



# **END FGM** EUROPEAN NETWORK

## Strategic plan 2015-2017

Towards a strong and sustainable  
European movement to end FGM





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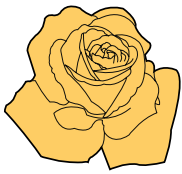
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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a global human rights violation which exists in Europe. Even though it affects 100-140 million women and girls worldwide, until recently it was not adequately recognised as a European Union policy concern. The voices of those affected by the practice were rarely heard. Many European countries were blind to the issue of FGM, and were failing to provide the necessary measures to effectively address this problem, which continues to affect the daily lives of so many women and girls.

The 2009-2014 End FGM European Campaign, led by Amnesty International in partnership with fifteen national NGOs from across Europe, set out to place FGM on the European agenda and to gain the attention of decision and policy makers. END FGM called on them to adopt a comprehensive approach to tackling FGM in Europe and beyond. Concerted advocacy and campaigning efforts led to FGM finally being recognised as a neglected problem that needs to be addressed holistically across Europe.



Girls on top of the World - a world free from FGM  
(Photo: Giuseppe Matese)

Six years of END FGM partnership brought many achievements. The European Commission released its first ever action plan towards the elimination of FGM in 2013. European governments and the European Parliament formally supported this action plan and committed to engage further in preventing the practice and protecting affected women and girls. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating all forms of violence against women, which entered into force in August 2014, is the first treaty to recognise that

FGM exists in Europe. It provides a framework for action which shall guide the work of decision and policy makers, NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs).

There is no doubt that the prevention of FGM is now on the European agenda. But for how long? Preventing FGM can only be achieved by transforming attitudes, and this takes time. We need sustainable engagement from decision makers to end this human rights violation. To ensure that commitments are turned into concrete action, we created the new End FGM European Network.

When the End FGM campaign ended in 2014, its national partners recognised that there was still a lot to do to guarantee the effective implementation of a holistic approach to ending FGM. Eleven organisations from across Europe decided to form the End FGM European Network and continue the work of the campaign. We have come together, united in our vision, to create a strong and sustainable European movement to end FGM.

This strategic document offers our approach as a network for the next three years. It is our plan to establish a world where those affected by FGM in Europe and beyond are empowered and girls live a life free from FGM and all other forms of gender-based violence.

**Naana Otoo-Oyortey**

President of the End FGM European Network Board  
Director of FORWARD UK





# WHO WE ARE?

The End FGM European Network (END FGM) is a European umbrella organisation set up by eleven national NGOs to ensure sustainable European action to end FGM.



## VISION

A world where women and girls are empowered and free from all forms of gender-based violence (GBV), in particular female genital mutilation, where their voices are heard, where they can enjoy their rights and make informed choices about their lives.



## MISSION

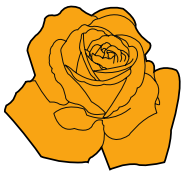
The Network creates an enabling environment for coordinated and comprehensive action by European decision-makers to end FGM and other forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG). The Network facilitates the synergy of diverse organisations and the active participation of rights holders and affected communities. The Network provides space where member organisations can share their experience and diverse skills.



# VALUES

END FGM places the following principles at the core of its work:

- ▶ Respect and promotion of human rights and gender equality
- ▶ Active participation of rights holders in decision-making and activities
- ▶ Use and promotion of empowering language framed in human rights terminology
- ▶ Ownership by member organisations
- ▶ Accountability, integrity, transparency and professionalism in all its work
- ▶ Solidarity between organisations and respect for staff, members, individuals and allies



# ADDED VALUE OF THE END FGM EUROPEAN NETWORK

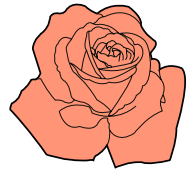


The End FGM European Network offers a space to **women and girls affected by FGM to engage directly with European decision makers**. Their experiences and the **expertise of member organisations** define and guide the Network's calls for European political action to end FGM.

The development of a European transnational network of organisations feeds into and complements the development of the platform working against FGM worldwide. Already, the platform created by the Network has facilitated cross-border cooperation and engagement in the international mobilisation on FGM. In addition, the Network provides a space for knowledge and skills sharing amongst actors involved in activities towards ending FGM, which can benefit the global movement to end FGM.



# FGM IS AN ISSUE FOR EUROPE



FGM can take diverse forms and have different effects on girls and women. In any case it entails the cutting, stitching or removal of part or all of the female external genital organs for non-therapeutic reasons. The mutilation of healthy body parts has a detrimental impact on the health and well being of women and girls. In addition, it constitutes a violation of women and girl's human rights.

**Each year, 180,000 girls and women in Europe are estimated to be at risk of FGM.** However, research<sup>1</sup> has shown that there are still many challenges in Europe that need to be addressed in order to develop adequate national and European policies on FGM:

- ▶ The lack of data and research to properly determine the prevalence of FGM and to assess related needs for state policies and services in Europe;
- ▶ The need to take preventive measures and to evaluate their impact to ensure they are organised in a sustainable way;

**Europe is home to an estimated 500,000 women and girls living with the lifelong consequences of FGM.**

1. EIGE (2013), Female genital mutilation in the European Union and Croatia, European Union, Belgium, available at [http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EIGE-Report-FGM-in-the-EU-and-Croatia\\_0.pdf](http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EIGE-Report-FGM-in-the-EU-and-Croatia_0.pdf); Leye E. (2008), Female genital mutilation, A study of health services and legislation in some countries of the European Union, p.175; UNHCR (2013), Too much pain: female genital mutilation & asylum in the European Union - A statistical overview, available at [www.unhcr.org/531880249.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/531880249.pdf); see also its update published in March 2014, available at [www.unhcr.org/53187f379.html](http://www.unhcr.org/53187f379.html)

