

## **TOOLKIT** for EU DELEGATIONS on **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENTS & ACTIONS to END FGM**

### **What is FGM**

FGM is internationally recognised as a gross violation of human rights, a form of violence against women and girls and a manifestation of gender inequality. According to research by UNFPA, if current trends continue in the direction they are moving in, 68 million girls will face FGM between 2015 and 2030<sup>1</sup>. According to UNICEF data, more than 200 million women and girls today are survivors of FGM<sup>2</sup>.

The new figures project that the current estimates of 3.9 million girls cut each year will rise to 4.6 million by 2030, unless massively scaled-up efforts are taken urgently to prevent that from happening. Such increase is due to estimated population growth in communities that practice FGM. Within this context, we must urgently push the international community to scale up efforts and ensure that we are effectively working towards both the abandonment of FGM and the provision of adequate services for women and girls affected<sup>3</sup>.

### **Toolkit scope and objectives**

This Toolkit aims to be a practical guidance document for European Union (EU) Delegations staff, particularly in countries with high FGM prevalence<sup>4</sup>, on key actions to undertake to end FGM within the EU commitments contained in the EU legal framework. The Toolkit is primarily based on the European External Action Service (EEAS) **Guidelines on Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child**, for the following reasons:

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<sup>1</sup> See UNFPA press release [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Global Concern, UNICEF, 2016, available [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> For the sake of space, throughout the document we will refer to both these aspects of work against FGM (efforts to ending the practice + services provided to survivors) with the wording “end FGM”/“tackle FGM”. It must be kept in mind however that such wording has these two components: ending the perpetuation of the practice and ending its negative effects on concerned women and girls.

<sup>4</sup> Specifically, the EU Delegations mostly concerned by this Toolkit are the ones based in (source: UNICEF 2016):

- 74% - 100% prevalence: **Somalia** (98%), **Guinea Conakry** (97%), **Djibouti** (93%), **Sierra Leone** (90%), **Mali** (89%), **Egypt** (87%), **Sudan** (87%), **Eritrea** (83%), **Mauritania** (79%), **Burkina Faso** (76%), **Gambia** (75%), **Ethiopia** (74%);
- 49% - 73% prevalence: **Guinea Bissau** (50%, among Muslims the prevalence raises to 95%), **Liberia** (50%, among population practicing traditional religion the percentage raises to 89%), **Indonesia** (49%);

- Within EU external action FGM is primarily placed under the umbrella of children rights, both in terms of development and cooperation and in terms of political relations with third countries, and this tool provides the overarching framework of action on this matter for EU Delegations;
- The EEAS Child Rights Guidelines have been reviewed and updated in 2017, therefore it is the most up-to-date framework on which all EU external action on the rights of the child will be based in the next years;
- The EEAS Child Rights Guidelines provide concrete actions to be performed by EU Delegations and can therefore be better traced, monitored and adapted to the context.

Despite being primarily focused on this latter, this Toolkit considers this instrument in light of the broader EU external action framework in place to ensure prevention of FGM and protection and care of women and girls affected in third countries.

## EU external action framework

In the last 10 years the European Union has adopted a number of tools regulating its external action that directly or indirectly refer to FGM. In a chronological order, they are:

- EEAS **Guidelines on Violence against Women** ([2008](#))
- European Commission's **Communication towards the elimination of FGM** ([2013](#)), including as a final pillar the external dimension of fighting against FGM
- EU **Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy** ([2015-2019](#)), includes in its objective 14b the key action to “help protect women's human rights and freedom from violence with special attention to ending FGM”
- The EU **Gender Action Plan** ([2016-2020](#)) has as its first priority “ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity”
- **Agenda 2030** ([2015](#)) foresees as one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to eliminate all harmful practices, including FGM (SDG 5.3).
- EEAS **Guidelines on Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child** (reviewed [2017](#))

## Toolkit: content and how to use it

This Toolkit intends to integrate and highlight, where relevant, FGM specific actions within the broader scope of the EEAS Child Rights Guidelines. Commitments underlined in the table below are taken directly from the text of the EEAS Guidelines, but are not an exhaustive list, since this Toolkit focuses only on the ones considered mostly relevant for targeted actions to address FGM in third countries. For every EU commitment considered, the table highlights:

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- 24% - 48% prevalence: **Chad** (44%, with an ethnic group with 92% prevalence), **Ivory Coast** (38%), **Senegal** (25%, with an ethnic group with 64% prevalence), **Nigeria** (25%, with an ethnic group with 55% prevalence), **Central African Republic** (24%, with an ethnic group with 53% prevalence)
  - 5% - 23% prevalence: **Kenya** (21%, with an ethnic group with 94% prevalence), **Yemen** (19%, with zones above 80%), **Tanzania** (15%, with zones above 50%), **Iraq** (8%, with zones between 50% and 80%), **Benin** (7%, with an ethnic group with 44% prevalence), **Togo** (5%, with an ethnic group with 58% prevalence).

