



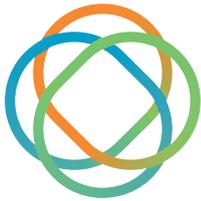
European Institute for  
Gender Equality



**Responding to gender-based violence  
in the context of migration: Mapping  
EU Member States' policies and actions**



An EU agency



European Institute for  
Gender Equality

## European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) produces independent research and shares best practice to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination based on gender. As the EU agency for gender equality, we help people achieve equal opportunities so everyone can thrive, independent of their gender and background.

We combine research, data and tools to help policymakers design measures that are inclusive and transformative and promote gender equality in all areas of life. We communicate our expertise and research effectively. We work closely with partners to raise awareness. We do this at the EU and national levels and with EU candidate and potential candidate countries.

Cite this publication:

EIGE (2025), *Responding to gender-based violence in the context of migration: Mapping EU Member States' policies and actions*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged, the original meaning is not distorted and EIGE is not liable for any damage caused by that use. The reuse policy of EIGE is implemented under Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39, ELI: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2011/833/oj>). Unless otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025

© European Institute for Gender Equality, 2025

PDF ISBN 978-92-9486-307-2 doi:10.2839/5385475 MH-01-25-038-EN-N

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

Tel. +370 52157444  
Web: [eige.europa.eu](http://eige.europa.eu)  
Email: [eige.sec@eige.europa.eu](mailto:eige.sec@eige.europa.eu)

Follow us



This report benefited from a study commissioned by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and produced by GAIC – Gender Associations International Consulting GmbH, headed by Nicola Popovic and Leigh Tomppert.

The principal contributors were Leigh Tomppert as project manager and Henri Myrntinen, Miki Jacevic, Mar Hermosilla, Masumi Yamashina and Anastaesia Mondesir as researchers.

The study also received input from Marta Perez del Pulgar (independent researcher and international gender policy advisor) regarding quality assurance.

# Contents

Glossary of terms .....	6
Executive summary .....	9
Key findings .....	9
High risk of gender-based violence for migrants and inadequate protection measures .....	9
Strong legal frameworks with weak overall implementation .....	9
Crisis response and national planning lack a gender perspective.....	10
Gaps in services and support .....	10
Insufficient training and over-reliance on non-governmental organisations.....	10
Limited data and intersectional analysis.....	10
Key recommendations for EU institutions .....	10
Key recommendations for Member States .....	11
1. Introduction .....	12
1.1. Background and scope of the study .....	12
1.2. Aim and objectives .....	13
1.3. Methodology .....	13
1.4. Structure of the report .....	14
2. Gender-based violence against migrant women: an overview .....	15
2.1. Prevalence and experiences of gender-based violence in migration .....	15
2.2. Impacts of gender-based violence .....	16
2.3. Risk factors for gender-based violence in the context of migration .....	17
2.4. Gender-based violence along the migration process .....	18
2.5. Conclusion .....	20
3. Overview of international and European frameworks .....	21
3.1. International frameworks .....	21
3.1.1. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) .....	21
3.1.2. Sustainable development goals.....	22
3.1.3. Women, peace and security agenda.....	22
3.1.4. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration .....	22
3.1.5. International humanitarian law and international criminal law.....	22
3.1.6. International Labour Organization C190 – Violence and Harassment Convention.....	23
3.2. European frameworks .....	23
3.2.1. Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) .....	23
3.2.2. Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence .....	24
3.2.3. Victims’ Rights Directive .....	24
3.2.4. Common European asylum system.....	24
3.2.5. EU Anti-trafficking Directive .....	25
3.2.6. EU Pact on migration and asylum .....	25
3.2.7. Gender equality strategy 2020–2025 .....	25
3.2.8. Roadmap for women’s rights.....	26

3.3. Further criteria and minimum standards related to gender-based violence in the context of migration .....	26
3.3.1. Global level.....	26
3.3.2. European level.....	27
3.4. Conclusion .....	27
4. National level .....	28
4.1. Introduction .....	28
4.2. Crisis management .....	31
4.3. Implementation of migration and asylum articles of the Istanbul Convention .....	32
4.4. Access to and provision of healthcare and social services .....	34
4.5. Specialist support services .....	35
4.6. Police and law enforcement .....	36
4.7. Conclusion .....	37
5. Challenges and gaps .....	38
5.1. Legal, policy and governance gaps .....	38
5.1.1. Legal gaps and inconsistencies.....	38
5.1.2. Fragmented policies and implementation.....	38
5.1.3. Burden of proof in asylum claims.....	38
5.1.4. Gender-based violence experienced in transit not recognised.....	38
5.1.5. Insufficient gender-specific planning in emergency responses .....	39
5.2. Gaps in safe and equitable access to support .....	39
5.2.1. Failure to apply intersectional approaches.....	39
5.2.2. Lack of awareness and understanding of violence against men and boys.....	39
5.2.3. Unequal access to shelters and support services.....	39
5.2.4. Over-reliance on non-governmental organisations and funding gaps .....	40
5.2.5. Training gaps .....	40
5.2.6. Male staff in asylum reception centres.....	40
5.2.7. Mixed-sex accommodation and facilities in asylum reception centres .....	40
5.3. Gaps in data collection and use .....	40
5.3.1. Lack of standardised data collection.....	40
5.3.2. Lack of data sharing .....	40
5.4. Conclusion .....	41
6. Conclusions and recommendations .....	42
6.1. Key conclusions .....	42
6.2. Recommendations .....	43
6.2.1. Legislation, policy and governance .....	43
6.2.2. Emergency preparedness and crisis response .....	45
6.2.3. Supporting adequate and inclusive services and leveraging good practices .....	45
6.2.4. Improving data collection and usage .....	46
Annex: Research design and methodology .....	47
Secondary research .....	47
Primary research .....	47
References .....	48

# Glossary of terms

Key term	Definition	Reference
Asylum seeker	A non-EU national or stateless person who has made an application for protection under the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951, as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967, in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken. In the context of the EU, this term is often understood as a synonym for 'applicant for international protection'.	European Commission (2023)
Documented migrant	A migrant authorised to enter and to stay pursuant to the law of that state or to international agreements to which that state is a party and who is in possession of documents necessary to prove his or her regular status in the country.	IOM (2019)
Female genital mutilation (FGM)	(a) Excising, infibulating or performing any other mutilation to the whole or any part of a woman's labia majora, labia minora or clitoris; (b) coercing or procuring a woman to undergo any of the acts listed in point a; (c) inciting, coercing or procuring a girl to undergo any of the acts listed in point a.	Council of Europe (2011)
Forced marriage	Marriage with a lack of consent from at least one of the two parties. A marriage in which (at least) one of the parties is not free to put an end to the marriage or to leave his or her spouse is also a forced marriage.	European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) Glossary
Gender-based violence (GBV)	Any type of violence, from physical to emotional to financial to reproductive violence, performed based on someone's gender. It is rooted in structural, political, social and economic inequalities. While anybody can be a victim of GBV, it affects predominantly women and girls.	EIGE Glossary
Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)	The independent expert body responsible for monitoring how parties implement the Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. GRETA carries out visits and draws up and publishes country reports evaluating legislative and other measures taken by parties to give effect to the provisions of the Convention. In addition, GRETA regularly publishes general reports on its activities.	Council of Europe
Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)	The independent expert body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention by its state parties. It assesses how effectively countries are preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, including through legal and policy frameworks, service provision and data collection. GREVIO conducts country evaluations and issues recommendations to improve compliance with the convention.	Council of Europe

Key term	Definition	Reference
Intersectionality	An understanding that human beings are shaped by the interaction of different social locations (e.g. 'race'/ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability/ability, migration status, religion). These combine to create interdependent and intersecting forms of privilege and oppression shaped by colonialism, imperialism, racism, homophobia, ableism and patriarchy.	Hankivsky (2014)
Migrant	An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common or lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movement are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; and those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.	IOM (2019)
Non-refoulement (principle of)	The prohibition on states' extraditing, deporting, expelling or otherwise returning a person to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened, or where there are substantial grounds for believing that he or she would risk being subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, or would be in danger of being subjected to enforced disappearance, or of suffering another irreparable harm.	IOM (2019)
Refugee	A person 'who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion' (Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951, as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967). In the EU, this term may be applicable to non-EU nationals or stateless persons, in accordance with the relevant provisions of Directive 2011/95/EU (Qualification Directive (recast)).	UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951, as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967
Trafficking in human beings	The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.	IOM (2019)
Undocumented migrant	A non-national who enters or stays in a country without the appropriate documentation.	IOM (2019)

Key term	Definition	Reference
Victim	A natural person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm, or economic loss that was directly caused by a criminal offence. The term also covers family members of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence and who have suffered harm as a result of that person's death, pursuant to Directive 2012/29, the Victims' Rights Directive, which establishes minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime in the EU.	Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA
Violence against women and girls	All acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or the arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.	Council of Europe (2011)

# Executive summary

Migration to the European Union (EU) has increased significantly in recent years, driven by conflict, climate change and geopolitical instability. While global data is limited, available evidence indicates that these crises disproportionately impact women and girls, increasing their exposure to gender-based violence (GBV). Migrants – particularly those who are forcibly displaced or undocumented or face intersecting forms of discrimination – are at greater risk of sexual, physical, psychological and economic violence. However, existing responses across the EU are often fragmented, under-resourced and insufficiently gender-sensitive.

Within this context, this report presents findings from a 2024 study that mapped the laws, policies and frameworks in place to prevent and respond to GBV in the context of migration and migration-causing crises. The research mapped and analysed global-, EU- and national-level policies, with the last focusing on a case study of seven EU Member States: Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Croatia, Malta and Finland.

The report aims to (1) map the current legal and policy frameworks in place at the global, EU and national levels; (2) assess how GBV prevention and response measures are integrated into migration and crisis contexts; (3) identify promising practices and highlight key gaps in the provision of protection and services; and (4) provide actionable recommendations for EU institutions and Member States.

The methodology combined a desk-based review of global, regional and national frameworks with an in-depth analysis of seven Member States selected for their geographic diversity, migration patterns and border security challenges. These were complemented by and triangulated with information gathered from 17 anonymised expert interviews conducted in March–April 2024.

## Key findings

### High risk of gender-based violence for migrants and inadequate protection measures

Migrant women and girls face high levels of GBV throughout all stages of migration, from transit to arrival and settlement. Victims often experience multiple forms of violence, including sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage and domestic abuse. Legal and systemic barriers frequently prevent migrant victims of GBV from reporting violence or accessing protection.

### Strong legal frameworks with weak overall implementation

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) offers strong legal foundations, particularly through Articles 59–61 on migration and asylum, as do other international instruments (Council of Europe, 2011). However, their implementation across Member States is inconsistent. Many countries create restrictive conditions for accessing autonomous residence permits or fall short in upholding non-refoulement protections. Gender-responsive asylum procedures are often underdeveloped or insufficiently carried out.

## Crisis response and national planning lack a gender perspective

Emergency preparedness plans rarely include GBV prevention or protection measures. While most Member States have national action plans for women, peace and security (WPS), these are often underfunded and inadequately integrated into broader crisis management frameworks.

## Gaps in services and support

Access to shelters, healthcare and specialist GBV support services is limited and irregular, especially for undocumented migrants. Language barriers, cultural insensitivity and a lack of legal aid further reduce migrants' access to support. Only a few of the Member States reviewed (mainly Finland and Belgium) offer specialist shelters for migrant women or targeted services for victims of female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage.

## Insufficient training and over-reliance on non-governmental organisations

Mandatory, trauma-informed GBV training for frontline professionals, including police, border guards and healthcare providers, is lacking. Many services rely heavily on overstretched non-governmental organisations, which often lack adequate funding or oversight.

## Limited data and intersectional analysis

Most Member States do not systematically collect or share disaggregated data on GBV prevalence among migrants. Policies frequently do not adequately consider the intersecting vulnerabilities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and other gender non-conforming (LGBTQ+) migrants, persons with disabilities or ethnic and religious minorities.

## Key recommendations for EU institutions

- Encourage Member States to harmonise the implementation of Istanbul Convention Articles 59–61, ensuring that autonomous residence permits and gender-responsive asylum procedures are accessible across all legal categories.
- Support gender-responsive implementation of the EU pact on migration and asylum, which includes safeguards for identifying, protecting and supporting victims of GBV – particularly women, children and those migrating along high-risk routes.
- Ensure that GBV prevention and response measures are integrated into EU-level crisis response plans, including those related to armed conflict, climate-related displacement and public health emergencies.
- Develop and promote common minimum standards for GBV training, ensuring that it is mandatory, trauma-informed and culturally competent. This training needs to include modules on FGM, trafficking, forced marriage and intersectional vulnerabilities.
- Designate funding for GBV services, including those serving migrants, undocumented individuals and groups at heightened risk. Funding needs to be multiannual, stable and accessible to grassroots and migrant-led organisations.
- Establish common standards for GBV-related administrative data collection. Ideally, it should be possible to disaggregate this data by sex, age, relationship between victim and perpetrator and migration status.

## Key recommendations for Member States

- Fully implement Articles 59–61 of the Istanbul Convention, ensuring the right to autonomous residence permits, gender-responsive asylum procedures and non-refoulement protections for GBV victims. Ratification of the Istanbul Convention remains an important step to take for Member States that have not yet done so.
- Explicitly integrate GBV protections into laws and policies on migration, asylum and crisis response.
- Ensure that all victims of GBV, regardless of migration status, have access to shelters, healthcare, psychosocial support and legal aid. Remove barriers that prevent undocumented migrants from accessing these, such as reporting to authorities and residency requirements.
- Provide adequate, stable funding to expand and sustain GBV services. This includes services in rural areas, child-specific and adolescent-specific services and services tailored to the needs of migrants, such as those focused on providing support to victims of trafficking, FGM, forced marriage or honour-related violence.
- Include migrant communities and organisations representing migrant interests in the development, delivery and evaluation of GBV prevention and response measures.
- Mandate and regularly update training for all professionals and frontline staff working within migration response systems. Clear guidance and training need to be developed to ensure the inclusion of groups facing multiple or 'invisible' vulnerabilities, such as LGBTQ+ persons, racial and ethnic minority groups, undocumented migrants, disabled migrants, children and male victims of GBV.
- Adopt survivor-centred approaches to the provision of services, which should follow the four guiding principles of dealing with GBV: safety, respect, confidentiality and non-discrimination.



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background and scope of the study

People have moved across national borders throughout history; migration is a long-standing global phenomenon. Migration to the European Union (EU) has increased significantly in recent years. In the latest estimates of international migrants (dated in mid 2020), almost 281 million people were estimated to live outside their country of birth – around 3.6 % of the global population – more than three times that in 1970 (McAuliffe and Oucho, 2024). At the end of 2021, less than 10 % of all the world’s refugees were living in the EU. However, by the end of 2022, primarily due to the war in Ukraine and related protection responses, the share of refugees living in the EU increased to more than 20 % (European Parliament, 2024b).