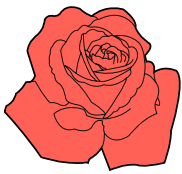
- ▶ The need to enhance the capacity of professionals likely to be in contact with women and girls living with or at risk of FGM to enhance their protection (e.g. professionals from the health, social, education, asylum and justice sector, etc.);
- ▶ A common approach to the implementation of existing policies on international protection and, where necessary, the development of new European policies that are in line with international standards and guidelines to better protect those seeking asylum on the grounds of FGM and affected women and girls within the asylum system;
- ▶ The need to remove obstacles to the prosecution of FGM cases while taking into account the best interest of the child;
- ▶ The lack of a systematic approach to the provision of services relating to FGM and the need for culturally sensitive services;
- ▶ Better involvement of affected communities and the development of partnerships between relevant stakeholders, including CSOs, governments and relevant professionals.

Thanks to regional and national mobilisations, there is a growing awareness of the problem in Europe compared to previous years, when many member states in Europe perceived that FGM was not common or not practised at all in their country. It is foreseen that the recent developments at the European Union (EU) level - under the forms of the European Commission Communication on the elimination of FGM<sup>2</sup> as endorsed by the European Parliament<sup>3</sup> and the Council of EU<sup>4</sup> (hereafter the EU Action Plan) - and the Council of Europe - Istanbul Convention<sup>5</sup> - as well as adoption of the United Nations (UN) Resolution on eliminating FGM<sup>6</sup> will give stronger impetus to this trend. They all contribute strongly to putting an end to this harmful practice in Europe and beyond.

The issue of FGM affects, and is linked to, a number of different issues addressed by EU policies affecting girls and women in Europe and other parts of the world. FGM impacts women and girls' equality and rights. In the EU's internal policy-making, FGM is recognised as a form of violence against women and girls and a violation of children's rights. In addition, FGM impacts on the development agenda; the EU and its member states being the biggest aid donors in the world, they need to be closely associated with the global movement to curb this practice. Finally, the EU member states have obligations to offer better protection to refugee and asylum seekers at risk of, or living with, FGM.

One of the key objectives of the Network is to ensure that FGM remains high on the political agenda of the EU and its member states so that concrete action to end FGM is taken. The Network will build on the successes of the Amnesty International's END FGM European Campaign, its branding and reputation recognised by EU institutions and the Council of Europe.

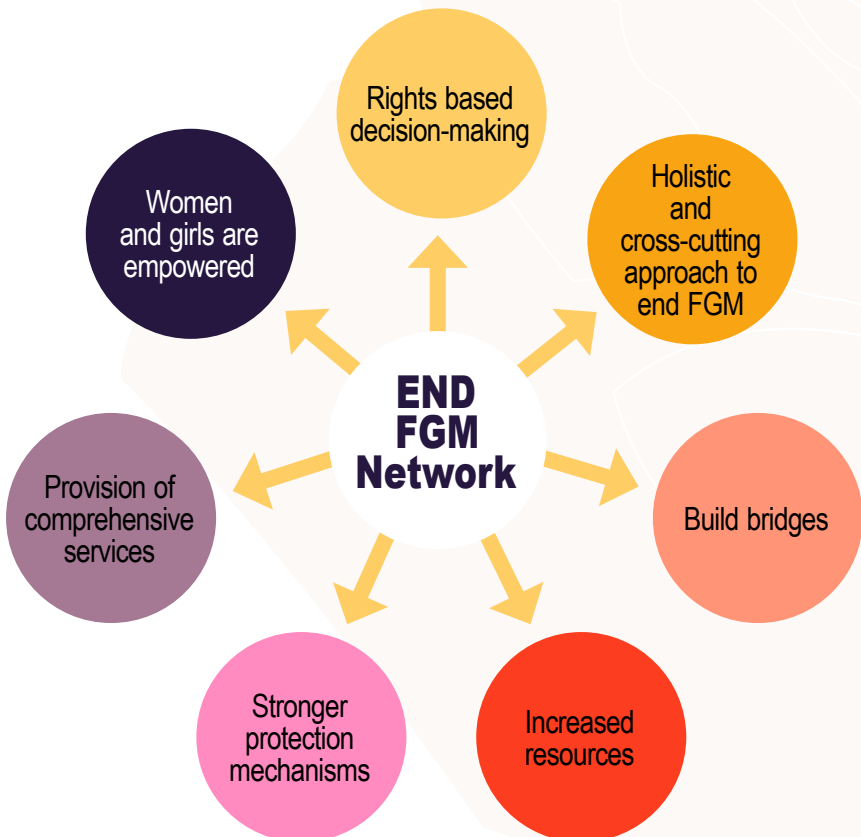
2. European Commission (2013), Communication: Towards the elimination of female genital mutilation, COM(2013) 833
3. European Parliament (2014), Resolution of 6 February 2014 on the Commission communication entitled 'Towards the elimination of female genital mutilation' (2014/2511(RSP))
4. Council of the European Union, Conclusions on Preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls, including female genital mutilation, Justice and Home Affairs meeting, Luxembourg, 5 and 6 June 2014
5. Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, CETS No.: 210
6. UN General Assembly, Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly , 5 March 2013, A/RES/67/146



# WHAT CHANGES DO WE WANT TO SEE?

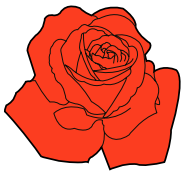
Our theory of change details the changes we want to see and the steps we will take to make this happen. A graphic detailing these steps can be found in annex 2.

