



Gender-related vulnerabilities in the EU asylum procedures: Spotlight on FGM

8 November 2016, 8.30 – 16.00

Hotel NH Collection Grand Sablon

Rue Bodenbroek 2/4, 1000 Brussels

[Register online by 28 October](#)

BACKGROUND

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a global human rights violation which also exists in Europe. The latest [UNICEF statistics](#), published in February 2016, estimate that at least 200 million women and girls in over 30 countries are living with the lifelong consequences of FGM.

UNHCR estimates that 20 000 women and girls from countries of origin affected by FGM seek asylum in EU Member States every year; a significant number of women, girls and families presenting an asylum claim are affected by FGM. UNHCR has estimated that 71 % of female EU asylum applicants from FGM-practising countries are survivors of FGM.

The END FGM European Network has identified asylum in relation to FGM as one of its priorities in its Strategic Plan 2015-2017 under **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. FGM survivors and women and girls at risk are



particularly vulnerable in the asylum system. Either because they suffer from the physical, mental and emotional consequences of FGM, or because they fear for themselves or their daughters, these women must receive support and advice from specialised trained professionals and civil society to help them navigate the process.

To address this, the Network has chosen **asylum** as its **focus theme** for **2016**. The conference represents the closing event of this annual campaign, which consisted of targeted communications, awareness-raising activities, capacity-building for the Network members and coordinated actions at national level.

The **aim of the conference** is to address on-going challenges in the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), share good practice and address how we can deal with the issue of credibility, the systematic lack of training of professionals and bring together the different perspectives of the actors involved. The focus will be on female genital mutilation and other gender-related vulnerabilities in the context of the EU asylum procedures. **The recommendations will be used to bring about concrete change at national level.**

Why should you attend?

- Get the latest updates in relation to gender-specific vulnerabilities and to FGM in particular in the EU asylum system, including the outcomes of recent court judgments;
- Interact with women affected by FGM who will testify about their journey as part of the asylum procedure;
- Discuss with frontline professionals who will expose the daily challenges they face;
- Join a multi-stakeholder audience to reflect on the way forward to effectively protect women affected by FGM and other forms of gender-based violence throughout the asylum procedures.

Who should attend?

- Women who have been affected by FGM and/or other forms of gender-based violence and went through the asylum process
- Civil society and non-governmental organisations working with refugee and migrant FGM survivors and FGM-affected communities
- Professionals (healthcare professionals, lawyers, asylum officers etc.) working with women affected by FGM and/or other forms of gender-based violence in the asylum process (interview, reception, follow-up etc.)
- Decision-makers at national and EU level
- Researchers and academics



Programme

Note: EN-FR interpretation will be available

8.30-9.00	Registration
9.00-10.00	Welcome: Naana Otoo-Oyortey, END FGM Network President
	Setting the scene: The concept of vulnerability Keynote speaker: Debora Singer, Policy and Research Manager, Asylum Aid
10.00-11.00	Panel Discussion: Granting international protection to FGM survivors: facing the EU system Q&A with audience
11.00-11.30	Coffee break
11.30-12.30	Projection of short video messages
	Panel Discussion: Credibility of asylum claims on grounds of FGM, mental health and psychological considerations Q&A with audience
12.30-13.00	Interactive Session
13.00-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.00	Panel Discussion: Promising practices: the way forward Q&A with audience
15.00-16.00	Closing session

