

**CAPACITY-BUILDING SEMINAR on ASYLUM**

**for END FGM Network members**

**Brussels, 1-2 June 2016**

**BACKGROUND**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a global human rights violation which exists in Europe. The latest [UNICEF statistics](http://www.unicef.org/media/files/FGMC_2016_brochure_final_UNICEF_SPREAD.pdf) , published in February 2016, estimate that at least 200 million women and girls in over 30 countries have been subjected to FGM.

UNHCR estimates that 20 000 women and girls from countries of origin practising female genital mutilation (FGM) seek asylum in EU Member States every year; a significant number of women presenting an asylum claim are doing so based on a fear of FGM. UNHCR has estimated that 71 % of female EU asylum applicants from FGM-practising countries are survivors of FGM.

The END FGM Network has clearly put a focus on asylum in its Strategic Plan 2015-2017:

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

Women and girl refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants can be vulnerable to gender-based violence. For those who have been subjected to FGM or are at risk from it, the long-term consequences and physical, mental and emotional trauma caused by the practice can make the asylum process and settling into a new country and environment even more of an ordeal, if there are not specialised trained professionals and civil society at hand to support them in navigating through the process.

Consequently**, the Network has chosen asylum as its focus theme for 2016**. The Secretariat developed a draft strategy that outlines objectives, strategies, activities and expected results for 2016, with the overall aim of deploying a targeted and well concerted effort to achieve our strategic goal 5. The Board has done a first review of the strategy. It is a live document, which will be adapted, added to and changed depending on circumstances and events as they occur. This is true of all strategic documents, but the asylum situation across Europe is especially volatile, tense and prone to change within this year. We will need to adapt our strategy to reflect this changing scene.

One of the activities of the asylum strategy is a capacity-building seminar for the Network’s members.

**SEMINAR OBJECTIVES**

**Knowledge-base**

* Strengthen the Network’s members’ knowledge on asylum in the EU – state of the situation, legislation & services by:
* Increasing knowledge on the current status of implementation of asylum directives – procedures & services
* Developing understanding of the three asylum directives in relation to FGM

**Advocacy**

* Equip members to advocate their governments to respect the obligations they committed to under the Asylum Directives and the Istanbul Convention by:
* Enhancing members’ understanding of the key advocacy messages to deliver
* Providing tips on advocacy approaches and strategies
* Deciding jointly advocacy-related tools to be developed in collaboration with the Secretariat

**Cooperation with stakeholders**

* Enhance members’ capacity to identify and establish a dialogue with key actors related to asylum in their country (e.g. competent bodies for asylum procedures) and to raise their awareness of FGM in the context of asylum by:
* Carrying out a preliminary mapping of these actors
* Developing an understanding of effective strategies to establish a dialogue and raise awareness of FGM in the context of asylum

**Communication towards women & communities**

* Support members in devising and delivering communications on asylum targeting women and girls and their communities by:
* Defining the key information areas
* Deciding jointly communications-related tools to be developed in collaboration with the Secretariat

**Putting knowledge into practice**

* Agree a plan for a few coordinated actions – advocacy and communications focussed – to be implemented in 2016 in the 11 Network’s countries with synergies with the EU level.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

**By the end of the seminar participants will:**

* Have a good understanding of the three Asylum Directives
* Know which actors (institutions, civil society, professional) they have to work with in relation to asylum and what role these actors play
* Have a better understanding of advocacy messages and approaches to be used
* Have increased understanding of key information areas to use in their communication activities to women & communities
* Have agreed a plan for a few coordinated actions – advocacy and communications focussed – to be implemented in 2016 in the 11 Network’s countries with synergies with the EU level.

**PROGRAMME**

**Wednesday, 1st June – 13.30 – 18.00**

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| **When**  | **What** | **Who** |
| 13.30 | Welcome, Introductions & Programme | Liuska Sanna, END FGM |
| 13.50 | UNHCR “Too much Pain” report – FGM & Asylum in the European Union, A Statistical Update (March 2014) | UNHCR/Natalie Kontoulis |
| 14.20 | Report on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU – EP Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality | Catriona Gray , Assistant to Mary Honeyball MEP |
| 14.50 | Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting as a Ground for Asylum in Europe | Alina Balta, Tilburg University  |
| 15.30 | Coffee break |  |
| 16.00 | The Asylum Qualification Directive | Elena Zacharenko, Advocacy Consultant |
| 17.00 | Exercise | Elena Zacharenko |
| 17.30 | What can the Network and members do? | L. Sanna, N. Kontoulis, ENDFGM |

**Thursday, 2nd June – 9 – 17.30**

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| **When**  | **What** | **Who** |
| 9.00 | Welcome & Programme | Liuska Sanna, Director |
| 9.15 | UNHCR Credo – Credibility Assessment in EU Asylum Systems and Procedures - report and training manuals | Shana Kaninda, Senior Policy Officer (Legal) UNHCR |
| 9.45 | The Asylum Procedures Directive | Elena Zacharenko |
| 10.45 | Exercise | Elena Zacharenko |
| 11.15 | Coffee break |  |
| 11.45 | What can the Network and members do? | L. Sanna, N. Kontoulis, ENDFGM |
| 12.15 | AIDA’s report on “The reception of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe” | Amanda Taylor, ECRE |
| 12.45 | Lunch |  |
| 13.45 | The Reception Conditions Directive | Elena Zacharenko |
| 14.45 | Exercise | Elena Zacharenko |
| 15.15 | Coffee break |  |
| 15.45 | What can the Network and members do? | L. Sanna, N. Kontoulis, ENDFGM |
| 16.15 | Action plan | L. Sanna, N. Kontoulis, ENDFGM |
| 17.15 | Next steps & Wrap-up | L. Sanna |