A range of ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors interact to influence why people migrate (European Parliament, 2024a). Key pull factors include the chance for a safer life, better jobs, better healthcare or quality of life, and joining family who have already moved. Key push factors include crises such as war, geopolitical instability and climate change; poverty; a lack of economic opportunities; and persecution. In recent years many of these drivers have intensified as various crises have emerged in Europe and across the world, including wars and instability near the EU (in Ukraine and the Middle East), the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters and the growing effects of climate change. These events have already increased, or are likely to increase, displacement and migration to the EU.

Gender shapes every stage of the migration journey – from the reasons people leave to the risks they face and the support they can access.

Understanding these differences is essential for designing effective and inclusive policies and services.

Each of these global and regional challenges affects women, men and gender-diverse people differently, as gender is a key factor in determining risk and security in crisis settings. Crises can trigger displacement and migration, which in turn intensify gender inequalities and expose women and girls to new risks. Displacement can lead to a loss of social protections, limited access to healthcare and justice, and reliance on unsafe or informal routes – all of which heighten the risk of gender-based violence (GBV). Women are frequently forced to flee because of the threat of gender-related harm, including increased exposure to GBV and insecurity. While global data on GBV is limited, available evidence indicates that migrants – especially those who are forcibly displaced or undocumented – face an increased risk of GBV and related harm. These risks are amplified when other forms of inequality – such as race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or economic marginalisation – intersect with gender. Thus, it is essential that policies and processes related to crisis preparedness/management and migration are gender-responsive and include measures to prevent and address GBV, and to support victims of GBV.

While this report primarily focuses on GBV against women and girls – in line with clear gendered patterns in the prevalence and impact of GBV – it is important to note that several of the laws, strategies and frameworks reviewed also take a broader approach. Some include references to GBV against men, boys and non-binary persons, although such inclusions are often implicit (through the use of gender-neutral language) rather than explicitly stated. Where relevant, this report also highlights available evidence concerning the experiences of violence of migrant men, boys and non-binary persons.

## 1.2. Aim and objectives

This report presents findings from a 2024 study that mapped the laws, policies and frameworks in place to prevent and respond to GBV in the context of migration and migration-causing crises. The research mapped and analysed global-, European- and national-level policies, focusing on seven EU Member States: Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Croatia, Malta and Finland.

The core objectives of this report are to:

1. identify the current key legal and policy frameworks that guide responses to GBV in the context of migration and crises such as armed conflict at the global, European and national levels;
2. identify whether and how GBV prevention and response is considered in the context of migration through the analysis of the measures in place in a case study of seven Member States (listed above);
3. highlight examples of promising practices in policies and provision of services across the selected Member States;
4. identify the gaps and challenges that exist in legal protections, policy and the provision of services for migrant victims of GBV;
5. provide actionable recommendations that address these gaps and strengthen GBV responses in migration and asylum contexts.

This report seeks to provide policymakers, researchers and practitioners with a clear overview of GBV response measures available to migrant women and girls across the EU. By highlighting existing measures, as well as gaps, challenges and examples of promising practices, this report will provide a concrete basis for policy and service provision. Throughout the report, the evidence is clear: migrant women and girls are repeatedly subjected to serious forms of GBV – including at times from those formally responsible for their protection – and existing policy responses are often insufficient. While much of the available evidence focuses on risks and gaps, it is also important to acknowledge the strength and resilience many migrant women demonstrate in supporting others in their communities, navigating complex systems and advocating for safety and justice despite systemic barriers. This report is a call to action for EU institutions and Member States to create and reinforce legal and policy responses that are not only gender-responsive but protective and inclusive, ensuring that migrant women and girls, particularly those facing compounded risks, are not overlooked in our collective response to crisis and displacement.

## 1.3. Methodology

This study draws on a range of methods to address these objectives, which include those listed below.

1. A literature review and desk-based mapping of key global-level instruments (e.g. international conventions, key documents of UN agencies) and Europe-wide regional-level frameworks (e.g. EU conventions, directives and strategies) pertaining to GBV in the context of migration.
2. A desk-based literature review and policy analysis of the national-level laws, strategies and guidelines in place across seven selected Member States. These Member States – Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Croatia, Malta and Finland – offer a snapshot of how different Member States are addressing GBV and migration. They were selected using the following criteria: the number of people claiming

## 1. Introduction

asylum, geographic representation and their varied border security challenges. The review was conducted in the first half of 2024.

3. The findings from the desk-based research were complemented by anonymised, online interviews with 17 experts – including legal professionals, academics and practitioners – who have extensive experience in GBV and migration at the European level. These interviews were conducted to validate and triangulate the secondary research findings, to better understand how different frameworks are implemented in practice and to identify gaps. The interviews took place between March and April 2024. The reader should be aware that, while the expert interviews offered rich insight, their findings are not intended to be representative. They highlight recurring challenges and opportunities across contexts, and further research is needed to build a comprehensive evidence base.

A more detailed description of the methodology used for this study can be found in the [Annex: Research design and methodology](#).

## 1.4. Structure of the report

This report is structured as follows.

- [Section 2](#) provides context for the report, summarising the most relevant literature on GBV against migrant women, with a focus on studies examining the prevalence, risks and experiences of GBV in the context of migration.
- [Section 3](#) provides an overview of key international and EU-level frameworks addressing GBV in the context of migration and crises that often result in mass migration.
- [Section 4](#) presents the findings from the seven selected Member States. It reviews their responses to GBV in the areas of crisis management, the implementation of Istanbul Convention articles on migration and asylum, the provision of healthcare and social services, police and law enforcement responses and training, and the provision of specialist services like shelters or helplines.
- [Section 5](#) highlights the key gaps and challenges in identifying and responding to GBV in the context of migration across the EU.
- [Section 6](#) presents the key conclusions of this research and provides actionable recommendations.

## 2. Gender-based violence against migrant women: an overview

This section summarises key findings from the existing literature and research on GBV in the context of migration. It is clear from this review that migrants and their experiences have typically been excluded from GBV research, including from national prevalence surveys. Similarly, representative and robust research on experiences of GBV among migrant populations is lacking. This results in a critical knowledge gap, which limits responses to this issue. Nevertheless, the available research suggests that being a migrant increases a person's risk of experiencing GBV, especially for women and girls. The research also highlights the many consequences of GBV for migrants and demonstrates how experiences of GBV are cumulative across the migration process.

### 2.1. Prevalence and experiences of gender-based violence in migration

The 2024 EU gender-based violence survey found that nearly one in three women (30.7 %) across the EU have experienced physical or sexual violence, or threats of such violence, at some point in their lives (FRA, EIGE, Eurostat, 2024). Although data on GBV among migrant populations is limited, the studies available consistently show that migrants face higher risks, especially those who have been displaced or are in irregular legal situations. Some examples are given below.

- A study involving 223 refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants in Belgium and the Netherlands (women and men) found that most respondents either had experienced GBV or knew a close peer who had experienced GBV since arriving in the EU. A total of 332 GBV incidents were reported, mainly perpetrated by (ex-)partners or authority figures, including those formally responsible for protection such as police or border officials. Over half involved sexual violence, with multiple and gang rape notably common. The study highlights that both the extent and the forms of sexual violence experienced by migrants differ markedly from those experienced by Belgian and Dutch nationals. While most victims were women, the study also observed higher GBV victimisation rates among male migrants than global averages for men (Keygnaert et al., 2015).
- A separate study that interviewed 375 asylum seekers and 187 professionals (women and men) across seven Member States identified 698 GBV cases involving 1 110 acts of violence. Most victims of GBV were women, although both women and men reported GBV victimisation. Physical and psychological GBV were the most prevalent forms of GBV reported (Oliveira et al., 2018).
- A qualitative study of 'transit migrants' (women and men) travelling from Morocco to Europe under the EU's neighbourhood policy framework found that most participants had encountered GBV while travelling through Morocco. Among the 154 participants, 51 % reported direct experiences of GBV, while 27 % had witnessed peers or family being victimised. Only 10 % reported no exposure to GBV. Participants described widespread sexual violence, including sexual torture and gang rape (Keygnaert et al., 2014).
- A review of 84 studies (2011–2020) on GBV and migration found consistently high prevalence rates, especially among forced or irregular migrants. Women constituted the majority of GBV victims in almost all studies reviewed. Studies that included young male migrants noted, however, that they were also at significant risk of GBV, including sexual violence (Tan and Kuschminder, 2022).
- A systematic review of 60 articles on sexual violence among refugees found that it affects people of all ages and genders. In 32 of the 36 studies reporting by sex, women were the main victims. However, the review noted a lack of data on men and children, with the few existing studies showing GBV rates of up to 39 % for men and 91 % for children (Araujo et al., 2019).

## 2. Gender-based violence against migrant women: an overview

- A scoping review of 27 peer-reviewed studies on violence, abuse and mental health among sexual and gender minority immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers found that they are extremely vulnerable to GBV. The review showed that violence often begins before migration and persists throughout the migration journey, including in destination countries. Reported experiences included sexual violence, physical assault (including by mobs), detention, forced heterosexual marriage and coercive 'conversion' practices. Persecution based on sexual orientation or gender identity was widespread and linked to significant negative mental health outcomes (Alessi et al., 2021).
- A systematic review of 41 studies on the impact of extreme events (e.g. natural disasters and climate-related crises) on GBV found that GBV mostly increased during or after these events. These increases were frequently linked to economic instability, food insecurity, mental stress, disrupted infrastructure and worsened gender inequality (van Daalen et al., 2022).
- A report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported prevalence rates of GBV against women of up to 70 % in conflict settings compared with 35 % worldwide (OCHA, 2021).

Across this diverse range of studies, a clear pattern emerges: migrants face elevated risks of GBV throughout their journeys – in transit, upon arrival and in precarious legal or crisis contexts. While GBV affects all genders and ages, women consistently represent the majority of victims, justifying a primary focus on violence against women. The data reveals the concerning prevalence of sexual violence – including brutal acts such as gang rape – which is often committed by intimate partners and authority figures, making it more difficult for victims to report cases and access protection measures. Additionally, migration's overlap with crises like natural disasters and armed conflict intensifies the risk of GBV, which is fuelled by economic hardship and social instability. Finally, significant knowledge gaps remain: few studies include children/adolescents or men/boys, or focus on the experiences of minority groups like lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and other gender non-conforming (LGBTQ+) individuals or persons with disabilities, and few studies explore forms of GBV beyond domestic and sexual violence, such as forced marriage or so-called honour crimes.

## 2.2. Impacts of gender-based violence

Research shows that the consequences of GBV are profound, wide-ranging and often long-lasting ([see Box 1](#)). These consequences are also often multilayered, as the psychological, physical, sexual, social and economic consequences of GBV overlap. While very limited research focuses specifically on migrant communities, available evidence shows these impacts are often intensified by migration-related precarity, such as displacement, legal uncertainty and poor access to support services. Undocumented migrants face additional risks – fear of deportation, loss of legal protections and unstable living conditions – which can prolong trauma, hinder recovery and prevent these victims from reporting GBV and seeking support.

### Box 1. Documented consequences of GBV

- **Psychological and emotional impacts** are among the impacts most commonly reported by all victims of GBV (not only migrant victims). High levels of depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances and social withdrawal are reported by victims of GBV (Doyle and McWilliams, 2020, 2018; Ferrari et al., 2016; Coker et al., 2002). Many victims struggle with shame and mistrust; some report suicidal thoughts (WHO Multi-Country Study Team et al., 2011). Witnessing violence can lead to fear, anxiety and/or behavioural problems in children, and children are also often directly victimised (Buckley et al., 2007).

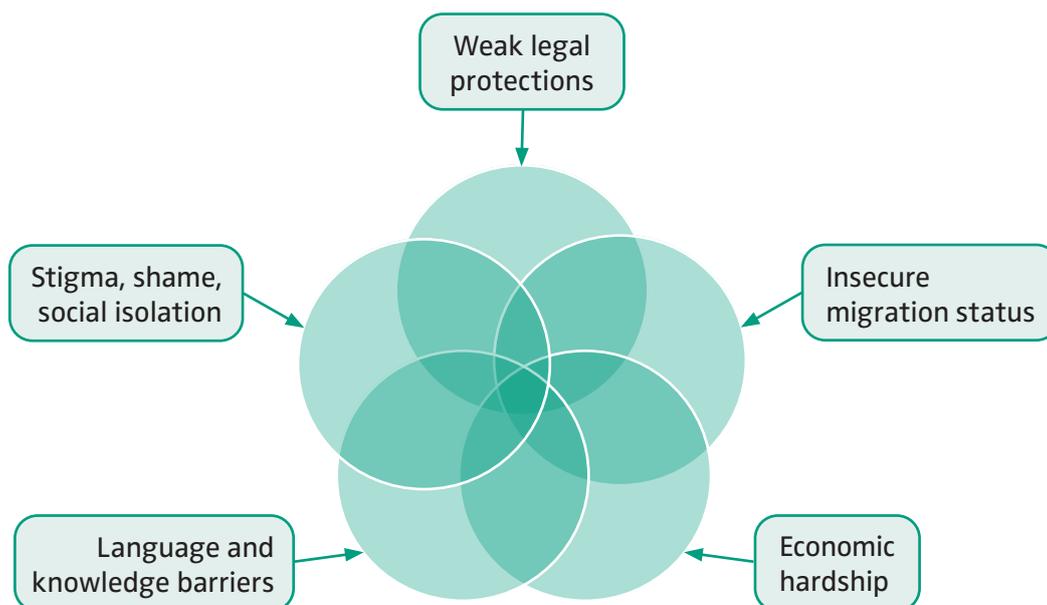
- **Physical consequences** include not only injuries but also longer-term health conditions. In some cases, victims experience permanent harm or contract serious **infections such as HIV** following sexual assault (Tan and Kuschminder, 2022).
- **Sexual and reproductive health impacts** range from unwanted pregnancies and miscarriages to sexually transmitted infections. Long-term sexual health issues are common and often worsened by poor access to care and barriers to getting help (Tan and Kuschminder, 2022).
- **Socioeconomic impacts** can include job loss, interrupted education and forced relocation (Showalter, 2016). Victims of GBV may be cut off from family and support networks, especially in places where emergency housing is unavailable. Research suggests that housing insecurity increases vulnerability to further GBV victimisation and limits opportunities for recovery (Phillimore et al., 2023).
- Studies focusing specifically on the experiences of migrants show that GBV can seriously **undermine migrant women's ability to integrate** (Phillimore et al., 2023). For example, control by abusive partners and the effects of trauma have been shown to limit migrant women's ability to work, study and connect with others. Interestingly, studies also show that participation in education or employment plays a vital role in recovery for victims of GBV, highlighting the importance of access to safe and inclusive support.

## 2.3. Risk factors for gender-based violence in the context of migration

In explaining the heightened risk of GBV – which already affects nearly one in three women – for migrants, research consistently highlights the impact of the following interlinking factors ([Figure 1](#)).