## ▼ The changes we want to see



## The Network will work towards the following middle and long term changes:

- **Rights-based decision-making** is achieved as European decision makers become aware of their human rights obligations;
- The EU institutions and states take a **holistic and cross-cutting approach** to end FGM with a long term vision. They implement the commitments taken at the EU level, the EU directives on asylum and victims' rights and the Istanbul Convention;
- **Build bridges** for better coordination between actors in and outside Europe to respond to the cross-border nature of the practice and to share good practices;
- **Increased resources** are devoted to prevention programs on FGM in affected communities;
- Stronger **protection mechanisms** are developed in Europe for women and girls at risk of FGM including for those seeking asylum;
- **Provision of comprehensive services** for women and girls at risk or living with FGM as professionals in contact with them are well trained and equipped;
- Women and girls are **empowered** and aware of their rights, they are mobilised and agents of change and their experience is reflected in decision making.



# WHAT STRATEGIES DO WE USE?

## ▼ Our strategies to INFLUENCE

Advocate for FGM on EU and national agenda and monitor implementation of obligations

Follow a human rights based approach

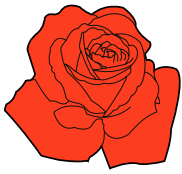
Raise awareness and mobilise

Provide expertise, promising practices and tools

Encourage positive language and empowerment

## The Network will use the following strategies to influence our targets:

- **Advocate** towards the EU institutions and decision-makers for comprehensive and resourced action on FGM and VAWG in Europe and beyond. The Network will **monitor** the implementation of states' obligations contained in the UN Resolution on FGM, the Istanbul Convention and EU commitments on FGM;
- Provide technical as well as on the ground **expertise through its members** and facilitate **the exchange of good and promising practices** to develop innovative approaches and build bridges between relevant actors to end FGM in Europe and beyond. Develop strategic partnership and alliances with CSOs working in the human rights and gender equality fields;
- Ensure that **communication** on FGM promotes a human rights-based approach, uses empowering and non-stigmatising language and seeks the same from our target audience;
- Develop a targeted and strategic communication and contribute to the **flow of information** between the EU institutions and the national level. In particular, ensure that decision-makers are aware of the situation on the ground in relation to FGM and VAWG;
- **Raise awareness** of violation of human rights related to FGM and **mobilise** EU residents and public at critical times to gather commitment to act.



# WHAT STRATEGIES DO WE USE?

## ▼ Our strategies for DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

Build a structured and sustainable Network

Build capacity of member organisations

Monitor, evaluate and share learning

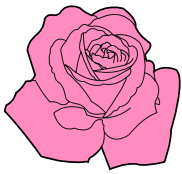
Increase visibility and recognisable branding

Coordinate common strategies



## The Network will use the following strategies to ensure its development and growth:

- Develop the **organisational capacity** of the Network, particular attention will be placed in ensuring that our structures are based on good governance principles and that our network is financially sustainable;
- Ensure **strong branding and visibility** of the Network with the aim of becoming a recognised key actor on the European and international scenes;
- Develop the **capacity of member organisations** working on FGM in Europe through training and tools and contribute to a stronger worldwide movement;
- Coordinate our work and develop **common strategies** for integrated action and better impact;
- **Monitor and evaluate** own impact and share learning with members and allies.



# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## 1 ENSURE A EUROPEAN, COORDINATED AND HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO END FGM

### Cross cutting objectives

These objectives are enablers to ensure that the Network has access to decision makers and that they are aware of the human rights based approach to end FGM promoted by the Network.

### Objective 1: Raise awareness of FGM and VAWG in Europe

To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Identify champions and supporters in the EU Institutions and regularly engage with them through advocacy and communication tools;
- ▶ Engage with rotating EU Presidencies and increase links with national governments;
- ▶ Use opportunities to mobilise activists and the general public;
- ▶ Strengthen & develop partnerships with CSOs and international organisations such as UN agencies and the Council of Europe;

- ▶ Monitor the use of language on FGM and encourage decision-makers to use empowering, human rights-based language and refrain from use of stigmatising wording.

## Objective 2: Increase understanding of FGM in the EU

To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Advocate for and support data collection on FGM (quantitative and qualitative);
- ▶ Collaborate with experts (e.g. academics, networks of professionals), UN agencies and CSOs;
- ▶ Advocate for inclusion of FGM in broader policy framework (in the areas of gender equality, justice and home affairs, children's rights, development cooperation, external action);
- ▶ Develop tool for collection and dissemination of promising practices in collaboration with member organisations;
- ▶ Contribute to a better pool of knowledge on FGM in Europe;
- ▶ Provide a platform for girls, women and communities affected by the practice of FGM.

“Ending FGM is now a priority for Europe and the EU institutions have adopted an action plan to work towards its elimination. Our role as members of the European Parliament is to monitor and guarantee that this plan is adequately implemented, so that FGM can become a practice of the past.”



**Iratxe García Pérez**  
Member of the European Parliament  
Chair of Women's Rights and Gender  
Equality Committee

## Specific objectives

These objectives reflect the Network's theory of change and are steps towards our ultimate changes.

### Objective 3: Increase prevention and empowerment of women, girls and communities

To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Raise awareness on prevention as a human rights obligation under international law;
- ▶ Advocate for long-term action involving affected women and communities and for links with countries of origin;
- ▶ Provide a platform for rights-holders to access decision makers and enable their mobilisation;
- ▶ Collect and share promising practices in collaboration with member organisations.