- its relevance to FGM, including FGM-related specificities that should be taken into consideration when dealing with FGM survivors or affected communities;
- concrete actions the EU Delegation can undertake and the available EU tools and instruments that can be used in that regard (e.g. political dialogues, public diplomacy, development and cooperation agreements with third countries, etc.);
- the EU delegations that are mostly concerned by those specific actions, if applicable (see also note 4).

The table follows the structure of the EEAS Child Rights Guidelines and addresses the several areas in which the EU Delegations can act:

- A. Legislation and Policy
- B. National Strategies / Documents and Action Plans
- C. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation
- D. Mobilising Financial Resources, Ensuring Efficient Allocation, Impact and Use
- E. Coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the rights of the child
- F. Human Resources and Capacity-building
- G. Data, Evidence and Knowledge
- H. Oversight and Accountability

EU commitments	Relevance to FGM	Concrete actions & available EU instruments/tools	EU Delegations concerned
<b>A. Legislation and Policy</b>			
The EU should support and encourage partner countries to:			
i.	<p>Accede, ratify and adhere to and/or implement and enforce the relevant international or regional instruments and standards for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child</p>	<p>Several are the <b>International and Regional instruments</b> that consider FGM as a human rights violation and an act of violence against girls and women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</a> (CRC), Art. 19;</li> <li>- <a href="#">UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women</a> (CEDAW), Art. 5;</li> </ul>	<p>The EU Delegation should urge the authorities of the third country to ratify and implement international and regional instruments through the use of the following tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Human Rights &amp; Democracy Country Strategy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Somalia and Sudan</b> did not ratify the CEDAW.</p> <p><b>Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan</b> did not ratify the Maputo</p>			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Joint CEDAW-CRC General Recommendation/Comment n.31/n. 18 on Harmful Practices</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">ACHPR Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), Art. 5</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political dialogues</li> <li>- Statements &amp; demarches</li> <li>- Trade, development &amp; cooperation agreements (e.g. EBA for Somalia, Sierra Leone; GSP: Indonesia)</li> </ul>	<p>Protocol.</p> <p>All<sup>5</sup> other countries should ensure a correct implementation of the ratified instruments.</p>
ii.	<p><b>Review and revise relevant legislation pertaining to the functioning of the justice system and children’s access to justice, in order to prohibit and punish violations of the rights of children, including in criminal law;</b></p>	<p>The <b>criminalization of FGM</b> in the Penal Code is a key starting point to strengthen the legal protection and guide States in putting in place effective policies to limit this form of violence. It ensures that no legal defence based on cultural or religious grounds is allowed to justify the practice of FGM. However; due to the traditional nature of this practice, legislation alone is not enough, and it needs to be used as an educational tool to raise awareness at grassroots level among practicing communities.</p>	<p>The EU Delegation should urge the authorities of the country to officially criminalise FGM in the Penal Code of the State, through the use of the following tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Human Rights &amp; Democracy Country Strategy</li> <li>- Political dialogues</li> <li>- Statements &amp; demarches</li> <li>- Trade, development &amp; cooperation agreements (e.g. GSP: Indonesia; EBA for Somalia, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Indonesia, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone and Somalia</b> have not yet adopted FGM legislation.</p> <p>All other countries should ensure a correct implementation of the laws in place.</p>
<p><b>B. National Strategies / Documents and Action Plans</b></p> <p>The EU should support and encourage partner countries to:</p>				
i.	<p><b>Adopt a national strategy on the promotion, protection and realisation of the rights of the child;</b></p>	<p>In order to effectively tackle FGM, it is key to establish a comprehensive National Action Plan (NAP) to enable the establishment of a national strategy and provide its implementation with the necessary multi-annual planning, centralised coordination and adequate national budgeting and human resources. Such a strategy should</p>	<p>Several EU member states have in place multiannual strategies to tackle FGM involving a number of sectors and in cooperation between ministries, professionals’ networks, civil society</p>	<p>All</p>

<sup>5</sup> In this Toolkit, the word “All” refers to the EU Delegations operating in the list of countries affected by FGM, as mentioned in Footnote 4 (source: UNICEF 2016).