- **Weak legal protections in host countries.** Dependency on a partner for legal status can prevent victims from leaving abusive relationships or seeking help. An inability to work and low subsistence payments increase the risk of sexual exploitation. Inadequate training or guidance for frontline services can result in victims of GBV not being identified or being misidentified, such as victims of human trafficking being misidentified as women in prostitution.
- **Insecure migration status.** Undocumented migrants are at higher risk of experiencing GBV, including transactional sex (e.g. with border guards) and human trafficking. They may avoid reporting abuse due to fear of deportation, and many live in camps or centres where GBV risks are elevated. Their status is also closely tied to other risk factors like poverty.
- **Economic hardship.** Poverty both drives and is a result of migration. Economic hardship increases the risk of GBV in several ways, including by increasing exposure to transactional sex, exploitative informal work and unsafe, overcrowded housing.
- **Stigma, shame and social isolation.** Migrant women often lack social networks, making it harder for them to seek help. Stigma and shame are major barriers to disclosure, and this may be compounded where cultural norms do not recognise GBV or support victims. Male victims also face strong stigma.
- **Language and knowledge of services.** Language barriers can prevent disclosure and access to support, especially when support providers lack specialised training. Recent migrants may not know about the GBV services available to them. Language barriers can limit job options (increasing poverty) and increase isolation.

**Figure 1. Risk factors for GBV are often increased for migrants**



Sources: compiled from Alsop (2023), Fanm (2023), GREVIO (2022a), Tan and Kuschminder (2022) and UN Women (2021).

Finally, research shows that certain migration routes carry particularly high risks of GBV. For instance, studies have found that central Mediterranean migration pathways (from northern Africa to Italy and Malta) carry extremely high risks of GBV; the vast majority of migrants on this route reported at least one experience of GBV (Women’s Refugee Commission, 2019). This route also carries a particularly high risk of human trafficking, with a 2017 UN Migration study estimating that 80 % of girls arriving from Africa (chiefly Nigeria) by this route were potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (IOM, 2017).

## 2.4. Gender-based violence along the migration process

Research interest in GBV against women and girls during war and forced migration has grown in recent years, driven largely by landmark international criminal tribunals addressing systematic rape carried out by armed forces. Studies have expanded the focus beyond systematic rape to show that a continuum of GBV exists, whereby GBV occurs at multiple stages of migration and in various forms. Research shows that GBV often occurs before, during and after migration and includes sexual, psychological, physical and economic violence. These forms frequently overlap and interact.

To illustrate, [Box 2](#) presents some findings on GBV at different stages of the migration process, including recorded experiences of GBV. Most types of GBV appear throughout the migration process. While the risk factors and experiences in [Box 2](#) relate to migration, many are similar in other crises such as armed conflict or natural disasters (Cohn, 2013). In essence, when women are cut off from support systems and essential services – whether due to forced migration resulting from armed conflict, to natural disasters or to COVID-19 lockdowns – they face an increased risk of GBV (Butt, 2023).

**Box 2. Studies show that GBV increases during and is shaped by migration****Before migrating**

Most forced migrants are fleeing armed conflict or crisis. Evidence shows that GBV often increases during these periods due to the use of weapons of war, including:

- rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and forced sterilisation by armed actors;
- forced marriage, female genital mutilation and forced prostitution.

These patterns are compounded by the collapse of protection systems during times of crisis – including criminal justice and social services – that ordinarily support survivors of domestic or sexual violence (Myrntinen, 2023; Pankhurst, 2008). Thus, the risk of domestic and sexual violence – which is already high during peacetime – increases due to impunity, and potentially also due to the increasing militarisation of society. The increased availability of small arms before, during and after conflict further elevates GBV risks (Swaine, 2015). Where poverty drives migration, women and girls may be pushed into transactional sex, early marriage or prostitution as a means of survival.

**In transit**

Migrants – both female and male – face frequent violence in transit. These experiences are often gendered: men and boys face more assault and torture, while women and girls experience more rape and other forms of sexual violence. A few other forms of GBV prevalent in transit are indicated below.

- Human trafficking, with migrants comprising a significant share of the victims of trafficking. Most victims of trafficking are women, who are overwhelmingly trafficked for sexual exploitation. Most victims of trafficking for forced labour are men (Eurostat, 2025).
- Rape and transactional sex, for example with border guards, smugglers or armed groups (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

**On arrival**

GBV risks persist – and in some cases escalate – after migrants arrive in their destination countries, particularly for those who are undocumented or lack a secure status. Documented risks include:

- sexual violence and harassment in asylum reception centres and detention facilities;
- domestic violence, which is often exacerbated by dependence on a partner for legal status and can prevent victims from leaving abusive situations;
- GBV in the workplace, especially in unregulated, informal sectors (e.g. domestic work, agriculture) where migrants – especially women – are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (ILO and Lloyd's Register Foundation, 2022).

Other barriers such as language, legal illiteracy and distrust of authorities often limit access to support services. Broader factors like isolation, poverty, overcrowding and racism or discrimination can further heighten the risk of GBV (IOM, 2024; FRA, 2017; United Nations Support Mission in Libya and OHCHR, 2018). Migrants are over-represented in high-risk, under-regulated jobs where accountability is minimal and violence is frequently experienced but rarely reported (Robillard et al., 2018).

## 2.5. Conclusion

To summarise the available research, migrants face a heightened risk of GBV that is shaped not only by personal factors like poverty or isolation but also by structural conditions – including laws, policies and systems – that enable or overlook violence. In countries of resettlement, restrictive policies and anti-immigrant rhetoric can deepen both the risk and impact of GBV. The evidence is clear: GBV during migration is cumulative and shaped by risks that intersect across time and place. It demands gender-responsive, inclusive policies that protect all migrants – especially the most vulnerable. Wars on the borders of the EU, including in Ukraine and resulting surge in migration have tested the capacity of Member States to respond to the large-scale relocation of people, especially while providing coordinated GBV support.

This report sets out key approaches, principles and practices to help EU and national policymakers and frontline services prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV affecting migrants, particularly in the context of crises.



## 3. Overview of international and European frameworks

This section outlines the key international and European frameworks shaping how Member States respond to GBV against migrant women and girls. It is worth noting at the outset that there is no universally agreed definition of ‘gender’ or ‘gender-based violence’. Additionally, the core international refugee instruments – the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol – do not explicitly reference GBV or violence against women, although subsequent interpretations and guidelines have recognised that gender-based persecution does fall under the convention’s grounds.

### 3.1. International frameworks

#### 3.1.1. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW)

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the primary international legal framework on violence against women. All Member States have ratified it. Several general recommendations (GRs) are particularly relevant (UNGA, 1979; Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, n.d.):

- GR 19 (1992), on violence against women, recognises GBV as a form of discrimination that disproportionately affects women or is directed at them because they are women;
- GR 30 (2013), on women in conflict, guides states on measures used to protect women’s rights during conflict and peacebuilding, with emphasis on including women’s diverse experiences and preventing GBV;
- GR 32 (2014), on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness, sets out obligations to ensure non-discrimination and gender equality in refugee and asylum processes affecting women;
- GR 35 (2017), on gender-based violence against women, expands on GR 19 to highlight the root causes of GBV and the heightened risks faced by displaced, migrant and asylum-seeking women;
- GR 37 (2018), on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, acknowledges climate change as a driver of migration, which increases GBV risks for women, and calls for gender-sensitive immigration policy and training;
- GR 38 (2020), on the trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, addresses states’ responsibilities under Article 6 of CEDAW to combat trafficking, especially in migration contexts.

Though not legally binding, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) defines violence against women broadly and guides UN work on GBV (UNGA, 1993, Article 1):

*“Violence against women” means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.*

### 3.1.2. Sustainable development goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development outlines 17 legally non-binding goals for peace, prosperity and sustainability, which were adopted by all UN member states in 2015. Goal 5 targets the elimination of violence against women and harmful practices such as trafficking and child or forced marriage. Goal 10 promotes safe, orderly migration through effective policy.

### 3.1.3. Women, peace and security agenda

The women, peace and security (WPS) agenda, grounded in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions, recognises the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls, including the heightened risk of GBV. It affirms the importance of women's participation in peacebuilding, humanitarian responses and post-conflict recovery. Resolution 1325 and its successors call on states and international actors to integrate gender perspectives into all areas of peace and security, including the protection of women and girls in forced displacement. Later resolutions such as UNSCR 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 2106 (2013) explicitly address conflict-related sexual violence and call for accountability, survivor support and gender-sensitive asylum and protection mechanisms.

### 3.1.4. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

The 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM; IOM, 2018), adopted by 152 states, is not legally binding but commits to gender-responsive migration policy:

*The Global Compact ... mainstreams a gender perspective and promotes gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, recognising their independence, agency and leadership in order to move away from addressing migrant women primarily through a lens of victimhood.*  
(UNGA, 2019, p. 5)

The GCM addresses GBV in several of its objectives, but Objective 7 addresses GBV most directly through the development of gender-sensitive migration policies and support for at-risk migrants.

### 3.1.5. International humanitarian law and international criminal law

International humanitarian law and criminal law primarily address GBV in conflict settings. Relevant articles include the Geneva Convention protections against rape and degrading treatment, and additional protocols offering further safeguards (ICRC, n.d.). While international humanitarian law and international criminal law address acts that constitute GBV, they lack a coherent or standardised definition of either 'gender' or GBV <sup>(1)</sup>. Nevertheless, international jurisprudence – particularly from international criminal tribunals – has significantly advanced the recognition and prosecution of GBV as an international crime.

<sup>(1)</sup> For in-depth discussions, see International Development Law Organization (2022), ICRC (2020) and Gaggioli (2014).

### 3.1.6. International Labour Organization C190 – Violence and Harassment Convention

The 2019 ILO Convention No. 190 – now ratified by nine EU Member States – recognises the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including GBV and sexual harassment. It acknowledges that GBV and harassment disproportionately affect women and girls, and calls on states to address violence and harassment in the world of work through a gender-responsive approach. The convention applies to all workers, regardless of contractual status, and intentionally includes those in the informal economy, a sector in which many migrant women are employed (ILO, 2019).

## 3.2. European frameworks

### 3.2.1. Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)

The Istanbul Convention is the central and most comprehensive legal framework on GBV in Europe. It is legally binding and has been ratified by 22 of the 27 Member States <sup>(2)</sup>. The EU itself ratified the convention in 2023, and it entered into force in October 2023. This means that the EU is now bound by the rules of the convention to prevent and combat GBV in areas of judicial cooperation, in criminal matters, during asylum and non-refoulement, and in its institutions and public administration. Member States that have not ratified the convention are only bound by the EU legislation that implements it.

The Istanbul Convention defines violence against women as all acts of GBV committed against women that result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm. It further defines GBV against women as violence that is aimed at women because they are women and that affects women disproportionately. It calls on state parties to adequately address GBV in all its forms, take measures to prevent it, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators.

Chapter 7 of the convention specifically addresses migration and asylum. It contains the following relevant articles:

- Article 59 states that victims of GBV with a dependent residence status (on a spouse or partner) must be granted an autonomous permit in the event of the dissolution of the relationship and difficult circumstances;
- Article 60 recognises GBV as grounds for asylum and mandates the use of gender-sensitive procedures;
- Article 61 upholds non-refoulement for GBV victims at risk of torture or persecution – meaning they cannot be returned to a country where they are at risk.

GREVIO, an independent expert group, monitors convention implementation through regular evaluation reports.

<sup>(2)</sup> As of December 2024, the Member States that have not ratified the convention were Bulgaria, Czechia, Lithuania, Hungary and Slovakia.

### 3.2.2. Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence

In 2024, the EU adopted its first directive on violence against women, Directive 2024/1385, which requires Member States to criminalise GBV offences including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and cyberviolence. It also identifies common aggravating factors – including the exploitation of migration status – and establishes minimum standards for victims' rights. The directive contains several articles related to the protection of migrant women, although it does not explicitly address their specific needs <sup>(3)</sup>. Recital 71 acknowledges that migrant and minority women face heightened risk and require specific protections. Articles 12, 13(3) and 18 also call for obligatory autonomous residence permits for victims previously dependent on an abuser, and for accessible, multilingual and culturally sensitive services for all victims of violence against women.

Member States have until mid 2027 to transpose the directive into national law.

### 3.2.3. Victims' Rights Directive

Directive 2012/29/EU – the Victims' Rights Directive – was adopted in 2012. This directive is a key legal act regarding GBV and other crimes, as it establishes minimum standards on the rights, support and protection that victims of crime are entitled to. Specifically:

- recital 9 and Article 1 stress that all victims benefit from the directive 'irrespective of nationality or residence status', including undocumented migrants;
- recitals 17 and 38 explicitly name violence against women, FGM and so-called honour crimes as examples of crimes for which victims need tailored help.

A revision of the Victims' Rights Directive is currently under way; in June 2023 the Commission presented its proposal, and the European Parliament and the Council entered trilogue talks in mid 2024.

### 3.2.4. Common European asylum system

The common European asylum system consists of five key pieces of legislation – Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast), known as the Asylum Procedures Directive; Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection, known as the Reception Conditions Directive; Directive 2011/95/EU, known as the Qualification Directive (recast); Regulation (EU) 2024/1358, known as the Eurodac Regulation; and Regulation (EU) 2024/1358, commonly referred to as the Dublin Regulation – which provide minimum standards for asylum procedures, reception conditions and refugee status determination. Two of the directives are especially relevant to GBV in the context of migration.

- The Asylum Procedures Directive aims to set out conditions for fair, quick and high-quality asylum decisions. These include using gender-sensitive approaches during assessments and recognising the complexity of gender-related claims, especially when applying concepts like safe third country and safe country of origin, or when reviewing repeat applications.

<sup>(3)</sup> Stakeholders, including some women's and migrant rights organisations, have raised concerns about the extent to which the directive explicitly addresses the specific needs of migrant women. Issues highlighted include the absence of provisions on data-sharing safeguards between support services and immigration authorities, the lack of GBV-specific grounds for international protection and the limited visibility of migration and asylum issues within the directive's main provisions (see Human Rights Watch, 2024).

- The Reception Conditions Directive sets minimum standards for housing, food, healthcare, education and other services for asylum seekers, including gender-sensitive accommodation and GBV prevention measures.

The new pact on migration and asylum (below), adopted in April 2024 will progressively replace these instruments. Key measures include the introduction of Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 establishing a common procedure for international protection (Asylum Procedures Regulation), which repeals Directive 2013/32/EU; Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 on standards for the qualification of beneficiaries of international protection (Qualification Regulation), which repeals Directive 2011/95/EU; and Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 on asylum and migration management (AMMR), which replaces the Dublin Regulation.

