



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

# ***Protection against Violence Strategy based on the Istanbul Convention***

***Federal Government strategy to prevent and  
combat violence against women and domestic  
violence based on the Istanbul Convention 2025–  
2030***



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# Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>List of Abbreviations</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>1 Background</b>   | <b>10</b> |
| <b>2 Pathway to the Strategy</b>  | <b>14</b> |
| 2.1 Consultation of relevant actors   | 17        |
| 2.2 Format and target groups of the Strategy  | 18        |
| 2.3 Monitoring and further development of the Strategy  | 19        |
| <b>3 Areas of Action of the Strategy</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| 3.1 Integrated policies and data collection   | 22        |
| 3.1.1 Goals of the Federal Government in the field of integrated policies and data collection | 22        |
| 3.1.2 Initial situation in the field of integrated policies and data collection               | 22        |
| 3.1.3 Challenges in the field of integrated policies and data collection                      | 24        |
| 3.1.4 Measures  | 26        |
| 3.2 Prevention  | 31        |
| 3.2.1 Goals of the Federal Government in the field of prevention                              | 31        |
| 3.2.2 Initial situation in the field of prevention  | 31        |
| 3.2.3 Challenges in the field of prevention   | 34        |
| 3.2.4 Measures  | 36        |
| 3.3 Protection and support  | 40        |
| 3.3.1 Goals of the Federal Government in the field of protection and support                  | 40        |
| 3.3.2 Initial situation in the field of protection and support                                | 40        |
| 3.3.3 Challenges in the field of protection and support                                       | 42        |
| 3.3.4 Measures  | 45        |

## Table of Contents

|       |   |           |
|-------|---|-----------|
| 3.4   | Substantive law   | 51        |
| 3.4.1 | Goals of the Federal Government in the field of substantive law   | 51        |
| 3.4.2 | Initial situation in the field of substantive law   | 51        |
| 3.4.3 | Challenges in the field of substantive law  | 52        |
| 3.4.4 | Measures  | 55        |
| 3.5   | Investigations, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures   | 56        |
| 3.5.1 | Goals of the Federal Government in the field of investigations, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures                       | 56        |
| 3.5.2 | Initial situation in the field of investigations, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures                                     | 56        |
| 3.5.3 | Challenges in the field of investigations, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures  | 57        |
| 3.5.4 | Measures  | 59        |
| 3.6   | Migration and asylum  | 60        |
| 3.6.1 | Goals der Federal Government in the field of migration and asylum   | 60        |
| 3.6.2 | Initial situation in the field of migration and asylum  | 60        |
| 3.6.3 | Challenges in the field of migration and asylum   | 61        |
| 3.6.4 | Measures  | 64        |
| 3.7   | International legal cooperation, contributions of feminist foreign and development policy   | 66        |
| 3.7.1 | Goals of the Federal Government in the field of international legal cooperation, contributions of feminist foreign and development policy | 66        |
| 3.7.2 | Initial situation in the field of international legal cooperation, contributions of feminist foreign and development policy               | 66        |
| 3.7.3 | Challenges in the field of international legal cooperation, contributions of feminist foreign and development policy                      | 68        |
| 3.7.4 | Measures  | 69        |
|       | <b><i>Glossary</i></b>  | <b>74</b> |
|       | <b><i>References</i></b>  | <b>78</b> |

# List of Abbreviations

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| AA        | Federal Foreign Office   |
| ADS       | Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency   |
| AGG       | General Equal Treatment Act  |
| AsylG     | Asylum Act   |
| AufenthG  | Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory |
| AVB       | Asylum procedure counselling   |
| BAG       | Federal Association  |
| BAG TÄHG  | Federal Association for Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence                            |
| BAFzA     | Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions                                   |
| BAMF      | Federal Office for Migration and Refugees  |
| BBMB      | Federal Commission for Matters relating to Disabled Persons                                    |
| BE-Stelle | Reporting body for gender-based violence   |
| bff       | Federal Association of Rape Crisis Centres and Counselling Centres – Women against Violence    |
| BFKM      | Federal Coordination Office for the Protection of Male Victims of Violence                     |
| BGB       | Civil Code   |
| BKAmt     | Federal Chancellery  |
| BKA       | Federal Criminal Police Office   |
| BKM       | Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media  |
| BLAG      | Federal Government- <i>Länder</i> Working Group  |
| BMAS      | Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs  |
| BMBF      | Federal Ministry of Education and Research   |
| BMDV      | Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport   |
| BMEL      | Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture   |
| BMF       | Federal Ministry of Finance  |
| BMFSFJ    | Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth                          |
| BMG       | Federal Ministry of Health   |
| BMI       | Federal Ministry of the Interior   |
| BMJ       | Federal Ministry of Justice  |

## List of Abbreviations

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| BMUV    | Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection  |
| BMVg    | Federal Ministry of Defence  |
| BMWK    | Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action   |
| BMWSB   | Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building   |
| BMZ     | Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development  |
| BVerfG  | Federal Constitutional Court   |
| BZgA    | Federal Centre for Health Education  |
| CEDAW   | United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women)                        |
| CERES   | Collaborative project Cyber grooming – Exploration of risk factors, investigative practice and protective measures   |
| CRPD    | UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  |
| CRSV    | Conflict-related sexual violence   |
| DaMigra | Umbrella association of migrant organisations  |
| DIMR    | German Institute for Human Rights  |
| DSA     | Digital Services Act   |
| DSC     | Digital service coordinators   |
| DZPG    | German Centre for Mental Health  |
| EIGE    | European Institute for Gender Equality   |
| EOK     | Initial orientation courses  |
| EU      | European Union   |
| FGM     | Female genital mutilation  |
| FHK     | Women's Shelter Coordination   |
| FRA     | EU Fundamental Rights Agency   |
| FamFG   | Act on Proceedings in Family Matters and in Matters of Non-contentious Jurisdiction  |
| GBV     | Gender-based violence  |
| GG      | German Basic Law   |
| GIZ     | Germany Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)   |
| GewSchG | Act on Protection against Violence   |
| GFMK    | Conference of Ministers and Senators for Equality and Women's Affairs of the <i>Länder</i>   |
| G7/G20  | Informal fora for international economic and monetary cooperation of the leading seven industrial countries / twenty industrial and newly industrialised countries |
| GREVIO  | Independent Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence  |

## List of Abbreviations

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| HIV                 | Human immunodeficiency virus   |
| IDP                 | Internally displaced person  |
| IfeS                | Institute for Empirical Sociology  |
| IC                  | Istanbul Convention  |
| ICT                 | Information and communication technologies   |
| IntB                | Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration   |
| ISoLa               | Early warning system of the Federal Armed Forces for the recording, analysis and evaluation of the internal and social situation in the Federal Armed Forces |
| IMK                 | Standing Conference of the Ministers and Senators of the Interior of the <i>Länder</i> (Interior Ministers' Conference)                                      |
| ICRC                | International Committee of the Red Cross   |
| ICRC                | International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement  |
| KoaV                | Coalition Agreement  |
| KoMo                | Municipal monitoring of hate, hate speech and violence directed against public officials   |
| LeSuBiA             | Life Situation, Safety and Strain in Everyday Life   |
| LP                  | Legislative period   |
| LGBTIQ <sup>+</sup> | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer persons  |
| MEG                 | Programme for shaping migration from a development policy angle  |
| MENA                | Middle East and North Africa   |
| MHPSS               | Mental health and psychosocial support   |
| MiA                 | Migrants simply strong in everyday life  |
| MOTRA               | Monitoring system and transfer platform radicalisation   |
| NAP                 | National Action Plan   |
| N.I.N.A.            | National Information and Counselling Centre for Sexual Violence during Childhood and Adolescence   |
| NGO                 | Non-governmental organisation  |
| OSCE                | Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe  |
| PfP II              | Regional project – Partnerships for the prevention of gender-based violence in southern Africa II  |
| QB                  | Federal Commissioner for Queers  |
| RDG                 | Act on Out-of-Court Legal Services   |



## List of Abbreviations

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| SDGs    | Sustainable Development Goals  |
| SGB     | Social Code  |
| SGBV    | Sexual and gender-based violence                                     |
| SKM     | Social services for catholic men                                     |
| SoldGG  | Act on the Equal Treatment of Female and Male Soldiers               |
| SRH     | Sexual and reproductive health and research                          |
| StGB    | Criminal Code  |
| UBAD    | Independent Commissioner for Anti-Discrimination                     |
| UBSKM   | Independent Commissioner for Questions related to Child Sexual Abuse |
| UN      | United Nations   |
| UN-CRPD | United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Programme                                 |
| UNFPA   | United Nations Population Fund                                       |
| UNICEF  | UN Children's Fund   |
| VStGB   | Code of Crimes against International Law                             |
| WfbM    | Workshops for Disabled Persons                                       |
| WHO     | World Health Organisation  |
| WLO     | Women-led Organisations  |
| WPHF    | Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund                                  |
| ZD      | Joint Service Regulation   |
| ZQP     | Centre for Quality in Care   |



***1***

***Background***

**Gender-based violence and domestic violence – particularly against women – are still an everyday reality in Germany and occur in all social classes. Gender-based violence and domestic violence should not be seen as a private problem.**

The forms of violence mentioned here constitute a structural problem at the heart of German society. They are still triggered by the unequal power relations between the sexes, gender stereotypes, by the expectations and the roles attributed to the sexes and, *inter alia*, by misogyny, sexism and hostility towards LGBTIQ+ persons. The 2011 Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (in short: the Istanbul Convention, IC) aims to help eliminate such discrimination. The Explanatory Report on the Istanbul Convention describes violence against women as being deeply rooted in the structures, norms and social and cultural values that govern society. It is often perpetrated by a culture of denial and silence.

In Germany, one in three women will fall victim to physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lives. This is confirmed by relevant studies (for instance BMFSFJ 2004, FRA 2014)<sup>1</sup>. Roughly one in four women will experience physical or sexual violence at least once at the hands of their current or former intimate partner. However, only some of the persons affected seek any form of external support. Many incidents are not reported to the police, for example, out of fear or shame. A significant proportion of this gender-based violence against women does not take place in public, but in the realm of domestic violence and, in particular, violence within intimate partnerships. According to the Domestic Violence Situation Report (reporting year 2023), the number of cases of domestic violence recorded by the police is increasing almost continuously. Over the last five years, the number of victims affected by domestic violence increased by 19.5 percent and now stands at 256,276. In terms of intimate partner violence (IPV), the gender-based impact on women is particularly evident: in 2023, 155 women and 24 men fell victim to intimate partner violence with fatal consequences. A total of 167,865 victims of completed and attempted offences of IPV were recorded in 2023. 132,966 victims (79.2 percent) were female and 34,899 (20.8 percent) were male.<sup>2</sup>

The Federal Government is firmly committed to stepping up its efforts to protect girls and women from violence. This includes the full and effective implementation of the Istanbul Convention. It is deemed to be the most far-reaching international convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in the world. The IC sets out a broad understanding of the concept of violence, which covers all acts of gender-based violence that result or may result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering for women and girls.

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1 [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance-oct14\\_de.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance-oct14_de.pdf)

2 <https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/HaesuslicheGewalt/HaesuslicheGewalt2023.html?nn=219004>

This includes the threat of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in the public or private sphere. Furthermore, the term “gender-based violence”, as used in the Strategy, also covers all acts that are directed against transsexual, intersexual or non-binary persons on the basis of their (ascribed) gender, including their gender identity. LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup>-phobic violence is also understood as a manifestation of gender-based violence.<sup>3</sup>

With the entry into force of the Convention, Germany has undertaken – at all levels of government – to do everything in its power to combat violence against women and domestic violence, to offer protection and support to those affected and to prevent violence.

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<sup>3</sup> For detailed definitions of the different forms of violence, please refer to the Glossary (from page 78)



***2 The Pathway  
to the  
Strategy***

**Germany ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 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.**

The independent Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) opened the first monitoring procedure for Germany in February 2020. As part of this procedure, the Federal Government submitted a state report on the implementation of the IC in Germany to the Council of Europe in September 2020. This was followed by a country visit by GREVIO in September 2021. In October 2022 GREVIO presented its final report based on the state report, information from civil society and the country visit. In this report on IC implementation, GREVIO called on the Federal Government, *inter alia*, to establish a coordinating body at national level (Article 10 IC) and to develop a long-term, comprehensive strategy that includes a nationwide, effective, comprehensive and coordinated set of measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the IC (Article 7 IC).

The mandate to develop the Strategy also results from the Coalition Agreement of the Federal Government – Dare to make even more progress! (2021-2025)<sup>4</sup>. It envisages the unconditional and effective implementation of the IC. Both the establishment of a “national state coordinating body” and an “interministerial policy strategy against violence” are anchored and explicitly mentioned in the Coalition Agreement (lines 3847–3850).

Another mandate arises from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD). The Federal Republic of Germany has ratified the UN-CRPD and it has been applicable law in Germany since 26 March 2009. On the occasion of the last state review, the UN Committee of Experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed its deep concern about the high rates of violence against persons with disabilities and recommended in its concluding observations in October 2023 that the parties to the Convention develop a comprehensive and effective strategy for the prevention of violence as set out in the Istanbul Convention.

The present Strategy for Protection against Violence pursuant to the IC is the first one of the Federal Government to focus on the implementation of the IC and, by extension, to take into account all forms of violence covered by the IC. Previously, there were two action plans at national level. On 1 December 1999, the Federal Government's Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women<sup>5</sup> came into force, and on 26 September 2007, the Federal Government's Action Plan II to Combat Violence against Women<sup>6</sup> was adopted.

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4 <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/koalitionsvertrag-2021-1990800>

5 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/bekaempfung-von-gewalt-gegen-frauen-deutsch-und-englisch-80628>

6 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/aktionsplan-ii-der-bundesregierung-zur-bekaempfung-von-gewaltgegen-frauen-80588>



The Federal Government shares responsibility for IC implementation in Germany with the *Länder* and the municipalities. In the course of implementing the Convention, many *Länder* have developed action plans for protection against violence, set up coordinating bodies and are implementing measures under their own responsibility. By signing the Convention, Germany has committed itself at all levels of government to combating violence against women and domestic violence. The Convention is therefore addressed equally to the Federal Government, *Länder* and municipalities. In the federal system, responsibility for the expansion, further development and financing of the help and support system for all victims of gender-based violence lies in principle with the *Länder*. The Federal Government welcomes the activities undertaken at the municipal and *Länder* levels in these areas.

The Federal Government is hereby presenting a comprehensive strategy for implementing the IC, which encompasses at the federal level an interministerial, effective and coordinated set of measures to prevent and combat all forms of gender-based and domestic violence.<sup>7</sup>

The public budgets and the budgets of the social insurance funds are not negatively affected by the protection against violence strategy based on the IC. Measures that result in financial burdens or additional staffing needs for the federal budget will not have a negative impact on current or future budget deliberations. Any additional requirements arising from the listed measures or future measures linked to them can only be financed, in principle, by the Federal Government if it has the legislative and administrative authority to do so. Furthermore, they are also to be covered by the individual plans concerned within the applicable budget lines and staffing plan when drawing up the respective federal budget.

## 2.1 Consultation of relevant actors

In the run-up to the drafting process by the ministries, the BMFSFJ held a consultation with relevant actors from civil society, the *Länder*, municipal authorities and academia (see Article 7 (3)/Article 9 IC). 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 and federal ministries.

The results of the consultation were available to the ministries when the Strategy was being drafted. The recommendations made by participants regarding the areas of action of the IC are also integrated into the relevant chapters of the Strategy (see orange frames).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Never before have so many agencies (BKAm, AA, BMI, BMJ, BMF, BMWK, BMEL, BMAS, BMDV, BMVg, BMG, BMUV, BMFSFJ, BMZ, BMWSB, BMBF) and commissioners (BKM, IntB, UBSKM, UBAD/ADS, QB, Commissioner for the Fight against Antisemitism, BBMB) of the Federal Government been involved in a comparable process to afford protection against gender-based and domestic violence.

<sup>8</sup> The recommendations were made on the basis of the summary of the results ([www.bmfsfj.de](http://www.bmfsfj.de)) prepared by the BMFSFJ.

## 2.2 Format and target groups of the Strategy

The Strategy defines verifiable goals for the area of responsibility of the Federal Government and underpins them with concrete policies, resources, timelines and responsibilities. The Strategy is structured according to the IC areas of action.

The IC prioritises the gender-based approach. GREVIO calls for the development and implementation of a comprehensive and holistic strategy to combat all forms and manifestations of gender-based violence against women, including its digital dimension, and in particular to combat domestic violence as defined in Article 3 b of the Convention, sexual violence, stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, violence in the name of “honour”, female genital mutilation, forced sterilisation and forced abortion. It follows that the gender-based nature of violence must be attributed due importance in national implementation.

Article 4 (3) of the Convention sets out another obligation to implement measures to protect the rights of victims without discrimination, in particular on the grounds of race, skin colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender including gender identity, age, state of health, disability or multiple disability, marital status, migration or refugee status or other status.

Women as such and women affected by violence do not form a homogenous group.<sup>9</sup> Often, in addition to the attribute “woman”, they may experience discrimination on one or more other grounds, as described in Article 4 (3) of the Convention. Women can be affected by intersectional discrimination, for example because of their skin colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, racist ascriptions, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation or gender (including gender identity), age<sup>10</sup>, state of health, disability or in the case of need for care, marital status, migration or refugee background, including women with an unresolved residence status, or any other status.

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9 This Strategy uses the term “woman” to emphasize that it is predominantly women who are affected by the above-mentioned forms of violence. This has to do not only with heteronormative, cisgender realities. The life realities of other people affected by misogynous, gender-based violence must be given equal consideration. Consequently, the Strategy also covers other persons who are affected by LGBTIQ+-phobic violence.

10 At this point, it should be noted that not only young women run an increased risk of violence, but older and very old women in particular also have a significantly elevated risk of falling victim to violence.

Persons affected by intersectional discrimination face an elevated risk of experiencing gender-based violence. In addition, special consideration is also given to children and adolescents, as a particularly vulnerable group, also as victims of and witnesses to domestic violence.<sup>11</sup>

The Strategy, therefore, addresses in particular the intersectional attributes of victims of violence (Article 12 IC), as requested by GREVIO. All policies envisaged in this Strategy should take into account the principle of intersectionality and the attributes of all women. Dedicated support should 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.

This Strategy will create synergies with other sets of measures of the Federal Government and avoid any duplication. The Strategy should therefore be seen in the context of, *inter alia*, the *Queer Leben* (Queer Life) Action Plan<sup>12</sup>, the UN-CRPD National Action Plan<sup>13</sup>, the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and the National Action Plan on Racism and their related measures.

## 2.3 Monitoring and further development of the Strategy

The implementation of the IC as a human rights convention is a lengthy, ongoing process. To this end, coordinating divisions or units are designated as “focal points” in all ministries concerned in order to ensure an exchange of information.

The Strategy is further developed at the beginning of each legislative period on the basis of the agreements in the respective coalition agreement. The implementation of its goals is accompanied by a monitoring procedure for which the coordinating body is responsible. This includes a query by the coordinating body on the status of the implementation of measures in the interministerial steering group at the middle and end of each legislative period, as well as a monitoring report to be submitted by the reporting body on gender-based violence with the German Institute for Human Rights (DIMR) at the end of the period of validity (2025–2030). The results of the next review process by GREVIO will also be taken into account in the further development of the Strategy.