**Johanna Nelles**

Head of Violence against Women  
Unit, Directorate General of  
Democracy, Council of Europe

“ The Istanbul Convention is the first treaty to recognise that FGM exists in Europe and that it needs to be systematically addressed. Engaging with affected communities, professionals and civil society organisations is one of the premises of this treaty. It contains a range of obligations for states parties, and its implementation will be monitored by the Council of Europe which will help bring an end to FGM in Europe. ”

## Objective 4: Stronger protection mechanisms and better provision of comprehensive services

To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Promote better knowledge and understanding of FGM by professionals;
- ▶ Advocate for the development and implementation of international and EU standards (Istanbul Convention, EU Action Plan, Victims Rights Directive);
- ▶ Collect and share promising practices in collaboration with member organisations;
- ▶ Encourage and support the development of research in this area;
- ▶ Ensure and contribute to the implementation of the EU Action Plan.

“ Although there is a growing awareness of the issue of FGM in Europe, professionals likely to be in contact with affected women or girls at risk feel that they need more support. This is why it is vital that they receive the proper training and are equipped to provide the comprehensive and holistic services needed. Working closely with specialist civil society organisations should also help them to better understand the issues affecting those who have undergone or at risk of FGM. ”



**Fabienne Richard**  
Midwife  
Director of GAMS Belgium

## Objective 5: Better protection for asylum seekers affected by FGM

To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Develop and promote tools for the implementation of EU and international obligations on international protection.
- ▶ Ensure and contribute to the implementation of the EU Action Plan in collaboration with EU and national networks/experts on asylum;
- ▶ Advocate to ensure professionals are equipped to adequately address the issue in their practice when confronted with affected communities;
- ▶ Collect and share promising practices in collaboration with member organisations;
- ▶ Communicate on the issue at key moments.



**Volker Turk**  
UNHCR Director of the Division for  
International Protection  
*Photo: UNHCR/Jean-Marc Ferré*

“UNHCR considers FGM as a form of persecution, which involves a number of human rights violations, such as right to life, right to bodily integrity, freedom of choice and right to health. So it involves a number of violations of international human rights law. Women and girls around the world are recognised as refugees on the basis of the claim that they may be subjected to FGM.”



## **Objective 6:** Initiate discussions on the best interest of the child in prosecution

To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Promote and explain the distinction between measures of prevention, protection and prosecution;
- ▶ Advocate and support the implementation of the EU commitments on FGM and international standards;
- ▶ Collect and share promising practices in collaboration with member organisations.

## 2 BUILD BRIDGES BETWEEN RELEVANT ACTORS TO END FGM

By building bridges we understand the creation of synergies to develop, share and coordinate actions, policies and legal frameworks to end FGM in countries of destination and of origin.

### Objective 7: Coordination of action in Europe and beyond

To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Advocate for and support the implementation of the EU Action plan and UN Resolution on the elimination of FGM;
- ▶ Monitor and advocate for the integration of FGM in EU external action and development cooperation;
- ▶ Encourage the EU to take position in various platforms and UN high level meetings and assemblies;
- ▶ Position the Network as the European focal point in the global movement to end FGM.



**Aissatou Diallo**  
Activist  
FGM survivor

“ I began working to end FGM in Guinea which I fled to protect my daughters. When I received protection in Belgium, I decided to continue my combat from Europe. Today, I see my role as that of a relay, at the personal and political level, by engaging with



# 3

## CREATE A STRONG EUROPEAN MOVEMENT TO END FGM

The Network facilitates a space for organisations to develop capacity, learn from one another, share resources and develop common strategies to end FGM in Europe and beyond.

### Objective 8: Coordination and support for member organisations

To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Facilitate a space for learning and exchange of good practices;
- ▶ Strengthen and consolidate the capacity of member organisations to advocate and communicate on FGM;
- ▶ Support the dissemination of findings of transnational projects;
- ▶ Facilitate the development of joint projects;
- ▶ Map skill set and training needs amongst the Network's members.

members of my community and with decision makers at European level. Coming from Guinea, I am particularly sensitive to actions linking the communities in the countries of origin and host countries. ”



## Objective 9: Development of the Network

To achieve this we will:

- ▶ Develop the effective branding and visibility of the Network at EU and international level;
- ▶ Set up accountability mechanisms and democratic decision-making bodies with transparent processes in line with best practices in good governance procedures;
- ▶ Diversify the mobilisation of resources to ensure the financial sustainability of the Network;
- ▶ Set up a secretariat and hire professional staff;
- ▶ Monitor and evaluate impact and ensure that learning is recorded and shared throughout the Network and with our allies;
- ▶ Develop a membership growth strategy to ensure European mobilisation.