### 3.2.5. EU Anti-trafficking Directive

The EU Anti-trafficking Directive (Directive 2011/36/EU) seeks to combat human trafficking through the criminalisation of exploitation in prostitution, forced labour and other abuses. It mandates victim protection, gender-sensitive support and measures to tackle demand (particularly in trafficking for sexual exploitation). The directive recognises that women and children are especially vulnerable. Directive (EU) 2024/1712 of the European Parliament and of the Council was introduced in June 2024, amending Directive 2011/36/EU, to further strengthen protections against gender-based trafficking, such as forced marriage and online coercion. The amended directive is to be incorporated into national law by mid 2026.

### 3.2.6. EU Pact on migration and asylum

In April 2024, the European Parliament adopted a new pact on migration and asylum, creating a revised framework for asylum and migration policy in the EU. Key aspects of the pact include reinforcing external border controls, streamlining asylum procedures, enhancing responsibility sharing among Member States and integrating migration into international partnerships. While the pact provides exceptional protection in certain circumstances – for example, for accompanied or unaccompanied minors – it does not explicitly acknowledge migrant, refugee or asylum-seeking women affected by GBV as a particularly vulnerable group. Some bodies have raised questions about how GBV-related vulnerabilities will be addressed in practice, particularly in the context of accelerated procedures and return measures (Amnesty International, 2024; European Institute of Public Administration and Foundation for Access to Rights, 2024).

### 3.2.7. Gender equality strategy 2020–2025

GBV was included among the European Commission's priorities in its gender equality strategy for 2020–2025, and the strategy made specific reference to migrant women and girls:

*The EU will do all it can to prevent and combat gender-based violence, support and protect victims of such crimes, and hold perpetrators accountable for their abusive behaviour.*

*Particular attention needs to be paid to women and girls in the asylum and migration area [.]*

*[...]*

*Furthermore, the fund will enable the stepping up of protection of vulnerable groups, including women victims of gender-based violence in asylum and migration contexts.*

(European Commission, 2020, p. 16)

The post-2025 strategy, currently under development, is expected to build on these foundations, updating actions to prevent and respond to GBV.

#### 3.2.8. Roadmap for women's rights

Published on 8 March 2025, the roadmap for women's rights sets out a comprehensive vision for gender equality across the EU. The roadmap is designed to guide actions by all EU institutions and Member States, encouraging shared responsibility and coordination beyond the remit of the European Commission.

At its centre is a set of guiding principles intended to shape the direction of EU policy. Principle 1 of the roadmap affirms freedom from gender-based violence as a foundational right, with a focus on preventing and combating all forms of GBV in conflict, trafficking in human beings and harmful practices such as FGM and forced marriage. Principle 8 of the roadmap focuses on institutional mechanisms and effective gender mainstreaming, financing and institutional infrastructure, and gender-sensitive research, data collection, design and planning that address women's needs with an intersectional approach.

### 3.3. Further criteria and minimum standards related to gender-based violence in the context of migration

This section identifies additional criteria, guidelines and minimum standards that have been developed to support a consistent and good-practice response to GBV in the context of migration and crises that cause mass displacement. While not legally binding or fully incorporated at the EU level, these frameworks serve as important reference points for policy and programming.

#### 3.3.1. Global level

- 'Guidelines for integrating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian action' (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2015) provide practical guidance and tools for humanitarian actors and communities to coordinate, plan and evaluate responses to GBV. They cover prevention, protection and victim support across all phases of humanitarian responses.
- The inter-agency minimum standards for gender-based violence in emergencies programming (Global Protection Cluster, 2019) establish universal minimum standards to ensure a comprehensive and consistent approach to GBV in emergencies. These standards are globally relevant but require contextualisation to local settings.
- The GBV accountability framework (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2021) delineates the specific roles and responsibilities of humanitarian actors, including donor countries, to guide them on the steps they can take to combat GBV within their mandates.
- The 2021–2025 GBV area of responsibility strategy (Global Protection Cluster, 2021) functions as the global coordination platform for GBV prevention and response under the humanitarian cluster system. It aligns closely with the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda and highlights the critical funding gap that continues to undermine effective GBV responses in crises (IRC, 2019).

### 3.3.2. European level

- The recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls (CM/Rec(2022)17; Council of Europe, 2022) provides concrete support to help policymakers and other stakeholders implement the recommendation, with a particular focus on the experiences of Ukrainian women migrants.
- The action plan on protecting vulnerable persons in the context of migration and asylum in Europe (2021–2025) (Council of Europe, 2021) is a targeted assistance package for Council of Europe member states that aims to strengthen their capacity to identify and address weak points throughout their asylum and migration procedures with the aim of protecting the human rights of all, especially vulnerable individuals.
- The European Parliament Resolution of 8 March 2016 on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU (2015/2325(INI)) adopts a gender perspective to lay out the main criteria and minimum standards Member States must consider in their reception and asylum procedures for migrant and refugee women.

## 3.4. Conclusion

These international and European frameworks reflect a growing recognition of the need to address GBV in migration and crisis contexts. In recent years, there has been significant progress in establishing obligations for states to provide gender-sensitive protection, to support GBV victims and to mainstream gender across their asylum and migration systems. However, persistent gaps remain. While there are strong guidelines and practical toolkits – particularly for frontline practitioners – for addressing GBV in the context of displacement, crisis or humanitarian emergencies, many of the overarching legal and policy frameworks in place remain siloed. For example, instruments related to GBV and those related to refugee or migration law often operate in parallel, with limited integration. This lack of coherence can weaken protections for migrant women and girls, who often fall into the cracks between systems not designed to address the full complexity of their experiences.



## 4. National level

### 4.1. Introduction

Having discussed the relevant international and European frameworks, this chapter focuses on national responses to GBV and migration through an in-depth examination of seven Member States: Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Croatia, Malta and Finland. It focuses on five areas: crisis management, migration and asylum under the Istanbul Convention, healthcare and social services, access to specialist support, and policing. Table 1 summarises these Member States' responses, and further details are given in the sections that follow. As a reminder to the reader, the review was conducted in the first half of 2024.



Table 1. Overview of national-level responses to GBV during migration

Member State	Crisis management	Istanbul Convention (Articles 59–61)	Healthcare and social services	Specialist support services	Police and law enforcement
<b>Belgium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— National Crisis Center</li> <li>— Multiactor coordination</li> <li>— National action plan (NAP) on women, peace and security with gender budgeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Mostly compliant, with specialised unit and procedure for GBV victims</li> <li>— Accelerated asylum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Initial GBV training, including on FGM</li> <li>— Intimate partner violence identification manual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Adequate number of shelters</li> <li>— Helpline in each region</li> <li>— FGM / forced marriage shelters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Training on GBV</li> <li>— Procedures for the identification of GBV victims at asylum reception centres</li> </ul>
<b>Germany</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance, which is part of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community</li> <li>— Multiactor coordination</li> <li>— NAP with strong monitoring and civil society consultation throughout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Past reservations about Article 59</li> <li>— Strong laws against refoulement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— GBV training, including on FGM</li> <li>— Nationwide standards for GBV healthcare and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Insufficient number of shelter beds</li> <li>— Helpline in multiple languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Mandatory and in-service training but with uneven focus</li> </ul>
<b>Spain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Department of National Security, which is part of the Presidency of the Government</li> <li>— Multiactor coordination</li> <li>— NAP with civil society input across cycle and robust monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— National law complies with the Istanbul Convention's legal standards for responding to GBV</li> <li>— Accelerated asylum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Initial GBV training</li> <li>— Conditional access to services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— GBV support programme for migrants</li> <li>— Insufficient number of shelter beds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Mandatory and voluntary training</li> <li>— Manual for supporting and assisting migrant GBV victims</li> </ul>
<b>France</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— General Directorate for Civil Security and Crisis Management within the Ministry of the Interior</li> <li>— Civil society consultation included in NAP but limited priority for women, peace and security issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Barriers to Algerian women gaining independent residence permits</li> <li>— FGM response protocols in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Initial GBV training, including on FGM</li> <li>— Protocols on GBV exist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Insufficient number of shelter beds</li> <li>— Helpline in multiple languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Mandatory training</li> <li>— Refugee-specific guidance</li> </ul>

#### 4. National level

Member State	Crisis management	Istanbul Convention (Articles 59–61)	Healthcare and social services	Specialist support services	Police and law enforcement
<b>Croatia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Croatian Disaster Risk Reduction Platform within the Ministry of the Interior</li> <li>— Multiactor coordination</li> <li>— NAP on women, peace and security with interministerial group and civil society consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Law complies with the Istanbul Convention</li> <li>— Unsatisfactory asylum accommodation</li> <li>— Standard operating procedures on sexual and gender-based violence for asylum reception centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Training is minimal</li> <li>— Protocols on GBV exist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Shelter access concerns</li> <li>— Some shelters lack survivor-centred approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Training on GBV</li> <li>— GBV training for border guards</li> </ul>
<b>Malta</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Civil Protection Department within the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality</li> <li>— Limited focus on gender</li> <li>— Civil society consultation included in NAP but narrow focus on selected forms of GBV</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Limited Article 59 access</li> <li>— Many gaps in upholding non-refoulement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Basic focus on domestic violence</li> <li>— New multiagency GBV training that has not yet been assessed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— No national helpline specific to GBV</li> <li>— Meets shelter requirements but very few shelters</li> <li>— Non-governmental organisation helpline offers legal advice for victims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Considerable gaps in GBV training</li> </ul>
<b>Finland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Ministry of the Interior</li> <li>— NAP with robust monitoring and civil society consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— High evidence threshold for GBV</li> <li>— GBV/FGM identification guidelines exist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Initial GBV training, including on FGM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Insufficient shelter beds</li> <li>— MONIKA shelter offers specialist migrant support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Voluntary GBV training</li> <li>— Use of multiagency risk assessment conference (MARAC) tool</li> </ul>

## 4.2. Crisis management

In general, crisis management across Member States lacks gender sensitivity and rarely addresses GBV explicitly. In most of the Member States examined, gender equality bodies and GBV experts were not integrated into core crisis decision-making, though some were consulted in specific instances. A notable example of consultation is Belgium's Institute for the Equality of Women and Men (IGVM-IEFH), which gave recommendations and created a GBV toolkit for Ukrainian refugees (IGVM-IEFH, 2022a, 2022b). The IGVM-IEFH also participated in the federal-government-led COVID-19 task force *Groupes Vulnérables*, which focused on addressing the impact of COVID-19 on marginalised groups (IGVM-IEFH, 2020). Aside from a few exceptions, however, crisis responses do not take a gender-sensitive and/or intersectional approach that considers the needs of at-risk groups, including victims of GBV.

One mechanism for improving crisis management responses through a gender-sensitive lens is national action plans (NAPs) on women, peace and security (WPS). While not always directly tied to emergency response protocols, they are an important tool for strengthening the protection of migrants during crises. EIGE's policy brief on the WPS NAPs in the seven Member States reviewed here found that their NAPs typically demonstrate both a strong commitment to supporting the WPS agenda and a growing recognition of the connection between migration and GBV (EIGE, 2025). The policy brief also found examples of good practice in implementing NAPs, including interministerial working groups (Germany, Spain, Croatia), effective consultations of civil society (Germany, Spain, France, Finland) and robust monitoring (Germany, Spain). However, the policy brief also reports that most NAPs do not have specific budgets, limiting their effectiveness. The underfunding of NAPs appears to stem in part from their limited integration into broader national budgeting frameworks, as well as a lack of political prioritisation of the WPS agenda within certain ministries (EIGE, 2025).

### Promising practices

Belgium's fourth women, peace and security (WPS) NAP introduced gender-responsive budgeting after the adoption of the Law on Gender Mainstreaming in 2017, which requires the inclusion of a gender perspective in all budgets, public policies and frameworks. Belgium's gender equality body plays a role in facilitating cooperation between national crisis management authorities and local service providers and civil society organisations (CSOs), which provide gender-responsive support and services to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (Kingdom of Belgium, 2022).

Germany's third WPS NAP, implemented by six federal ministries, introduced a GBV monitoring and evaluation practice that covers six priority areas, including crisis prevention; participation; protection and support; humanitarian assistance, crisis management and reconstruction; strengthening the WPS agenda; and increasing institutional integration and capacity (Federal Foreign Office, 2020).

Spain's second WPS NAP institutionalised CSO involvement across the entire plan, from its design to its implementation and evaluation. CSOs' recommendations were accepted and implemented into the operation of the NAP (Government of Spain, 2017).

### 4.3. Implementation of migration and asylum articles of the Istanbul Convention

As noted previously, the main provisions of the Istanbul Convention on migration and asylum are Articles 59, 60 and 61. These articles cover several key protections: autonomous residence permits for GBV victims (Article 59), gender-sensitive asylum processes that recognise GBV as grounds for persecution (Article 60) and non-refoulement (Article 61).

Of the seven Member States analysed for this report, only Spain <sup>(4)</sup> and Croatia <sup>(5)</sup> were found to be fully compliant with Article 59. In the remaining five, independent residence permits were available only to specific migrant groups or under certain conditions. In Germany, until 2023, reservations were in place for Article 59, which excluded migrants who derived their residence from family reunification or from a sponsoring spouse with a permit of a set duration (and no option to extend). In France, Algerian migrant women are excluded due to the Franco-Algerian Agreement (GREVIO, 2019b). Women in Belgium are granted different measures of GBV protection depending on their administrative status (GREVIO, 2020a), and four Member States (Belgium, Germany, France and Malta) impose restrictions on women requesting an independent residence permit that are based on the duration of their marriage <sup>(6)</sup>. The level of evidence needed to access these permits also varies between Member States. In Finland, the immigration authority puts strong emphasis on robust proof, such as police reports and/or convictions (GREVIO, 2019a), whereas in Croatia the provision of a witness statement typically suffices (GREVIO, 2023).

While GBV is formally recognised as a persecution for which asylum can be claimed in all seven Member States, data reveals that very few GBV asylum claims have been documented. Croatia and Malta have received and/or granted particularly low numbers of such applications. A possible explanation for this is the absence of protocols/procedures for identifying vulnerable individuals, including GBV victims, or that enable victims to self-identify on arrival and during detention – an issue especially evident in both Croatia and Malta. Accelerated asylum procedures at border entry points that ‘effectively prevent women from disclosing experiences of violence’ have been reported in Spain (GREVIO, 2020c). France also has accelerated procedures and, while cases can be removed from these procedures, data indicates that this rarely occurs in practice (AIDA, 2025a).

Across all seven Member States, challenges persist in the early identification of victims of GBV, including those affected by trafficking and those who are children or adolescents. While Germany and Finland have systems in place that assign specially trained officers to vulnerable cases (AIDA 2025b; GREVIO, 2019a), GREVIO and GRETA reports continue to highlight gaps in the protocols used in other Member States. In Spain, Croatia and Malta, identification procedures remain inconsistent or overly reliant on visual assessments or non-governmental organisation (NGO) referrals (AIDA, 2025c, 2024, 2023; GRETA, 2021, 2020, 2018), and in France, in particular, age assessment procedures for unaccompanied minors have been widely criticised for their lack of safeguards and reliance on medical testing (AIDA, 2025a). All seven Member States have some form of anti-trafficking framework, but their implementation varies and a lack of training for frontline officials remains a key barrier to victim identification (see AIDA, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2024, 2023). Across the Member States studied, reception systems and vulnerability assessments are often not fully adapted to the needs of child and adolescent victims of GBV.