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11 In line with the definition of domestic violence in Article 3 b IC. Accordingly, all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit affect in particular the group of children and adolescents, regardless of gender.

12 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/205126/4826d1e00dc9d02e48f46fa47bb0c3e9/aktionsplan-queer-leben-data.pdf>

13 [https://www.gemeinsam-einfach-machen.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/AS/NAP2/NAP2.pdf;jsessionid=863D92C5148BF7EB5C32F20ACB0AC5BB.internet942?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=3](https://www.gemeinsam-einfach-machen.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/AS/NAP2/NAP2.pdf;jsessionid=863D92C5148BF7EB5C32F20ACB0AC5BB.internet942?__blob=publicationFile&v=3)



***3. Areas of  
Action of the  
Strategy***

## 3.1 Integrated policies and data collection

### 3.1.1 Goals of the Federal Government in the field of integrated policies and data collection

The Federal Government pursues the goal of implementing a comprehensive, coherent and holistic policy at the federal level to combat all forms and manifestations of violence against women that is flanked by the necessary institutional, financial and organisational structures. To achieve this goal, the present Strategy of the Federal Government should be adopted and implemented. It entails the setting up of a coordinating body, the ongoing establishment of the reporting body on gender-based violence, multi-sectoral and multi-professional cooperation between three federal levels of government and between government and civil society, and improved data collection.

### 3.1.2 Initial situation in the field of integrated policies and data collection

The Federal Government already has structures in place that promote policy coordination and data collection in the field of protection against violence. Since 2004, the BMFSFJ has organised a line of action with the Federal Government-*Länder* Working Group on Domestic Violence that enables cross-stakeholder cooperation and coordination between actors from the Federal Government, *Länder*, municipalities and civil society.

In addition, the National Council against Sexual Violence committed against Children and Adolescents runs a long-term, interdisciplinary dialogue at the Federal Government, *Länder* and municipal levels to further promote protection and support for children and adolescents, as well as for adults affected by sexual violence and exploitation in their childhood. In addition to representatives from politics, civil society, academia and professional practice, the body includes members of the Council of Affected Persons with the Independent Commissioner for Questions related to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Federal Government provides financial aid for the work of several umbrella organisations in the help and support system for women affected by violence, such as the Women's Shelter Coordination (FHK) and the Federal Association of Rape Crisis Centres and Counselling Centres (bff). The umbrella organisations provide a network and upskilling for local protection and counselling centres. They also coordinate and represent the interests of the help and support system at the federal level.

In Germany, there are a large number of studies and data collections that are initiated and funded by the Federal Government. One important statistical publication on the topic of violence in intimate partner relationships is the Criminal Statistics Evaluation – Intimate Partner Violence. It has been published annually by the Federal Criminal Police Office since 2016 and was incorporated into the Domestic Violence Situation Report from 2023 onwards.

The Life Situation, Safety and Strain in Everyday Life (LeSuBiA) survey has been conducted jointly by the BMI, BMFSFJ and BKA since 2021. It, too, collects valid data to facilitate the targeted development and expansion of offers of support and help for all those affected by violence.<sup>14</sup> The results can likewise be used to derive recommendations for action by the Federal Government.

The Independent Reporting Body on Gender-Based Violence at the German Institute for Human Rights (DIMR) is responsible for data collection, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and

for identifying the gaps that still need to be filled in terms of data, statistics and research. The reporting body has developed a human rights-based set of indicators that provides a foundation for creating a broad, reliable and comparable data pool on gender-based violence in Germany. In December 2024, the reporting body published the Monitor on Violence against Women, the first periodic report on gender-based violence in Germany. It evaluates data and information from federal and *Länder* ministries, civil society organisations and other institutions for the period 2020 to 2022. The report focused, *inter alia*, on access to protection and counselling, prevention, custody and access rights, femicide and digital violence.<sup>15</sup>

Pursuant to Section 27 (4) of the General Equal Treatment Act (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz*, AGG), the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency submits a report on discrimination to the German Bundestag every four years for the reasons stated in section 1 AGG. The report contains counselling data on all discrimination attributes pursuant to section 1 AGG, also for the attribute gender.

The number of registered hate crimes against LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> persons has risen sharply in recent years. According to the statistics, three to four people are attacked in Germany every day for queer-phobic reasons. In 2023, the number of registered cases of hate crimes against LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> persons rose further and is now at an alarming level. In the sub-category of sexual orientation, 1,499 offences (including 288 violent crimes) were recorded, and in the sub-category of gender diversity, 854 offences (including 117 violent crimes) were recorded.<sup>16</sup> These figures are not broken down separately by *Land* or by other attributes, such as gender. They also only show the number of cases that have actually been reported and properly registered. Other surveys have come to the conclusion that between 16 and 30 percent of LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> persons have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, and more than half have been harassed in the last five years because they are LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup>.<sup>17</sup> This makes Germany one of the countries with the highest rates of LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup>-phobic attacks. These attacks mainly occur in public spaces and on public transport. Many transgender people experience public spaces as “places of permanent threat”<sup>18</sup>.

According to the latest research, people with disabilities are at a high risk of experiencing violence in various areas of life, even if they live in dedicated disability care facilities. On behalf of the BMAS and the BMFSFJ, the Institute for Empirical Sociology (IfES) conducted a study on violence against women and men with disabilities in institutions that include inpatient and outpatient care settings in the period from 2021 to 2024. The study surveyed around 400 staff members in workshops for people with disabilities and around 1,000 persons in different residential forms at 20 locations and conducted focus group discussions with persons with disabilities, care staff and management. In addition, examples of good practice were documented and recommendations made for more comprehensive measures.<sup>19</sup>

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15 [https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere\\_Publikationen/Monitor\\_Gewalt\\_gegen\\_Frauen\\_2024.pdf](https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Weitere_Publikationen/Monitor_Gewalt_gegen_Frauen_2024.pdf)

16 <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/veroeffentlichungen/nachrichten/2024/pmk2023-factsheets.html>

17 <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2024/lgbtiq-crossroadsprogress-and-challenges>; <https://www.beltz.de/fileadmin/beltz/leseproben/978-3-7799-6443-8.pdf>

18 [https://www.lsbti-monitoring.berlin/wp-content/uploads/Monitoring-trans-und-homophobe-Gewalt\\_2022\\_barrierefrei.pdf](https://www.lsbti-monitoring.berlin/wp-content/uploads/Monitoring-trans-und-homophobe-Gewalt_2022_barrierefrei.pdf), p. 14.

19 <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Service/Presse/Meldungen/2024/studie-zur-gewalt-in-einrichtungen-der-behindertenhilfe.html>

### 3.1.3 Challenges in the field of integrated policies and data collection

In its first evaluation report on the implementation of the IC in Germany, GREVIO welcomed some of the policies already in place. Nevertheless, the report highlighted a number of challenges that needed to be addressed more vigorously in Germany. For example, GREVIO criticised the fact that a comprehensive national strategy in line with Article 7 of the Convention had not yet been developed to establish common definitions of violence against women and domestic violence at the central level and to set nationwide goals for the implementation of the IC. Furthermore, a national coordinating body in line with Article 10 of the Convention has not yet been set up.

Moreover, GREVIO recommends ensuring that there are adequate human and financial resources, in accordance with Article 8 of the Convention, for all strategies, measures and legal provisions aimed at preventing and combating violence against women and for the institutions in charge of their implementation, including dedicated support services provided by civil society organisations.<sup>20</sup>

Germany is a federal country in which responsibilities are shared by the Federal Government, *Länder* and municipalities. One key challenge is that data collection on domestic and gender-based violence in Germany is not harmonised. This is hampered by Germany's federal structure. GREVIO has observed that administrative data collection in Germany currently falls short of the requirements of Article 11 of the Convention and that the administrative data collected are highly fragmented.<sup>21</sup>

Further challenges in the field of data collection were outlined in the first report of the independent reporting body for gender-based violence on the Data Situation on Gender-based Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.<sup>22</sup> The report concluded that the usability of administrative data for monitoring and research and the disaggregation of existing data based on attributes of relevance for human rights would have to be improved. There was a need for a structured and continuous collection of data from different (administrative) levels that should be comparable with each other.

Although data on cases of intimate partner violence are collected in Germany, the Domestic Violence Situation Report, for example, does not constitute a complete database for cases of femicide. Femicide – the intentional killing of women and girls because of their gender – is the most extreme form of gender-based violence against women. The new situation report Gender-based Offences against Women, published on 19 November 2024, constitutes the first expansion of the database.<sup>23</sup> For the first time, the Federal Government has provided a nationwide and comprehensive database for monitoring gender-based offences against women.

Challenges also arise with regard to factoring gender diversity into data collection and evaluation. In order to ensure that protection and support services for trans and non-binary individuals are easily accessible and tailored to their specific needs, statistical data collection and the evaluation of measures must really take their identities into account. In so doing, specific experiences of violence and discrimination at the intersections of various forms of marginalisation should also be consciously taken into account (e.g. transmisogyny and the

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20 20 GREVIO/inf(2022)9 2022, p. 27 et seq., paras. 42–67. GREVIO/inf(2022)9 2022, p. 27 et seq., para. 30.

21 GREVIO/inf(2022)9 2022, p. 27 et seq., para. 30. <https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/publikationen/detail/bericht-ueber-die-datenlage-zu-geschlechtsspezifischergewalt-gegen-frauen-und-haesuslicher-gewalt-in-deutschland>

22 <https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/publikationen/detail/bericht-ueber-die-datenlage-zu-geschlechtsspezifischergewalt-gegen-frauen-und-haesuslicher-gewalt-in-deutschland>

23 <https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/StraftatenGegenFrauen/StraftatengegenFrauenBLB2023.html?nn=237578>



specific experiences of violence of racialised, impoverished and disabled trans\* and non-binary persons or those without secure residence status or access to medical care).

Due to the limited statistical recording to date, more precise data on the extent to which LGBTIQ+ persons are affected by domestic and intimate partner violence are lacking. For example, it is not known whether and how many young LGBTIQ+ persons experience domestic violence when, for example, parents or siblings do not accept their sexual orientation or gender identity. Data on intimate partner violence in non-heterosexual relationships are not officially collected or recorded separately.

Finally, collecting data on the prevalence of violence in caregiving settings is also challenging. Violence in this context takes many forms, and all the people involved in caregiving can be both victims and perpetrators – or both. However, the opportunity to interview possible victims, witnesses or perpetrators or their willingness to provide information are limited. This applies particularly to home-based care, the context in which most people in need of care are looked after throughout Germany (according to the care statistics of the Federal Statistical Office, 84 percent of people in need of care at the end of 2021). Due to the difficult access to the field of investigation and to the people affected, a high number of unreported cases must be assumed.

**Results from the consultation on  
14 November 2023**

**Integrated policies and data collection:**

*Ensure the involvement of civil society and address all forms of violence; take intersectionality and multiple discrimination into account and strengthen the gender-based perspective.*

**Data:**

*Coordinate and consolidate data collection and evaluation and (further) develop a nationwide, overarching system of indicators, taking into account the perspective of those affected.*

**Coordination:**

*Horizontal and vertical coordination of all levels and policy areas and designation of clear responsibilities.*

**Resources:**

*Interministerial, long-term and structural funding of protection against violence and provision of budgetary resources specifically for the implementation of the IC.*

### 3.1.4 Measures

The challenges are to be tackled, *inter alia*, with the following measures:

Table 1 Measures for the area of action of integrated policies and data collection

| Title  | Short description of measure  | Responsibility       | Timeline  | Budget in €                                       |
|--|---|----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Further development of the Federal Government-Länder Working Group on Domestic Violence in conjunction with the coordinating body | The tasks of the Federal Government-Länder Working Group on Domestic Violence (BLAG) are mainly to exchange information on developments and activities at the EU, Federal Government, Länder and municipality levels, to discuss current developments, to present good practices and to establish a network between the different levels of government and civil society. The relevant federal and Länder ministries, the specialist ministerial conferences of the Länder, the municipalities, NGOs and professional associations are represented. The Working Group's format, structure and content are further developed on the basis of the Strategy. | BMFSFJ               | Since 2004  | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 2. Networking of the women's support system at federal level: Funding of the Federal Coordinating Body for Women's Shelters (FHK)    | The aim is to further develop the women's support system (focus on women's shelters) and thus indirectly to improve support for women affected by violence. The work of the FHK contributes to the professional quality development of local services and to the transfer of current policy challenges from the federal level to practice and vice versa. It pools the expertise of women's shelters and feeds it into policy and professional discussion processes.  | BMFSFJ <sup>24</sup> | 1.1.2022 to 31.12.2024 and new funding period from 1.1.2025 | €1,294,000  |

24 In principle, the Federal Government and Länder each separately cover the expenses incurred through the performance of their tasks. The tasks that the Federal Government and the Länder have to perform are determined by the administrative competences laid down in the Basic Law (GG). The financing of state action is therefore the responsibility of the level that has the administrative competence to carry out the measure. In addition, the Federal Government can assert an unwritten competence from the nature of the matter in hand for tasks that can only be handled by it in a uniform manner on a nationwide basis. This concerns cases in which a task cannot be performed by a single Land alone due to its nature. These tasks must, therefore, be tackled at the supraregional level.

The networking bodies have this supraregional character and are central facilities whose sphere of influence extends to the entire federal territory. The Federal Government therefore supports, as part of its remit, the networking body for women's shelters (FHK) and the networking body for the Federal Association of Rape Crisis Centres and Counselling Centres (bff). They, in turn, promote the exchange, close cooperation and formation of a network of facilities and projects on the ground. This ensures the maintenance and further development of professional and qualified support and counselling services for female victims of violence throughout Germany. The networking bodies pool the expertise and professional competence of the facilities that provide support for women affected by violence in Germany and introduce them into policy discussions, to the public at large and in legislation. They back the professional and societal objectives of their members at the federal level and provide assistance in legal matters. In addition, the networking bodies help to create structures that are designed to support the sustainable, efficient and economic action of support facilities on the ground. They work to close existing gaps in the support system and thus contribute to achieving uniformity of living conditions throughout Germany. Through nationwide public relations work and in-service training opportunities on the topic of violence against women and girls, the networking bodies provide information about the services offered by their members and raise awareness of the topic among the public at large and various relevant professional groups.

| Title  | Short description of measure   | Responsibility       | Timeline  | Budget in €                                       |
|--|--|----------------------|---|---|
| 3. Networking of the women's support system at the federal level: Funding for the coordinating body of Women's Counselling and Rape Crisis Centres (bff) | The goal is to further develop the women's support system (focus on a mobile women's support system) and thus indirectly improve support for women affected by violence. The work of the bff contributes to the professional quality development of local counselling centres and to the transfer of current policy challenges from the federal level to practice and vice versa. It draws together the expertise of the counselling bodies and feeds it into policy and professional discussion processes.    | BMFSFJ <sup>25</sup> | 1.1.2022 to 31.12.2024 and new funding period from 1.1.2025 | €1,192,000  |
| 4. Status Report on Domestic violence  | The status report has been compiled since the 2022 reporting year. An update and supplement to the earlier evaluation of crime statistics on intimate partner violence (since 2015 by the BKA), it also contains evaluations of crime statistics for offences of violence within families in order to provide an overview of domestic violence as a whole.   | BKA                  | From reporting year 2022 (publication 2023)                 | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 5. Status Report on Gender-based Offences against Women  | Up to now, no corresponding status report has been compiled. The goal is to create a standardised national database for monitoring gender-based offences against women in a longitudinal and cross-sectional way, to provide robust data for the preventive fight against and prosecution of crime, for organisational planning and decisions, as well as for criminological-sociological research and criminal policy measures, to keep the public informed and to meet international reporting requirements. | BKA                  | from reporting year 2023 (publication 2024)                 | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 6. Population survey Life Situation, Safety and Strain in Everyday Life (LeSuBiA)  | LeSuBiA (Life Situation, Safety and Strain in Everyday Life) is a gender-spanning survey with the focus on intimate partner violence, sexual violence and digital violence in Germany, which also meets the obligations of the IC. A periodic repeat of the survey is being examined.  | BMFSFJ, BMI, BKA     | 2021 to 2025  | €5,657,000 (total)                                |
| 7. Reporting body for gender-based violence  | The task of the reporting body is to undertake continuous and independent reporting on IC implementation in Germany. The goal is to comply with the obligations set out in Article 10 IC.  | BMFSFJ               | 1.11.2022 to 31.10.2026                                     | €3,669,000  |
| 8. Setting up a coordinating body pursuant to the Istanbul Convention  | The national coordinating body is established in accordance with Article 10 IC and is attached to the BMFSFJ. The role of the coordinating body is to coordinate all policies and other measures of the Federal Government to prevent and combat the forms of violence covered by the Convention.  | BMFSFJ               | From 2025   | no budgetary impact                               |
| 9. Designation of focal points in the relevant ministries to liaise with the national coordinating body.   | The designation of focal points (e.g. coordinating division/units) within the ministries is intended to ensure an exchange and cooperation with the national coordinating body.  | all                  | From 2025   | no budgetary impact                               |

25 See footnote 21.

| Title   | Short description of measure   | Responsibility  | Timeline  | Budget in €  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| 10. Continuation of the Together against Violence round table with the Federal Government, <i>Länder</i> and municipalities | The Together Against Violence against Women round table is a forum for the Federal Government, <i>Länder</i> and municipalities to exchange ideas at the top policy-making echelon for more effective protection against domestic and gender-based violence.   | BMFSFJ  | Since 2018  | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable  |
| 11. Municipal monitoring of hate, hate speech and violence directed against public officials (KoMo)                         | Using a longitudinal online survey as part of the cutting-edge research cluster – Monitoring System and Transfer Platform MOTRA –, full-time and volunteer public officials at the municipal level are interviewed every six months about their experiences with hostility and assaults in their daily work. The analyses also specifically address the group of female public officials.  | BMBF, BMI, BKA <sup>26</sup>  | 2022 to 2024<br>Continuation planned  | €252,000   |
| 12. Further development of the Interactive Gender Equality Atlas  | The Interactive Gender Equality Atlas uses 40 indicators to generate a comprehensive overview of regional differences in gender equality between women and men in Germany. The Atlas also contains data on intimate partner violence.  | BMFSFJ  | 2024 et seqq.   | approximately €102,000 p. a.                       |
| 13. Development of a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking   | The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (NAP MH) aims to optimise the structured planning and efficient bundling of the Federal Government's measures to prevent and combat human trafficking, to protect victims, and to deal with all forms of human trafficking, including sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, exploitation of criminal acts, organ trafficking, begging and child trafficking. The gender dimension of human trafficking and the particular vulnerability of women and children should be fully addressed by the measures set out in the NAP. | Interministerial Steering Group on Human Trafficking (AA, BMAS, BMF, BMFSFJ, BMG, BMI, BMJ, BMZ), coordinated by BMFSFJ | Planned approval of the NAP before the end of the legislative period, implementation probably from 2025, review and revision after four years | envisaged in the budget sections, not quantifiable |