		<p>envisage a <b>cross-sectorial and multi-agency integrated national system</b>, to ensure efficiency, coordination and avoiding duplication of efforts when working towards the abandonment of FGM, as well as the protection and care of women and girls concerned. Moreover, addressing the issue from different angles and supporting FGM-affected women and girls through the full range of services available is very beneficial for them, as it considers the complexity and entirety of their lives and experiences as a whole.</p>	<p>organisations and affected communities.</p> <p>The EU Delegations could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitate bilateral support and cooperation between EU MS and third countries through sharing good practices and mutual learning meetings;</li> <li>- Provide technical support to ensure an efficient budget and human resources allocation to end FGM</li> </ul>	
<p>ii.</p>	<p><b>Consult with local civil society, relevant UN agencies and other relevant multilateral actors, children and young people in the design and implementation of such a strategy and/or action plans</b></p>	<p>It is crucial that such integrated national mechanism not only coordinates the work among the different sectors at policy and service-provision level, but also represents an institutionalised multi-stakeholder platform to effectively connect all relevant actors, including by actively involving civil society organisations and especially <b>affected communities</b> into decision and policy-making and implementation.</p> <p>The latter is key, to take into consideration the needs of FGM survivors and FGM-affected communities, in order to shape and better tailor national policies and service provision. Too often governments delegate the work with communities almost exclusively to civil society organisations, who execute their work with limited and unsustainable funds. Instead, institutions should work directly with communities not only as beneficiaries of pre-designed policies and services, but as key actors to meaningfully engage with at all stages. There is a strong need to establish more direct and sustainable relationships between institutions and community</p>	<p>The EU Delegations should facilitate the creation of national multi-stakeholder platforms involving civil society, affected communities, and particularly affected girls and young women, and encourage periodic regular exchanges and dialogues with the third country national authorities.</p> <p>Some EU Member States have national coordination systems in place that integrate the participation of civil society affected communities in shaping and implementing national strategies to end FGM.</p> <p>The EU Delegations could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitate bilateral support and cooperation between EU MS and third countries through sharing good practices and mutual learning meetings;</li> <li>- Link at national level with the UNFPA-</li> </ul>	<p>All</p>

		representatives, by integrating them in institutional multi-stakeholder platforms to sustain the crucial role they play in ending FGM and making national and local policies and practices more tailored and effective. The work of civil society is key to ensure this, but it is equally fundamental that national authorities play their part <sup>6</sup> .	UNICEF Joint Programme to end FGM/C, of which the EU is one of the biggest donors, to ensure complementarity of efforts, and close cooperation between national and local authorities and the UN.	
iii.	Ensure that the strategy is based on a child rights gender sensitive analysis of the situation of children in the country	A “child rights gender sensitive analysis” prior to establishing a national strategy is extremely important for addressing FGM. However, an important aspect of any analysis aimed at tackling such traditional practice is also <b>cultural sensitivity</b> and taking into consideration the affected communities’ beliefs, perspectives and specificities surrounding the practice.	The EU Delegation should ensure to foster partnerships between governmental and local authorities, affected communities, specialised civil society, researchers and UN agencies (particularly UNFPA and UNICEF within the Joint Programme to end FGM), in order to gather useful and culturally sensitive resources on which to base a national strategy to end FGM and tailored actions.	All
<b>C. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation</b>				
The EU should (and encourage partner countries to):				
i.	Raise the rights of the child in all dialogues, in trade and other negotiations, programming discussions, in Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategies, in collaboration with the partner country on the 2030 Agenda etc.	Political commitment is key to end FGM, since authorities’ engagement in establishing and implementing legislation and policies against the practice is crucial to make concrete steps forward. The EU should use its political leverage with third countries’ governments to push for political commitment in this	The EU Delegation should raise the issue of FGM with third country authorities through the use of the following tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Human Rights &amp; Democracy Country Strategy</li> <li>- Political dialogues</li> </ul>	All Particularly: <b>Indonesia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Somalia, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso</b> and

<sup>6</sup> On the issue of community engagement, please see the End FGM European Network Position Statement.