<sup>(4)</sup> Both Organic Law 4/2000 on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners in Spain and Their Social Integration (Government of Spain, 2000) and the corresponding Royal Decree 1155/2024 (Government of Spain, 2024).

<sup>(5)</sup> The Law on Foreigners of 2020, *Official Gazette* 133/20, especially Art. 79, and the Ordinance on the Status and Work of Third-Country Nationals in the Republic of Croatia Arts 21 and 22 (Croatian Parliament, 2020).

<sup>(6)</sup> Permits are granted after three years of marriage in Germany and France and only after five years in Belgium and Malta.

Many reports have raised concerns regarding the availability of satisfactory and safe reception conditions for women in most of the Member States reviewed. In Malta, there is a lack of access to safe women-only housing and sanitary facilities and women, girls and minors have sometimes been housed in tents (GREVIO, 2020b). In Germany, shortcomings have been noted in security and privacy for women and vulnerable individuals (e.g. unlockable dormitories) in asylum reception centres, and incidents of abuse or harassment have been reported as well (GREVIO, 2022a). In Croatia, an absence of women-only accommodation was highlighted (GREVIO, 2023), while shortcomings in ensuring access to same-sex accommodation were also observed in Finland. In Spain, concerns were raised about the use of temporary asylum reception facilities, which are supposed to house male irregular migrants for short stays, to house women and minors as well. Similar concerns were raised in France, where it was reported that some female asylum seekers, including victims of trafficking or sexual violence, were housed in centres mainly occupied by single men (AIDA, 2025a). Concerns were also raised in Spain about unaccompanied children being forced to leave accommodation facilities upon turning 18 (GREVIO, 2020c), although a legislative reform was adopted in 2021 that sought to address this (AIDA, 2025c). In Malta, all asylum applicants rescued at sea and disembarked in Malta throughout 2023 were automatically detained on public health grounds. Vulnerable applicants, including minors, were thus de facto detained for days or weeks following their arrival (AIDA, 2024).

Regarding non-refoulement, most Member States were found to not fully uphold this principle. This is typically due to accelerated procedures (Belgium, Spain) – which limit the time for robust assessments and/or the trust-building necessary to detect GBV (GREVIO, 2020a, 2020c) – or border control practices that make it difficult for migrants to gain access to the Member State (Malta and, in some cases, Croatia) (GREVIO, 2020b, 2023). However, Germany demonstrates good practice, with its national legislation offering safeguards against refoulement, including for those at risk of GBV or exploitation (OHCHR, 2021). In the remaining Member States, compliance with non-refoulement could not be assessed due to a lack of information. GREVIO echoed this, noting in its 2022 review that, for the same reason, out of 17 baseline reports, non-refoulement could only be assessed in five countries (GREVIO, 2022b).

### Promising practices

In Croatia, the Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with UNHCR, IOM and other organisations, implemented standard operating procedures for sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response in shelters for seekers of international protection, which outline the procedures that should be followed and introduce a referral procedure for officials in charge of protection and the prevention of violence (Government of Croatia, 2024).

Germany published national minimum standards for the protection of asylum seekers in refugee accommodation shelters (BMFSFJ and UNICEF, 2021).

Finland has official national guidelines on the services available to migrants, which include information on the services provided by different sectors, namely the state, municipalities and civil society. The guidelines include instructions for receiving medical check-ups upon arrival and optional questions that help identify FGM and sexual or domestic violence. The staff at asylum reception facilities receive training on how to identify victims of forced marriage or FGM (GREVIO, 2019a).

Spain's legislation secures procedural guarantees and standards for individuals with specific needs, including victims of trafficking or sexual, psychological or physical violence.

## 4.4. Access to and provision of healthcare and social services

Healthcare and social services play a key role in identifying victims of GBV, providing services and support to victims, and collecting data and information on victims to improve services and evaluate their effectiveness. Some countries manage their healthcare and social services centrally at a national level (Croatia, Malta). Others do so at a regional or language-community level (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Finland).

Most Member States in this study provide some level of training on GBV to service providers and healthcare professionals, but there are no minimum standards or requirements for mandatory training at the EU level. Belgium, Germany, Spain, France and Finland offer initial training on GBV for healthcare professionals and social workers, but their focus on the different areas of GBV is fragmented – some training focuses on intimate partner or domestic violence, some training focuses specifically on FGM or sexual violence, and only in a few countries (Germany and Finland) does training consider GBV to be an intersectional issue that affects the needs of high-risk groups and is the result of overlapping vulnerabilities. In Croatia, a lack of systematic and mandatory initial training on GBV for healthcare and social welfare professionals has been raised as an issue, and on-the-job training has mostly focused on domestic and sexual violence (GREVIO, 2023). Croatia does have a protocol that healthcare workers should follow in cases of domestic violence and sexual violence, but GREVIO (2023) noted that this was more a ‘list of tasks rather than proper guidelines’ (p. 41). The GREVIO report for Malta likewise noted only minimal training for healthcare and social welfare professionals and that this training was focused on domestic violence and did not include other forms of GBV (2020b). However, in 2024 the government of Malta provided information that multiagency training on GBV and domestic violence is now given to frontline workers and, furthermore, that this includes modules on the needs of migrants, individuals with disabilities and LGBTQ+ individuals (Government of Malta, 2024a). Across the Member States, key gaps were identified in the provision of mandatory training for healthcare and social welfare professions that addresses intersecting vulnerabilities and victims’ needs (including those of migrants). In some Member States (e.g. Belgium and Croatia), victim-blaming narratives and content were found in training manuals.

A key area of concern regarding the provision of services for migrant victims of GBV is that of services for, and the identification of, victims of FGM. The early identification of FGM can be used as the basis for gender-based asylum claims and protection for migrants upon entry into a Member State. In Finland, the early identification of FGM and its related risks is included in the training of frontline staff in migration settings (GREVIO, 2019a). In France, compulsory training courses on FGM (and sexual violence) are included in healthcare workers’ initial training, and protocols for responding to FGM have been established by the Haute Autorité de Santé (2020). France has made improvements in the detection of FGM; by the end of 2019, more than 9 000 people were under the protection of the Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides on the grounds of a risk of FGM, and by the end of 2023, 20 900 were (AIDA, 2025a). In Germany, mandatory initial training on FGM is in place for midwives, and the quality management guidelines of the Joint Federal Committee on Health include GBV service provision standards, but these are unevenly implemented (Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss, 2024). In Malta, pilot training modules on FGM have recently been introduced for certain professions, including for healthcare professionals, teachers, social workers, and law enforcement and military personnel, but there are no guidelines on FGM response protocols (GREVIO, 2020b).

### Promising practices

In asylum reception centres in Finland, medical check-ups for migrants and refugees are available upon arrival, and individual sessions with women are also conducted to address GBV concerns and enable referrals to specialist services.

France has created a thematic group on violence against women within the Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides, which develops gender-sensitive recommendations and guidelines for the processing of asylum claims and provides initial and continuous training and training materials.

In Germany, the Quality Management Guidelines of the Joint Federal Committee on Health include standards for the provision of GBV services, which are then implemented by the federal states.

## 4.5. Specialist support services

Research shows that migrant victims of GBV often experience difficulties in accessing specialist support services due to their vulnerable and/or uncertain residence status. Specialist support services include helplines, shelters and sexual violence treatment centres. Most out of the seven analysed Member States meet the minimum standards for helplines set by the Council of Europe – a national helpline for women that operates 24/7 and is free of charge – except for Malta, where there is no national women’s helpline but rather a generic gender-neutral helpline that provides support regarding child abuse, homelessness, suicide, marriage and family problems, and gambling, in addition to domestic violence and GBV.

In Belgium, helplines are organised at the language-community level rather than the national level (Floriani and Dudouet, 2023). The availability of helplines operating in different languages varies greatly between Member States. In France, services are offered in 185 languages, thanks to simultaneous interpretation (Women for Women France, 2023). In Finland, the national helpline operates in English, Finnish and Swedish. The Multicultural Women’s Association (MONIKA) in Finland also provides services and support through a ‘chat’ function in several additional languages, including English, Finnish, French, Arabic, Dari, Persian and Russian, depending on the day <sup>(7)</sup>. In Germany, there is support in German and 19 additional languages available 24/7 thanks to interpreters (Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben, n.d.). In Malta, the Women’s Rights Foundation (a voluntary organisation) has a legal support helpline, which offers services in several different languages (Stop Violence, n.d.).

The provision and availability of access to shelters for migrant women varies between Member States. When it comes to women victims of GBV, only seven out of all 27 EU Member States meet the minimum standard for beds in women’s shelters (Floriani and Dudouet, 2023). The Council of Europe sets these as a minimum of 1 bed per 10 000 women, accounting for the regional distribution of shelters. Of the Member States reviewed here, only Belgium and Malta have sufficient capacities, although these are clearly the ones with the smallest populations, as Malta had only 6 shelters in 2023 compared with the 380 in Germany (Floriani and Dudouet, 2023). Spain, France and Croatia are missing between 10 % and 28 % of their required beds, Finland is missing 59 % and Germany is missing 67 % (Floriani and Dudouet, 2023). Migrant women may also face legal or bureaucratic barriers to accessing shelters, such as needing legal status (Malta) or to have submitted a report of violence to the police (Spain). In Germany, access to some shelters might be subject to a financial contribution, which may be a limiting factor for migrant women (Floriani and Dudouet, 2023). In Croatia, GREVIO raised concerns about the lack of a survivor-centred approach in some shelters, especially those run by faith-based organisations. In Finland, shelters are open

<sup>(7)</sup> MONIKA is an umbrella organisation of multicultural women’s organisations that helps and supports women in different languages. The website is available at <https://monikanaiset.fi/en/>.

to all victims, including women with an irregular migration status, although there are few women-only shelters. In Belgium, processes for granting preferential treatment to GBV survivors searching for housing exist, but coverage and access vary between the Flemish and Walloon Regions. Some Member States (Belgium, Finland) have shelters run by NGOs that specifically provide services to refugees, or specialised shelters for victims of FGM or forced marriage <sup>(8)</sup>. Finland has a specialised shelter for migrant women and girls who have experienced or are at risk of GBV, including not only domestic violence but also forced marriage or other forms of honour-related violence. This is run by MONIKA, which also offers peer support groups and counselling. In Belgium, specialised housing has been established for victims of FGM and forced marriage. In France, around 300 dedicated places have been created specifically for women victims of violence or trafficking (operating since 2020) and 200 places have been created for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers (in 2022), although no additional budget has since been set aside for these additional missions (AIDA, 2025a). Across Member States there is a notable lack of targeted services that consider the needs of unaccompanied minors and adolescents who are victims of GBV, LGBTQ+ victims of GBV and male victims of sexual violence.

### Promising practices

In Finland, the Multicultural Women's Association - MONIKA runs a shelter and offers specialist support services to migrant women and girls who have experienced or are at risk of not only domestic violence but also forced marriage or other forms of honour-related violence.

In Spain, there is a programme available to vulnerable migrants, including victims of GBV, that provides them with financial aid, accommodation, maintenance and health and psychological support (Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, n.d.).

## 4.6. Police and law enforcement

Some level of training on GBV is available for police and law enforcement officials in most Member States, but its content varies. Some focus on GBV in general, while others address specific forms of GBV like domestic violence, sexual assault or FGM (this last is less commonly addressed). Some of the Member States analysed have mandatory training on GBV (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Croatia) and some offer voluntary in-service training (Germany, Spain, Finland). The exception is Malta, where GREVIO noted significant gaps in GBV training (2020b). Some specialised training focuses on GBV experienced during migration by refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. For example, in Croatia a special training module on GBV is available to border guards. Belgium, in partnership with the IOM, implemented training on GBV and sexual violence in the context of migration for border guards (IOM Belgium and Luxembourg, n.d.) and developed a training manual for the identification of and communication with GBV victims (IOM, 2020). In France, the Ministry of the Interior launched a training course on vulnerability for many asylum actors (e.g. authorities, CSOs) in 2022, while also making it mandatory for officers dealing with claims from unaccompanied minors to attend training, including on sensitive interviewing techniques (AIDA, 2024). There has been some joint training for frontline officers in Spain and Malta (OSCE, 2024).

In Belgium and Finland, guidelines have been developed for staff in asylum reception centres on identifying GBV, including FGM-related risks, forced marriage and – in Belgium – transphobic discrimination (GREVIO, 2020a, 2019a). Croatia implemented a standard operational procedure for

<sup>(8)</sup> These include, for example, l'Eglantier (<https://www.leglantier.be/leglantier.php>), Solidarité Femmes (<https://www.solidarite-femmes.be/>) and Talita (<https://www.talita.brussels/>). These are emergency shelters that address domestic violence but are not specifically focused on migration. Some NGOs for refugees also have shelters for women, such as Sister House in Brussels (<https://www.bxlrefugees.be/2023/11/03/5ans-sh/>).

dealing with GBV and sexual violence in asylum reception centres, which was produced by the Ministry of the Interior in collaboration with international organisations (Croatian Law Centre, 2024). In Spain there is a procedure manual and protocol for police and frontline and asylum reception personnel on the proper treatment of vulnerable individuals including victims of GBV and migrant and refugee women and girls (Government of Spain, 2024). Malta's strategy for the reception of asylum seekers and irregular migrants refers to a vulnerability assessment approved by the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (Government of Malta, 2024b).

### Promising practices

The multiagency risk assessment conference (MARAC) tool is used in Finland to conduct risk assessments. This is done by means of a quick referral to a MARAC comprising a number of professionals who share information, create a personalised safety plan and follow up. The MARAC tool is designed for victims of recurrent intimate partner violence and domestic violence. Its guiding principles are to be victim-centred, in order to avoid secondary victimisation, and to involve cooperation among various relevant professionals, including the police, victim support services, child protection services and healthcare professionals, who, with the victim's consent, inform each other and cooperate to mitigate risks and provide support and necessary services to the victim (Crimeprevention, n.d.).

In France, officers dealing with asylum claims from unaccompanied children must be specially trained and certified. They are trained on the particularities of asylum claims lodged by young individuals and also have to attend mandatory training on techniques for collecting personal stories, which uses the European Union Agency for Asylum training module on interviewing children (AIDA, 2025a).