26 The municipal monitoring of hate, hate speech and violence against public officials (KoMo) is carried out as part of the collaborative project Monitoring System and Transfer Platform Radicalisation (MOTRA) at the Federal Criminal Police Office with cooperation partners (including main municipal organisations). It provides valuable evaluation results and insights in the field of municipal conflict analyses by means of a longitudinal, regular survey of full-time and volunteer public officials and elected representatives. The results provide insights into current (analogue/digital) hostility incidents involving public officials at the municipal level. The only regular, nationwide survey on prevalence among municipal officials, KoMo, constitutes an indispensable empirical basis for many actors dealing with the topic. It facilitates the drawing of robust conclusions about the scale of the problem, changes over time, regional differences and key topics, such as the specific victimisation of women. On the basis of these analyses, for example, forward-looking measures to protect municipal policymakers from hostility and assault can be developed and implemented. It makes sense for such a supra-regional and periodic survey to be carried out by an actor at the federal level who is trusted by the target group. The basis for this is the coordinating function arising from Article 87 (1) sentence 2 of the German Basic Law in conjunction with Article 73 (1) no. 10 a) of the Basic Law. In addition, the Federal Government has fundamental responsibility and, by extension, financing competence, since ensuring safety is clearly a supraregional matter and research on civil security is an endeavour that, by its very nature, cannot be effectively funded by one Land (unwritten financing competence pursuant to the body of case law of the Federal Constitutional Court). In addition, the establishment of an alliance to protect municipal officials and elected representatives was also agreed by the Federal Ministry of the Interior as Measure 9 in the implementation of the Action Plan to combat Right-Wing Extremism, which already began its work at the beginning of 2022. The municipal umbrella organisations, municipal policy associations, municipal policymakers, relevant authorities and social organisations are members of this alliance. The aim was for the group of experts to develop on their own behalf effective and rapidly implementable measures to protect municipal policymakers. On 15 January 2024, the alliance presented a total of six concrete proposals to improve the situation of public officials and elected representatives. This also includes the observation that the scale of the threat to municipal officials and elected representatives necessitates long-term examination as part of regular monitoring by the Federal Criminal Police Office (MOTRAKoMo project) in order to identify any trends and developments in conjunction with this phenomenon at an early stage and to derive appropriate preventive measures from the findings.

| Title   | Short description of measure   | Responsibility   | Timeline   | Budget in €   |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| <p>14. Implementation of the Federal Government's Queer Life action plan</p>  | <p>In the area of action of safety the Federal Government's Queer Life action plan (<a href="http://www.aktionsplanqueer-leben.de">www.aktionsplanqueer-leben.de</a>) encompasses a series of safety measures to afford protection against violence, assaults and hostility and also against domestic violence and sexual violence directed at lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer persons (LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup>).</p> <p>In the accompanying participatory process, agencies, <i>Länder</i> and civil society have exchanged ideas on how to implement the measures. Civil society has developed several recommendation papers with concrete proposals for instance on topics such as protection against violence, LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> refugees, protection of children and adolescents and LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> persons in foreign policy and development cooperation, which have been submitted to the relevant ministries. The Federal Government will report to the Bundestag and the Bundesrat on the implementation status of the Queer Life action plan at the end of 2024.</p> | <p>Interministerial</p>  | <p>since 2022</p>  | <p>envisaged in the budget sections, not quantifiable</p> |
| <p>15. IMK decision on combating homophobic and transphobic violence (219<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Conference of the Ministers and Senators of the Interior of the <i>Länder</i> in Berlin from 14 to 16 June 2023)</p> | <p>The IMK intends to continuously improve the combating of violence directed against LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> persons by taking appropriate measures. In this context, it should be examined whether and how the recommendations for action contained in the final report of the Working Group on Combating Homophobic and Transphobic Violence can be implemented. The IMK has asked the BMI to report to its autumn meeting in 2025 on the development of LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup>-phobic offences and on the implementation status of the recommendations for action, with the participation of the members of the Working Group on Combating Homophobic and Transphobic violence.</p>   | <p>IMK, BMI, BMJ, BKA, Ministries of the Interior of the <i>Länder</i></p> | <p>2023 to 2025 (thereafter continuous)</p>              | <p>envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable</p>  |
| <p>16. Improve data situation / create evidence-based knowledge through various funding measures of the Health Research Framework Programme</p>   | <p>Funding of research into, <i>inter alia</i>, the consequences of drastic, negative experiences in childhood and adolescence for mental health over the course of a lifetime, for example as a result of experiencing violence; research on trauma.</p> <p><sup>1</sup> Future German Centre for Mental Health (DZPG) – start-up funding</p>   | <p>BMBF</p>  | <p><sup>1</sup> 2023 to 2025</p>                         | <p><sup>1</sup> approximately €29.5 million</p>           |
| <p>17. Act to strengthen structures to combat sexual violence directed at children and adolescents (UBSKMG)</p>   | <p>The Act is intended to improve the protection of children and adolescents against sexual violence and exploitation: through a person elected by parliament to act as the independent federal commissioner, as well as a council of affected persons attached to the commissioner and an independent commission for critical reappraisal. In addition, prevention and quality development in child protection are to be enhanced.</p>  | <p>BMFSFJ</p>  | <p>approval scheduled during this legislative period</p> | <p>no budgetary impact</p>                                |

## Areas of Action of the Strategy

| Title  | Short description of measure  | Responsibility | Timeline                              | Budget in €                                       |
|--|---|----------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 18. Consolidating the National Council on Combatting Sexual Violence against Children and Adolescents  | The National Council engages in a long-term, interdisciplinary dialogue at the Federal Government, <i>Länder</i> and municipal levels to advance the protection of and support for children, adolescents and adults affected by sexual violence and exploitation during their childhood. In addition to representatives from politics, civil society, academia and professional practice, the body includes members of the Council of Affected Persons with the Independent Commissioner for Questions related to Child Sexual Abuse. | BMFSFJ/UBSKM   | since 12.2019 (thereafter continuous) | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 19. Establishment of a research centre on sexual violence against children and adolescents   | The newly established centre is to regularly conduct research into the frequency of unreported cases of sexual violence against children and adolescents in Germany. The Centre is to provide the Office of the Independent Commissioner for Questions Related to Child Sexual Abuse (UBSKM) with the database for regular reporting to the German Bundestag and to facilitate evidence-based policy-making.  | UBSKM          | 2024 to 2027 (thereafter continuous)  | annually at least €1.2 million                    |
| 20. 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)  | The project aims to improve protection against violence in institutions for people with disabilities. The project was prompted, <i>inter alia</i> , by studies that show that people with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities, very often experience violence that includes sexual, physical and psychological violence.   | BMAS           | 2024 to 2027                          | €757,836  |
| 21. Examination of the legal options for improving protection against violence in institutions   | In response to the recently published concluding observations of the UN Expert Committee, the BMAS is examining what legal options are available to increase protection in institutions (concrete implementation of section 37a Social Code Book IX ( <i>Sozialgesetzbuch IX</i> , SGB IX) violence protection concepts, contract law, joint recommendations or the like. The UN Expert Committee explicitly mentioned the need for protection of women and girls with disabilities).   | BMAS           | 2025 to 2026                          | no budgetary impact                               |
| 22. Establishment and further development of the Working Group on Protection against Violence for People with Disabilities   | With an Expert Conference on Protection against Violence on 11 July 2024, the BMAS launched a broad multi-stakeholder process to which the Federal Government, <i>Länder</i> , municipalities and associations were invited. The plan is for its activities to be continued in a Working Group on Protection Against Violence in 2025. The objective is to reach agreement on timely, effective improvements.   | BMAS           | 2025                                  | no budgetary impact                               |
| 23. Further development of the ISoLA reporting system (early warning system of the Federal Armed Forces ( <i>Bundeswehr</i> ) for the recording, analysis and evaluation of the internal and social situation in the Federal Armed Forces) | The ISoLa reporting system records suspected cases within the Federal Armed Forces/Federal Ministry of Defence, including violations of sexual self-determination. It serves as a pointer for areas that require closer attention.  | BMVg           | ongoing                               | no budgetary impact                               |
| 24. Evaluation and implementation of the report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces   | The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces of the German Bundestag compiles an annual report on the state of the Armed Forces, which also addresses, <i>inter alia</i> , misogynistic incidents/misconduct. This report is evaluated by the Federal Ministry of Defence and the necessary measures are taken.  | BMVg           | ongoing                               | no budgetary impact                               |

## 3.2 Prevention

### 3.2.1 Goals of the Federal Government in the field of prevention

The goal of the Strategy is to avert violence against women and domestic violence before it occurs. In doing so, behavioural patterns that encourage violence are to be uncovered and changes effected in order to overcome prejudices, customs, traditions, socialisation and all other practices based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on discriminatory role assignments between the sexes. Furthermore, the passing on of patterns of violence to future generations is to be countered. All members of society, especially men and boys, should be encouraged to actively participate in the prevention of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the Convention. The Federal Government aims to develop and support holistic approaches to primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.<sup>27, 28</sup>

### 3.2.2 Initial situation in the field of prevention

The Federal Government has already taken numerous steps to prevent gender-based violence against women and domestic violence. Working with perpetrators can help to avert further violence and thus contribute to general safety and to protection against violence, particularly for women. The Federal Government supports the Federal Association for Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (BAG TäHG) and, by extension, the further development of perpetrator work in Germany as a whole.

The Federal Government supports the private sector and the media in their efforts to prevent gender-based violence against women and domestic violence. This includes, *inter alia*, the reform of the Youth Media Protection Act (*Jugendmedienschutzgesetz*) in 2021, which contains a provision for the establishment of a federal agency for child and youth protection.

In the fight against sexual harassment and violence, it was a central (cultural policy) concern of the BKM to initiate a dialogue process in the culture and media industries that addresses what the conditions for respectful work are and how abuse of power and violence can be specifically countered. Under the moderation of the German Cultural Council, a broad alliance from the cultural and media sectors has since developed a position paper with voluntary undertakings.

In 2023, the BMFSFJ funded the film “You are the key to change”, which uses culturally sensitive language to call for the prevention of female genital mutilation. The film, which also provides information about the Federal Government's Letter of Protection against female genital mutilation, was developed as part of the project together with members of the communities concerned. In 2024, the follow-up project was funded, in which the film was publicised nationwide via social media, *inter alia*. People from the communities, the general public and the specialist public make up the target group. Furthermore, from September to December 2024, the BMFSFJ funded the project Nationwide Community – Networking for the Transcultural Empowerment of Persons affected by FGM, in which the mental health of women and girls at risk of or affected by female genital mutilation was supported using methods from their own traditional context.

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27 Primary prevention starts before any undesirable situations arise and aims to prevent them from developing at all. In contrast, secondary prevention takes place when the first manifestations of undesirable situations are already present and (further) entrenchment is to be prevented. In cases of tertiary prevention, the problem that is to be prevented is already fully blown. The preventive efforts here are primarily directed at preventing a recurrence.

28 Coalition Agreement 2021–2025, lines 3846–3847.

Since February 2023, the Together Against Sexism Alliance has drawn together over 750 organisations, companies and government agencies across all sectors to identify sexism and sexual harassment and to establish effective counter-measures. With targeted public relations, events, materials and, for example, a print-on-demand exhibition on sexism, the Alliance supports its members and other interested parties in effectively tackling sexism and providing effective support for those affected.

As part of the Federal Innovation Programme – Together against Violence against Women (2019–2022)<sup>29</sup>, the interdisciplinary online course Protection and Help in Cases of Domestic Violence was developed for professionals from the fields of protection against violence and child protection. The course is still available free of charge thanks to *Länder* funding even though federal funding has come to an end.<sup>30</sup> In the above-mentioned project, a further training brochure on the topic of Custody and Access Rights after Domestic Violence was also created for family court judges and other experts in child custody proceedings.<sup>31</sup>

Women with disabilities are more affected by violence than women without any. In 2023, the Federal Network of Women's Commissioners in institutions set up the *Starke.Frauen.Machen e.V.* (Make.Strong.Women. association). It focuses on violence against women in institutions. The aim of the federal network is to train and empower women's commissioners to set up a nationwide network and to develop and defend political demands.

In the care context, older people in need of care may also be regularly affected by violence. There is an increased risk of this particularly for care-dependent dementia sufferers. This problem can be observed in both inpatient and home care settings. In this context, family members play a key role in violence prevention measures. On the one hand, family members very often participate in the provision of care, which means that there is a risk that they themselves will become involved in violent conflicts with the person receiving care. On the other hand, it is not uncommon for family members to become aware of violent assaults by other people involved in care, and who can then take protective action. The Centre for Quality in Care (ZQP) Foundation has produced a guide entitled “Preventing Violence – Practical Tips for Everyday Care”<sup>32</sup> to support, inform and raise the awareness of family members about what they can do if they encounter violence in their loved-one’s care setting. The Federal Government is contributing to the continuation of prevention work in this area by helping to finance a reprint.

A needs assessment for the prevention of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence constitutes the first systematic inventory to record, analyse and evaluate the services available throughout Germany. The needs assessment is also to make recommendations for improving prevention services for all groups, but especially for vulnerable groups in the population. The study's recommendations furnish a solid basis for the further development of strategic considerations at the federal level in the field of prevention. Every form of prevention against domestic violence is also, by implication, a form of prevention against femicide, the most extreme form of gender-based violence.

The Hate on the Net (“*Hass im Netz*”) and Self.evident Diversity (“*Selbst.verständlich Vielfalt*”) competence networks are currently being funded under the federal Live Democracy! (“*Demokratie leben!*”) programme. They address, *inter alia*, online hate and violence against LGBTIQ+ persons and strategies for empowering individuals and groups affected by violence. In addition, funding is provided for the Federal Working Group Hate on the Net, nine model

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29 For further details and measures, see Chapter 3 Protection and support.

30 <https://haeuslichegewalt.elearning-gewaltschutz.de/>

31 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/kindschaftssachen-und-haeusliche-gewalt-185890>

32 <https://www.zqp.de/produkt/ratgeber-gewalt-vorbeugen/>



projects on homophobia and trans\* hostility, an accompanying project on anti-feminism and numerous projects in the Live Democracy! innovation fund.

The Office for the Protection of the Constitution has observed that right-wing extremists have been agitating more and more openly and aggressively in recent years against the liberalisation of public discourse regarding different sexual orientations and gender identities, as well as same-sex partnership and family models. The rejection of sexual and gender diversity in modern democratic societies is an integral part of all Islamist ideologies.<sup>33</sup> Women are also frequently affected by abasement, hate and violence due to right-wing extremist and Islamist ideologies.<sup>34</sup> This results in the need to prevent extremism that also addresses LGBTIQ+ hostility, anti-feminism and misogyny. The Federal Government has explicitly addressed LGBTIQ+ hostility in its Strategy for Democracy and against Extremism and recognises it as an outright attack on our democratic, open, pluralistic and liberal society. It has also established that anti-feminism is a unifying ideological link between different groups of extremists.<sup>35</sup>

The German General Equal Treatment Act (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG*) applies to both private and public employers and prohibits all forms of discrimination based on gender and sexual identity, including (sexual) harassment in the workplace. It requires employers to take the necessary measures to prevent discrimination in the workplace (such as awareness-raising and training measures). Furthermore, it obliges them to set up company AGG complaints units that people affected by discrimination can turn to. The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency has made available several publications on the topic of sexual harassment in the workplace. The guidance document “What to do if you experience sexual harassment in the workplace” provides information about the rights of those affected, gives advice on how to proceed against sexual harassment and presents examples of good practice from companies. The guidance document is intended for employees, employers and works councils. The study “Examples of Good Practice in the Prevention of and Intervention Against Sexual Harassment in the Workplace” demonstrates how prevention and intervention measures can be implemented in different sectors and companies of varying sizes. The study “Dealing with Sexual Harassment in the Workplace – Solution Strategies and Measures” examined the perspective of women and men affected by sexual<sup>35</sup> harassment in the workplace. The study contains recommendations for improved prevention, intervention and support. The recommendations are intended for employers, external counselling bodies and the legislature.

The Federal Government welcomes the plans of the *Länder* to promote the prevention of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence in their area of responsibility. This includes measures in educational institutions and in the initial and in-service training of specialists. Furthermore, the Federal Government welcomes the range of prevention programmes for sexual offenders and sexual violence run by the *Länder*.

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33 <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutzberichte/2024-06-18-verfassungsschutzbericht-2023.html>

34 [https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/themen/ministerium/BMI24021.pdf;jsessionid=545987E1BE004F7ADF4E33BCE662EFA.live862?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=4](https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/themen/ministerium/BMI24021.pdf;jsessionid=545987E1BE004F7ADF4E33BCE662EFA.live862?__blob=publicationFile&v=4)

35 *ibid.*

### 3.2.3 Challenges in the field of prevention

GREVIO has established that there are many prevention measures in place at the federal, regional and local levels. However, there is a lack of coordination and exchange of experience or good practice.<sup>36</sup> Close and continuous co-operation between all stakeholders, such as women's support facilities, but also men's support facilities, the police, the judiciary and other support services such as the youth welfare office, is relevant here.<sup>37</sup>

GREVIO recommends that – pursuant to Article 15 of the Convention – professionals dealing with victims or perpetrators of all acts of violence covered by the scope of the Convention, should undergo systematic and mandatory initial and in-service training to enable them to recognise and respond to all forms of violence against women and domestic violence, with a focus on the human rights of victims, their safety, their individual needs and empowerment, and the prevention of secondary victimisation.<sup>38</sup> To ensure the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in a manner that meets the needs of all persons affected by gender-based violence, state actors (including judges, public prosecutors, security authorities and police forces) should also be made aware of the needs and realities of trans\*, intersex and non-binary persons and familiarised with the principles of perpetrator work.<sup>39</sup>

GREVIO welcomes the fact that the standards for perpetrator work in Germany drawn up by the Federal Association for Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (BAG TäHG) are largely in line with the IC principles, particularly the victim-centred and safety-oriented approach which aims to change the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic violence by making them take responsibility for their actions. GREVIO does, however, criticise the fact that not all programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence apply these standards. Further efforts are therefore needed to ensure that all perpetrator programmes in Germany adhere to the recognised standards. Furthermore, improving the data situation in areas such as perpetrator work and developing evidence-based policy approaches in the field of prevention continue to be a challenge.

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36 GREVIO/inf(2022)9 2022, p. 36, paras. 82-83.

37 GREVIO/inf(2022)9 2022, p. 43, para. 111 a.

38 GREVIO/inf(2022)9 2022, p. 41, para. 102.

39 The Strategy refers primarily to “male perpetrator work” because a large proportion of acts of violence are committed by men. However, this does not exclude the fact that women can also be perpetrators.