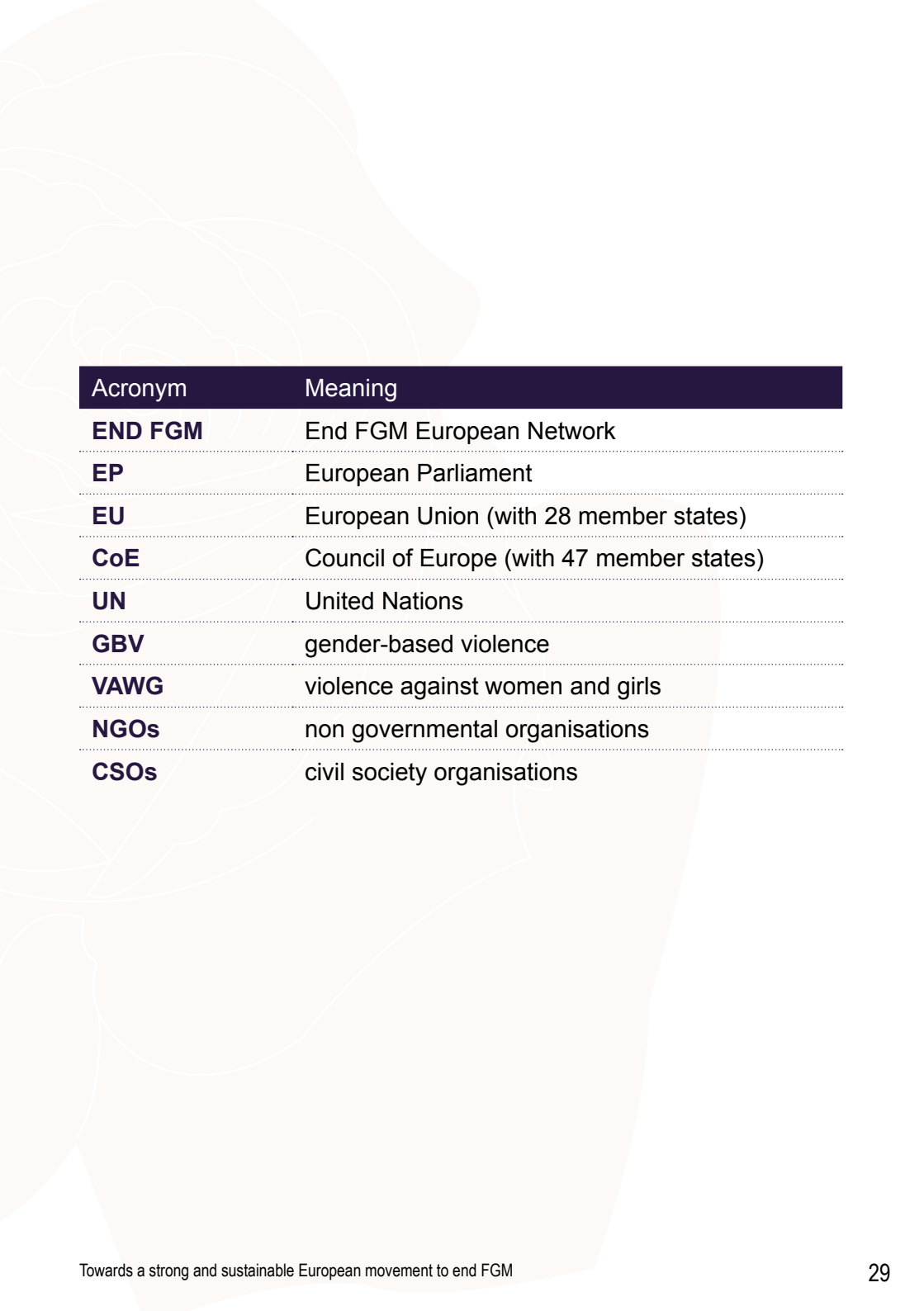




# ANNEXES

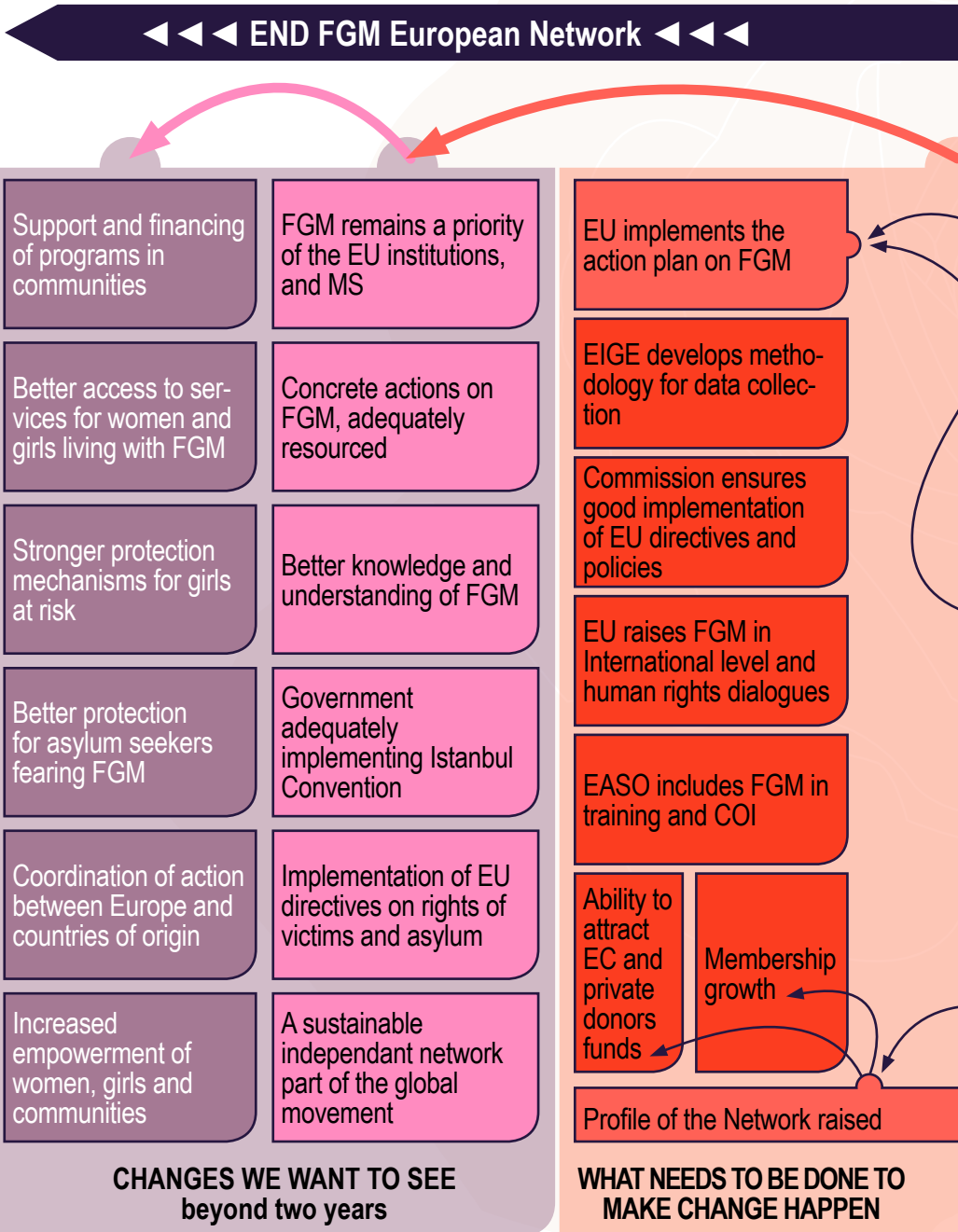
## 1. TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

