

# EIGE's study on female genital mutilation yields the first EU-wide map on the situation of FGM

*updated on 07 November 2012*

**Female genital mutilation (FGM)** continues to be one of the most brutal and at the same time most tabooed forms of gender-based violence. During recent years FGM has gained considerable attention in the EU. In June 2012, the European Parliament adopted the Resolution on ending female genital mutilation. EIGE launched a **"Study to map the current situation and trends of female genital mutilation in 27 EU Member States (MS) and Croatia"** on the request of EU Commissioner Viviane Reding. The results of the project will support policy makers in their efforts to follow the law obligation in this area and develop strategies for effective elimination of female genital mutilation in Europe.

**In June 2012 EIGE completed the first phase** of the "Study to map the current situation and trends of female genital mutilation in 27 EU Member States (MS) and Croatia". It uniquely yields the **first EU-wide map of information and data, legal and policy frameworks, actors, tools and methods in the area of female genital mutilation (FGM)**. The study will be completed by the end of 2012.

During the first phase of the study information was collected through desk research in the 27 Member States and Croatia. Research identified the **six most comparable indicators** to evaluate and monitor the situation in the Member States in the area of FGM: FGM prevalence studies; asylum granted on FGM grounds; specific criminal law provisions on FGM; national action plans covering FGM; FGM-related child protection interventions and hospital/medical records on FGM. Country factsheets following the above mentioned indicators will be publicly available in the beginning of 2013.

The main findings of the study's first phase show that despite the absence of reliable prevalence data, **national policies are being developed in the Member States and Croatia** to combat FGM. There are national action plans that deal exclusively with FGM in eight countries, namely: Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Sweden. Eleven Member States address FGM under national actions plans on violence against women and/or gender equality.

Ten Member States have developed **specific criminal legislation on FGM**, whereas in other Member States the practice is prosecutable under general criminal law provisions dealing with bodily injury. In the majority of countries, the principle of extra-territoriality may be used. However, conditions for its application differ greatly across countries. It is worth mentioning that if the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence enters into force, it will become the first legally binding instrument that specifically mentions FGM.

The number of **actors dealing with FGM** across EU-27 and Croatia varies significantly. The largest category consists of civil society organisations, which represent 42 per cent of all mapped actors. Slightly less than one-third of actors (30 per cent) constitute governmental bodies. Nine per cent of actors are FGM-specific, with the main focus on work towards complete abandonment of FGM practices or the provision of specific health care for FGM victims. **EU's Daphne II programme** played an important role combating FGM in the EU.

During their **in-depth research phase of EIGE's study**, different national approaches taken toward tackling FGM in the EU were analysed and compared in order to identify good practices in the prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services, partnership and prevalence. At present, a report is under preparation.

In the frame of EIGE's study, an experience exchange meeting on '[Good Practices in the approach against Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\) in Europe](#)' took place in London on 13 September 2012. Experts from the Member States, NGOs and international organisations who work on FGM discussed and shared ideas on how to best (delete) fight against FGM in Europe, in relation to prevention, protection, prosecution, provisions of services and partnerships.

### **Project timeframe**

1 December 2011 – 30 November 2012

*A Consortium composed by the Ghent University – ICRH and E.A.D.C. (Yellow Window Management Consultants) have been commissioned to carry out the study*

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