



**End FGM**  
EUROPEAN NETWORK

# EUROPEAN FORUM TO BUILD BRIDGES ON FGM

*28th November, 2017, The Square Brussels Meeting Centre, Rue Ravenstein 2, Brussels 1000, Belgium*

REGIONS

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN SECTORS

FORMS OF VAWG

**Organised by End FGM EU in cooperation with DG JUST and DG DEVCO  
and with support from the Human Dignity Foundation and the Wallace Global Fund.**

## Background

FGM is a human rights violation that has existed over centuries and is strongly linked to social norms shaped by tradition, culture and religion.

According to the latest UNICEF statistical report, while the exact number of girls and women worldwide who have undergone FGM remains unknown, at least 200 million girls and women in 30 countries, mostly but not solely in Africa, have been subjected to the practice.

FGM is now recognised as a global issue, which affects all continents, including Europe. FGM has emerged as an issue in the European Union (EU) due to migration from countries affected by the practice – migrants' countries of origin – and it is now practiced by several communities residing in the EU, which have strong transnational linkages both within the EU and beyond. Research by the European Parliament indicates that an estimated 500,000 women and girls in the European Union (EU) have been subjected to FGM (EU, 2016) and, each year, 180,000 girls and women are estimated to be at risk. According to UNHCR, around 20,000 women and girls from FGM-risk countries of origin seek asylum in the EU each year 20% of all female applicants in 2011. Around 8,800 of these – mostly from Somalia, Eritrea or Guinea – are affected by FGM.

Since its foundation, the End FGM European Network (End FGM EU) has had the mission of creating an enabling environment for coordinated and comprehensive action to end FGM in Europe and to facilitate transnational, cross-border cooperation at global level.

End FGM EU is dedicating its 2017 annual campaign to the theme of Building Bridges in order to fine tune their building bridges approach and pursue it with concrete actions and initiatives.

End FGM EU's definition of Building Bridges in tackling FGM is:

***“Synergies and cooperation between actors from different sectors in EU countries of residence and in countries of origin to implement actions, policies and legal frameworks to end FGM tackling the transnational nature of this practice”.***

The European Forum to Build Bridges on FGM intends to be an opportunity for all actors working to end the practice of female genital mutilation to share experiences, exchange good practice and discuss future trends.

The Forum aims to gather NGOs, CSOs, service providers and practitioners, donors, researchers, experts, lawyers, academics, civil servants and activists from worldwide.

The programme is shaped around the 4 Ps approach of the Istanbul Convention – Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Integrated Policies – and, at the same time is structured to explore how to strengthen cooperation between different regions of the world, particularly with regard to cooperation with countries of origin in Africa and Asia; between different sectors and how to foster actions that address various forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) through a holistic approach.

The outcome of the Forum will be a set of conclusions and recommendations targeted to the various audiences, that have a role to play in cross-border, multi-sectoral, holistic actions to tackle FGM, having the added value of being formulated by a multi-stakeholder audience coming from different parts of the world.

### **Objectives of the Forum**

- To share knowledge on existing building bridges approaches and best practices for the three topics
- To exchange information on new and existing opportunities for building bridges to end FGM
- To brainstorm on how to address current challenges to building bridges approaches to end FGM.





## Registration

8.00-9.00

### Opening remarks

9.00-9.40

**Naana Otoo-Oyortey**, President of End FGM EU,  
**Ingrid Bellander**, Deputy Head of Unit for Gender Equality Issues, DG JUST, European Commission, **Fabienne Van Den Eede**, Deputy Head of Unit for Gender Equality, Human Rights and Democratic Governance at DG DEVCO, European Commission, **Luis Mora**, Chief of the Gender Human Rights and Culture Branch, UNFPA

9.40-11.30

### Building Bridges between Regions

The decision to cut or not to cut a girl is often not an individual one: families and communities both in the country of origin and in countries of residence have a large influence on it. At the same time, migrants returning to their country of origin can represent a challenge for FGM abandonment programmes both in a positive and negative way. Sometimes members of affected migrant communities may encourage communities to perpetuate or maintain traditional practices like FGM, in some cases due to the lack of awareness of the social change that might have occurred in the country of origin since they left. In other cases, migrant organisations, as well as migrants who return to their countries of origin can play an important role in showing how communities can shift from FGM practices without losing their sense of belonging and cultural identity. Therefore, the practice must be addressed in bi- and multilateral discussions among countries and stakeholders and requires the development of measures with a cross-border dimension and collaboration among EU stakeholders and with partners in countries of origin.



**Intro with Morissanda Kouyaté**, Executive Director, Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices, **Menna El Shiati**, Research Analyst, UNFPA Arab States Regional Office, **Nora Murat**, Regional Director, IPPF ESEAOR, **Shelby Quast**, Director, Equality Now & **Jaha Dukureh**, Founder & Executive Director, Safe Hands for Girls

**Moderator: Liuska Sanna**, Director, End FGM EU

The parallel workshops will explore how intra and extra continental cross-border cooperation can effectively strengthen prevention, protection and prosecution to tackle FGM, as well as measures and integrated policies between regions of the world. Some key questions that will be addressed include: What can different regions learn from each other? How can actors working in the same sector but in different cultural & socio-economic contexts work together in a cross-border manner (e.g. communities, NGOs, health professionals)? What type of legal and policy frameworks do we need to have in place? How can institutions and donors facilitate such forms of building bridges?