**Results from the consultation  
on 14 November 2023**

**Prevention:**

*Develop evidence-based measures in the field of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention and standardised tools for risk management; take prevention and protection against violence into account in education policy.*

**Awareness-raising:**

*Raise awareness of the topic of violence, particularly in the context of perpetrator work, men's counselling, youth work and in the media, and sharpening of terms such as "gender-based violence".*

**Upskilling:**

*Provide compulsory, interdisciplinary initial and in-service training for all persons working in the field of protection against violence, in particular teachers, health service providers and the judiciary.*

**Coordination:**

*Improve cooperation between the Federal Government, Länder, civil society and other stakeholders.*

### 3.2.4. Measures

The challenges are to be tackled, *inter alia*, with the following measures:

Table 2: Measures for the area of action of prevention

| Title   | Short description of measure   | Responsibility | Timeline                | Budget in €                                       |
|---|--|----------------|-------------------------|---|
| 25. Promotion of the Federal Association for Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (BAG TäHG)   | The project aims to professionalise the work of the BAG TäHG, which was initially done on a purely voluntary basis, and to advance work with perpetrators in Germany. One of the project's priorities is to establish a proactive approach to working with perpetrators.   | BMFSFJ         | 1.7.2023 to 30.6.2026   | €990,000  |
| 26. Together against Sexism Alliance  | The aim of the cross-sector alliance is to recognise sexism and sexual harassment and to embed effective counter-measures. More than 750 members from business, administration, media, culture and civil society have already joined the Alliance.   | BMFSFJ         | 10.2022 to 12.2025      | €1,819,600  |
| 27. <i>Weibernetz e. V.</i> (Women's Network Association) – Project on political representation of the interests of disabled women in the context of intersectionality, sexism, ableism and protection against violence | The goals and priorities of the project are to represent the political interests of disabled women in the context of sexism, protection against violence, and equality and disability policy, taking into account multiple forms of discrimination. A further focus is on analysing the need for structural change in these areas. | BMFSFJ         | 03.2024 to 02.2027      | €754,582  |
| 28. Needs assessment for the prevention of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence  | The study will constitute the first systematic inventory to record, analyse and evaluate prevention services in Germany. Based on the results, the study is to make recommendations on how to improve prevention services.   | BMFSFJ         | 1.09.2023 to 30.11.2024 | approximately €450,000                            |
| 29. Target group-oriented dissemination of the results of the needs assessment for the prevention of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence  | The results of the needs assessment can form the basis for the further development of prevention services at all state and non-state levels and are, therefore, communicated to specific target groups.  | BMFSFJ         | 2025                    | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 30. Funding of measures and model projects on promising prevention approaches; for example, neighbourhood or community-based forms of work or approaches related to specific target groups such as teenage partnerships | Model projects to promote proven impact prevention measures, for example, community-based neighbourhood projects to prevent domestic violence  | BMFSFJ         | 2025 to 2027            | €850,000  |
| 31. Federal programme Live Democracy!   | The Federal programme enters a new funding period in 2025. In this upcoming funding period, too, projects that address intersectional dimensions for the protection of victims and the prevention of violence are likely to secure funding.  | BMFSFJ         | 2025 to 2032            | envisaged in the budget item, not quantifiable    |

| Title   | Short description of measure   | Responsibility | Timeline  | Budget in €                                       |
|---|--|----------------|---|---|
| 32. Promoting sustainable masculinity – Overcoming toxic masculinity (project of the <i>Bundesforum Männer</i> [Federal Forum for Men]) | The Federal Forum for Men aims first to strengthen an equality-oriented policy for men and second to expand work with men (including boys and fathers) and counselling for men – also on the prevention and management of crisis situations.   | BMFSFJ         | 2024 to 2026  | €2,500,000  |
| 33. In-service training for multipliers with a focus on male-oriented counselling   | Male-oriented counselling is geared towards offering men help and support and thus to opening up conflict resolution options other than violence directed against others or oneself. The in-service training offered by the Federal Association of Social Services for Catholic Men ( <i>SKM Bundesverband</i> ) is intended for the staff of existing counselling centres in order to achieve the comprehensive distribution of counselling services specifically for men throughout the country. | BMFSFJ         | 2023 to 2027  | €1,476,000  |
| 34. Stereotype-free sports culture  | Boys and men, like girls and women, can be negatively influenced by stereotypes in sports and often cite sports as a social space in which sexist comments denigrate their masculinity. The No Stereotypes in Sport project is committed to creating a sports culture in Germany that is inclusive for all genders and free from stereotypes.  | BMFSFJ         | 2023 to 2025  | €770.000  |
| 35. #together – United against sexism and racism (DaMigra project)  | The #together – United against sexism and racism project by the umbrella organisation of migrant women's organisations – DaMigra – has the overarching goal of breaking down sexist and racist structures in order to improve equality for and empower women with a migration and refugee background. The topic of violence against women is also addressed.   | BMFSFJ/BAMF    | 10.2022 to 12.2025  | €1,167,000 plus BAMF co-financing                 |
| 36. Reprint of the Federal Government's Letter of Protection against Female Genital Mutilation in 16 languages                          | The Letter of Protection provides information on the criminal liability of persons who carry out female genital mutilation, possible legal repercussions for foreign nationals and health consequences. It also contains information about contact points for those affected.  | BMFSFJ         | 2023 et seqq.   | €91,270.78  |
| 37. Upskilling of specialists in emergency housing aid  | Development of training materials for the upskilling of professionals in emergency housing aid facilities regarding the special needs of victims of violence.  | BMWSB          | 2025  | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 38. Feminist urban development policy – guideline process   | The aim of the BMWSB guidelines currently being drafted is not only to advance gender equality, but also to facilitate equal social participation of all groups and social echelons in their living and working environment (design of public spaces, mobility or housing, etc.) along the lines of integrated urban development. In this context, the design of safe public spaces that prevent violence plays an important role.   | BMWSB          | September 2023 to (probably) March 2025 (thereafter continuous) | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |

| Title   | Short description of measure  | Responsibility   | Timeline               | Budget in €                                  |
|---|---|------------------|------------------------|--|
| 39. What's up with Jaron?   | Online further training developed together with the educational authorities of the <i>Länder</i> as a serious game which is recognised as further training in all <i>Länder</i> . It uses an approach oriented towards school practice to equip school staff members with the basic knowledge they need to protect their pupils from sexual violence and thus increase security of action in the school system. | UBSKM            | ongoing                | approximately €160,000 annually              |
| 40. Schools against sexual violence   | The dedicated portal of the initiative of the same name has been helping schools to develop concepts for protection against sexual violence since 2016. The detailed information and assistance presented on the portal are constantly being developed and supplemented by services and regulations specific to each <i>Land</i> . This promotes the quality development of school protection concepts.         | UBSKM            | ongoing                | approximately €35,000 annually               |
| 41. <i>Wissen hilft schützen</i><br>(Knowledge helps to protect)  | This web portal offers a comprehensive and steadily growing selection of information and materials from various providers on the topic of protecting children and adolescents from sexual violence in the digital space. The web portal increases knowledge and engagement in this area as part of its wide-ranging services for school staff members, educational experts and parents.                         | UBSKM            | ongoing                | approximately €12,000 annually               |
| 42. Don't push it away – Campaign for increased protection of children and adolescents against sexual violence  | Multi-annual awareness-raising and activation campaign in 2022: “Don't push the thought away!” to draw attention to the fact that sexual violence also happens in one's own environment; in 2023 “Don't push your responsibility away!” to get adults on board by means of low-threshold recommendations for action and to reinforce this in 2024 with examples of good local practice.                         | UBSKM/<br>BMFSFJ | 2022 to 2025           | 2023:<br>€5 million,<br>2024<br>€2.2 million |
| 43. Reform of the Protection against Violence Act: court order for participation in perpetrator work programmes and the use of electronic monitoring  | The Protection against Violence Act is to be supplemented: the court is to be given the option of ordering the perpetrator to participate in a social training course. In addition, the use of electronic monitoring is to be allowed.  | BMJ              | Approval probably 2025 | no budgetary impact                          |
| 44. The training of all military personnel includes content on dealing with sexuality, protection against (sexual) harassment whilst in service, protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual identity and protection against violence. | The training of all military personnel 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 avert violent and sexual offences. Between 2021 and 2024, around 20,000 soldiers each year were taught the basics of this topic.      | BMVg             | ongoing                | no budgetary impact                          |

Areas of Action of the Strategy

| Title   | Short description of measure  | Responsibility | Timeline                 | Budget in €                                       |
|---|---|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| 45. Regulation on dealing with sexuality and sexual misconduct  | Regulation A-2610/2 governs the handling of sexuality and sexual misconduct in the Federal Armed Forces. The regulation is intended for all staff members in the sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry of Defence, particularly for military and civilian superiors. Its goals are to prevent sexual misconduct, to afford victims better protection and to provide information to those affected about contact points and support.                | BMVg           | Next review 31.8.2028    | no budgetary impact                               |
| 46. Creating and raising awareness of the problem, for example, through information events, guidelines, in-service training measures, further education | The sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry of Defence includes a wide range of measures for the prevention of sexual offences and violence, including information events, guidelines for action in the event of sexual harassment, training assistance for dealing with sexuality and sexual misconduct.  | BMVg           | ongoing                  | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 47. In-service training for specialist staff in the social services of the Federal Armed Forces   | Preparation of training materials for the social services of the Federal Armed Forces to improve the counselling and support provided to staff members in the sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry of Defence who have fallen victim to domestic violence or psychological or physical violence in a professional or private setting.   | BMVg           | ongoing                  | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 48. Digital violence against female professors in contested fields of knowledge   | The project undertakes an empirical investigation of the phenomenon of gender-based digital violence against female professors in the fields of gender, migration and climate research and develops effective counter-strategies and support measures.  | BMBF           | 01.10.2024 to 30.09.2027 | €481,391.07                                       |
| 49. Expert discussion and expertise on the topic of sexism in science   | For the first time, this project interconnects multipliers from the field of science in an extensive professional exchange on the subject of gender-based violence. At the same time, an expert report on sexual assault and sexism in science was prepared in German based on the research results of the UniSAFE project. It was supplemented by further relevant research findings with a special focus on diversity and intersectionality in science. | BMBF           | 2024 to 2029             | €18,086.40  |

**See Measure 16:** Improve data situation / generate evidence-based knowledge through various funding measures in the health research framework programme: future German Centre for Mental Health (DZPG)

## 3.3 Protection and support

### 3.3.1 Goals of the Federal Government in the field of protection and support

The aim is to further develop the help system to cater for the needs of all victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence. The Federal Government is working to ensure that all persons affected and all forms of violence are given equal consideration in the help system. This also means that the needs of particularly vulnerable groups, such as women with disabilities, female refugees, women with temporary residence permits, women in precarious (residence permit) situations or in precarious employment situations in private households, as well as queer persons, are taken into account. This likewise applies to needs-based support and safe spaces for male victims of intimate partner violence. New forms of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence in the digital space should be combatted and prevented even more vigorously.

### 3.3.2 Initial situation in the field of protection and support

The Violence against Women telephone helpline was established on a permanent basis in 2013 by the Telephone Helpline Act (*Hilfetelefongesetz*). Women can call 116 016 to contact female counsellors free of charge, 24/7 – confidentially and anonymously. Family members, friends and professionals can also phone the telephone helpline to obtain assistance for women who have fallen victim to violence. With the help of interpreters, counselling is available in 18 foreign languages. If requested, persons seeking assistance can be given the contact details of suitable counselling facilities and help organisations in their area. The service is also explicitly aimed at those with an impairment or disability, as counselling is also available in plain language or in German sign language. Counselling is available via instant chat, scheduled chat or email, too. Since 1 June 2023, the telephone helpline has been accessible on the shortened number 116 016, which is also the number used for national helplines in many other EU countries.

On 1 January 2021, a new fast-track procedure was introduced for the take-up of the services of trauma outpatient clinics. This makes it easier for victims of violent crime to access psychological support and avoid long waiting lists.

The federal innovation programme *Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt an Frauen* (Together Against Violence Against Women) ran from 2019 to 2022 and had a funding volume of €21 million. A total of 22 innovative projects, studies and local model projects throughout Germany were funded with a view to facilitating access to protection and counselling, improving the accuracy of the fit and functionality of help services, preventing violence against women and supporting the public relations campaign *Stärker als Gewalt* (Stronger than Violence).<sup>40</sup>

From 2020 to the end of 2024, the Federal Government funded model projects for the construction, conversion and acquisition of innovative women's shelters and protection facilities through the federal investment funding programme Together Against Violence Against Women. A total of €140 million was made available as funding. The programme met with a very positive response from the outset, with 70 projects approved with good regional distribution. The goal is to close known gaps in the help system for women affected by violence and their children and to further advance the needs-based expansion of the help system in Germany. In particular, the aim is to improve access for target groups that have so far been insufficiently reached, such as

40 Main research foci: Upskilling of professionals and occupational groups that have not so far been sufficiently reached; improving access to and support for target groups that have not yet been reached or only insufficiently reached and/or particularly vulnerable target groups; testing conceptual and qualitative further developments of protection and support services, also to adapt to new challenges; further development of work with perpetrators of violence against women within the framework of inter-institutional cooperation alliances and preventive measures.



women with disabilities, LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> persons, women with mental disorders, women with many children or sons above a certain age, or women in rural areas.

Domestic violence primarily affects women, but they are not the only victims. The Federal Coordination Office for the Protection of Male Victims of Violence (BFSFJ) was founded in 2019 and is funded by the BMFSFJ. It advises municipal and *Land* policymakers on setting up protective facilities for men. In addition, the BFSFJ supports the expansion of telephone helplines and online counselling services in the *Länder* to ensure that a uniform support service for male victims of violence is available throughout the country.

The Federal Government actively supports services to protect vulnerable groups and people who are affected by intersectional discrimination.

Now in its 14<sup>th</sup> edition, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency publishes the flyer “Setting boundaries – What to do if you experience sexual harassment in the workplace?”. The flyer is also available in plain language. It provides a clear overview of the options for action for persons affected by sexual harassment at the workplace.

GREVIO draws attention to its General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women in relation to online hate speech, defamation and other forms of abuse through the medium of information and communication technologies (ICTs). They can have a huge psychological impact on victims and are becoming more and more prevalent.<sup>41</sup> According to this recommendation, violence against women online constitutes a continuation of the violence perpetrated against them offline. Various studies have shown that almost half of the victims of domestic violence report having been subjected to some form of online abuse during a relationship and/or after it has ended.<sup>42</sup> GREVIO welcomes the explicit criminalisation under German law of various forms of technology-facilitated abuse, such as cyberstalking, the unauthorised taking of pictures of private bodily parts, the sharing of images online and the use of stalker software.<sup>43</sup>

The Act on Protection against Violence covers the legal asset of sexual self-determination, which also includes the right to freely decide whether to publish intimate pictures. In addition, the Act on Protection against Violence also covers the offence of unacceptable harassment that uses means of distance communication (internet, mobile phone) and punishes any violations.

One important legal modification was the entry into force of the *Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz* (Network Enforcement Act) on 1 October 2017, which aims to combat hate crime and other illegal content on social networks. GREVIO notes that there are still some problems with its implementation by the respective platforms and insufficient checks by the authorities.

From 17 February 2024, the European Digital Services Act (DSA) will apply to all social media platforms and replace the Network Enforcement Act. The Act will enable illegal content to be removed more quickly and the fundamental rights of users on the internet to be protected more comprehensively. An important part of this is the appointment of national Digital Service Coordinators (DSCs) in the member states. Whereas the European Commission monitors very large platforms and search engines, the DSCs are responsible for smaller platforms and serve as a central point of contact for citizens.<sup>44</sup>

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41 <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-rec-no-on-digital-violence-againstwomen/1680a49147>.

42 [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance-oct14\\_de.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance-oct14_de.pdf); [www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2018/03/online-violence-against-women-chapter-1](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2018/03/online-violence-against-women-chapter-1); <https://plan-international.org/publications/freetobeonline>

43 GREVIO Inf(2022) 9, p. 790, para. 240.

44 <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/themen/digitalisierung/gesetz-ueber-digitale-dienste-2140944> 45

### 3.3.3 Challenges in the field of protection and support

Responsibility for providing support services for victims of the different forms of violence covered by the IC lies mainly with the *Länder* or municipalities. The number, type and accessibility of the available services therefore varies greatly. In its state report GREVIO stressed that significant safety concerns for victims of domestic violence in Germany persist because of the shortage of shelter facilities in many parts of the country and the barriers that exist to their admission. The challenges facing victims seeking protection include structural obstacles due to complex funding requirements for staying at a women's shelter, which are caused by strict residency requirements. This sometimes results in women not being admitted to shelters because they come from another municipality. In addition, certain groups of women encounter difficulties in being admitted to shelters, in particular women with sons above a certain age and/or with many children, women with disabilities and/or care needs, women fleeing so-called "honour" violence, asylum-seeking women and women with uncertain residence status. There are few or no dedicated shelters available for these groups of women. Moreover, there are almost no dedicated shelters for girls under the age of 18 who have experienced (sexual) violence.<sup>45</sup> For men, there is also a widespread shortage of shelters as not every *Land* has shelter facilities. Long distances between the shelter and the place where the person concerned lives or works are therefore a serious obstacle to accessing such services.<sup>46</sup> There is also a particular lack of shelters (including barrier-free shelters) for men in need of care.

GREVIO, therefore, recommends increasing the number of emergency shelters available and ensuring their adequate geographical distribution throughout the country. Furthermore, GREVIO recommends significantly stepping up efforts at all relevant levels to embed the provision of services to victims of all forms of violence in multi-agency cooperation structures involving all relevant actors, including specialised women's support services. It is recommended that – in line with Article 18 of the Convention – protection and support services be made available as far as possible on the same premises (one-stop shops).<sup>47</sup>

GREVIO likewise recognises the need for better networking between the health sector and other services and facilities for victims of violence to ensure that they receive the holistic support they so urgently need. In addition to the confidential securing of physical evidence and the treatment of physical injuries, this also includes speedy access to psychological support. Furthermore, access barriers to the healthcare system for women with disabilities and female asylum seekers affected by violence should be dismantled.<sup>48</sup>

Certain groups of women, for instance women with intellectual impairments or other disabilities, illiterate women, asylum-seeking women and migrant women may have no or insufficient access to information. According to NGOs, women exposed to intersectional discrimination are particularly difficult to reach. GREVIO therefore recommends – in line with Article 19 of the Convention – a more proactive approach, for example by providing information packs for newly arrived asylum-seeking and migrant women and by targeting women with disabilities through needs-oriented information campaigns.<sup>49</sup> Specialist support services should be available and responsive to the needs of victims, regardless of the form of violence they have experienced, in line with Article 22 of the Convention. Specialist support services and facilities should, therefore, be available for women with disabilities living in

45 GREVIO Inf(2022) 9, pp. 8–9.

46 For more precise figures on female and male victims of domestic violence, see the Cost Study on the Help System for Victims of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (Kienbaum study) and compare the BFKM user statistics from 2022.

47 GREVIO Inf(2022) 9, p. 50, paras. 135–136.

48 GREVIO Inf(2022) 9, p. 54, paras. 149–151, 191.

49 GREVIO Inf(2022) 9, p. 51, paras. 140–142.

institutions, for women and girls living in reception centres, but also for girls and young women, Romnja and Sintizze, LGBTI women and for victims of forced marriage, in the required form of communication, including plain language or German sign language.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, GREVIO recommends stepping up measures to protect and support minors exposed to any of the forms of violence referred to in the IC. Although specialist (psychosocial) support services are available in larger cities, they are severely understaffed. This leads to long waiting times, too. The availability of support services for children in more rural areas is impaired by the general shortage of support services.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, there is a lack of community-based counselling services for trans\*, inter\* and non-binary persons, especially in rural areas. These counselling services not only provide a large proportion of the immediate, low-threshold support for those affected, but are also able to undertake educational and awareness-raising work for other help services (such as women's shelters) and public authorities.

The virulent development of violence in the digital space throws up new challenges for both those affected and for the help and support system. The handling of the digital dimension of gender-based violence must be improved and the help and support system must be developed further to enable it to react appropriately to new forms of violence and modern technologies and to protect the rights of those affected. The violation of rights in the digital space must be better identified and effectively prosecuted.