		<p>regard in all possible bilateral and multilateral cooperation fora.</p> <p>Moreover, the EU should ensure to use its <b>economic leverage</b> particularly in the field of development and cooperation aid, in which the EU it's the biggest donor worldwide. Respect for girls' human rights and ensuring them a life free from violence should have a prominent role in development negotiations and monitoring of agreements. In countries with high percentages of FGM prevalence, where virtually almost all girls and women are cut, such systematic violation should be one of the priorities to address within the development framework, since without the female half of the population being able to participate equally in society there will never be a sustainable development.</p>	<p>- Trade, development &amp; cooperation agreements: <u>GSP</u>: Indonesia / <u>EBA</u> for Somalia, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone (possibility to withdraw EBA preference in exceptional circumstances including for serious and systemic human rights violation) / <u>Sahel Alliance Mechanism</u>: "G5 Sahel" Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad</p>	<b>Chad.</b>
ii.	<b>Work closely with civil society organisations.</b> Such collaboration with civil society should also serve to promote a more enabling environment for civil society actors.	See B.ii.	See B.ii.	See B.ii.
iii.	<b>Support the work of relevant international and regional actors</b> in the area of the rights of the child, in particular the UN organs and treaty bodies, UN Special Procedures and mechanisms	Idem.	Idem.	Idem.
<b>D. Mobilising Financial Resources, Ensuring Efficient Allocation, Impact and Use</b>				
The EU should:				
i.	<b>Continue to support children's rights in programming through a 3-pronged</b>	In order to end FGM all three components of the 3-pronged approach are crucial:	The EU Delegation should address the issue of FGM in third country through the use of	All

	<p><b>approach;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting the rights of all children in its political dialogues,</li> <li>- Mainstreaming the rights of the child in all projects and programs (the EU-UNICEF Child Rights Toolkit serving as a reference guide),</li> <li>- Supporting specific projects and programmes for children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As mentioned in C.i., political commitment is key to end the practice and the EU should use all political dialogues to raise the issue with third countries;</li> <li>- <b>Mainstreaming FGM</b> is fundamental in order to ensure to address the issue in a cross-sectoral and comprehensive way, as mentioned in B.i. and to reach as much affected women and girls as possible by incorporating FGM into larger programmes and already existing services;</li> <li>- Besides mainstreaming FGM in generalised services, due to the specificities of this traditional harmful practice, it is also important to ensure specific attention to some of its peculiar aspects, also in terms of cultural sensitivity of initiatives to eliminate it. This can be done through the provision of <b>specialised services</b> and the implementation of <b>specialised programmes</b> tackling FGM.</li> </ul>	<p>the following tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political dialogues</li> <li>- Ensuring that all projects and programmes carried out mainstream children rights, gender equality, including by addressing FGM, and include a human rights impact assessment which considers girls affected by FGM as particularly in need of protection</li> <li>- Support, including financially through calls for proposal at national level, specific projects tackling FGM, particularly in countries and communities with high prevalence.</li> </ul>	
<p>ii.</p>	<p><b>Ensure better and more efficient allocation and use of resources</b> in the implementation of the above 3-pronged approach as well as ensuring that resources obtain the optimal impact on the rights of the child through a complementary use of EU geographic and thematic instruments and modalities;</p>	<p>To ensure better and more efficient allocation of resources for mainstreaming FGM in all projects and programs or for supporting specific projects around FGM, EU Delegations should consider that <b>involvement of grassroots and community-based organisations</b> is essential. Funding should be directed more to these community-led organisations, to be more effective and impactful. However, EU application procedures are not easily accessible and understandable for community-based organisations.</p> <p>Moreover, apart from making calls for proposals more accessible to community-led entities, it is also paramount to involve communities throughout the process of project</p>	<p>The EU Delegation should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure the sustainability of grassroots organisations at national level with funding programmes that take into account their operational realities.</li> <li>- Ensure that the EU funding that it manages reaches more out to communities (e.g. advertise calls for proposals also in rural areas and among affected communities);</li> <li>- Foresee proper assistance and capacity building for community-based organisations to facilitate their</li> </ul>	<p>All</p>



