istanbul Convention makes specific reference to the provision of support for survivors of sexualised violence, requiring that states provide for the establishment of "appro-

appropriate, easily accessible rape crisis or sexual violence referral centres” for survivors, with the recommendation being one centre available for every 200,000 inhabitants. These specialist services must have a “particularly sensitive response by trained and specialised staff”<sup>8</sup>, and provide critical services such as immediate medical care and forensic examinations, trauma support, information, and guidance in potential legal cases including navigating secondary victimization through judicial decisions.

A rape crisis centre (RCC) is understood to be a specialist centre for sexualised violence which offers long-term help that focus on counselling and therapy by offering face-to-face counselling, support groups and contact with other services. These centres also support survivors during court proceedings by providing advocacy and other practical help.<sup>9</sup>

A sexual violence referral centre (SVRC) may specialise in immediate medical care, forensic practice and crisis intervention, and can be placed in hospital settings to respond to survivors of recent sexualised violence. These centres can also carry out medical assistance and refer survivors to other specialist community-based centres.<sup>10</sup>

RCCs and SVRCs provide critical immediate, holistic and specialist care survivors of SV need, while at the same time reducing the number of referrals they may receive if contacting other services, and increasing their breadth of information and knowledge of opportunities in crisis situations specifically related to SV. **This focus on RCCs and SVRCs in no way discounts the work other women’s centres may provide for survivors of SV, but rather focuses on a particular form of specialist service provision which should be a standard for all European countries, as required by the Istanbul Convention and Council of Europe.**

**Table 4: Overview of findings on rape crisis centres and sexual violence referral centres in Europe**

	Total Population	Number of needed services to meet IC standard	Number of rape crisis centres/sexual violence referral centres	Number of services missing
Europe (46)	840,919,693	4,205	357	3,848 (92%)
EU Member States (28)	512,379,225	2,562	338	2,224 (87%)
European countries outside the EU (18)	328,540,468	1,643	19	1,624 (99%)

There is a severe lack of specialist support services for survivors of sexualised violence in Europe, with approximately 87% of rape crisis centres or sexual violence referral centres missing in EU countries and 99% missing in non-EU countries. Half of the countries provide at least one RCC or SVRC, with the most services located in Germany. However, only one country (Iceland) meets Istanbul Convention requirements for having one RCC or SVRC per 200,000 inhabitants.

Just over half (54%) of European countries report having other services in their countries which support women survivors of sexualised violence (although are not rape crisis centres or sexual violence referral centres). Most of these services provided are counselling services, as well as medical support services. Finally, specific helplines for survivors of sexualised violence exist in 33% of European countries.

### Services for survivors of sexualised violence – Key Findings

- Only half of 46 European countries have at least one RCC or SVRC, with a total of 353 such centres in all of Europe.
- Countries outside of the EU are missing 99% of services as required by standards set in the IC, and EU countries are missing 87%.
- 33% of European countries have specific helplines for survivors of sexualised violence.
- Over half (54%) of European countries have other services (other than RCC and SVRCs) in their countries which support women survivors of sexualised violence.



## Femicide

Femicide is the most extreme form of violence against women that victims can experience in a continuum of violence. The term ‘femicide’ refers to the gender-related killing of women and girls. Femicide crimes are connected to historically unequal power relations between women and men, which instil a sense of possessiveness, dominance and superiority over women by men.

Femicide may occur in the private or public sphere, with perpetrators often being intimate partners, family members or persons known to the victim. However, femicide can also occur outside the family sphere and may be perpetrated by strangers and acquaintances.

Data collection efforts on femicide are also regularly undertaken by women’s organisations such as Women’s Aid Federation England (UK), Casa delle donne per non subire violenza di Bologna (Italy) and feminicidio.net (Spain), covering femicides perpetrated both inside and outside the family or domestic sphere. Given that there is no harmonized data collection across European countries on the number of femicide victims, the WAVE Network aims to contribute to existing data collection efforts by collecting additional information from women’s organizations that are Network Members.

### Data collection on femicide victims in Europe – Key Findings

- There were at least 1,070 victims of femicide in 2018 (31 of 46 countries provided data).
- In all countries surveyed, government institutions from the criminal justice system and/or national statistical institutes regularly collect data on the number of homicide victims; however, this data is not always disaggregated by the sex of victims and perpetrators, nor by the relationship between victims and perpetrators.
- Ten out of 46 countries have women’s organizations which are carrying out their own data collections and record the number of femicide victims through media reporting and/or collecting data from police records.

8 Istanbul Convention Explanatory Report, p. 82 (Art 25 §138).

9 Istanbul Convention Explanatory Report, p. 83 (Art 25 §140).

10 Istanbul Convention Explanatory Report, p. 82 (Art 25 §141).