## 4.7. Conclusion

This review of national responses to GBV in the context of migration across seven Member States shows ongoing efforts to align national legislation and responses with international legal frameworks, especially the Istanbul Convention. This is significant, as the implementation of the Istanbul Convention (particularly Articles 59–61) is the foundation for gender-sensitive migration responses. However, this analysis also demonstrates that there is significant variation between legal commitment and implementation. While all seven Member States reviewed here have ratified the Istanbul Convention and maintain NAPs that align with the WPS framework, their practical integration into crisis management and migration and asylum procedures remains inconsistent. Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Croatia, Malta and Finland differ markedly in how they operationalise Articles 59–61 and respond to GBV in migration more generally. Differences in their implementation of these articles and their responses to GBV are also evident across the different areas of focus examined in this research. Some of the weakest areas for these Member States are the identification of victims of GBV, the provision of specialist support services for migrants and the provision of adequate, safe refuge places. The review of these national responses highlights that gender-sensitive, intersectional measures are critical – but often missing – in crisis settings, the reception of asylum seekers and health and legal services. This shows the urgent need for improved standardisation, capacity building and monitoring at both the national and EU levels to ensure that all victims of GBV benefit equally from safety and support measures.

## 5. Challenges and gaps

This section identifies key challenges and gaps in the response to gender-based violence in the context of migration across the EU. Findings are drawn from qualitative interviews with 17 GBV and migration experts and the desk-based literature and policy analysis. For clarity, challenges/gaps are grouped into three thematic areas; however, in reality they overlap and interact.

### 5.1. Legal, policy and governance gaps

#### 5.1.1. Legal gaps and inconsistencies

Despite the strong legal framework offered by the Istanbul Convention, its incorporation into national law remains uneven across the Member States reviewed. Even where national-level provisions exist, inconsistencies are common – for example in the application of gender-sensitive interview protocols or access to same-sex accommodation. This is supported by both interviews and the analysis of national responses across the seven Member States reviewed.

Certain legislative and policy frameworks across the Member States include restrictive measures intended to deter irregular migration. These may have unintended consequences, including limiting access to protection and support for individuals who are at risk of or affected by GBV.

#### 5.1.2. Fragmented policies and implementation

A wide range of policies, standards, tools and guidance documents exist (see [Section 3](#)), but their implementation is uneven and often only prospective. GBV and migration frameworks frequently operate in parallel, with limited coordination, resulting in gaps in service provision. This fragmentation is further exacerbated by the number of actors involved and the lack of mechanisms for coordination between stakeholders working across asylum, healthcare, policing and social support systems.

#### 5.1.3. Burden of proof in asylum claims

Accessing asylum on GBV grounds remains challenging due to the high evidentiary thresholds required. The experts interviewed gave examples of cases where evidence of GBV had been left behind in a country of origin or deemed insufficient (extensive evidence is often required). Providing evidence of GBV is especially difficult for victims of psychological or economic violence, which remain poorly understood and recognised in asylum processes. Fast-tracked asylum procedures may limit the time available to build trust and disclose GBV, compounding these difficulties, especially for those with prior negative experiences with state institutions, including racism or the dismissal of GBV claims.

#### 5.1.4. Gender-based violence experienced in transit not recognised

Incidents of GBV during migration, especially in transit zones such as Libya or Türkiye, are frequently not recognised as grounds for protection, even when victims continue to experience significant physical and psychological harm. This creates protection gaps for victims of trafficking and other forms of GBV experienced outside formal conflict zones.

### 5.1.5. Insufficient gender-specific planning in emergency responses

Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine have exposed the lack of gender-sensitive preparedness for emergencies across Member States. Few countries, including in the EU, integrate GBV prevention and protections into their contingency and rapid-response strategies. This leads to increased vulnerability to GBV during crises and limited institutional readiness to respond.

## 5.2. Gaps in safe and equitable access to support

### 5.2.1. Failure to apply intersectional approaches

National frameworks and frontline services often lack practical guidance on how to apply intersectional approaches. The experts interviewed spoke of how intersecting vulnerabilities are often not properly understood by authorities and service providers and gave examples of where service providers lacked cultural understanding, including of LGBTQ+ women who had been forced into heterosexual relationships. Barriers include limited training, resulting in a lack of awareness and cultural competence among service providers; a lack of tailored services; and the absence of participatory mechanisms that enable affected groups to shape or evaluate interventions.

### 5.2.2. Lack of awareness and understanding of violence against men and boys

There is a notable policy and service gap in the recognition of and response to GBV experienced by migrant men and boys <sup>(9)</sup>. There is very limited research on GBV against migrant men and boys, but the research that does exist highlights how stigma and a lack of awareness contribute to under-reporting and poor identification (Tan and Kuschminder, 2022; Keygnaert et al., 2015). Even trained professionals often overlook or misunderstand this form of violence, which limits the provision of appropriate support.

### 5.2.3. Unequal access to shelters and support services

Access to GBV shelters and specialised support services varies widely across the EU. In several Member States, undocumented migrants and asylum seekers face legal or practical restrictions on accessing these services. Availability is highly dependent on location, with significant regional disparities (e.g. between urban and rural areas or in different language or federal administrations), even in well-funded countries. There is a shortage of adequate, safe housing for migrants across the EU, which has been compounded in recent years following several geopolitical crises. A related challenge is the lack of trained, specialised interpreters for migrant survivors of GBV, which limits their access to trauma-informed and culturally appropriate care. These issues were evident across both the interviews and the desk-based analysis.

<sup>(9)</sup> The use of the term 'GBV against men and boys' refers to the recognition that the violence that migrant men and boys experience in the context of migration stems from unequal power structures and attempts to reinforce dominant forms of masculinity and maintain a gendered hierarchy. It can intersect with racism, imperialism and homophobia.

#### 5.2.4. Over-reliance on non-governmental organisations and funding gaps

Support for migrant victims of GBV across the EU often relies heavily on NGOs, many of which operate with limited and unstable funding. Experts interviewed spoke of the burden the current system places on 'under-resourced, over-stretched and overworked NGOs'. Findings from the desk review also indicated that outsourcing GBV services may limit the reach of oversight and accountability mechanisms.

#### 5.2.5. Training gaps

A consistent finding across both the interviews and policy analysis is the lack of mandatory, high-quality training for professionals interacting with migrant victims of GBV (including possible victims). Other key challenges in the training process are listed below.

- Training is often voluntary and not mandatory for key frontline roles. This means that only professionals who are already aware of the issue are typically reached.
- Many programmes lack a trauma-informed, gender-sensitive or culturally competent approach.
- Responsibility for improving training typically lies with national authorities but can be strengthened through EU-level minimum standards and the establishment of funding conditions.

#### 5.2.6. Male staff in asylum reception centres

The predominance of male staff in some reception centres and asylum facilities may increase insecurity among women and gender-diverse migrants and limit the reporting and identification of GBV.

#### 5.2.7. Mixed-sex accommodation and facilities in asylum reception centres

A key issue identified by both interviews and desk-based research is that of mixed-sex accommodation and sanitary facilities in asylum reception centres, which are known risk factors for GBV in institutional settings (see GREVIO's country reports).

### 5.3. Gaps in data collection and use

#### 5.3.1. Lack of standardised data collection

Reliable and comparable data on GBV among migrants is lacking across Member States. For instance, few Member States systematically collect data on the prevalence and/or types of GBV experienced by migrants, or on the sexes of victims and perpetrators and the relationship between them. Fewer still disaggregate administrative data according to migration status.

#### 5.3.2. Lack of data sharing

When data is collected, it is often not shared effectively between relevant bodies, such as migration authorities, support services and/or law enforcement agencies, either within or between Member States. This leads to fragmented policies and support for migrant victims of GBV. It also means that victims of GBV must often recount their experiences multiple times, compounding trauma.

## 5.4. Conclusion

This section has outlined persistent gaps in EU responses to GBV in the context of migration, based on qualitative expert interviews and a desk-based review of policies and literature. Key concerns include inconsistent legal implementation, limited coordination, inadequate access to services and poor data collection practices. While some progress has been made over the past decade, even in the face of rising numbers of migrants and asylum seekers, the overall picture remains concerning. Responses within the EU frequently fall short of the standards and best practices Member States promote in humanitarian settings abroad, and highlight the need for more consistent, coordinated, gender-responsive and rights-based approaches.



## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

This section presents key conclusions from the research and provides actionable recommendations. It is informed by the desk-based review of Member State responses to GBV and migration and of key literature (e.g. GREVIO reports, AIDA reports, Beijing + 30 national reviews) and by the findings of the qualitative interviews with experts on GBV and migration.

### 6.1. Key conclusions

- **Migrant women face high levels of GBV and multiple barriers to accessing safety and support.** The research strongly suggests that migrant women face high levels of GBV, including grievous sexual violence. At the centre of this is the fact that women belonging to marginalised groups – in this case migrants, but also other marginalised groups – face overlapping forms of discrimination and exclusion, which heightens their risk of experiencing GBV and creates barriers to seeking help.
- **Existing legal frameworks provide a solid basis, but their implementation remains uneven.** Migrant women's increased risk of GBV is recognised in key frameworks, particularly the Istanbul Convention. However, this research shows that the implementation of Istanbul Convention provisions at the national level – even in countries that have ratified the convention – is uneven, fragmented, incomplete and under-resourced.
- **Alignment with the Istanbul Convention is crucial for policy convergence.** Efforts to incorporate Articles 59–61 of the Istanbul Convention into EU and national law are the clearest path to linking otherwise siloed GBV, migration and crisis response policies. Core EU migration instruments (e.g. the new EU pact on migration and asylum) are still largely gender-blind.
- **There is a disconnect between the recognition of the heightened vulnerability of migrant women to GBV and the direction of migration policy in several EU Member States.** Recent deterrence-focused measures risk increasing this vulnerability, particularly where safeguards are lacking. This research finds that, in most Member States, protection measures for migrant women affected by GBV are insufficient. Restrictions on access to shelters and support services for undocumented women and asylum seekers further compound this risk. Concerns have also been raised about the EU pact on migration and asylum; provisions such as accelerated procedures may hinder the identification of GBV victims and increase the potential for harm. While this recommendation focuses on women, it is also important to recognise that migrant men and boys may experience GBV and encounter barriers to disclosure and support. Their needs should be addressed through appropriate policy measures.
- **Emergency preparedness and response strategies would benefit from the stronger integration of gender-responsive measures.** Increases in GBV exposure observed during the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent crises (e.g. the war in Sudan and Russia's invasion of Ukraine) illustrate the need to prioritise GBV prevention and protection within emergency planning. This research highlights the gaps in gender-responsive emergency planning and emphasises the need to integrate GBV protections into rapid response mechanisms.
- **A vast set of tools and guidelines exist at the international level, but they have not been well integrated into national responses.** Despite the existence of robust international frameworks – including those developed by the United Nations, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Council of Europe – national uptake remains limited and fragmented. Strengthening the alignment between international guidance and domestic practice would enhance the consistency, quality and gender-responsive and rights-based nature of GBV responses in migration and crisis settings.

- **Adequate, specialised and survivor-centred services are lacking.** Few Member States provide sufficient number of beds in shelters and support services for victims of GBV, including migrants. Even fewer provide the tailored or specialised services that migrant victims of GBV need, such as dedicated, gender-responsive shelters or shelter space, legal aid and trauma-informed, culturally sensitive care. In several Member States, it was seen that asylum reception and accommodation arrangements potentially increase the risk of further harm for migrant victims of GBV. The provision of adequate, specialised and safe support is also paramount for child and adolescent victims of GBV, who are often overlooked in planning despite research suggesting they face a high risk of GBV.
- **Resource constraints limit the capacity to provide consistent, high-quality support for victims of GBV.** Persistent funding shortfalls significantly hinder the provision of specialist support services, particularly those tailored to the needs of migrant victims of GBV. Specialist NGOs and migrant-led organisations – which are often at the forefront of service delivery – frequently operate with limited, short-term funding, which undermines their sustainability, staffing capacity and ability to respond to complex needs.
- **Evidence gaps impede effective policy design.** There is an evident lack of reliable information, including administrative data, on GBV in the context of migration. That leaves gaps in our knowledge and undermines evidence-based policymaking. For example, many Member States do not collect administrative data on migration status, sex, age or the relationship between the victims and perpetrators of GBV.
- **Intersectional vulnerabilities require greater recognition and integration.** Existing policies and responses to GBV often lack a sufficiently intersectional perspective and may not fully address the needs of victims from marginalised groups, such as members of ethnic or religious minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals or persons with disabilities. Migration policies and related measures also tend to overlook the cumulative effect of multiple forms of discrimination. Without stronger attention to intersectionality, responses risk being less effective for those most at risk of exclusion or harm.
- **Promising practices and guidelines exist that can inform responses to GBV in migration.** Promising practices – such as specialised shelters and services, trauma-informed and culturally sensitive responses, intersectional gender-sensitive training for asylum officers and gender-responsive National Action Plans (NAPs) – demonstrate that progress is achievable and scalable.

## 6.2. Recommendations

All recommendations provided in this section aim to ensure that GBV prevention and response measures are gender-responsive, inclusive, survivor-centred and aligned with international obligations and good practice. The recommendations are divided by level of action – those for EU institutions and those for Member States – to support their targeted implementation.

### 6.2.1. Legislation, policy and governance

#### Recommendations for EU institutions

- EU institutions are encouraged to support Member States in preventing GBV and protecting all victims – regardless of migration status – through legislative initiatives, policy guidance, funding and research.
- The European Commission is encouraged to support Member States in harmonising the implementation of Istanbul Convention Articles 59–61, ensuring that autonomous residence permits and gender-responsive asylum procedures are accessible across all legal categories.

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

- EU institutions are encouraged to support a gender-responsive implementation of the new pact on migration and asylum that includes safeguards to identify, protect and support victims of GBV – particularly women, children and those migrating along high-risk routes.
- EU institutions and Member States are encouraged to ensure that GBV prevention and response measures are integrated into migration-related and crisis response strategies, including asylum reception systems, border management and integration programmes.

### Recommendations for Member States

- Member States are encouraged to fully incorporate into national law and implement Articles 59–61 of the Istanbul Convention, which ensure the right to autonomous residence permits, gender-responsive asylum procedures and non-refoulement protections for GBV victims. Ratifying the Istanbul Convention remains an important step for those Member States that have not yet done so.
- National authorities are encouraged to review legislation and policy and remove provisions incompatible with the Istanbul Convention and core EU values, such as measures that increase the detention of women and children, create barriers to legal status for migrant victims of GBV and put victims at risk of further harm.
- Member States are encouraged to remove excessive evidentiary burdens for GBV-related asylum claims and autonomous residence permits.
- Member States are encouraged to implement the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda – both domestically and overseas – including through WPS national action plans (NAPs) that promote gender equality and empowerment. These NAPs should incorporate clear budgetary allocations and monitoring frameworks to ensure the capacity for and effectiveness of implementation.
- Member States are encouraged to ensure that GBV prevention and protection are central to the national implementation of the pact on migration and asylum.

### Top five short-term actions

#### EU actions

1. Encourage Member States to harmonise the implementation of Istanbul Convention Articles 59–61.
2. Integrate GBV safeguards into the implementation of the EU asylum and migration pact.
3. Designate funding for GBV services (especially services for migrants).
4. Develop EU-wide GBV training standards for frontline staff.
5. Establish EU-wide standards for GBV data collection.