		<p>shaping and implementation, not only as beneficiaries, but as real empowered actors. Communities are best placed to ensure projects are tailored to their specific self-determined needs and that resources are better allocated to ensure real and long-lasting impact.</p> <p>Finally, FGM prevention and behavioural change towards the abandonment of FGM are key to ending the practice, but it takes time. Bringing about sustainable change and long-lasting impact is only possible thanks to sustainable resources, meaning longer-term projects. Very often however, EU-funded projects only last for 2 or 3 years, which is not enough to change a deeply culturally rooted tradition that has been in place for centuries.</p>	<p>application and project implementation and to empower them;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take into consideration the possibility of funding longer-term projects, specifically when involving prevention and behavioural change activities in affected communities.</li> </ul>	
iii.	<p>Ensure that the partner countries put into place an <b>accurate costing to allow sufficient allocation of resources</b> to the realisation of the rights of the child;</p>	<p>As mentioned in B.i., in order to effectively tackle FGM, besides establish a comprehensive national strategy, it is key to ensure its implementation through the necessary multi-annual planning, centralised coordination and adequate national budgeting and human resources.</p>	<p>The EU Delegations could provide technical support to ensure an efficient budget and human resources allocation to end FGM in the third country.</p>	All
<p><b>E. Coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the rights of the child</b></p> <p>The EU should support and encourage partner countries to:</p>				
i.	<p><b>Develop and strengthen governmental mechanisms for coordinating action</b> among central government departments (between ministries and departments), among different provinces and regions, between central and other levels of government and between</p>	<p>As mentioned in B.i., in order to effectively tackle FGM countries should put in place national strategies and envisage a <b>multi-agency national coordination system</b>, to ensure efficiency, coordination and avoiding duplication of efforts when working towards the abandonment of FGM, as well as the protection and care</p>	<p>Several EU member states have in place national coordination mechanisms to tackle FGM in cooperation between ministries, local authorities, professionals' networks, civil society organisations and affected</p>	All

	<p>Government and civil society.</p>	<p>of women and girls concerned. This should include cooperation among the central government (different ministries), regional and local authorities, professionals' networks, civil society organisations and affected communities. Once again, in the case of FGM, it is important to ensure that <b>affected communities</b> are also engaged in this coordination mechanism.</p>	<p>communities.</p> <p>The EU Delegations could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitate bilateral support and cooperation between EU MS and third countries through sharing good practices and mutual learning meetings;</li> <li>- Provide technical support to ensure an efficient budget and human resources allocation to end FGM</li> </ul>	
<p><b>F. Human Resources and Capacity-building</b></p> <p>The EU should:</p>				
<p>i.</p>	<p><b>Ensure specific training on the rights of the child and their cross-cutting nature is available to all EU staff, at all levels, working on all thematic areas</b>, including those not commonly perceived as relevant to the rights of the child. This could also be carried out through Training of the Trainer's (ToT) exercise;</p>	<p>This is specifically important in the field of FGM, since it is a form of violence against women and girls that in some countries severely undermines the effective participation of half of the population to the political and economic life and touches upon so many different aspects of women and girls' lives.</p> <p>Continuous and systematic training should be carried out in cooperation with specialised civil society organisations and most importantly with the participation of affected communities at third country level. A stronger <b>partnership between EU Delegations staff, local civil society and FGM-affected communities</b> will be also beneficial for the sustainability of EU Delegation's training and actions to tackle FGM, overcoming the issue of the frequent staff turnover.</p> <p>Moreover, the <b>dissemination of practical Toolkits</b></p>	<p>The EU Delegations should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All EU staff working in third countries where FGM is prevalent is trained around the topic, and that they have the possibility to access resources and material (such as the present Toolkit) on a continuous basis to expand their knowledge when necessary;</li> <li>- EU Delegations establish sustainable partnerships with local civil society and FGM-affected communities in terms of training and programmes implementation.</li> </ul>	<p>All</p>

		<p>(such as this one), available for consultation whenever needed, will also help overcoming the limitations of trainings, which can only reach a partial amount of staff members in very specific timeframes and can be quite costly.</p>		
	<p>Support and encourage partner countries to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Build capacity of government officials, parliamentarians, members of the judiciary, community and religious leaders, teachers, social workers, health workers, the police, peacekeeping forces and all other functions working with and for children</b>, including through training, and the development of child protection policies with clear guidance on appropriate conduct in relation to working with children, and on reporting arrangements where abuse arises or is suspected for partners and contracted agents. It will be particularly important that law enforcement officials are able to promote and safeguard the rights of the child and ensure compliance with international norms and instruments;</li> <li>• Invest in <b>awareness-raising events/campaigns</b> on the rights of the child;</li> </ul>	<p>Training of authorities and professionals in different sectors is a priority as lack of knowledge of professionals is frequently raised as challenge. It is fundamental because very often local authorities, officials and professionals are the ones dealing directly with FGM survivors or girls at risk and need to be aware of the issue, particularly in countries with high prevalence of FGM, to be able to handle it in a gender-, age- and culturally-sensitive way and respecting always the best interest of the child.</p>	<p>The EU Delegation should encourage and support third countries to build capacity of authorities and professionals around FGM by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting trainings such as the United to End FGM e-learning for professionals in multiple sectors (health, social work, education, judiciary and law enforcement, media, civil society), freely available online at <a href="http://www.uefgm.org">www.uefgm.org</a></li> <li>- Partnering with local civil society actors and FGM-affected communities to ensure third country authorities and professionals systematically engage with them.</li> </ul>	<p>All</p>

