

**Statement by Germany on the investigation and prosecution of
gender-related killings of women and girls**

Germany attaches great importance to combating violence against women and takes relevant measures at various levels.

1.

Femicide (understood as the killing of women simply because of their gender and to which there is little or no state reaction) is not a phenomenon which can be found in Germany. In Germany, homicide in general is subject to criminal punishment according to the general provisions of section 211 (murder) and section 212 (manslaughter) of the German Criminal Code (*Strafgesetzbuch*, StGB). Murder is punished with life imprisonment. The offence of homicide carries a penalty of five to fifteen years' imprisonment. This sentencing range is considered sufficient for cases of femicide as well. This is why neither best practices nor statistical data pertaining specifically to femicide are available.

2.

Violence against women in general, and domestic violence in particular, can manifest themselves in the form of various offences, such as bodily harm, sexual offences or stalking. Forty percent of women in Germany have at some point become victims of physical or sexual violence. Twenty-five percent of women have suffered physical or sexual violence by their partners at least once in their lives. Thirteen percent have been a victim of sexual violence.

3.

Even though a majority of the female population is aware of the existence of counselling and assistance services designed to protect women against violence, only about 20 percent of women make use of such services. This is why, in 2013, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth launched a toll-free multilingual nationwide telephone hotline staffed by counsellors and advisers who are available around the clock. If they wish, those seeking help can be referred to local institutions providing the required assistance. The telephone hotline offers counselling and advice on all forms of violence

against women. Not only the affected women, but also their relatives, friends, other people from their social environment and practitioners can use the telephone hotline. The internet platform www.hilfetelefon.de also offers women safe, anonymous and universally accessible online contact with hotline staff. The website also provides access to sign languages interpreters.

4.

The Second Action Plan of the Federal Government to Combat Violence against Women is an overall concept for tackling the current challenges in the protection of women against violence and brings together all the measures and programmes of the Federal Government in this field. The plan is aimed at making the fight against violence more effective and at improving the protection afforded to the affected women. The Action Plan brings together over 130 Federal Government measures and programmes in the form of prevention, federal legislation, assistance systems to support and counsel women affected by violence, national networking of the support system, cooperation between State institutions and non-governmental support services, work with offenders, qualification and awareness-raising, research, cooperation at the European and international levels, and support measures for women in foreign countries. The Action Plan pays particular attention to the situation of women with a migrant background and women with disabilities, as well as focusing on medical care.

It provides an overall concept which includes the areas of responsibility of the Federal *Länder* and local authorities. This includes police and judicial practice as well as the establishment and preservation of support services and institutions providing assistance to women affected by violence. The implementation of the concept is therefore focussed on ensuring targeted cooperation between the Federation, *Länder*, local authorities and non-governmental organisations. This cooperation is effected in the Federation-*Länder* Working Groups on Domestic Violence and Trafficking in Women, which function as steering committees to supervise the implementation of the Action Plan.

5.

The Council of Europe Convention of 11 May 2011 on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence is aimed at protecting women against all forms of violence and at preventing, punishing and ending all forms of domestic violence.

It provides a comprehensive framework for political and legal measures to protect all victims of violence against women and domestic violence, and to prosecute the offenders. In order to ensure effective implementation of its provisions by the State parties, the Convention establishes an efficient and independent monitoring mechanism. Germany signed the Convention on the day it was opened for signature.