Terminology	Definition
<b>FGM</b>	Female genital mutilation is the terminology used in international law, by EU institutions and by the Network in its advocacy and communication. When engaging with communities and rights holders we advise to use wording that they use and understand.
<b>Rights holders</b>	People (individuals and groups) whose human rights have been or are at risk of being violated, upon whom a decision or process may impact.
<b>Duty-bearers</b>	State and non-state actors with legal obligations to respect, protect and fulfil individuals and groups' human rights.
<b>Empowerment</b>	Aims towards redressing the power imbalance. A process through which rights holders develop the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and confidence they need to know their rights and to influence decisions and processes that affect their rights.
<b>Affected communities</b>	This wording includes women, girls, men, boys, religious and community leaders from communities where FGM is prevalent. The terminology practicing communities is sometimes used to refer to this population but the Network prefers to refer to affected communities.

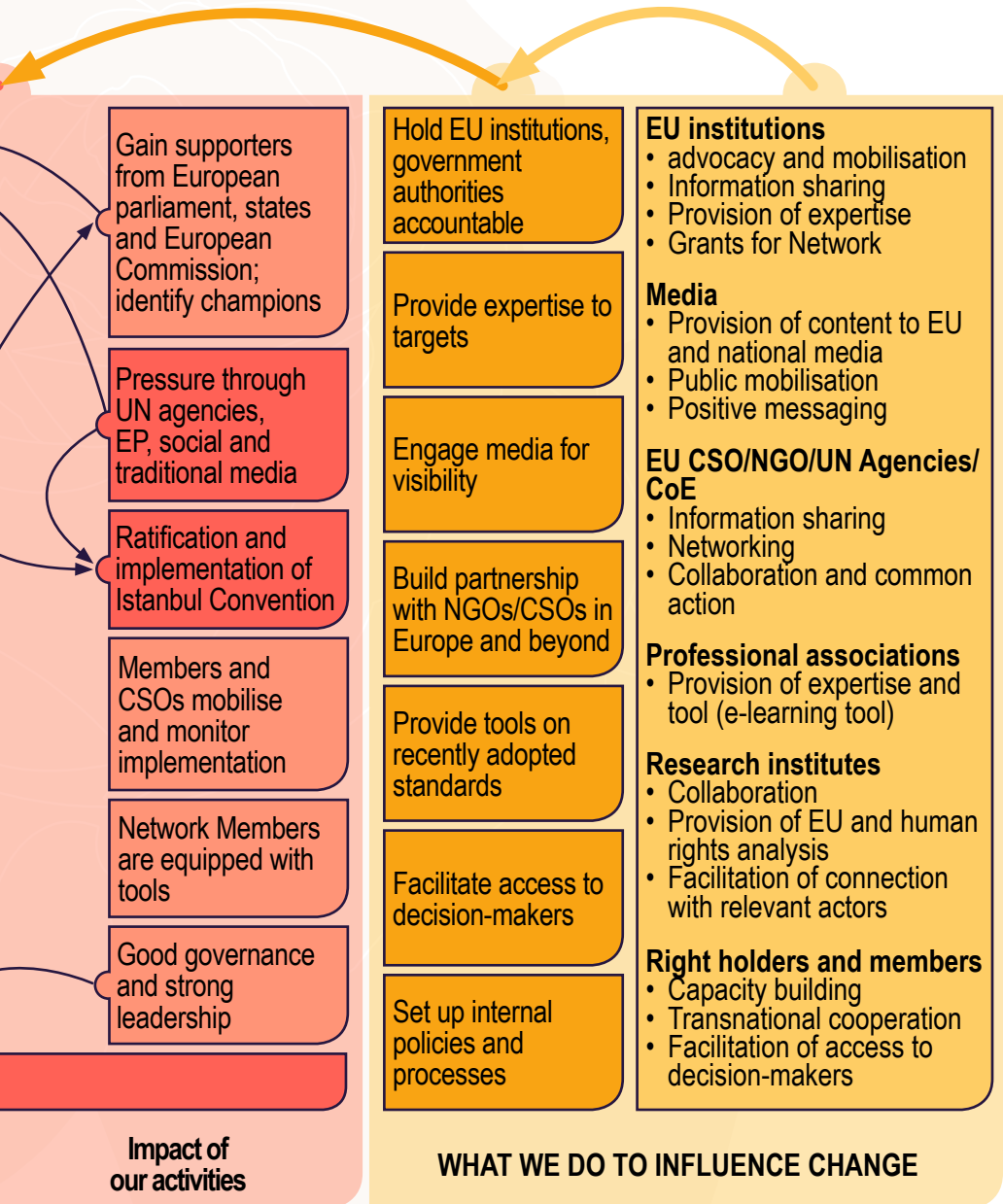


Acronym	Meaning
<b>END FGM</b>	End FGM European Network
<b>EP</b>	European Parliament
<b>EU</b>	European Union (with 28 member states)
<b>CoE</b>	Council of Europe (with 47 member states)
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>VAWG</b>	violence against women and girls
<b>NGOs</b>	non governmental organisations
<b>CSOs</b>	civil society organisations

## 2. THEORY OF CHANGE



## Theory of change



### 3. EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO END FGM ADOPTED BETWEEN 2009 AND 2014

#### European Parliament (EP) resolutions on FGM

★ **EP resolution of 24 March 2009 Combating female genital mutilation in the EU**

This resolution reiterates previous resolutions and calls on the EU institutions and Member States to take certain steps towards ending FGM in the EU and in third countries. It calls for “an overall strategy and action plans aimed at banishing FGM from the EU and, to that end, to provide the means required – in the form of laws and administrative provisions, prevention systems, and education and social measures, and in particular, wide dissemination of information regarding the existing protection mechanisms available to vulnerable groups – to enable real and potential victims to be properly protected” (point 2).

★ **EP resolution of 14 June 2012 Female Genital Mutilation**

The European Parliament passed a resolution calling for an end to FGM in Europe and abroad through prevention, protection measures and legislation. The Parliament reminded the European Commission of its commitment to develop a strategy to combat violence against women, including FGM. At the hearing before the vote on the resolution, the European Commission confirmed continued funding of transnational projects to raise awareness.

★ **EP Resolution of 6 February 2014 Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation**

This resolution urges the Commission and Member States to implement the Commission’s Communication on the elimination of FGM and to make it a priority to end violence against women and girls and, through the allocation of appropriate financial resources, to support targeted and innovative programmes both within the EU and in third countries.



## Commission's actions

### Commissioners' statements

- ★ On 6 February 2011, the **International Day of Zero Tolerance of female genital mutilation** (FGM), Commissioner Viviane Reding, the Vice President of the European Commission and High Representative Catherine Ashton made a short statement to reaffirm the EU's commitment to end FGM and gender-based violence in the EU and in its external relations.
  