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50 GREVIO Inf(2022) 9, pp. 58–59, paras. 168 a-h

51 GREVIO Inf(2022) 9, pp. 65–66.

**Results from the consultation  
on 14 November 2023**

**Protection and support:**

*Ensure access to the help system for all; expand counselling facilities/points of contact, women's shelters and prevention programmes; develop uniform definitions nationwide; adopt a holistic approach: protection of victims – perpetrator work – prevention.*

**Resources:**

*Provide needs-based funding of offers of help services and improved distribution of resources between the Federal Government, Länder and municipalities.*

**Experts:**

*Create good working conditions for professionals; promote community work by intercultural teams and use (informal) networks*

**Data:**

*Make measures and policies evidence-based, conduct needs-oriented research and regular monitoring and evaluation processes.*

### 3.3.4 Measures

The challenges are to be tackled, *inter alia*, with the following measures:

Table 3: Measures for the area of action of protection and support

| Title   | Short description of measure  | Responsibility | Timeline                            | Budget in €  |
|---|---|----------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 50. Violence against Women telephone helpline   | 24/7, free, accessible, anonymous and qualified initial counselling available in 18 foreign languages by telephone, chat or email for women affected by violence, their social environment and professionals. Counselling can also be provided in German sign language and in plain language. Since 1 June 2023, the telephone helpline has been accessible on the shortened number 116 016, which is also the number for national helplines in many other EU countries.  | BMFSFJ         | Permanent, legal basis (since 2013) | Annually more than €10 million                     |
| 51. Expansion of a nationwide uniform support service for men affected by domestic violence | The Federal Coordination Office for the Protection of Male Victims of Violence (BFKM) advises and helps interested parties to set up shelters for men. In particular, <i>Land</i> and municipal policymakers are to be encouraged to push ahead with protective and supportive measures for boys and men. Likewise, the establishment of telephone helplines and online counselling in the <i>Länder</i> is to be coordinated and their expansion encouraged. The BFKM compiles annual statistics on the take-up of men's shelters, including data on users, but also on the working conditions in men's shelters. <sup>52</sup>                    | BMFSFJ         | 2022 to 2025                        | €2.45 million                                      |
| 52. Pregnant Women in Need telephone helpline   | By dialling the number 0800 40 40 020, callers can obtain anonymous, free-of-charge help and assistance 24/7. The telephone helpline was set up and is operated on the basis of the Act to Extend Assistance for Pregnant Women and Regulate Confidential Births ( <i>Gesetz zum Ausbau der Hilfen für Schwangere und zur Regelung der vertraulichen Geburt</i> ).  | BMFSFJ/BAFzA   | Since 2014                          | 2022: €553,000<br>2023: €406,000<br>2024: €401,000 |
| 53. Telephone care helpline   | The telephone care helpline was set up as a low-threshold initial point of contact for all matters relating to the topic of care and assistance in old age. The telephone care helpline is intended for people in need of care, family carers, service providers/employers in the care sector and the environment of family carers. Many carers are engaged in round the clock care. Dealing with different demands and expectations is a challenge, both emotionally and physically. Since 2016, counselling has also been offered in stressful and critical situations, and, if needed, information is also provided about local respite options. | BMFSFJ         | Since 2011                          | €200,000 annually                                  |

52 With the regular annual data collection from men's shelters, the BFKM also contributes to the data collection measures mentioned in 1.4.

| Title   | Short description of measure  | Responsibility | Timeline   | Budget in €                |
|---|---|----------------|--|----------------------------|
| 54. Counselling services available on the Number against Grief telephone helpline   | The role of the Number against Grief telephone helpline is to advise and support children and adolescents on all questions and/or problems on the phone (child and youth phone) or by email/chat (online counselling). The various stressful situations, including experiences of violence in any form, experienced by children and adolescents are discussed in the counselling sessions on the Number against Grief telephone helpline. | BMFSFJ         | 2023 to 2025   | €2,881,665                 |
| 55. Legislative project regarding protection and counselling for gender-based and domestic violence (Violence Assistance Act)   | The Coalition Agreement between the governing parties envisages enforcing the right of every woman and her children to protection from violence. The Act aims to ensure that anyone affected by domestic or gender-based violence, especially women and their children, obtains protection from violence and qualified specialist counselling as quickly as possible and encounters as few bureaucratic hurdles as possible.              | BMFSFJ         | Adoption envisaged during the current legislative period | See footnote <sup>53</sup> |
| 56. Countering digital violence in women's shelters (FHK – Women's Shelter Coordination project)  | The project helps women's shelter staff members put in place, in their shelters, a protection concept against digital violence which was developed in a pre-project. The aim is to further develop the women's support system and to provide assistance and counselling for women affected by violence.   | BMFSFJ         | 1.3.2023 to 31.5.2026                                    | €1,069,000                 |
| 57. Concepts against digital violence in the social environment and public sphere (in short: <i>Aktiv gegen digitale Gewalt</i> (Active against Digital Violence) (bff project) | The project focuses on the latest technological developments, develops targeted measures to offer further training for the women's support system and devotes special attention to the rights of those affected. The aim is to further develop the women's support system and to assist women affected by violence.   | BMFSFJ         | 1.1.2023 to 31.12.2026                                   | €1,024,000                 |
| 58. Make it work – then make it better! Help is available for violence in the workplace. Focus: training programmes, quality assurance, counselling (bff project)               | The project addresses the topic of sexual harassment in the workplace and places special emphasis on training, quality assurance and counselling. The aim is to further develop the women's support system and to assist women affected by violence.  | BMFSFJ         | 1.1.2023 to 31.12.2026                                   | €1,015,000                 |
| 59. Further training brochure for professionals on the topic of protection against violence, custody and access rights, child matters and domestic violence                     | The training brochure is intended for family court judges and other actors in family court proceedings who are involved in regulating access, parental custody and determining the risk to the child's well-being (in the aftermath of domestic violence).  | BMFSFJ         | since 2022   | no budgetary impact        |
| 60. Federal Government-Länder NGO Working Group to Overcome Female Genital Mutilation in Germany (WG)   | The working group presents best practices for overcoming female genital mutilation, discusses current challenges, and plans and designs measures and projects. It is a central forum for exchange, cooperation and network building.  | BMFSFJ         | ongoing  | no budgetary impact        |

53 The Federal Government bill on the Violence Prevention Act provides for partial and temporary compensation by adjusting the distribution of value added tax in favour of the *Länder*.

| Title   | Short description of measure  | Responsibility | Timeline   | Budget in €                                       |
|---|---|----------------|------------|---|
| 61. Contact point for discrimination and violence in the Federal Armed Forces   | The contact point set up in the Federal Ministry for Defence is available to all active and former, civilian and military members of the Federal Armed Forces and of the Ministry who are experiencing or have experienced bullying, discrimination, physical or emotional violence in a work-related setting in the Federal Armed Forces. The contact point notes information from those affected, advises them and can initiate an individual case review (technical and administrative supervisory oversight) so that the necessary clarification, prosecution, protection or assistance measures can be undertaken by the responsible departments in the Federal Ministry of Defence. | BMVg           | since 2017 | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 62. Trusted persons and the psychosocial network (applied military psychology, stress management, military chaplaincy, etc.)                                  | Servicewomen and men can talk about incidents with their (disciplinary) superiors, the staff council or the equal opportunities officer, and can take up the services of trusted persons and/or the existing psychosocial network (applied military psychology, stress management assistants as part of crisis intervention, military chaplaincy).  | BMVg           | ongoing    | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 63. Counselling on psychological/physical violence and sexual harassment on the basis of gender, gender identity or sexual orientation                        | Counselling and support from the social services of the Federal Armed Forces for staff members in its sphere of competency and their families.  | BMVg           | ongoing    | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 64. Counselling on sexual harassment, on the basis of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and other attributes under the General Equal Treatment Act. | In concrete cases, persons seeking advice turn to the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency ( <i>Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes – ADS</i> ). The ADS provides legal advice and may encourage amicable settlements (support mandate, section 27 AGG).  | ADS            | ongoing    | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| 65. Confidential securing of physical evidence  | In order to secure evidence and findings for a later criminal investigation, women who have fallen victim to a sexual offence are, within the framework of the Social Code Book V, entitled to the confidential securing of physical evidence, including the necessary documentation and laboratory testing (section 27 (1) p. 6 SGB V). The health insurance funds or their <i>Land</i> associations enter into joint and uniform contracts with the respective <i>Land</i> and with a sufficient number of suitable facilities or doctors to provide these services at the behest of the respective <i>Land</i> .   | BMG            | Since 2020 | no budgetary impact                               |

| Title   | Short description of measure   | Responsibility                    | Timeline                        | Budget in €   |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| <p>66. Recommendations for dealing with patients who have suffered FGM</p>                          | <p>The recommendations contain useful pointers for attending doctors, in particular on the legal situation, preventive measures and how to deal with affected women. The German Medical Association has stated that the medical associations will use the medical journals to draw the attention of all doctors to the recommendations and the issue of dealing with patients who have suffered female genital mutilation. The recommendations of the German Medical Association and the further sources of information listed there are freely accessible and can also be used by midwives and members of other regulated health professions. These recommendations are also available in English and French.</p> | <p>German Medical Association</p> | <p>Since 2005 (update 2016)</p> | <p>no budgetary impact</p>  |
| <p>67. Handbook for the clinical care of women who have experienced violence or sexual violence</p> | <p>In 2015, the Federal Ministry of Health funded the translation of the handbook. The practical handbook, with its clearly laid out recommendations, is a valuable aid for health care professionals. The WHO clinical handbook on Health care for women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence can be accessed here.</p>  | <p>BMG</p>                        | <p>ongoing</p>                  | <p>no budgetary impact</p>  |
| <p>68. Guidelines on (sexual) violence and abuse</p>  | <p>On the topics of (sexual) violence and abuse, there are currently more than 30 medical guidelines that address these important issues in varying detail. They are intended for different target groups of victims (adults – women, men and diverse – as well as children/adolescents).</p>  | <p>Medical societies</p>          | <p>ongoing</p>                  | <p>no budgetary impact</p>  |
| <p>69. Social housing (federal financial aid)</p>   | <p>The Federal Government helps the <i>Länder</i> to make subsidised housing available by granting federal financial aid. It offers living space for women subjected to violence who want to move on from a women's shelter. This frees up places in women's shelters for individuals in acute need of protection.</p>   | <p>BMWSB</p>                      | <p>since 2020</p>               | <p>Federal financial aid: 2024 €3.15 billion plus the necessary co-financing by the <i>Länder</i></p>                   |
| <p>70. Urban development funding (federal financial aid)</p>  | <p>Provision of federal financial aid to the <i>Länder</i>, which can then use urban development funds to promote the construction and conversion of shelter and counselling facilities for women subjected to violence and their children. The actual implementation takes place in the <i>Länder</i>.</p>  | <p>BMWSB</p>                      | <p>since 2020</p>               | <p>Federal financial aid: 2024 €790 million plus the necessary co-financing by the <i>Länder</i> and municipalities</p> |



| Title  | Short description of measure  | Responsibility | Timeline   | Budget in €   |
|--|---|----------------|--|---|
| 71. Themis Advice Centre for Sexual Harassment and Violence  | In response to the #Me Too debate, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media contributed to the launch of the independent, cross-sectoral Themis Advice Centre in 2018 and has been providing funding on a pro-rata basis ever since. Industry bodies in the film, television, music and theatre sectors are the supporting members of the Themis Advice Centre for Sexual Harassment and Violence. Themis provides case-specific legal advice and psychological counselling for people exposed to sexual harassment and violence in the context of their work in the cultural or media industry, as well as prevention services, particularly for employers and executive staff. | BKM            | since 2018   | Funding of the secretariat and expansion of prevention since 2018 up to 2026 amounting to €1,020,000 in total |
| 72. Sexual abuse help portal   | The help portal proposes an extensive database of help services such as (specialist) counselling bodies, legal or therapeutic help that is available online, by telephone or on the ground. In addition, the website offers a wealth of information on the topic of sexual violence against children and adolescents.   | UBSKM          | ongoing  | approximately €185,000 annually   |
| 73. Sexual abuse helpline  | Telephone contact point and online counselling for affected individuals, support persons and specialists, N.I.N.A.  | UBSKM          | ongoing  | €1,432,000 annually   |
| 74. Financial support for an app to provide low-threshold help with domestic violence from the association <i>Gewaltfrei in die Zukunft e. V.</i> (Violence-free into the Future). | The app offers affected individuals help and counselling on domestic violence in a range of situations. In addition, incidents of violence can be documented in a violence diary and, if necessary, produced as evidence in court.  | BMI            | October 2023 to end 2026                               | €3,752,000  |
| 75. Proposed legislation: act against digital violence   | The aim of an act against digital violence is to strengthen individual law enforcement (see Coalition Agreement, p. 14) In particular, the act should enable affected individuals to effectively identify violators in the virtual space and thus create for the first time ever a basis for the prosecution of rights violations under civil law. The standardisation of a claim by the person exposed to digital violence for a court-ordered blocking of the user account is to be a new instrument for combating digital violence in the case of particularly serious violations of personal rights.  | BMJ            | Planned approval during forthcoming legislative period | no budgetary impact   |
| 76. The <i>HateAid gGmbH</i> (Hate Aid) project for counselling individuals exposed to digital violence  | The project deals with new and virulent developments in the field of digital violence. It addresses the new forms of digital violence (including deep fakes, phishing and shadow banning) to which victims of digital violence are exposed. Counselling provides support from a preventive perspective but also in the acute situation of individuals experiencing digital violence. Furthermore, it informs affected individuals about the new legal options for dealing with perpetrators and platforms on which hate and hate speech are spread.   | BMJ            | 2024 possibly continuation in 2025                     | €600,000  |

Areas of Action of the Strategy

| Title  | Short description of measure   | Responsibility | Timeline                     | Budget in €         |
|--|--|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 77. Pilot project: 24/7 contact point of the Federal Police in Berlin's Ostbahnhof railway station   | The police officers deployed there have undergone special training to deal with the task and the needs of individuals seeking help or victims. The contact point is borne by the idea that this public space offers individuals seeking protection both fall back options and anonymity that will give them an additional access option. | BMI/BPol       | Ongoing (evaluation in 2025) | No budgetary impact |
| <p><b>See Measure 2:</b> Networking of the women's support system at federal level: Funding for the coordinating body of Women's Counselling and Rape Crisis Centres (bff)</p> |  |                |                              |                     |
| <p><b>See Measure 3:</b> Networking of the women's support system at federal level: Funding of the Federal Coordinating Body for Women's Shelters (FHK)</p>                    |  |                |                              |                     |
| <p><b>See Measure 24:</b> Promotion of the Federal Association for Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (BAG TäHG)</p>  |  |                |                              |                     |

## 3.4 Substantive law

### 3.4.1 Goals of the Federal Government in the field of substantive law

The Federal Government will examine what further legislative and other measures can be taken to afford protection against gender-based and domestic violence in conformity with the IC, in order to increase the effectiveness of and access to measures under civil, criminal and public law. Furthermore, the Federal Government will examine which legal and other measures are needed to implement the EU Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence and other relevant EU directives.

### 3.4.2 Initial situation in the field of substantive law

Even before Germany ratified the IC, the Act Amending the Criminal Code to Improve the Protection of Sexual Self-Determination (*Gesetz zur Änderung des Strafgesetzbuches zur Verbesserung des Schutzes der sexuellen Selbstbestimmung*) came into force in 2016. It constituted a fundamental reform of German law governing sexual offences. In particular, the introduction of the “no means no” solution placed the victim's will at the centre of protection under criminal law. For a person to be criminally liable for sexual assault or rape, it is no longer necessary for the perpetrator to coerce the victim into performing a sexual act by using or threatening to use force. The deciding factor is now that the perpetrator disregards the victim's clearly expressed objection. In addition, a separate and new statutory element of an offence has been introduced for promoting sexual offences by participating in a group (section 184j of the Criminal Code). Furthermore, the protection of women in particular has been improved by the introduction of the new statutory element of the offence of sexual harassment (section 184i of the Criminal Code).

When the Act to Combat Child Marriages (*Gesetz zur Bekämpfung von Kinderehen*) entered into force in 2017, the age at marriage in Germany was raised to 18. At the same time, a marriage legally concluded abroad with a person who had not yet reached the age of 16 at the time of the marriage, was declared void in Germany. In 2024, the Act on the Protection of Minors in Foreign Marriages (*Gesetz zum Schutz Minderjähriger bei Auslandsehen*) was supplemented to include maintenance claims for the protection of minors and an option for rectifying a void marriage upon their reaching the age of legal majority. Marriages involving a person who has reached the age of 16 but is not yet 18 remain valid, but can be annulled.

Furthermore, the rights of women in particular were strengthened, along with the protection of privacy, with the entry into force of the Law on the Protection of Personal Privacy in the Taking of Photographs (*Gesetz zum Persönlichkeitsschutz bei Bildaufnahmen*) on 1 January 2021. It envisages a new provision (section 184k of the Criminal Code, violation of intimate parts of the body by taking photographs or other images) to counter phenomena such as “upskirting” and “downblousing”.<sup>54</sup> In addition, the Act Amending the Criminal Code – more effective combating of stalking and improved recording of cyberstalking and improvement of criminal law protection against forced prostitution (*Gesetz zur Änderung des Strafgesetzbuches – effektivere Bekämpfung von Nachstellungen und bessere Erfassung des Cyberstalkings sowie Verbesserung des strafrechtlichen Schutzes gegen Zwangsprostitution*) entered into force on 1 October 2021. The adaptation of the statutory element of the offence of stalking (section 238 of the Criminal Code) takes into account the increasing importance of the digital dimension of gender-based violence.

<sup>54</sup> Taking photos under other people's skirts without permission, sharing these photos in chat groups or distributing them commercially are all punishable by law.

The Criminal Code contains a number of criminal law provisions that criminalise the conduct referred to in Articles 33 to 40 of the Istanbul Convention, for example female genital mutilation pursuant to Article 38 of the Convention is punishable under section 226a of the Criminal Code. The comprehensive reform of all sexual offences prior to Germany's ratification of the IC was accompanied by extensive awareness-raising measures and public debates, which led to an increase in the number of criminal charges filed for these offences.

In Germany, victims of intentional, unlawful acts of violence can claim compensation. This consists of financial compensation for economic loss and damage and/or compensation in kind for physical and emotional harm. As of 1 January 2024, all social compensation was drawn together in Social Code Book XIV. In addition to the elements of compensation, this contains numerous simplifications and improvements for victims of violent crimes, particularly for victims of sexual violence. Victims of violent crimes can seek compensation regardless of their nationality, and the right to compensation is no longer limited to physical acts of violence. Under the new law, victims of psychological violence are also entitled to recompense.

With effect from 1 October 2023, the Act to Revise the Law on Sanctions – default imprisonment, fixing of penalties, conditions and directions, and placement in an addiction treatment facility (*Gesetz zur Überarbeitung des Sanktionenrechts – Ersatzfreiheitsstrafe, Strafzumessung, Auflagen und Weisungen sowie Unterbringung in einer Entziehungsanstalt*) explicitly added “gender-based” motives for a crime and motives for a crime “against sexual orientation” – examples of inhumane motives and goals – to the catalogue of penalty fixing principles in section 46 (2) sentence 2 of the Criminal Code. The provision regulates which circumstances the court must take into account when fixing penalties.