#### Member State actions

1. Incorporate Articles 59–61 into national law and implement them.
2. Integrate responses to GBV into national crisis and asylum systems.
3. Ensure **all** migrants can access shelters and support services without restriction.
4. Include migrant organisations in planning and services.
5. Adopt survivor-centred and intersectional approaches.

## 6.2.2. Emergency preparedness and crisis response

### Recommendations for EU institutions

- EU institutions are encouraged to ensure that GBV prevention and response measures are included in EU-level crisis response plans, including those related to conflict, climate-related displacement and public health emergencies.
- As the operational role of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) continues to expand, with plans to increase its standing corps to 10 000 by 2027 and eventually to 30 000, mandatory GBV and gender-responsiveness training should be integrated into all levels of border guard training. This is essential to promote gender-sensitive and rights-based border management, ensure the early identification and referral of GBV cases and prevent the re-traumatisation or secondary victimisation of migrants at EU borders.

### Recommendations for Member States

- Governments are encouraged to explicitly integrate GBV protections into migration, asylum and crisis response laws and policies.
- Governments are encouraged to ensure that women's organisations, organisations representing the interests of migrants, and frontline service providers are included in the planning, implementation and evaluation of crisis responses.
- Member States are encouraged to establish and strengthen multisectoral and coordinated measures to tackle GBV in migration. This should involve police and law enforcement agencies, health and social services, specialist support services, the security sector, asylum workers and civil society.

## 6.2.3. Supporting adequate and inclusive services and leveraging good practices

### Recommendations for EU institutions

- EU institutions are encouraged to develop and promote common minimum standards for GBV training, ensuring that it is mandatory, trauma-informed and culturally competent. This training should include modules on FGM, trafficking in human beings, forced marriage, honour-related violence and intersectional vulnerabilities.
- The European Commission is encouraged to allocate a budget for peace-related initiatives, including conflict prevention and crisis management, within the defence section of its multiannual financial framework.
- EU institutions are encouraged to ensure that funding mechanisms include ring-fenced, long-term funding for GBV services, including those serving migrants, undocumented individuals and groups at heightened risk of GBV. Funding should be multiannual, stable and accessible to grassroots and migrant-led organisations, not just large NGOs with administrative capacity.
- EU-wide cooperation mechanisms are encouraged to be strengthened to support cross-border coordination, knowledge exchanges and the scaling of effective practices for GBV and migration.

### Recommendations for Member States

- Governments are encouraged to ensure that all victims of GBV, regardless of migration status, have access to shelters, healthcare, psychosocial support and legal aid. Barriers that prevent

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

undocumented migrants from accessing these services, such as reporting and residency requirements, should be removed.

- Member States are encouraged to provide adequate, stable funding for the expansion and maintenance of GBV services. This includes services in rural areas, child-specific and adolescent-specific services, and gender-responsive and culturally sensitive support tailored to the needs of migrants, such as providing support to victims of trafficking, FGM, forced marriage or honour-related violence.
- Migrant communities and organisations representing migrant interests are encouraged to be included in the development, delivery and evaluation of GBV prevention and response measures.
- Member States are encouraged to mandate and regularly update training for all professionals and frontline staff working within migration response systems. Rather than developing new training materials, the integration of GBV training, such as the inter-agency minimum standards for gender-based violence in emergencies programming (Global Protection Cluster, 2019), into existing curricula could prove more effective.
- Member States are encouraged to adopt targeted intersectional approaches in their GBV policy and responses. Clear guidance and training should be developed to support the inclusion of groups facing multiple or 'invisible' vulnerabilities – such as LGBTQ+ persons, racial and ethnic minorities, undocumented migrants, disabled migrants, children and male victims of GBV.
- All services are encouraged to adopt a survivor-centred approach, which is one that follows the four guiding principles of dealing with GBV – safety, respect, confidentiality and non-discrimination. This approach has been shown to centre victims of GBV in the support process and empower them (UNFPA, 2019).

### 6.2.4. Improving data collection and usage

#### Recommendations for EU institutions

- EU institutions are encouraged to support and cooperate with EIGE to strengthen the collection and analysis of GBV data relevant to migration and asylum across the EU. EIGE's expertise should be leveraged to ensure that data collected under Article 44 of the EU directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence includes people's migration status and intersecting vulnerabilities, which will provide a stronger evidence base for policy development.
- EU institutions and Member States are encouraged to invest in and support gender-responsive, intersectional research that addresses gaps in the evidence on GBV in migration and crisis contexts. This includes research on the prevalence, patterns and causes of GBV in these settings; evaluations of the implementation and impact of legal frameworks, including the Istanbul Convention provisions on migration and asylum; and studies on the needs and experiences of under-represented or 'invisible' groups – such as LGBTQ+ migrants, children and adolescents, men and boys, and individuals in transit – which are often not considered during service design and policy development.

#### Recommendations for Member States

- Member States are encouraged to implement EU-wide standards for the collection of GBV-related administrative data in line with Article 44 of the EU directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence. Data should be disaggregated by sex, age, relationship between victim and perpetrator and migration status.
- Authorities and service providers are encouraged to strengthen the mechanisms used for data sharing and create built-in safeguards to protect survivor consent, privacy and data security and to avoid re-traumatisation.

# Annex: Research design and methodology

This research, conducted between January and April 2024, employed both secondary and primary data collection methods to investigate how GBV is addressed in the context of migration in the EU.

## Secondary research

Desk research and a comprehensive literature review were carried out at the international, regional (EU, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and national levels. This involved the analysis of conventions, policy frameworks, guidelines and laws relevant to GBV and migration. The findings were organised in a matrix by theme (e.g. GBV, international law, crisis response and management), document type, issuing body, target audience and publication date. Where relevant, the definitions of key terms like 'GBV' and 'crisis' were noted. Key sources included GREVIO and UN agency reports, the EUR-Lex database, and government and agency websites. Document discovery was aided by a snowball methodology, based on known resources and expert recommendations.

A second matrix mapped institutional responsibility for addressing GBV in migration across seven selected Member States: Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Croatia, Malta and Finland. This covered sectors such as asylum/migration, healthcare, social welfare, policing / the judiciary, and support services, along with the tools and guidance used in each.

These seven Member States were selected to ensure that the research covered:

- high migration volumes (e.g. Germany, Spain, France);
- geographic diversity (e.g. Nordic, central European, Mediterranean Member States);
- border security challenges (e.g. France, Croatia, Malta);
- ongoing efforts to address GBV (e.g. through NAPs or gender-sensitive strategies);
- the development of relevant policy, including NAPs on WPS that incorporate GBV or migration concerns (only Member States with some existing policies were included).

While there are other Member States that may also meet the above criteria, these seven Member States were purposefully selected to create a diverse sample and present a snapshot of the current ways in which some Member States are addressing this issue. A gap analysis assessed the consistency between national frameworks and international standards, particularly the Istanbul Convention.

## Primary research

Seventeen virtual key informant interviews were conducted with legal, academic and practitioner experts from six Member States and two EU agencies. The goal was to triangulate findings, explore how frameworks are implemented and identify gaps.

Interviewees were selected based on:

- a minimum of seven years' experience in GBV, or GBV and migration;
- their knowledge of different regions, sectors (e.g. humanitarian, asylum, trafficking), GBV types (e.g. domestic violence, FGM, cyberviolence) and demographics;
- their focus on intersectionality and practical experience.

Ethical standards were maintained via shared documentation (e.g. EIGE accreditation, consent forms). Findings from these interviews informed [Section 5](#) and supported the final conclusions and recommendations of this report.

# References

AIDA (Asylum Information Database) (2023), *Country Report: Croatia*, [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/AIDA-HR\\_2023-Update.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/AIDA-HR_2023-Update.pdf).

AIDA (2024), *Country Report: Malta*, [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/AIDA-MT\\_2023-Update.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/AIDA-MT_2023-Update.pdf).

AIDA (2025a), *Country Report: France*, [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/AIDA-FR\\_2024-Update.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/AIDA-FR_2024-Update.pdf).

AIDA (2025b), *Country Report: Germany*, [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/AIDA-DE\\_2024-Update.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/AIDA-DE_2024-Update.pdf).

AIDA (2025c), *Country Report: Spain*, [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/AIDA-ES\\_2024Update.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/AIDA-ES_2024Update.pdf).

Alessi, E. J., Cheung, S., Kahn, S. and Yu, M. (2021), 'A scoping review of the experiences of violence and abuse among sexual and gender minority migrants across the migration trajectory', *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, Vol. 22, Issue 5, pp. 1339–1355.

Alsop, R. (2023), 'Migration and gender-based violence', in: Ali, P. and Rogers, M. M. (eds), *Gender-based Violence: A comprehensive guide*, Springer International Publishing, Cham, pp. 385–398.

Amnesty International (2024), 'EU: Vote to adopt the migration and asylum pact "a missed opportunity"', Amnesty International website, 10 April 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/eu-vote-migration-pact-missed-opportunity/>.

Araujo, J. D. O., Souza, F. M. D., Proença, R., Bastos, M. L., Trajman, A. et al. (2019), 'Prevalence of sexual violence among refugees: A systematic review', *Revista de Saúde Pública*, Vol. 53, 78.

BMFSFJ (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend) and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) (2021), *Mindeststandards zum Schutz von geflüchteten Menschen in Flüchtlingsunterkünften*, Berlin, <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/mindeststandards-zum-schutz-von-gefluechteten-menschen-in-fluechtlingsunterkuenften-117474>.

Buckley, H., Holt, S. and Whelan, S. (2007), 'Listen to me! Children's experiences of domestic violence', *Child Abuse Review: Journal of the British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect*, Vol. 16, Issue 5, pp. 296–310.

Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben (n.d.), 'Herzlich willkommen zur telefonischen Beratung in 18 Fremdsprachen – Welcome to our telephone counselling in 18 other languages', Hilfetelefon website, <https://www.hilfetelefon.de/das-hilfetelefon/beratung/beratung-in-18-sprachen/>.

Butt, M. N. (2023), 'How climate change fuels gender-based violence', Oxfam blog, 30 November 2023, <https://views-voices.oxfam.org.uk/2023/11/how-climate-change-fuels-gender-based-violence/#:~:text=These%20encompass%20the%20loss%20of,also%20force%20families%20to%20migrate>.

Cohn, C. (2013), 'Women and wars: Toward a conceptual framework', in: Cohn, C. (ed.), *Women and Wars – Contested histories, uncertain futures*, Polity Press, pp. 1–35.

- Coker, A. L., Davis, K. E., Arias, I., Desai, S., Sanderson, M. et al. (2002), 'Physical and mental health effects of intimate partner violence for men and women', *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Vol. 23, Issue 4, pp. 260–268.
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (n.d.), 'General recommendations database', OHCHR website, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw/general-recommendations>.
- Council of Europe (2011), Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Treaty Series No 210, Istanbul, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=210>.
- Council of Europe (2021), *Council of Europe action plan on protecting vulnerable persons in the context of migration and asylum in Europe (2021–2025)*, <https://edoc.coe.int/en/refugees/10241-council-of-europe-action-plan-on-protecting-vulnerable-persons-in-the-context-of-migration-and-asylum-in-europe-2021-2025.html>.
- Council of Europe (2022), *Protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls – Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17*, <https://rm.coe.int/prems-092222-gbr-2573-recommandation-cm-rec-2022-17-a5-bat-web-1-/1680a6ef9a#:~:text=Member%20States%20should%20ensure%20that,the%20same%20conditions%20as%20nationals>.
- Crimeprevention (n.d.), 'MARAC', Crimeprevention website, <https://rikoksentorjunta.fi/en/marac>.
- Croatian Law Centre (2024), 'Country report: Identification', Asylum in Europe website, 10 July 2024, <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/croatia/asylum-procedure/guarantees-vulnerable-groups/identification/>.
- Croatian Parliament (2020), Zakon o strancima NN 133/2020, [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2020\\_12\\_133\\_2520.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2020_12_133_2520.html).
- Doyle, J. and McWilliams, M. (2018), *Intimate Partner Violence in Conflict and Post-conflict Societies: Insights and lessons from Northern Ireland*, Political Settlements Research Programme, [https://pure.ulster.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/12657575/Intimate\\_Partner\\_Violence\\_in\\_Conflict\\_and\\_Post\\_Conflict\\_Societies\\_Insights\\_and\\_Lessons\\_from\\_Northern\\_Ireland.pdf](https://pure.ulster.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/12657575/Intimate_Partner_Violence_in_Conflict_and_Post_Conflict_Societies_Insights_and_Lessons_from_Northern_Ireland.pdf).
- Doyle, J. L. and McWilliams, M. (2020), 'What difference does peace make? Intimate partner violence and violent conflict in Northern Ireland', *Violence against Women*, Vol. 26, Issue 2, pp. 139–163.
- EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality) (2025), *Addressing Gender-based Violence in Migration: How to strengthen national action plans on women, peace and security across the EU*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/addressing-gender-based-violence-migration-how-strengthen-national-action-plans-women-peace-and-security-across-eu>.
- European Commission (2023), 'EMN asylum and migration glossary', European Commission website, 11 June 2025, [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary_en).
- European Commission (2020), 'A union of equality: Gender equality strategy 2020-2025', <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/redirection/document/68222>.

European Institute of Public Administration and Foundation for Access to Rights (2024), 'Vulnerability in the new pact: An empty promise to protect, or an operational concept?', EU Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy, <https://eumigrationlawblog.eu/vulnerability-in-the-new-pact-an-empty-promise-to-protect-or-an-operational-concept/>.

European Parliament (2024a), 'Exploring migration causes: Why people migrate', European Parliament website, updated 16 April 2024, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20200624ST081906/exploring-migration-causes-why-people-migrate>.

European Parliament (2024b), 'Asylum and migration in the EU: Facts and figures', European Parliament website, updated 21 November 2024, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20170629ST078630/asylum-and-migration-in-the-eu-facts-and-figures#:~:text=Over%20one%20million%20asylum%20seekers&text=The%20number%20of%20recognised%20refugees,number%20rise%20to%20around%2020%25>.

Eurostat (2025), 'Trafficking in human beings statistics', European Commission website, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Trafficking\\_in\\_human\\_beings\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Trafficking_in_human_beings_statistics).

Fanm, K. (2023), 'Tackling gender based violence in fragile contexts', World Bank website, 8 March 2023, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2023/03/07/tackling-gender-based-violence-in-fragile-contexts>.

Federal Foreign Office (2020), *Third action plan of the federal government on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council's agenda on women, peace and security – 2021–2024*, <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/aktionsplan-1325-2021-2024-en-data.pdf>.

Ferrari, G., Agnew-Davies, R., Bailey, J., Howard, L., Howarth, E. et al. (2016), 'Domestic violence and mental health: A cross-sectional survey of women seeking help from domestic violence support services', *Global Health Action*, Vol. 9, No 1, 29890.

Floriani, E. and Dudouet, L. (2023), *Wave Country Report 2023*, WAVE – Women Against Violence Europe, [https://wave-network.org/wp-content/uploads/WAVE\\_CountryReport2023.pdf](https://wave-network.org/wp-content/uploads/WAVE_CountryReport2023.pdf).