- ★ On the tenth anniversary of **the International Day of Zero Tolerance to FGM on 6 February 2013, six EU Commissioners issued a joint statement** confirming the EU's commitment to end FGM and take action that will focus on **prevention**. They highlighted the need for raising awareness and improving support services. They launched a consultation to develop EU measures to combat the practice in Europe and abroad which led to the adoption of a Communication on FGM containing a plan of action.
  
- ★ **European Institute for Gender Equality 's Mapping study on FGM**  
In 2011, the Commission requested the European Institute for Gender Equality to carry out a study mapping the FGM situation in Europe which was published in March 2013.<sup>7</sup> END FGM was actively involved in gathering resources and providing expertise for the study. The Commission's current action is based on the study's findings and recommendations.
  
- ★ **The European Commission released a Communication 'Towards the elimination of female genital mutilation' on the International day of elimination of violence against women**<sup>8</sup> (25 November 2013). It calls for more data in Europe, better training of health and legal professionals, funding for civil society, exchange of good practices within the EU and much more. In its external relations, the EU is urged to raise the issue of FGM in annual dialogues and in its work with the African Union.

7. EIGE, Female Genital Mutilation in the EU and Croatia-report (2013) available at <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/female-genital-mutilation-in-the-european-union-and-croatia-report>

8. European Commission (2013) , Communication: Towards the elimination of female genital mutilation, COM(2013) 833 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender\\_based\\_violence/131125\\_fgm\\_communication\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_based_violence/131125_fgm_communication_en.pdf)

## Council Conclusions

### ★ **Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council Conclusions on Combating Violence Against Women 6 December 2012<sup>9</sup>**

The EU Council led by Cyprus adopted conclusions recommending the European Parliament, the European Commission and member states to consider adoption of an EU strategy on violence against women and signing and ratifying the Council of Europe convention on violence against women. It also requested the Commission and member states to improve collection of data on violence against women and to provide or strengthen training for relevant professionals encountering women affected by violence.

### ★ **Justice and Home Affairs Council Conclusions on Preventing and Combating All forms of violence against women and girls, including female genital mutilation 5-6 June 2014<sup>10</sup>**

The Justice and Home affairs Council led by the Greek Presidency adopted conclusions inviting Member States to sign, ratify and implement the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. In these Conclusions EU member states also welcomed the 2013 Commission's action plan on the elimination of FGM and committed to take further action to support its implementation.

9. Read the EPSCO Council conclusions here <http://www.cy2012.eu/index.php/en/file/EfusrOH182v2nxXo9+AUZw==>

10. Read the JHA Council conclusions here: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/143103.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/143103.pdf)

11. Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast)-

## EU legislation

### ★ **International Protection Qualification Directive 25 November 2011.**<sup>11</sup>

The Justice and Home Affairs Council adopted the qualification directive, which will bring better, clearer and more harmonised standards for identifying persons in need of international protection (asylum). The final text of the qualification directive makes reference to “certain legal traditions and customs resulting in for example **genital mutilation**, forced sterilisation, forced abortion” to ensure that they are taken into account in relation to the asylum seekers’ fear of persecution. Although it is not mentioned in the legal text of the directive, this reference is made in the recital, which carries the spirit of the directive.

