

End FGM EU stands in solidarity with MEP Herzberger-Fofana

The End FGM European Network (End FGM EU) stands in solidarity with Dr. Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, a Black woman Member of the European Parliament (MEP) who was subjected to police violence at the hands of Belgian officers on Tuesday, 16 June. MEP Herzberger-Fofana gave an account of her experience, during the opening of the June plenary session, where MEPs debated racism, discrimination and police violence, with Council and Commission representatives.

Dr. Herzberger-Fofana is a successful European and German politician: she is the first German MEP of African descent and the co-president of the European Parliament's [Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup \(ARDI\)](#). Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana has also been a great Ally to End FGM EU within the course of the current EU legislature: she has co-hosted and spoke at several of our events, initiated the informal EP group on friends against FGM and played a great role in the recent European Parliament resolution, an [EU strategy to put an end to female genital mutilation around the world](#). Evidently, she has been at the forefront of tackling FGM through action at political level, both in Germany, wider Europe, and at international level.

On Tuesday, MEP Herzberger-Fofana was leaving the Gare du Nord station when she witnessed nine police officers harassing two young Black men. Whilst taking photo evidence of the incident, she was targeted by police and brutally pushed against the wall by four of the armed officers, who also violently took her phone and purse. Police also refused to believe she was a Member of the European Parliament, even after MEP Herzberger-Fofana presented several ID documents and her European Parliament badge, which clearly identified her as a European Union representative.

Following the death of George Floyd in May in the US, thousands have protested to demand justice for countless Black people who have died at the hands of police: including men, women, transgender, and gender non-conforming Black Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC). End FGM EU stands firmly in solidarity with the BIPOC community and protesters of all races who are out on the streets across the world, demanding justice and calling for an end to systemic racism and oppression.

Racism, discrimination and police brutality are very much a European issue. As highlighted by Vera Jourova, the Vice President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Values and Transparency, during yesterday's plenary session, only 15 Member States currently have specific strategies in place to tackle racism. The right to equal treatment and non-discrimination is a fundamental right enshrined in the EU Treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and should be fully respected. As such, EU institutions and Member States must do more to tackle structural racism, a persisting issue which impacts hundreds and thousands of people in Europe, like MEP Herzberger-Fofana.

“End FGM EU applies an intersectional approach to its work and reiterates its engagement against all forms of discrimination based on gender, age, colour, religion, sexual orientation, as well as against institutionalised racism” concluded Chiara Cosentino, End FGM EU Acting Director. **“As such, we demand justice concerning all cases of police brutality in Europe and beyond and we wish to express our deepest solidarity to all the people affected, including MEP Herzberger-Fofana.”**

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