In 2021, the Participation Strengthening Act (*TeilhabeStärkungsgesetz*) created a legal basis for anchoring protection against violence in disability aid facilities (service providers). According to this provision (section 37a of the Social Code Book IX), providers are to take suitable measures to protect persons with disabilities, in particular women and children with disabilities, from violence. Suitable measures within the meaning of this provision include, more particularly, the development and implementation of a violence protection concept tailored to the respective institution or service.

### **3.4.3 Challenges in the field of substantive law**

GREVIO proposes creating a separate offence for psychological violence to effectively criminalise all acts that seriously impair a person's psychological integrity for the purpose of implementing Article 33 of the Convention. Investigating, prosecuting and punishing acts of psychological violence should always take into account the online and offline dimensions of the offence.<sup>55</sup> Current forms of digital violence against women and girls must be monitored and, where appropriate, legislative and other measures taken to effectively counteract forms of sexual harassment that occur in the digital space.<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, the intentional conduct of forcing a woman or girl to undergo female genital mutilation or to cause her to undergo the acts set forth in Article 38 b and c of the Convention, are to be punishable.<sup>57</sup>

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55 GREVIO Inf(2022)9, p. 80, para. 243.

56 GREVIO Inf(2022)9, p. 87, para. 274.

57 GREVIO Inf(2022)9, p. 84, para. 259.

GREVIO recommends that in any procedures in which the consensual sterilisation of women with disabilities can be authorised, less invasive contraceptive methods should be considered, with due regard for the best interests and the self-determination of the women concerned. Furthermore, it should be ensured that women involved in these procedures receive sufficient and accessible information from professionals with training in gender and disability issues. In addition, GREVIO calls for the collection of data on the number of forced abortions and forced sterilisations in order to grasp the scale of these practices and take any necessary action.<sup>58</sup>

Regarding a review of the criteria for supervised visitation, GREVIO calls for the collection of data on how judges exercise their discretion to restrict or withdraw parental or visitation rights in the context of domestic violence.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, data should be collected on gender, age, type of violence, relationship between perpetrator and victim and place of residence, compensation claims filed and granted under the Crime Victims' Compensation Act (*Opferentschädigungsgesetz*) and on the compensation awarded in the context of criminal proceedings.<sup>60</sup>

GREVIO strongly encourages the German authorities to ensure the application of the Protection against Violence Act to women with disabilities living in institutions and to asylum-seeking women living in reception and accommodation facilities.<sup>61</sup>

In its concluding observations, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) also emphasises the need for an effective strategy for protection against violence and a practice-oriented implementation of the Protection against Violence Act, especially in institutions.

In their analyses legal scholars not only identify significant gaps in the Protection against Violence Act but also stress the urgent need to further develop the existing provisions in order to effectively protect persons with disabilities, especially women, in institutions and in their own homes.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, GREVIO encourages the German authorities to monitor and further evaluate the implementation of the new sexual offences legislation, in particular section 177 of the Criminal Code, with a view to further aligning its definition of consent with that set out in Article 36 (2) of the Convention.

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58 GREVIO Inf(2022)9, p. 88, para. 267 et seq.

59 GREVIO Inf(2022)9, p. 76, para. 230.

60 GREVIO Inf(2022)9, p. 71, para. 217b.

61 Opinion of the Federal Government on the first report of the Committee of Experts (GREVIO) on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention of 11 May 2011 (Istanbul Convention) in Germany, Recommendation 60, p. 33

62 Rechtsdienst 2/2023 Rechts- und Sozialpolitik Gewalt gegen Menschen mit Behinderungen: Schutzlücken schließen! Prof. Dr. Julia Zinsmeister, Professor for public law at the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences at the TH Köln

**Results from the consultation  
on 14 November 2023**

**Substantive law:**

*Consider protection against violence in custody/access rights, especially in so far as the legal presumption in the case of domestic violence does not necessarily correspond to the best interests of the child; synchronise protection against violence, child protection and criminal law; reform of section 177 of the Criminal Code.*

**Upskilling:**

*Provide compulsory, interdisciplinary further training for relevant professions (including the police and the judiciary) and include protection against violence in training/study curricula.*

**Data:**

*Extend indicators and data collection on access/custody proceedings.*

**Procedure:**

*Develop court-ordered perpetrator work; strengthen children's co-decision-making powers.*

### 3.4.4 Measures

The challenges are to be tackled, *inter alia*, with the following measures:

Table 4: Measures for the area of action substantive law

| Title  | Short description of measure   | Responsibility | Timeline  | Budget in €                       |
|--|--|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 78. Reform of law on parent and child matters (Civil Code)   | Article 31 (2) IC is to be transposed into national law. According to this, the family court will also be able to restrict or exclude contact, if necessary, to avert a specific risk to the parent affected by violence. The same applies to Article 51 IC. It should be made clear that in access proceedings, a comprehensive examination of the indications of domestic violence and a risk analysis must be carried out. In matters of custody law, a presumption is to be introduced according to which joint custody should not be considered systematically in cases of intimate partner violence. | BMJ            | Next legislative period                         | no budgetary impact               |
| 79. Act concerning Self-determination in Gender Entry and the Amendment of Further Provisions ( <i>Gesetz über die Selbstbestimmung in Bezug auf den Geschlechtseintrag – SBGG</i> ) | The Act harmonises the rules for changing gender entry and first names and reduces the red tape. This enables a self-determined change of the gender entry and first names to preserve and protect the constitutionally protected gender identity.   | BMFSFJ and BMJ | Conclusion of the legislative process in 2024   | no budgetary impact               |
| 80. Second Act amending the Pregnancy Conflict Act ( <i>Schwangerschafts konfliktgesetz</i> ) (street harassment)  | The aim of the law is to protect pregnant women more effectively from harassment outside pregnancy conflict counselling centres and facilities that perform abortions.   | BMFSFJ         | Entry into force of the Act on 13 November 2024 | no budgetary impact <sup>63</sup> |
| 81. Protection against Discrimination AGG  | The General Equal Treatment Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexual identity in the workplace and in civil law communications. The Coalition Agreement plans to close gaps in protection, improve legal protection and expand the scope of application.   | ADS            | ongoing   | no budgetary impact               |
| 82. Protection against (sexual) harassment   | The Equal Treatment of Soldiers Act ( <i>Soldaten-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz – SoldGG</i> ) prohibits soldiers from harassing, sexually harassing and instructing others to engage in such behaviour [section 7 (2)]. Possible consequences are, for example, the initiation of disciplinary proceedings or dismissal.  | BMVg           | ongoing   | no budgetary impact               |

63 The Act also amends the federal statistics on abortions. This will generate costs of €25,000 in 2024 and €10,000 annually in subsequent years.

## 3.5 Investigations, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures

### 3.5.1 Goals of the Federal Government in the field of investigations, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures

The Federal Government aims to improve the effectiveness of investigations into cases of violence against women and girls in particular, as well as all forms of gender-based violence in accordance with the standards of the IC. This includes a thorough investigation of all reported incidents and compliance with international standards for the investigation of said offences. Taking into account the interests of victims and safeguarding their legal position is an important part of procedural law. The Code of Criminal Procedure (*Strafprozessordnung – StPO*) and the Courts Constitution Act (*Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz – GVG*) provide for numerous protective measures to reduce the strain on injured parties during criminal proceedings. For example, in certain cases it is possible to exclude the public or take special precautions to protect witnesses during questioning.

### 3.5.2 Initial situation in the field of investigations, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures

Germany has already implemented a high standard of protection in the field of victim protection. Taking victims' interests into account and ensuring that they are attributed appropriate rights and protection is an important legal policy concern for the Federal Government. The third Victims' Rights Reform Act (*Opferrechtsreformgesetz – OpferRRG*) of 21 December 2015 further increases the standard of protection for victims. Furthermore, Germany has fully implemented the obligations pursuant to the EU Victims' Rights Directive 2012/29/EU of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards for the rights, support and protection of victims of offences (2012/29/EU). In July 2023, the Commission submitted a proposal to revise the EU Victims' Rights Directive, which is currently being deliberated and contains further improvements to victims' rights.

A milestone in victim protection is the introduction of psychosocial court assistance which entered into force on 1 January 2017. This gives particularly vulnerable victims access to professional, non-legal support and care before, during and after the main hearing. Children and adolescents who are victims of sexual or serious violent offences have a legal right to free psychosocial court assistance.

Furthermore, persons seeking protection from violence can turn to lawyers for support. If the requirements of section 1 (1) of the Act on Counselling Assistance (*Beratungshilfegesetz – BerHG*) are met, there is an entitlement to counselling assistance, in which case legal counselling is free of charge with the exception of a contribution of €15 by the victim.

The 2019 Act on the Modernisation of Criminal Proceedings (*Gesetz zur Modernisierung des Strafverfahrens – StraVMoG*) extended the possibility of recording judicial examinations in investigation proceedings to adult victims of sexual crimes, which had previously been restricted to victims under the age of 18. This significantly reduces the strain on victims of violence by sparing them repeated examinations and appearances in court.



Pursuant to section 2 of the Protection against Violence Act, an affected person can obtain an order from the family court to the effect that the perpetrator has to vacate a shared residence. Pursuant to sections 49 et seqq., 214 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>64</sup> an order under the Protection against Violence Act can also be issued as a preliminary injunction (emergency barring order).

Since 2023, an interdisciplinary group of experts under the aegis of the Federal Ministry of Justice has been working on a practical guide on the subject of psychotherapy and criminal proceedings, which is to be published before the end of 2024. The guide is intended to help the judiciary and prosecuting authorities to improve their approach to witnesses in need of therapy whose statements are to be used as evidence in criminal proceedings.

### **3.5.3 Challenges in the field of investigations, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures**

In Germany, investigation and prosecution are organised on a federal basis and fall within the jurisdiction of the *Länder*. According to GREVIO, there are some public prosecutor's offices in Germany that have specialist departments for the prosecution of offences against sexual self-determination. Some of these offices have specialist units for domestic violence.<sup>65</sup> The *Länder* are also responsible for police training and organisation which means that they may differ within Germany. Effective, low-threshold access to justice for all victims of violence, especially for women affected by intersectional discrimination, should be guaranteed nationwide.<sup>66</sup>

Concepts and training are required for this, especially with regard to dealing with witnesses with intellectual impairments and disabilities. Difficulties and barriers in communication constitute significant hurdles here. In particular, the ability of people with intellectual impairments to describe incidents is often underestimated and their statements regarding experiences of violence are doubted or even downplayed. This increases the risk of further assaults and the exemption from punishment of perpetrators due to a lack of evidence. By ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Germany has undertaken to ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. This includes the provision of procedural and age-appropriate safeguards in order to facilitate their effective participation in court proceedings (Article 13 (1) of the UN CRPD). Currently, not all *Länder* in Germany offer the option of reporting an offence to the police online or uploading digital evidence.<sup>67</sup> To ensure that the special needs of witnesses with intellectual impairments and disabilities are met and that their statements are properly considered, audio-visual recordings and other procedural options in the investigation proceedings can and should be used.

Furthermore, awareness-raising and comprehensive in-service training measures for all relevant professional groups in the criminal justice system are important. In addition, further legal or other measures should be taken to reduce the time taken by prosecuting authorities to process cases of violence against women and domestic violence covered by the IC.<sup>68</sup> The Federal Government welcomes efforts by the *Länder* in these areas. GREVIO also suggests strengthening the prosecution of offences of physical violence in the context of intimate partner

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64 Law on Proceedings in Family Matters and in Matters of Non-Contentious Jurisdiction.

65 GREVIO Inf(2022)9, p. 94, para. 298.

66 GREVIO Inf(2022)9, p. 92, para. 292.

67 GREVIO Inf(2022)9, p. 91, para. 291.

68 GREVIO Inf(2022)9, p. 95, para. 302.

violence by establishing strict guidelines for prosecution. This will enable victims to obtain justice and help deter future violence.<sup>69</sup>

GREVIO is of the opinion that there is a need for systematic analyses of the prosecution of sexual and domestic violence based on data, research and case law in order to develop fact-based strategies for the handling of sexual and domestic violence by institutions and the judiciary and for examining the need for any necessary legislative and practical modifications.

GREVIO recommends that measures to protect victims during investigations and court proceedings be implemented for victims of all forms of violence covered by the IC. Furthermore, how these measures are applied and how effective they are should be regularly evaluated and documented, taking into account the victim perspective, too.

### **Results from the consultation on 14 November 2023**

#### **Investigations, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures:**

*Focus on victim protection in court proceedings and interlink these areas with each other and with the actions of the police and support system; synchronise family and criminal law; reduce the processing time of violence protection cases.*

#### **Upskilling:**

*Provide initial/further training for all professional groups in criminal/civil proceedings; create special departments/public prosecutor's offices with a focus on this area.*

#### **Procedure:**

*Introduce mandatory separate questioning, risk analysis/management and case conferences for high-risk cases; expand work with perpetrators and introduce a proactive approach, enable data transfer for this purpose.*

#### **Awareness-raising:**

*Examine critically education on all forms of violence, role models, for example in the media, strengthen the credibility of victims and conduct effectiveness research on measures.*

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69 GREVIO Inf(2022)9, p. 81, para. 249.

### 3.5.4 Measures

The challenges are to be tackled, *inter alia*, with the following measures:

Table 5: Measures for the area of action investigations, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures:

| Title   | Short description of measure   | Responsibility | Timeline              | Budget in €                        |
|---|--|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 83. CERES: Cyber grooming – Exploration of risk factors, investigative practice and protective measures | Cybergrooming refers to grooming children for sexual abuse using information and communication technology (Section 176b of the Criminal Code). The aim of the CERES collaborative project is to develop recommendations for action for prosecution and crime prevention in conjunction with this phenomenon and to transpose them into practice. | BMBF, BKA      | 01.04.2023–31.03.2026 | €172,000 (BKA)<br>€842,000 (Total) |
| 84. Zero tolerance policy for sexual assault  | Suspected cases of offences against sexual self-determination are among the offences that are regularly referred to the public prosecutor under regulation A-2160/6.   | BMVg           | ongoing               | no budgetary impact                |

## 3.6 Migration and asylum

### 3.6.1 Goals of the Federal Government in the field of migration and asylum

The German Government wants to help ensure that the needs of asylum seekers who were or are affected by gender-based or domestic violence and human trafficking are given due consideration in asylum procedures. This includes improved access to specialist services for refugees who were or are victims of gender-based violence and consideration of gender perspectives in asylum procedures. The aim is to reduce factual and legal barriers to protection and counselling for victims of domestic or intimate partner violence who are not German nationals. This includes more precise provisions under residence law for victims of domestic or intimate partner violence who only have a derived right of residence and the creation of a residence permit that is not tied to testimony by victims of human trafficking.

### 3.6.2 Initial situation in the field of migration and asylum

The Federal Government recognises the need to afford protection against violence to affected persons who belong to (multiple) discriminated groups, especially people with migration and flight experience. With this in mind, Germany undertook in February 2023 to fully implement the IC and did not extend the reservations regarding Article 59 (2) and (3) of the Convention in 2022.

In asylum proceedings, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) uses in-house instructions to draw the decision-makers' attention to the special needs of persons who have been exposed to gender-based persecution. The BAMF systematically identifies vulnerabilities – and by extension victims of gender-based violence – among those seeking protection in asylum procedures with the help of an identification concept that was last updated in 2022. Further education and training courses are held on an ongoing basis for staff members in asylum procedures to ensure comprehensive, gender-sensitive processing of asylum procedures with the relevant references. The Federal Government supports measures to provide asylum seekers affected by violence with appropriate counselling and information about their rights.

Section 44 of the Asylum Act states that refugee accommodation is the responsibility of the *Länder*. The Federal Government supports the networking of all actors involved in order to ensure adequate accommodation for refugees throughout Germany. The Federal Government welcomes and supports measures to improve access to special protection and counselling facilities for refugees.

Since 2016, the voluntary federal initiative “Protection of Refugees in Refugee Accommodation” has supported the protection of women, children and other vulnerable persons in accommodation. As part of the federal initiative, the BMFSFJ supports the *Länder* and municipalities that are responsible for accommodation as well as providers and financing entities by funding various model projects to implement violence protection measures.

Awareness-raising work on equality and women's rights is being done in integration and initial orientation courses, as well as in special programmes for female refugees. The aim here is to raise the participants' awareness about potential differences and similarities between the country of origin and the country of destination with regard to the legal and social position of women.

Since 1 January 2023, the Federal Government has been funding asylum procedure consulting that is independent of the authorities, open-ended, personalised, free of charge and voluntary in accordance with section 12a of the Asylum Act. Pursuant to section 12a (2) of the Asylum Act, asylum procedure counselling includes information on the procedure and may also include legal services pursuant to the Act on Out-of-Court Legal Services (*Rechtsdienstleistungsgesetz* –

RDG). The counselling takes into account the special circumstances of the foreigners, in particular whether they require special procedural guarantees (for example, due to their sexual orientation or gender identity) or special guarantees upon admission. This replaces the previous state asylum procedure counselling provided by the BAMF. Asylum procedure counselling is intended for all persons seeking protection and aims to ensure that they are informed about the purpose, procedure and content of the asylum procedure. Asylum procedure counselling is also designed to help identify vulnerable persons seeking protection. Budget funds amounting to €25 million were available for this in 2024.

### 3.6.3 Challenges in the field of migration and asylum

The implementation of the IC in the field of migration and asylum poses a number of challenges, particularly when dealing with the increasing number of refugees fleeing from crisis and war zones. Refugee women and girls are at increased risk of gender-based violence. Language barriers, a lack of trust and uncertain residence status often make it difficult to identify and support victims. Victims need barrier-free access to legal support and information on their rights. GREVIO calls for asylum-seeking women to be systematically informed of their rights and grounds for asylum prior to or in the context of their first interview with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). This includes information from independent support services for asylum-seeking women on the possibility of requesting a female case worker and interpreter at the BAMF, on applying for asylum in their own capacity, as well as on the availability of legal advice.<sup>70</sup>

When they submit an application to the BAMF, women, like all other asylum seekers, are always informed of their rights and obligations in the asylum procedure. In addition, asylum seekers can take advantage of voluntary, free and open-ended asylum procedure counselling independent of administrative authorities throughout the asylum procedure. During the hearing, the BAMF appoints same-sex decision-makers and interpreters if this is requested and sufficient staff members are available. Furthermore, so-called special representatives for gender-based persecution are appointed in every BAMF branch office. They are specially trained personnel whose presence is mandatory in presentations on gender-based persecution or indications of such.

The Federal Government has set itself the goal of identifying and protecting vulnerable groups from the outset. LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> refugees are particularly affected by intersectional discrimination and violence. They are especially at risk in reception centres and collective accommodation for refugees and require special protection from violence, assaults and hostility. In order to implement the existing obligation of the *Länder* arising from sections 44 (2a), 53 (3) of the Asylum Act and to make the accommodation of persecuted LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> persons safer, further measures are needed to protect vulnerable groups in reception and collective accommodation; this also includes refugees with disabilities and impairments.

The integration of female refugees requires special attention, particularly for victims of violence, in order to enable them to regain their autonomy. It is important to consider the diverse needs and challenges of the women and girls affected and to adopt an intersectional approach.

The Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration, who is also the Federal Government Commissioner for Anti-Racism, is therefore funding several projects to promote the integration and participation of women with a history of migration and flight. The umbrella association of migrant women's organisations (DaMigra) provided several thousand women with a history of flight and migration with information and empowered them to hone their individual skills up to the end of 2024 by means of the *Gemeinsam MUTig* (Brave

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70 GREVIO Inf(2022)9 2022, p. 109 et seq., para. 362 (c).

Together) project in order to reduce the disadvantages suffered by and empower refugee girls and women in all areas of society. Also up to the end of 2024, the Women's Computer Centre Berlin supported the training of both female trainers and providers of IT training for female refugees throughout Germany, as well as the refugees themselves, with the IntB-funded Mikado Open up project, and accompanies them on their path to digital sovereignty. With the *Frauen in Aktion* (Women in Action) project, which is also funded by IntB, the Iranian Community of Germany (IGD e. V.) helps refugee women and their children in Berlin, Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig to access sports and leisure clubs and obtain positions as trainers in the clubs.

Finally, the IntB is funding various projects up to the end of 2024 that provide support services for the empowerment of refugee women and other vulnerable groups. It supports, *inter alia*, projects seeking to boost the self-determination, participation and empowerment of refugees, especially women and girls, queer refugees and victims of human trafficking. Particular attention is paid to people who have suffered or are still suffering from forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence. Refugee parents are trained to tap into their own resources in order to help them cope better with stress and strain (flight trauma) in their everyday lives. Educational professionals also undergo training to equip them with the skills to improve the psychosocial health of children and their families and to provide them with a stabilising learning environment that contributes to a successful transition of children to primary school thereby increasing their chances of social participation in society. In basic and in-service training courses they acquire the skills and knowledge to raise their awareness of the needs of refugee families and obtain the necessary qualifications. Another project promotes the development and dissemination of a peer-based approach to providing sustainable psychosocial support for traumatised refugees, with the aim of giving refugees better access to psychotherapeutic support.

The *Länder* are responsible for refugee accommodation which means that there is no harmonised approach to dealing with refugees affected by violence in the federal territory.

Decisions regarding the recognition of protection status independent of marital status for women affected by domestic violence are still taken on a case-by-case basis and depend on a variety of prerequisites. The aim is therefore to make it necessary merely to credibly demonstrate that the conditions for an independent right of residence are met. In addition, victims of violence should be able to receive a one-off independent temporary residence permit even if the renewal of the permit of the main beneficiary is excluded. In cases of domestic violence, the annulment of a residence provision (section 12a of the Residence Act) should also be included as a separate case category in section 12a (5) sentence 1 no. 2 c of the Residence Act and thus be made easier.

GREVIO calls for all persons involved in asylum procedures to receive adequate training on gender-based persecution and gender-based violence.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, training on how to deal with victims of violence should be provided more frequently to those involved in asylum procedures, including how to recognise the effects of violence. When reforming the Common European Asylum System, special consideration should be given to the needs of women and girls who have been exposed to violence.

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71 GREVIO Inf(2022)9 2022, p. 109 et seq., para. 362 b.

The right to a residence permit in return for testimony for victims of human trafficking is to be extended. In line with the Coalition Agreement, victims of human trafficking should no longer be required to testify, but merely to cooperate. There are also plans to extend the scope of the provision to cover the entire criminological phenomenon of human trafficking for sexual exploitation for the first time. Finally, the later initial granting of a residence permit should be possible if the investigation proceedings have not led to a result although the person concerned has done what was required of them.

***Results from the consultation  
on 14 November 2023***

***Migration and asylum:***

*Humanitarian right of residence independent of marital status; standardised identification of vulnerable groups throughout Germany, taking into account all forms of violence.*

***Accommodation:***

*Create safe accommodation and protective facilities for all individuals, taking into account the special needs of vulnerable groups; extend interpreting services in the help system; reform residence requirements or regulations.*

***Upskilling:***

*Intersectional initial and further training for all professions involved in asylum procedures (e.g. interpreters, authorities, judiciary) and awareness-raising about protection against violence.*

### 3.6.4 Measures

The challenges are to be tackled, *inter alia*, with the following measures:

Table 6: Measures for the area of action migration and asylum

| Title  | Short description of measure  | Responsibility | Timeline  | Budget in €   |
|--|---|----------------|---|---|
| 85. Raising awareness about equality and women's rights in integration measures such as integration courses (IK), initial orientation courses (EOK) and the programme Female Migrants Simply Strong in Everyday Life (MiA courses) | Drawing attention to potential differences and similarities between the country of origin and the country of destination with regard to the legal and social position of women, for example in relation to equality and women's rights.   | BMI            | IK: Since 2005 ongoing<br>EOK: ongoing nationwide since 2017 (2016 as a model project in 5 <i>Länder</i> )<br>MiA courses: ongoing since 2020 (previously under another name) | 2024:<br>In total approximately €1.27 billion                                 |
| 86. Federal initiative – Protection of Refugees in Refugee Accommodation   | Since 2016, the Federal Government has been committed to protecting women, children and other vulnerable persons in refugee accommodation through the federal initiative – Protection of Refugees in Refugee Accommodation. As part of the federal initiative, the BMFSFJ supports the <i>Länder</i> and municipalities that are responsible for accommodation as well as providers and financing entities by funding various model projects to implement violence protection measures. | BMFSFJ         | Since 2016  | Total allocation of resources 2024: approximately €1.1 million                |
| 87. Creation of a residence right not tied to testimony for persons who have been victims of human trafficking   | Amendment of section 25 (4a) of the Residence Act   | BMI            | planned for the next legislative period   | no budgetary impact   |
| 88. Creation of an independent temporary residence permit, even if the original permit holder's permit is not renewable, and easing of the burden of proof   | Amendment of section 31 (2) of the Residence Act  | BMI            | planned for the next legislative period   | no budgetary impact   |
| 89. Amendment of the provision to waive a place of residence requirement in cases of domestic violence   | Amendment of section 12a (5) and section 72 (3a) of the Residence Act   | BMI            | planned for the next legislative period   | no budgetary impact   |
| 90. LGBTIQ+ counselling and self-empowerment for LGBTIQ+ refugees  | <i>Lesben und Schwulenverband e. V.</i> (Gays and lesbians association): LGBTIQ+ counselling and self-empowerment for LGBTIQ+ refugees, as well as training and honing of the counselling skills of facilities for LGBTIQ+ refugees, and support for their integration.   | IntB           | 2024 to 2025  | €254,581 (in 2024)<br>For 2025 funding amounting to €252,229.82 is envisaged. |



| Title  | Short description of measure  | Responsibility | Timeline              | Budget in €        |
|--|---|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <p><b>91.</b> Asylum procedure counselling</p> | <p>Grants are awarded to providers that offer asylum procedure counselling. Asylum procedure counselling may also include out-of-court legal services for queer and other vulnerable individuals seeking protection under the Act on Out-of-Court Legal Services Act. The counselling takes into account the special circumstances of the foreigner, in particular whether he or she requires special procedural guarantees or special guarantees upon admission.</p> | <p>BAMF</p>    | <p>Since 1.1.2023</p> | <p>€25,000,000</p> |

## 3.7 International legal cooperation, contributions of feminist foreign and development policy

### 3.7.1 Goals of the Federal Government in the field of international legal cooperation, contributions of feminist foreign and development policy

The Federal Government's goal is to further expand its international leadership role in promoting gender equality, strengthening the rights of women and girls at the international level and eradicating all forms of gender-based violence in the long term. Since preventing and combating violence against girls and women are global challenges, Germany is increasingly committed at the bilateral, European and multilateral levels.

### 3.7.2 Initial situation in the field of international legal cooperation, contributions of feminist foreign and development policy

Germany is committed to promoting gender equality and the participation of all persons in economic, political and social life worldwide through its feminist foreign and development policy, for example within the framework of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the United Nations (UN) and the G7/G20, through lobbying, partnerships, multilateral engagement, development cooperation and humanitarian programmes. Furthermore, the Federal Government supports the international engagement of non-governmental organisations and EU agencies (European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), etc.) and their cooperation in European and international networks.

The UN Women in Germany Association, a strategic partner of the Federal Government, is funded by the BMFSFJ. As one of 13 national UN women's committees worldwide, it provides support for gender equality policy work at the national level in the implementation of international agreements and treaties, particularly on the topic of protection against violence. For example, international initiatives and UN women's campaigns such as the UN campaign against gender-based violence (Orange the World) are implemented in Germany with a high impact, and the organisation is also developing its own gender equality campaigns. With a view to international legal cooperation, the Federal Government has supported the project work of the civil society CEDAW Alliance, coordinated by the German Women's Council, since 2023 to accompany the ongoing national implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). With the help of the CEDAW Alliance, links with other, regional human rights conventions, such as the IC, are being created and utilised.

Germany fulfils a number of international obligations to combat discrimination and violence against women and girls as a signatory party to important international human rights treaties/conventions, including:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976) with Optional Protocol
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1985)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment (1990)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992)

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2009)
- Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2017)
- Act on Convention 190 of the International Labour Organization on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment at Work (2023)
- Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence (2024)

The 2030 Agenda, with its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is the guiding principle for the policy of the German Government. To implement the 17 SDGs, the German Government has, *inter alia*, continued to develop the German Sustainable Development Strategy. The implementation of Goal 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – is of particular importance for the protection against violence strategy set out in the IC. For example, all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere in the world are to be ended by 2030. In addition, all forms of violence against and exploitation of women and girls are to be abolished, and early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation are to be eradicated.

The Federal Government pursues a feminist foreign and development policy. Consequently, in March 2023, the Federal Foreign Office presented the guidelines for a feminist foreign policy of the Foreign Office and the strategy for a feminist development policy of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. They are closely coordinated and complement each other. This places gender equality even more centre stage of foreign and development policy. A key concern is to overcome the structural causes of gender-based violence, including harmful practices such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The ending of gender-based violence is enshrined, *inter alia*, in the German government's Third National Action Plan on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, in the Third Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality (2023-27).

In March 2021, the LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> inclusion concept for foreign policy and development cooperation, which was developed together with civil society, was published.<sup>72</sup> The main objective of the concept is to provide sustainable structural support for civil society human rights work for members of the LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> community. Discrimination and criminalisation on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) run counter to the human rights commitments that Germany and the majority of its partner countries have entered into. Nevertheless, LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> persons are more affected than other groups by human rights violations and multiple forms of discrimination. They are threatened worldwide by violence and structural discrimination.

With the inclusion concept, Germany has set itself the goal of playing “a pioneering role in the international human rights dialogue for the respect, protection and guaranteeing of the human rights of LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> persons”<sup>73</sup>. Only a few other countries have put in place an LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> inclusion strategy for their foreign and development policy to date.

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72 <https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/86798/lbtti-inklusionskonzept-de.pdf>

73 <https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/86798/lbtti-inklusionskonzept-de.pdf>, p. 6.

At the European level, Germany also supports relevant legislative proposals, for example Directive (EU) 2024/1712 amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims of 13 June 2024. It has widened, *inter alia*, the forms of exploitation of human trafficking to include surrogacy, forced marriage and illegal adoption. Germany will implement the amending directive by 15 July 2026 at the latest.

On 3 August 2024, the Act for the Further Development of International Criminal Law (*Gesetz zur Fortentwicklung des Völkerstrafrechts – VstRGF*), which was based on an initiative of the BMJ, came into force. The Act expanded the Code of Crimes against International Law (VStGB) to include new statutory elements of offences, more particularly with regard to sexual violence (for example, the alternative offences of sexual slavery, sexual assault and forced abortion) and the use of prohibited means of warfare. It also resulted in a widening of the Criminal Code to include the offence of enforced disappearance of persons. Victims' rights were strengthened (by allowing private accessory action on the basis and because of offences under the VStGB and easier access to psychosocial court assistance). The broad impact of international criminal proceedings and judgments was improved (by allowing filming of significant court proceedings, in particular for offences under the VStGB, for scientific and historical purposes and by allowing foreign persons reporting for press, radio, television or other media to utilise the interpreted material in court proceedings).

Germany is in regular contact with the other national coordinating bodies of the contracting states regarding IC implementation. The aim is for them to work closely together and to deepen the exchange of experiences, for example by participating in the annual meetings of the national coordinating bodies that have been set up under the Convention. The Federal Government supports projects of the Council of Europe division dealing with the implementation of the IC with a view to recruiting third countries for membership, improving networking between international and regional bodies dedicated to protecting girls and women from violence, and countering disinformation regarding the Istanbul Convention.

### **3.7.3 Challenges in the field of international legal cooperation, contributions of feminist foreign and development policy**

The implementation of the IC in the field of international cooperation faces a variety of challenges. The rise in conflicts and crises, intensified by climate change, is increasing the number of victims of gender-based and domestic violence worldwide. Poverty and food insecurity lead to increased violence within families and communities, with women and girls being particularly affected. Many partner countries have inadequate resources and infrastructure to combat gender-based violence, including a lack of physical facilities such as women's shelters and psychosocial support services.



**3.7.4 Measures**

The challenges are to be tackled, *inter alia*, with the following measures:

Table 7: Measures for the area of action international legal cooperation, contributions of feminist foreign and development policy

| Title  | Short description of measure   | Responsibility | Timeline   | Budget in €   |
|--|--|----------------|--|---------------|
| 92. Strengthening Girls' Rights! Reproductive health and HIV prevention for young Zambian women II                     | Selected state and non-state actors have increased their commitment to strengthening the rights of young women and girls to prevent HIV, early pregnancies and gender-based violence.  | BMZ            | 05.2012 to 08.2026   | €11.8 million |
| 93. Regional project – Partnerships for the Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls in South Africa II (PfP II) | This regional programme promotes cooperation between state, non-state and private sector actors to prevent gender-based violence in South Africa, Zambia, Namibia and Lesotho. In line with feminist development policy, the programme encourages a critical appraisal of social norms that perpetuate violence. To this end, GIZ also works with schools, teachers, students and parents in the Eastern Cape Province to raise awareness of violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ* persons and to create a supportive environment. | BMZ            | 2017 to 2025<br>The follow-up phase has been underway since December 2023. | €27 million   |
| 94. Project – Prevention of Violence against Women II in Ecuador R(PreViMujer)   | In the follow-up phase the project aims to increase the capacities of state and private sector actors, civil society and the media to prevent violence against women.  | BMZ            | 2018 to 2027<br>An application has been submitted for the follow-up phase. | €11.4 million |

| Title  | Short description of measure  | Responsibility      | Timeline   | Budget in €                           |
|--|---|---------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 95. Improving primary health care, Libya   | The quality of primary health care in communities is insufficient in terms of quality and access for vulnerable groups. Particular consideration is given to people with disabilities in need of psychosocial support, girls and women, victims of violence including gender-based violence.  | BMZ                 | 2018 to 2025   | €23.8 million                         |
| 96. Strengthening participation, peaceful coexistence and equality in Iraq                               | The project promotes the active and equal participation of women in the reconstruction and peace process by developing the capacities of state and non-state actors at the national, governorate and local levels, and by implementing dialogue processes and high-profile campaigns to change patriarchal gender relations and stereotypes. This should, <i>inter alia</i> , reduce acceptance of violence against women.                        | BMZ                 | 2024 to 2027   | €17 million                           |
| 97. Action Network for Women with a flight background – Women as Agents of Change in Forced Displacement | The action network creates visibility and a voice for women with a flight background. It promotes their political, economic and social participation. Through the associated Funding Initiative on Forced Displacement of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), civil women's rights organisations in 10 countries receive assistance in implementing the participation and protection of women and girls in a flight context.          | BMZ                 | Since 2020   | €20.5 million                         |
| 98. Regional programme to improve the prevention of female genital mutilation in the Horn of Africa      | The contribution of relevant state and non-state actors at the local, national or regional levels to changing social norms regarding female genital mutilation and other forms of gender-based violence has been strengthened. Cross-border exchange and joint learning strengthen the capacities of relevant state and non-state actors to take action so that they can make a sustainable contribution to preventing female genital mutilation. | BMZ                 | 2020 to 2026<br>2024 to 2026   | Total:<br>€10.9 million<br>€6 million |
| 99. Project – Prevention of Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Rwanda                                   | The project aims to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion in the prevention of violence against women, as well as the capacities of state and non-state actors to provide medical, psychosocial and legal support for persons exposed to gender-based violence. In addition, community-based awareness-raising work will be carried out to achieve broad societal consciousness.                               | BMZ                 | 2021 to 2027<br>The implementation of the follow-up phase has been ongoing since October 2024. | €4 million                            |
| 100. Project – Prevention of Sexual and Gender-based Violence in South Sudan                             | The project expands the reach of basic psycho-social counselling services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, the project aims to critically examine harmful gender roles in society through gender-transformative approaches.  | BMZ EU co-financing | 2022 to 2026   | €3 million                            |

Areas of Action of the Strategy

| Title   | Short description of measure   | Responsibility      | Timeline     | Budget in €                                |
|---|--|---------------------|--------------|--|
| <b>101.</b> Project – Access to Justice for Women and Children (SAFE) in Tanzania   | Access to justice and protection for women and children to prevent and combat gender-based violence have improved.   | BMZ                 | 2022 to 2026 | €5 million (additional €6 million planned) |
| <b>102.</b> Mental health and psychosocial support in the flight context (MHPSS) in the Middle East   | The GIZ regional programme in Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey supports the high-quality implementation of context-, trauma- and gender-based approaches for people in the Middle East who are suffering from psychosocial stress. Together with local civil society organisations, state actors and regional and global networks, the project pilots and documents local experiential knowledge of MHPSS such as a regional feminist MHPSS approach, and makes it available to professionals. | BMZ                 | 2022 to 2025 | €5 million                                 |
| <b>103:</b> Promoting women's participation in peace and political decision-making processes in the MENA region (Women4Peace)                       | The project strengthens gender-equitable change processes with regard to the participation of women in peace and policy decision-making processes in the four focus countries of Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Syria and beyond in the MENA region and at the regional level.   | BMZ                 | 2022 to 2025 | €5.1 million                               |
| <b>104.</b> Better Migration Management   | Improvement of migration management in the region, particularly with regard to human trafficking and smuggling within and out of the Horn of Africa.   | BMZ EU co-financing | 2022 to 2025 | €6 million                                 |
| <b>105.</b> UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation  | At the multilateral level, the BMZ supports the joint programme of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the prevention of female genital mutilation. The programme recognises the crucial role of social norms in maintaining and overcoming this harmful practice.  | BMZ                 | 2023 to 2028 | €4 million                                 |
| <b>106.</b> Gender-responsive approaches to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in Ukraine   | The project supports vulnerable individuals, particularly internally displaced persons, returnees, veterans and residents in host communities in Ukraine, by providing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). MHPSS professionals are trained to offer gender-responsive support services to those affected, especially women and children.   | BMZ                 | 2023 to 2026 | €8.6 million                               |
| <b>107.</b> Strengthening the rights, resources and representation of marginalised, displaced and conflict-affected women in Armenia and Azerbaijan | The GIZ project aims to improve the social services, income and employment situation of marginalised, displaced and conflict-affected women and their families. To this end, it offers, <i>inter alia</i> , sports and leisure activities, further education and in-service training and psychosocial support.   | BMZ                 | 2023 to 2026 | €6 million                                 |