### ★ **EU Directive on asylum procedures.**<sup>12</sup>

Adopted in 2013 as part of the Common European Asylum System, the directive creates obligations for EU member states to identify asylum seekers in need of special procedural guarantees due to, inter alia, their gender, age or forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence. It also calls for the development of gender-sensitive examination procedures and for the provision of precise and up-to-date information, including on child-related and gender issues to all staff examining applications. The Directive also states that information on the countries of origin should be obtained from various sources, such as relevant international human rights organisations and that staff at the determining authority should be trained. Member states, not including the UK, Ireland and Denmark, have until July 2015 to transpose the new provisions into national law.

### ★ **EU Directive on reception conditions for asylum seekers.**<sup>13</sup>

Adopted in 2013, the directive mentions “victims of female genital mutilation” amongst vulnerable persons whose specific situation will be taken into account. It also states that EU member states need to ensure that victims of violence receive “appropriate medical and psychological treatment or care”. In addition,

12. 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)

13. Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast)

those working with victims of serious acts of violence shall receive appropriate training. Member states, not including the UK, Ireland and Denmark, have until July 2015 to transpose the new provisions into national law.

★ **Victim's rights directive 4 October 2012<sup>14</sup>.**

The Directive makes clear references to the Istanbul Convention, gender based violence and FGM. In particular, the victim's rights directive obliges member states to:

- provide support services for victims during and after proceedings
- provide training for practitioners (judiciary and police)
- provide cooperation and coordination amongst services

Member states will have until November 2015 to transpose the directive into national law. A Guidance Note has been developed by the EU to help member states for this purpose.

## **Council of Europe**

The Istanbul Convention<sup>15</sup> is the most progressive instrument developed to deal with all aspects of VAWG and FGM in a holistic and multi-disciplinary way. It highlights the link between FGM and other forms of violence against women and girls, the need to promote equality between women and men and address gender stereotypes. It is open for signature and ratification to all states in and outside Europe and to the EU<sup>16</sup>. The Convention entered into force on 1 August 2014. This entry into force offers the opportunity to ensure that signatory parties implement the Convention in a holistic manner; that they allocate resources to the prevention of FGM, the protection of women and girls including through granting asylum and access to much needed services for women and girls living with FGM.

END FGM has teamed up with the Council of Europe to develop a Guide on FGM and the Istanbul Convention available in French and English. This handbook spells out obligations stemming from the text and presents promising practices developed

14. 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

15. Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, CETS No.: 210

16. <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/brochures/IstanbulConventionFGM%20Guide%20EN.pdf>

in relation to prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services and integrated policies to end FGM. This tool was launched on 25 November 2014 in collaboration with the Council of Europe.

## UN developments

- ★ These developments took place in parallel to global mobilisation which culminated in the adoption of a **UN General Assembly Resolution on 'Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of FGM'**, adopted in December 2012 and sponsored by a majority of EU member states.
- ★ The END FGM Campaign worked in close collaboration with UNHCR in development of **Too Much Pain: Female Genital Mutilation & Asylum in the European Union - A Statistical Overview**<sup>17</sup> and **its companion video- the voice of refugee women**.
- ★ **Joint general recommendation/general comment No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices**<sup>18</sup> (4 November 2014)  
For the first time, two United Nations human rights expert committees have joined forces to issue a comprehensive interpretation of the obligations of States to prevent and eliminate harmful practices inflicted on women and girls, such as female genital mutilation, crimes committed in the name of so-called honour, forced and child marriage, and polygamy.

17. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/512c72ec2.html>.

18. Join General Comment/Recommendation to be found here : [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FGC%2F31%2FCRC%2FC%2FGC%2F18&](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FGC%2F31%2FCRC%2FC%2FGC%2F18&)

## 4. FOUNDING MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

The End FGM European Network is a European umbrella organisation set up under Belgian law to ensure that the European Union takes effective actions to end FGM.

The founding members of the Network are non-for-profit organisations based in Europe:

	AFP - Family Planning Association	Portugal	<a href="http://www.apf.pt/">http://www.apf.pt/</a>
	AIDOS - Italian Association for Women in Development	Italy	<a href="http://www.aidos.it/">http://www.aidos.it/</a>
	Akidwa	Ireland	<a href="http://www.akidwa.ie/">http://www.akidwa.ie/</a>
	Equilibres & Populations	France	<a href="http://www.equipop.org">http://www.equipop.org</a>
	Female Integrity	Sweden	<a href="http://www.femaleintegrity.se/index.htm">http://www.femaleintegrity.se/index.htm</a>
	Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development (FORWARD UK)	UK	<a href="http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/">http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/</a>
	FSAN - Federation of Somali organisation in the Netherlands	Netherlands	<a href="http://www.fsan.nl/">http://www.fsan.nl/</a>
	GAMS - BELGIUM Groupe pour l'abolition des mutilations sexuelles	Belgium	<a href="http://www.gams.be">http://www.gams.be</a>
	INTACT	Belgium	<a href="http://www.intact-association.org/">http://www.intact-association.org/</a>
	Lebendige Kommunikation	Germany	<a href="http://www.fulda-mosocho-project.com/news.htm/">http://www.fulda-mosocho-project.com/news.htm/</a>
	Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS)	Cyprus	<a href="http://www.medins-tgenderstudies.org/">http://www.medins-tgenderstudies.org/</a>





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