



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

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.

A significant number of women, girls and families presenting an asylum claim are affected by FGM. UNHCR estimates that between 20.000 and 30.000 women and girls from FGM-practising countries seek asylum in EU Member States every year. In 2014, UNHCR estimated that among them, 71 % were 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.**

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 and policy makers at national and EU level
- Researchers and academics



Programme

Note: EN-FR interpretation will be available

Our Master of Ceremonies for the day will be Frances Robinson, Freelance Journalist and Moderator

8.30-9.00	Registration
9.00-10.00	Welcome: Naana Otoo-Oyortey, END FGM European Network Board 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. <u>Moderator:</u> Charlotte McDonald-Gibson, journalist and author of Cast Away <u>Panel includes:</u> Andrea Vonkeman (UNHCR Bureau for Europe), Martin Vegter (Defence for Children Netherlands), Bintou Bojang (Activist, Innocent Crocodile, Germany) Q&A with audience
11.00-11.30	Coffee break
11.30-12.30	Panel Discussion: Credibility of asylum claims on grounds of FGM, mental health and psychological considerations. <u>Moderator:</u> Christine Flamand, Coordinator, INTACT asbl <u>Panel includes:</u> Aji Rohey Manka (Network Ambassador), Peggy Mulongo (NESTAC, UK), Dr Luc Declaire (Psychiatrist, Belgium) 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. <u>Moderator:</u> Annemarie Middelburg, Researcher and author of 'Empty Promises?' <u>Panel includes:</u> Clara Caldera (United to End FGM Knowledge Platform for Professionals), Irene Masci (Cidis Onlus, Italy), Silvana Guenther (German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), Annalisa d'Aguanno (Psychologist, GAMS Belgium) Q&A with audience
15.00-16.00	Closing session Summary of recommendations and conclusions: Annemarie Middelburg Closing remarks: Mary Honeyball MEP