Group work on **Prevention** – Moderator: **Fatma Naib**, Al Jazeera free-lance journalist, Eritrea/Sweden

Group work on **Protection** – Moderator: **Hannah Wettig**, Project Coordinator, WADI, Germany/Iraq

Group work on **Prosecution** – Moderator: **Jennifer Obaseki**, Solicitor & VAW and FGM advocate, United Kingdom

**11.30-11.50**

**Coffee break**



**11.50-13.40**

### **Building Bridges between Sectors**

In order to end FGM it is necessary to promote interaction and collaboration among stakeholders in different fields of action, which can all contribute to enhancing prevention, protection, prosecution and can effectively shape integrated policies towards the abandonment of the practice. These include national and regional institutions, governmental and public officials, civil society organisations (including women's rights and youth movements), professionals in several sectors (health, asylum, social work, child protection, VAWG, law, law enforcement, education, journalism and media), FGM survivors, communities, as well as traditional and religious leaders. Building bridges among these multiple stakeholders, promoting cooperation and exchanges among them, is key to strengthen integrated and holistic approaches to end FGM.



**Intro** with **Christina Pallitto**, Social scientist/epidemiologist, WHO, **Maggie O'Kane**, Executive Director, The Global Media Campaign, **Joanina Karugaba**, Senior Protection Adviser on GBV Division for International Protection, UNHCR, **Els Leye**, Professor, ICRH

**Moderator: Faith Powell**, Global Director, The Girl Generation

The parallel workshops will explore challenges and benefits of multi-sectoral approaches when dealing with prevention, protection and prosecution, with concrete examples of initiatives implementing this type of approach in different parts of the world. Some key questions that will be addressed include: What is needed to mainstream FGM into all relevant policy and legislative frameworks (education, health, justice, research, asylum, etc.)? And how to bring these together into integrated policies? How can we equip professionals with the knowledge and skills they need to protect and support girls and women? What type of cooperation mechanisms across sectors could be established? What type of resources need to be made available to achieve such cross-sectorial cooperation?





Group work on **Prevention** – Moderator: **Masooma Ranalvi**, Publisher and trainer, WeSpeakOut, India

Group work on **Protection** – Moderator: **Fabienne Richard**, Executive Director, GAMS Belgique

Group work on **Prosecution** – Moderator: **Christine Nanjala**, Anti-FGM Prosecution Unit, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Kenya

13.40-14.40

Lunch



14.40-16.30

### **Building Bridges between FGM and other Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls**

It is important not to consider FGM as an isolated practice, but to see it within a continuum of violence which is deeply rooted in gender inequality and gender-based discrimination against women and girls. For instance, girls and women who are survivors of FGM could be at risks of or subjected to other forms of gender-based violence, such as child marriage, intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. To ensure a strategic and comprehensive approach to end FGM it is key to adopt a holistic approach to address the continuum of gender-based violence against women and girls. This can be done by developing partnerships with actors working towards the elimination of other forms of VAWG, including the abandonment of other harmful practices, as well as by implementing policies and providing services informed by this type of approach. Although such holistic approach is already well known, unfortunately it is not systematically and widely implemented. There is therefore a need to strengthen the sharing of expertise and promising practices, inter alia by involving all critical stakeholders into the process of change.



**Intro with Edith Schratzberger-Vécsei**, President of European Women's Lobby, **Assita Kanko**, Women's Rights Activist and Town Councillor, Ixelles Belgium, **Sophie Aujean**, Senior Policy and Programmes Officer, ILGA Europe, **Godfrey Williams-Okorodus**, Artist & Activist against FGM and other forms of VAWG

**Moderator: Dagmar Schumacher**, Director of the Brussels Office, UN Women

The parallel workshops will look into gaps of current policy frameworks and service provision in responding to the multiple needs of girls and women affected by FGM as well as by other forms of harmful practices and gender-based violence.

Some key questions that will be addressed include: What are the unmet needs and gaps in policy and practices? What are the good and promising practices available and the opportunities for strategic cooperation? How can we hold responsible entities accountable for delivering a comprehensive response? How can all concerned actors work better together? Which kind of resources are needed to achieve a more comprehensive approach to ending FGM as a form of VAWG?



Group work on **Prevention** – Moderator: **Anna Zobnina**, Strategy & Policy Coordinator European Migrant Women Network, Belgium  
Group work on **Protection** – Moderator: **Sophia Temba**, Child protection and participation specialist, Children's Dignity Forum, Tanzania  
Group work on **Prosecution** – Moderator: **Lorraine Koonce-Farahmand Esq.**, Solicitor, Lawyer, Gender & Human Rights Advocate, United Kingdom & USA

16.30-17.10

### The way forward

The panels moderators report back on key recommendations from the group work providing perspective on feedback and insights from the day.

End FGM EU, the Girl generation, UN Women, **Mary Healy**, Director of Human Dignity Foundation representing the FGM/C Donor Working Group.

17:10-17:30



### Concluding remarks

**Douglas Wedderburn-Maxwell**, Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe, **Dieynaba Ball**, End FGM EU Ambassador, **Liuska Sanna**, Director, End FGM EU,

17:30

### Networking coffee



This event will be Livestreamed to Facebook Live. Share the stream from:  
[facebook.com/endfgmeuropeannetwork](https://facebook.com/endfgmeuropeannetwork)



EN <> FR  
interpretation  
will be provided.  
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