FRA (2017), *Together in the EU: Promoting the participation of migrants and their descendants*, Vienna, [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2017-together-in-the-eu\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2017-together-in-the-eu_en.pdf).

FRA, EIGE and Eurostat (2024), *EU Gender-based Violence Survey – Key results: Experiences of women in the 27 EU Member States*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, [https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/eu-gender-based-violence-survey-key-results?language\\_content\\_entity=en](https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/eu-gender-based-violence-survey-key-results?language_content_entity=en).

Gaggioli, G. (2014), 'Sexual violence in armed conflicts: A violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law', *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 96, No 894, pp. 503–538.

Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss (2024), *Qualitätsmanagement-Richtlinie*, [https://www.g-ba.de/downloads/62-492-3427/QM-RL\\_2024-01-18\\_iK-2024-04-20.pdf](https://www.g-ba.de/downloads/62-492-3427/QM-RL_2024-01-18_iK-2024-04-20.pdf).

Global Protection Cluster (2019), '16 interagency minimum standards for GBV in emergencies programming', Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility website, <https://gbvaor.net/gbviems>.

- Global Protection Cluster (2021), *Strategy 2021–2025, Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility*, <https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/publications/223/reports/report/gbv-aor-strategy-2021-2025>.
- Government of Croatia (2024), *Comprehensive National-level Review – The Republic of Croatia*, Zagreb, [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/b30\\_report\\_croatia\\_en.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/b30_report_croatia_en.pdf).
- Government of Malta (2024a), *National Report on Beijing + 25 – Malta*, UN Women, [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/b30\\_report\\_malta\\_en.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/b30_report_malta_en.pdf).
- Government of Malta (2024b), *Strategy for the reception of asylum seekers and irregular migrants*, <https://awas.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Migration-Policy-FINAL-1.pdf>.
- Government of Spain (2000), Ley Orgánica 4/2000, de 11 de enero, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España y su integración social, <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2000/01/12/pdfs/A01139-01150.pdf>.
- Government of Spain (2017), *Second national action plan on women, peace and security*, <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Spain-NAP-2017-2023-English.pdf>.
- Government of Spain (2024), Real Decreto 1155/2024, de 19 de noviembre, por el que se aprueba el Reglamento de la Ley Orgánica 4/2000, de 11 de enero, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España y su integración social, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2024-24099>.
- GRETA (Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings) (2018), *Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Spain*, <https://rm.coe.int/greta-2018-7-frg-esp-en/16808b51e0>.
- GRETA (2020), *Evaluation Report – Croatia*, <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-convention-on-ac/1680a09509>.
- GRETA (2021), *Evaluation Report – Malta*, <https://rm.coe.int/greta-evaluation-report-on-malta-3rd-evaluation-round-/1680a47d84>.
- GREVIO (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) (2019a), *GREVIO's (baseline) evaluation report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) – Finland*, Council of Europe, <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-report-on-finland/168097129d>.
- GREVIO (2019b), *GREVIO's (baseline) evaluation report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) – France*, Council of Europe, <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-inf-2019-16/168098c61a>.
- GREVIO (2020a), *GREVIO's (baseline) evaluation report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) – Belgium*, Council of Europe, <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-report-on-belgium/16809f9a2c>.

GREVIO (2020b), *GREVIO's (baseline) evaluation report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) – Malta*, Council of Europe, <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-inf-2020-17-malta-final-report-web/1680a06bd2>.

GREVIO (2020c), *GREVIO's (baseline) evaluation report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) – Spain*, Council of Europe, <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-s-report-on-spain/1680a08a9f>.

GREVIO (2022a), *GREVIO's (baseline) evaluation report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) – Germany*, Council of Europe, <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-germany-for-publication/1680a86937>.

GREVIO (2022b), *Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO's Baseline Reports*, <https://rm.coe.int/prems-010522-gbr-grevio-mid-term-horizontal-review-rev-february-2022/1680a58499>.

GREVIO (2023), *GREVIO's (baseline) evaluation report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) – Croatia*, Council of Europe, <https://rm.coe.int/baseline-evaluation-report-on-croatia/1680ac76c9>.

Hankivsky, O. (2014), *Intersectionality 101*, Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, <https://womensstudies.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/66/2021/06/Intersectionality-101.pdf>.

Haute Autorité de Santé (2020), 'Prise en charge des mutilations sexuelles féminines par les professionnels de santé de premier recours', Haute Autorité de Santé website, 6 February 2020, [https://www.has-sante.fr/jcms/p\\_3150640/fr/prise-en-charge-des-mutilations-sexuelles-feminines-par-les-professionnels-de-sante-de-premier-recours](https://www.has-sante.fr/jcms/p_3150640/fr/prise-en-charge-des-mutilations-sexuelles-feminines-par-les-professionnels-de-sante-de-premier-recours).

Human Rights Watch (2021), "'They treat you like you are worthless'" – Internal DHS reports of abuses by US border officials', Human Rights Watch website, 21 October 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/10/21/they-treat-you-you-are-worthless/internal-dhs-reports-abuses-us-border-officials>.

Human Rights Watch (2024), 'Joint statement – Civil society reaction to the adoption of the EU Directive on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence', Human Rights Watch website, 7 May 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/07/joint-statement-civil-society-reaction-adoption-eu-directive-combating-violence>.

ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) (n.d.), 'Geneva Conventions of 1949, Additional Protocols and their commentaries', International Humanitarian Law Databases, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/geneva-conventions-1949additional-protocols-and-their-commentaries>.

ICRC (2020), 'Domestic implementation of international humanitarian law prohibiting sexual violence: A checklist for states and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement', Geneva.

IGVM-IEFH (Institute for the Equality of Women and Men) (2020), *Rapport d'activités – 2020*, [https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/sites/default/files/147\\_-\\_rapport\\_annuel\\_2020\\_0.pdf](https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/sites/default/files/147_-_rapport_annuel_2020_0.pdf).

- IGVM-IEFH (2022a), *Toolkit – Recognition, detection and referral of signs of sexual violence in (Ukrainian) refugees*, Brussels, [https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/sites/default/files/media/documents/en\\_toolkit\\_beschermingoekraïense\\_vluchtelingen.pdf](https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/sites/default/files/media/documents/en_toolkit_beschermingoekraïense_vluchtelingen.pdf).
- IGVM-IEFH (2022b), 'Recommendation no. 2022-A/18 of the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men concerning the protection of Ukrainian refugees against sexual violence', [https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/en\\_advies\\_bescherming\\_oekraïense\\_vluchtelingen.pdf](https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/en_advies_bescherming_oekraïense_vluchtelingen.pdf).
- ILO (International Labour Organization) (2019), C190 – Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No 190), [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx\\_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C190](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190).
- ILO and Lloyd's Register Foundation (2022), *Experiences of Violence and Harassment at Work: A global first survey*, [https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_863095.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_863095.pdf).
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2015), 'Guidelines for integrating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian action', <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/working-group/iasc-guidelines-integrating-gender-based-violence-interventions-humanitarian-action-2015>.
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2021), 'The GBV accountability framework: All humanitarian actors have a role to play', <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2021-05/Gender-Based%20Violence%20Accountability%20Framework%20.pdf>.
- International Development Law Organization (2022), *Survivor-centred Justice for Gender-based Violence in Complex Situations*, Rome.
- IOM (International Organization for Migration) (2017), *Human Trafficking through the Central Mediterranean Route: Data, stories and information collected by the International Organization for Migration*, <https://briguglio.asgi.it/immigrazione-e-asilo/2017/ottobre/rapp-oim-tratta-medit-centrale.pdf>.
- IOM (2018), 'Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration', IOM website, <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>.
- IOM (2019), *Glossary on Migration*, Geneva, [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml\\_34\\_glossary.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf).
- IOM (2020), *Training manual on identification and communication with migrant victims of sexual and gender-based violence*, Budapest, <https://belgium.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1286/files/documents/PROTECT-Training-EN.pdf>.
- IOM (2024), *Operating in Crisis – 2023 annual report*, Geneva, <https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl2616/files/documents/2024-11/operating-in-crisis-2023-annual-report.pdf>.
- IOM Belgium and Luxembourg (n.d.), 'PROTECT', IOM Belgium and Luxembourg website, <https://belgium.iom.int/protect>.
- IRC (International Rescue Committee) (2019), *Where Is the Money? How the humanitarian system is failing in its commitments to end violence against women and girls*, New York, <https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2021-09/whereisthemoneyfinalfinal.pdf>.

- Keygnaert, I., Dialmy, A., Manço, A., Keygnaert, J., Vettenburg, N. et al. (2014), 'Sexual violence and sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco: A community-based participatory assessment using respondent driven sampling', *Globalization and Health*, Vol. 10, No 32, pp. 1–16.
- Keygnaert, I., Vettenburg, N. and Temmerman, M. (2015), 'Hidden violence is silent rape: Sexual and gender-based violence in refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants in Belgium and the Netherlands', *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, Vol. 14, Issue 5, pp. 505–520.
- Kingdom of Belgium (2022), 'Belgium presents a fourth national action plan "Women, peace and security" (2022–2026) for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325', government website, 25 February 2022, <https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/belgium-presents-fourth-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security-2022-2026-implementation-un>.
- McAuliffe, M. and Oucho, L. A. (eds) (2024), *World Migration Report 2024*, IOM, Geneva, <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2024>.
- Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration (n.d.), 'Humanitarian assistance', government website, <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/en/web/migraciones/atencion-humanitaria>.
- Myrntinen, H. (2023), *Men, Masculinities and Humanitarian Settings: A mapping of the state of research and practice-based evidence*, UN Women, <https://reliefweb.int/node/3989825>.
- OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) (2021), *Lethal Disregard – Search and rescue and the protection of migrants in the central Mediterranean Sea*, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Migration/OHCHR-thematic-report-SAR-protection-at-sea.pdf>.
- Oliveira, C., Keygnaert, I., Oliveira Martins, M. D. R. and Dias, S. (2018), 'Assessing reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence, causes and preventive strategies, in European asylum reception facilities', *Globalization and Health*, Vol. 14, pp. 1–12.
- OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) (2024), 'OSCE and the Spanish National Police train Mediterranean border security officers on gendered aspects of cross-border crimes', OSCE website, 1 November 2024, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/579556>.
- Pankhurst, D. (2008), 'The gendered impact of peace', in: Pugh, M., Cooper, N. and Turner, M. (eds), *Whose Peace? Critical perspectives on the political economy of peacebuilding*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 30–46.
- Phillimore, J., Block, K., Bradby, H., Ozcurumez, S. and Papoutsis, A. (2023), 'Forced migration, sexual and gender-based violence and integration: Effects, risks and protective factors', *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Vol. 24, 2, pp. 715–745.
- Robillard, C., McLaughlin, J., Cole, D. C., Vasilevska, B. and Gendron, R. (2018), "'Caught in the same webs" – Service providers' insights on gender-based and structural violence among female temporary foreign workers in Canada', *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Vol. 19, pp. 583–606.
- Showalter, K. (2016), 'Women's employment and domestic violence: A review of the literature', *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, Vol. 31, pp. 37–47.
- Stop Violence (n.d.), 'Women's Rights Foundation', Stop Violence website, <https://www.stopviolence.gov.mt/womens-rights-foundation-2/>.

- Swaine, A. (2015), 'Beyond strategic rape and between the public and private: Violence against women in armed conflict', *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No 3, pp. 755–786.
- Tan, S. E. and Kuschminder, K. (2022), 'Migrant experiences of sexual and gender based violence: A critical interpretative synthesis', *Globalization and Health*, Vol. 18, No 1, 68.
- UNFPA (UN Population Fund) (2019), *The inter-agency minimum standards for gender-based violence in emergencies programming*, Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility, <https://www.unfpa.org/minimum-standards>.
- UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) (1979), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979/81) New York, 18 December 1979, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>.
- UNGA (1993), Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/eliminationvaw.pdf>.
- UNGA (2019), Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2018, A/RES/73/195, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/73/195>.
- UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees), Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 28 July 1951, 189 UNTS 137, as amended by the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, Jan. 31, 1967, 606 UNTS 267, <https://www.unhcr.org/media/1951-refugee-convention-and-1967-protocol-relating-status-refugees>.
- United Nations OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) (2021), 'Global humanitarian overview', Humanitarian Action website, 1 December 2020, <https://2021.gho.unocha.org/global-trends/gender-and-gender-based-violence-humanitarian-action/>.
- United Nations Support Mission in Libya and OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) (2018), *Desperate and Dangerous: Report on the human rights situation of migrants and refugees in Libya*, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/LY/LibyaMigrationReport.pdf>.
- UN Women (2021), 'From evidence to action: Tackling gender-based violence against migrant women and girls', <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/10/policy-brief-from-evidence-to-action-tackling-gbv-against-migrant-women-and-girls>.
- van Daalen, K. R., Kallesøe, S. S., Davey, F., Dada, S., Jung, L. et al. (2022), 'Extreme events and gender-based violence: A mixed-methods systematic review', *Lancet Planetary Health*, Vol. 6, Issue 6, e504–e523.
- WHO Multi-Country Study Team, Devries, K., Watts, C., Yoshihama, M., Kiss, L. et al. (2011), 'Violence against women is strongly associated with suicide attempts: Evidence from the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women', *Social Science & Medicine*, Vol. 73, Issue 1, pp. 79–86.
- Women for Women France (2023), 'The national domestic abuse and sexual violence support line – 3919 – is now available in 185 languages', Women for Women France website, 15 December 2023, <https://www.womenforwomenfrance.org/en/about-us/news/>

[the-national-domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence-support-line-3919-is-now-available-in-185-languages?utm\\_source.](#)

Women's Refugee Commission (2019), *'More Than One Million Pains': Sexual violence against men and boys on the Central Mediterranean route to Italy*, New York, <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/research-resources/more-than-one-million-pains-sexual-violence-against-men-and-boys-on-the-central-mediterranean-route-to-italy/>.

## GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE EU

### In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you online ([european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/meet-us\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/meet-us_en)).

### On the phone or in writing

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

- by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
- at the following standard number: +32 22999696,
- via the following form: [european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/write-us\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/write-us_en).

## FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

### Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website ([europa.eu](https://europa.eu)).

### EU publications

You can view or order EU publications at [op.europa.eu/en/publications](https://op.europa.eu/en/publications). Multiple copies of free publications can be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local documentation centre ([european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/meet-us\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/meet-us_en)).

### EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1951 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex ([eur-lex.europa.eu](https://eur-lex.europa.eu)).

### Open data from the EU

The portal [data.europa.eu](https://data.europa.eu) provides access to open datasets from the EU institutions, bodies and agencies. These can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes. The portal also provides access to a wealth of datasets from European countries.



European Institute for  
Gender Equality



Publications Office  
of the European Union

[eige.europa.eu](http://eige.europa.eu)