G. Data, Evidence and Knowledge				
The EU should support and encourage partner countries to:				
i.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop child-sensitive indicators and child impact assessments and evaluations</b> for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child;</li> </ul>	<p>A specific indicator on the “<b>percentage of girls and women aged 15-49 who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age group</b>” should also be encouraged to evaluate progress on SDG 5.3 of Agenda 2030 (indicator 5.3.2).</p>	<p>The EU Delegation should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide technical support and assistance, if needed, to ensure that third countries affected by FGM adequately collect this data at national level.</li> <li>- Liaise with UN agencies (the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme to end FGM/C) to provide the necessary support</li> </ul>	All
ii.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collect and use disaggregated data for each indicator</b> according to gender, age, income, disability and other factors, and provide information on marginalised, vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups, inclusive governance and other issues, consistent with the EU's rights-based approach).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ethnicity</b> – and, in some countries, <b>religion</b> – are particularly important factors to consider when collecting disaggregated data regarding girls and women who have undergone or are at risk of FGM. Data can vary greatly from region to region within the same country due to these elements (source: UNICEF 2016).</p>	Idem.	All
iii.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Promote research and building knowledge</b> for a better understanding of child rights and how to enhance protection and prevention of violations (cf. social norms and harmful practices).</li> </ul>	<p>This is extremely important also related to FGM, not only in terms of quantitative data collection, but also in terms of <b>qualitative research</b>, to deeply understand cultural justifications of the practice in different communities, gender social norms surrounding it, perspectives and opinions of different stakeholders within affected communities (women and girls affected, men and boys, elderly and youth, religious and traditional leaders).</p>	<p>The EU Delegation should encourage third countries to invest in research and knowledge-building around FGM, including through allocation of adequate financial and human resources to it.</p>	All

H. Oversight and Accountability				
The EU should support and encourage partner countries to:				
i.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that civil society can play its role in holding the government to account.</li> </ul>	<p>Civil society plays a key role in holding governments to account and the EU is committed to support its watchdog actions worldwide. As largely mentioned in this Toolkit, concerning FGM, <b>affected communities</b> are a key stakeholder in this regard, since only they can identify gaps in the governmental action around an issue that touches them so closely.</p> <p>It is crucial that the EU shows actively and openly its support for community-led organisations and grassroots activists who are opposed to FGM and who demand action from their governments at national and local level. It is also key that, in case of threats and harassment, the EU stands by these <b>human rights defenders</b> and ensures their protection.</p>	<p>The EU Delegation should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Systematically and meaningfully consult civil society, including hard-to-reach community-based organisations and grassroots activists from marginalised and rural areas who cannot participate in periodic consultations organised in capitals;</li> <li>- Call upon third countries' authorities to do the same through political dialogues and Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategies</li> <li>- Openly stand by anti-FGM activists as human rights defenders (particularly from grassroots communities) in case of harassment through statements and demarches</li> <li>- Ensure protection for anti-FGM activists as human rights defenders through political and financial means as deemed necessary through the available EU instruments.</li> </ul>	<p>All, and particularly in those countries where civil society space is shrinking, because threatened by both State and non-State actors.</p>

## About us

The End FGM European Network (End FGM EU), which is an umbrella network of 22 national organisations working in 12 European countries who are expert on female genital mutilation (FGM). End FGM EU operates as a meeting ground for communities, civil society organisations, decision-makers and other relevant actors at European level to interact, cooperate and join forces to end all forms of FGM in Europe and beyond. We put at the heart of our work grassroots voices to influence European governments and policy-makers to work towards the elimination of FGM. We build our members' capacity, offer spaces to share expertise and develop partnerships.

While being dedicated to being the driving force of the European movement to end FGM, we are equally committed to build bridges and cooperation with all relevant actors in the field of FGM both in Europe and globally. In this sense, we actively promote and foster cooperation between the European movement and movements in other regions of the world.

We developed this Toolkit in 2018, within the framework of our advocacy efforts to influence and support the EU external action to end FGM worldwide.

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