Areas of Action of the Strategy

| Title   | Short description of measure  | Responsibility      | Timeline   | Budget in €                             |
|---|---|---------------------|--|---|
| <b>108.</b> Strengthening key actors in the fight against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the Democratic Republic of Congo | The project supports organisational and strategy development for NGOs and state actors for holistic approaches to overcoming SGBV.  | BMZ                 | 2024 to 2026   | €4.5 million                            |
| <b>109.</b> Strengthening women's rights in Mauritania  | The aim of the project is to strengthen the skills and capacities of relevant state and non-state actors in protecting and promoting women's and children's rights in Mauritania.   | BMZ                 | 2024 to 2027<br>Project implementation has been ongoing since November 2024. | €5 million                              |
| <b>110.</b> Support for host communities for refugees in the border regions of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru (SI Frontera)               | State and civil society actors in the border regions of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru are supported in their efforts to manage the influx of refugees from Colombia and Ecuador in a socially acceptable and employment-promoting manner. The area of action – Protection and Prevention of (Potential) Victims of Sexual Violence and Exploitation – was added in the context of the migration crisis in Venezuela. | BMZ EU co-financing | 2018–2025  | €43.6 million (BMZ share €38.5 million) |
| <b>111.</b> Prevention and combatting of human smuggling and trafficking in the Western Balkans                                       | The project is active the fields of prevention, prosecution, protection and partnership at the individual and institutional levels. The module focuses on strengthening prosecuting and border authorities, as well as the judiciary and state and non-state institutions in the area of victim protection.   | BMZ EU co-financing | 2023–2027  | €1.5 million                            |
| <b>112.</b> Programme – Designing migration from a developmental policy angle   | Key actors in the partner countries are supported in making gender-responsive contributions to the goals of the Global Pact for Migration. Particular emphasis is placed on empowering women in their role as agents of change. Support is provided for the implementation of measures to strengthen women migrants in precarious situations.   | BMZ                 | 2023–2025<br><br>Possible continuation in 2025                               | €37.7 million                           |
| <b>113.</b> Making Migration Safe for Women, Phase II (Ethiopia)  | The focus is on providing women with information on migration decisions, including the risks involved, to allow them to make informed decisions. The project aims to ensure that female migrants, including returnees, are protected by gender-responsive laws and have access to decent work, in line with the International Labour Organization's definition of decent work.                                    | BMZ                 | 2023–2026<br>An application for an extension has been submitted.             | €7.35 million                           |
| <b>114.</b> Call to Action Field Implementation   | Mainstreaming of the call to action in the humanitarian system by Care Deutschland e. V. and the capacity building of local women-led organisations (WLOs) to obtain funding for their gender-based violence projects   | AA                  | 2023 to 2025   | €5.5 million                            |
| <b>115.</b> ICRC Special Appeal Addressing Sexual Violence  | ICRC special appeal to combat sexual and gender-based violence  | AA                  | 2023 to 2026   | €25 million                             |



Areas of Action of the Strategy

| Title  | Short description of measure  | Responsibility | Timeline              | Budget in €                                       |
|--|---|----------------|-----------------------|---|
| <b>116.</b> Enhancing access to critical protection services through boosting the humanitarian response role of Ukrainian and Moldovan women-led organisations   | Provision of psychological and psychosocial health measures   | AA             | 2024 to 2026          | €3 million (AA: €2.5 million)                     |
| <b>117.</b> Strengthening Access and Service Provision for sexual and reproductive health and research and gender-based violence Support among Conflict-affected Women and Girls in Eastern and Southern Ukraine | Improve access to sexual and reproductive health and research and gender-based violence services, especially for internally displaced persons (IDPs), Romnja and other vulnerable groups.<br>Improved access to health, prenatal and postnatal care for pregnant women, mothers and victims of sexual violence  | AA             | 2025 to 2026          | €6 million (AA: €5.4 million)                     |
| <b>118.</b> Payments into the UNDP Conflict Related Sexual Violence Multi-Partner Trust Fund with earmarked funds for Ukraine, South Sudan and the team of legal experts   | Support for the UN/UNDP in capacity building and coordination work related to the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine and South Sudan (primarily providing legal support for CRSV survivors).   | AA             | 2023 to at least 2025 | at least €6.4 million                             |
| <b>119.</b> Awareness-raising and targeted training for civilian, police and military personnel in peacekeeping missions on the topics of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment                    | Awareness-raising and targeted training for foreign and peacekeeping missions. For example, the UN military observers course includes a module on conflict-related sexual violence, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, while the course on the mission skills of military personnel on land-based missions includes a module on the prevention of sexual offences based on the A-2160 Joint Service Regulation and on the rights of women and children based on the A-2141/1 Joint Service Regulation. | BMVg           | ongoing               | envisaged in the budget section, not quantifiable |
| <b>120.</b> Stronger integration of the gender perspective in international missions through gender advisors   | The function of a female gender advisor for the Federal Armed Forces was created for the first time for the EU support mission in Ukraine. The adviser counsels the mission leadership, analyses gender roles in the area of operations, monitors violence against women (e.g. an increase in domestic violence after traumatic experiences) and acts as a point of contact.  | BMVg           | ongoing               | no budgetary impact                               |

# GLOSSARY <sup>74</sup>

Table 8: Glossary

| Glossary   |   |
|--|---|
| Violence against women   | The term “violence against women” is understood to be a human rights violation and a form of discrimination against women. It refers to all acts of gender-based violence against women that result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in the public or the private sphere. <sup>75</sup> The term covers violence against girls.   |
| Gender-based violence  | In line with the IC, the term “gender-based violence” encompasses in particular gender-based violence against women and, by extension, all acts by a person or group of persons that are directed against a woman because she is a woman or that primarily affect women and (may) lead to physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering for women. This also includes the threat of such acts. For the purposes of the Strategy, “gender-based violence” encompasses all acts directed against a trans*, intersex or non-binary person on the basis of their (ascribed) gender, including their gender identity, and that (may) result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering.  |
| Relevant forms and manifestations of violence against women and gender-based violence: |   |
| Domestic violence  | The term “domestic violence” encompasses physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence directed against a person in the family environment and the domestic unit or within existing or terminated partnerships. According to the IC, this refers to all victims of domestic violence. It may also include acts that are not punishable by law. Intergenerational violence, for example “parent-child violence” committed by adult carers towards their parents in need of care or by parents towards their children, can thus be a manifestation of domestic violence. This also includes witnessing violence. A current or previous shared residence or shared housekeeping are not a requirement. The close social environment (e.g. friendships, workplace, school, club life) is not included in this form of violence. |
| Intimate partner violence  | “Intimate partner violence” is a form of “domestic violence” <sup>76</sup> . Intimate partner violence refers to acts of violence between people who are or were married, in a civil partnership or in an intimate relationship (violence by an ex-partner). It is not necessary for the partners to currently live or have lived at the same address or share housekeeping. Intimate partner violence encompasses physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence. It may also include acts that are not punishable by law. <sup>77</sup> Partner violence is a form of violence that disproportionately affects women and is, therefore, a form of gender-based violence in relation to women. <sup>78</sup>   |

<sup>74</sup> These terms have been defined for use in this Strategy. This is not a definition of legal terms. However, certain legal terms are referred to below.

<sup>75</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/1680462535>

<sup>76</sup> [https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/veroeffentlichungen/2023/lagebild-HG.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=3](https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/veroeffentlichungen/2023/lagebild-HG.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3)

<sup>77</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1198?language\\_content\\_entity=de](https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1198?language_content_entity=de); <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/frauen-vor-gewalt-schuetzen/haeusliche-gewalt/formen-der-gewalt-erkennen-80642>

<sup>78</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1198?language\\_content\\_entity=de](https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1198?language_content_entity=de); <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/frauen-vor-gewalt-schuetzen/haeusliche-gewalt/formen-der-gewalt-erkennen-80642>

| Glossary                              |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Sexual harassment                     | “Sexual harassment” <sup>79</sup> is any form of gender-based violence that includes unwanted, sexually determined verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour with the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity and creating an atmosphere of intimidation, hostility, humiliation, degradation or insult. <sup>80</sup> “Catcalling” is an example of verbal sexual harassment and refers, <i>inter alia</i> , to sexually suggestive shouting, whistling, obscene gestures, comments about the body and many other sexually suggestive actions in public. <sup>81</sup> Sexual harassment within the meaning of section 184i of the Criminal Code requires physical contact in a sexually explicit manner.  |
| Sexual harassment in the workplace    | “Sexual harassment in the workplace” <sup>82</sup> encompasses any unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that occurs in the course of, in connection with, or as a result of matters relating to employment, profession or self-employment and that has the purpose or effect of violating a victim’s dignity, particularly if this results in an environment characterised by intimidation, hostility, humiliation, degradation and insults. <sup>83</sup>   |
| Sexual violence                       | “Sexual violence” refers to any verbal, non-verbal or physical assault on sexual self-determination and physical integrity. In the vast majority of cases the perpetrators are men. However, sexual violence can also be perpetrated by women or non-binary persons. The perpetrators act against the will of the person affected or take advantage of the fact that they are not able to form a will. Consequently, this has nothing to do with lust or eroticism but is about power. This form of violence encompasses not only physical attacks such as rape, sexual coercion or sexual abuse. It also encompasses sexual harassment and any form of unwanted sexual communication – obscene words and gestures, intrusive and unpleasant looks, showing or sending sexual content and/or pornography. <sup>84</sup>  |
| Stalking                              | “Stalking” is defined as the repeated pursuit, intrusive harassment and threatening of a person against their will by another person. Typical forms of stalking include: attempting to establish contact with the person using telecommunications or third parties; ordering goods or services for the person by illegally using their personal data; threatening the person themselves, one of their family members or another person close to them with harm to their life, physical integrity, health or freedom. In dramatic cases, the spectrum of stalking behaviour can range from physical violence to killing. Criminal liability pursuant to section 238 of the Criminal Code (stalking) arises when the offender illegally stalks the person in a manner suited to not insignificantly restricting that person’s lifestyle by repeatedly committing acts pursuant to paragraph 1 of the provision. <sup>85</sup>                |
| Sexual assault, sexual coercion, rape | “Sexual assault, sexual coercion, rape” (Section 177 of the Criminal Code) constitute the performing of sexual acts against the recognisable contrary will of another person or the performance of sexual acts by exploiting the inability of the victim due to his/her physical or mental condition to form or express a contrary will, an element of surprise or a situation conducive to coercion or to the performance of sexual acts by coercion. This encompasses cases in which the perpetrator uses violence, threatens a present danger to life or limb or exploits the defenceless situation of the victim. Rape is presented as a model example of a particularly serious case and is legally defined in section 177 (6) p. 2 no. 1. Accordingly, rape is always deemed to have occurred if the sexual act involves penetration of the body. Section 177 of the Criminal Code protects sexual self-determination. <sup>86</sup> |
| Femicide                              | The term “femicide” refers to the killing of women and girls because of their gender. Depending on the individual case, the term may encompass, for example, fatal cases of intimate partner violence, killings of women and girls “in the name of honour”, or because of their sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as targeted killings of women and girls in armed conflicts. <sup>87</sup>  |

<sup>79</sup> Cf. section 184i German Criminal Code and section 3 (4) General Equal Treatment Act

<sup>80</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1212?language\\_content\\_entity=de](https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1212?language_content_entity=de)

<sup>81</sup> [https://www.chancengleichheit.lwl.org/media/filer\\_public/30/69/3069e502-7dbc-433a-9e59-c91b3ab12dbe/2021-11\\_newsletter\\_sexualisierte\\_gewalt\\_catcalling.pdf](https://www.chancengleichheit.lwl.org/media/filer_public/30/69/3069e502-7dbc-433a-9e59-c91b3ab12dbe/2021-11_newsletter_sexualisierte_gewalt_catcalling.pdf)

<sup>82</sup> Cf. sections 12 et seqq. AGG

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/frauen-vor-gewalt-schuetzen/haeusliche-gewalt/formen-der-gewalt-erkennen-8064>

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/frauen-vor-gewalt-schuetzen/haeusliche-gewalt/formen-der-gewalt-erkennen-80642>

<sup>85</sup> [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/stgb/\\_238.html](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/stgb/_238.html); <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/94290/051f925bc2b7ed09921f363ab8b0a236/materialie-gleichstellung-nr-104-data.pdf>

<sup>86</sup> German Criminal Code in the version announced on 13 November 1998 (Federal Law Gazette [BGBl.] I p. 3322, last amended by Article 2 (2) of the Act of 7 November 2024 (BGBl. 2024 I no. 351), [https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1199?language\\_content\\_entity=de](https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1199?language_content_entity=de)

<sup>87</sup> [https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ\\_Sessions/CCPCJ\\_22/\\_E-CN15-2013-NGO1/E-CN15-2013-NGO1\\_E.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ_Sessions/CCPCJ_22/_E-CN15-2013-NGO1/E-CN15-2013-NGO1_E.pdf)

| Glossary                        |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Violence in the name of honour  | <p>“Violence in the name of honour” refers to violent acts that the perpetrator justifies by claiming to want to maintain or restore “family honour”. This form of violence often begins with emotional pressure and blackmail. However, it can also take on forms of physical and sexual violence, including forced marriage and killing. Men who violate traditional gender roles or are queer are also victims of such violence. “Violence in the name of honour” can encompass all forms of domestic violence. Unlike violence in intimate partnerships, however, the perpetrator is not just a current or past relationship partner. Violence in the name of “honour” is usually perpetrated by male family members – for instance fathers, brothers, uncles or cousins. Sometimes, several members of a family – including women – are involved in planning and perpetrating the violence.<sup>88</sup></p>  |
| Female genital mutilation (FGM) | <p>“Female genital mutilation”<sup>89</sup> encompasses all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the outer female genitalia or other injury to the female genitalia for non-medical reasons.<sup>90</sup></p> <p>Female genital mutilation is a severe form of gender-based violence and constitutes a violation of multiple human rights. In particular, it violates the right to security and personal liberty, the right to life and physical integrity, the right to health, and the right to gender equality. Female genital mutilation causes serious, usually lifelong physical, psychological and social harm that significantly impairs the quality of life of the women and girls affected.<sup>91</sup></p>  |
| Forced marriage                 | <p>“Forced marriage” (section 237 of the Criminal Code) refers to the unlawful coercion of a person to enter into a marriage by force or by threatening them with serious harm.</p> <p>A forced marriage can also involve a case of underage marriage, but this is not always the case.<sup>92,93</sup></p>  |
| Human trafficking               | <p>“Human trafficking” (section 232 of the Criminal Code) refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring and receipt of a person by taking advantage of that person’s personal or economic predicament or helplessness, with the intention of exploiting that person by way of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engaging in prostitution or performing sexual acts</li> <li>• employment</li> <li>• begging</li> <li>• committing criminal offences</li> <li>• slavery, bonded labour, debt bondage or similar conditions</li> <li>• illegal organ removal.</li> </ul> <p>Minors may also be victims of human trafficking. Special rules apply in this case. For example, there is no requirement for a person under 21 years of age to be in a predicament or helpless. The individual forms of exploitation are criminalised in sections 232a et seqq. of the Criminal Code. The purchase and sale of children as well as the unauthorised procurement of an adoption is punishable as child trafficking pursuant to section 236 of the Criminal Code.</p> |
| Psychological violence          | <p>“Psychological violence” encompasses the (deliberate) harming of a person without any physical interaction with the victim. This encompasses, in particular, verbal abuse, threats, harassment, controlling behaviour, intimidation, stalking and coercion, psychological manipulation (gaslighting), isolation or discouragement of the person affected, whereby the person affected is emotionally injured, prevented from leading an independent everyday life and developing their personality and/or placed in a position of submission.<sup>94</sup></p>  |
| Economic violence               | <p>“Economic violence” describes all actions of control and surveillance of a person's behaviour when using and distributing money and other economic resources, as well as the constant threat of refusing to disburse economic resources. Economic violence also encompasses withholding money, for instance violating the obligation to pay maintenance despite having the means to do so.<sup>95</sup></p>   |

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/frauen-vor-gewalt-schuetzen/haeusliche-gewalt/formen-der-gewalt-erkennen-80642>

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Section 226a Criminal Code

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.bmz.de/de/themen/frauenrechte-und-gender/gewalt-gegen-frauen-und-maedchen/fgm-weibliche-genitalverstuemmelung>

<sup>92</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/1680462535>

<sup>93</sup> <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/17380/html>

<sup>94</sup> <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/18052>

<sup>95</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1229?language\\_content\\_entity=de](https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1229?language_content_entity=de); on the breach of the maintenance obligation, cf. section 170 Criminal Code

| Glossary  |  |
|---|--|
| Cyber violence / Digital violence               | The phenomena cyber violence/digital violence describe violations of rights of personality that are committed in the digital space. In particular, they encompass the use of information and communication technologies to disparage, harass, discriminate against, coerce and cause or threaten violence against other people, which results (or may result) in physical, sexual or economic harm or psychological suffering and may include the exploitation of the person's circumstances, attributes or vulnerabilities. Digital and analogue violence often reinforce and complement each other. <sup>96</sup>  |
| Hate speech                                     | "Hate speech" encompasses all types of expression that incite, promote, disseminate or justify violence, hate or discrimination against a person or group of persons, or that denigrate them on the basis of their actual or ascribed personal attributes or status, such as ethnic group, skin colour, language, religion, nationality, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.   |
| LGBTIQ <sup>+</sup> -phobic violence            | "LGBTIQ <sup>+</sup> -phobic violence" refers to the threat or use of violence against people because of their (ascribed) sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sexual characteristics. This manifestation of gender-based violence is also caused by patriarchal power relations, such as heteronormative ideas and gender stereotypes. People who do not fulfil societal expectations of a specific gender role or consciously decide against an unambiguous attribution often experience massive discrimination in their daily lives. This ranges from systematic bullying – both in public and private spaces and on the internet – to physical assault, sexual violence and targeted killing – both in public and private spaces. <sup>97</sup> |
| In the context: "public space", "private space" | "Public space" is defined as all publicly used places that are accessible to everyone and includes streets and open public spaces that are not part of the close social environment (e.g. urban space, public transport, educational institutions). <sup>98</sup> In contrast to public space, "private" space is only accessible to clearly defined persons. It is attributed to the home and the enterprise and is subject to the domiciliary rights of the owner. <sup>99</sup> Private space also includes the rooms in facilities where people live, for example in institutions for people with disabilities or in care homes.   |
| Sexism  | "Sexism" refers to the discrimination of people based on their gender. Girls and women are disproportionately affected; people who do not conform to heteronormative, two-sex gender concepts, such as non-binary people or trans individuals, are also affected. <sup>100</sup>   |
| Intersectional discrimination                   | "Intersectional discrimination" describes how different grounds for discrimination come together in people (intersection) and how they interact to produce a specific type of discrimination. This means that discrimination on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, origin, disabilities, socioeconomic status, ethnic or religious affiliation or attribution, for example, cannot be considered in isolation or simply added together. New forms of discrimination arise at the intersections.  |

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.hilfetelefon.de/gewalt-gegen-frauen/digitale-gewalt>; <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cyberviolence>; <https://www.unwomen.org>; <https://unwomen.de/formender-gewalt-gegen-frauen-und-maedchen/>

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/psychological-violence>

<sup>98</sup> [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/07/indicator\\_11.7.1\\_training\\_module\\_public\\_space.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/07/indicator_11.7.1_training_module_public_space.pdf)

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.polizei-beratung.de/themen-und-tipps/staedtebau/glossar/r/>

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.gemeinsam-gegen-sexismus.de/ueber-sexismus/wissen-ueber-sexismus/>

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