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**EIGE Press Release**

## **Estimating the number of girls at risk of female genital mutilation in the EU**

**European Institute for Gender Equality presents its new report**

In the study *'Estimation of girls at risk of female genital mutilation in the European Union'*<sup>1</sup>, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) develops a methodology to estimate the number of girls at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) in the EU Member States. This methodology has been pilot-tested in Ireland, Portugal and Sweden. 'Being able to estimate the number of girls at risk of FGM can be very useful for policy makers, not only when planning and implementing asylum or migration policies, but also for measures and activities related to social integration,' states Virginija Langbakk, Director of EIGE. 'We hope that this new methodology will allow a better understanding of the phenomenon of FGM, following the efforts that Portugal has made in order to determine the number of girls at risk of female genital mutilation. On the other hand, this approach also relies on working more closely with the communities involved, in line with the goals and advances that Portugal has made through the Portuguese Action Plan', asserts Teresa Morais, Secretary of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Equality.

The findings of this research stress the importance of cooperation between governments and communities in preventing the practice of female genital mutilation in Europe and beyond. The study employs a mixed-method approach, comprising both a quantitative and a qualitative component. The quantitative component involved the collection of FGM

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<sup>1</sup> Report available here: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/estimation-of-girls-at-risk-of-female-genital-mutilation-in-the-european-union-report>

prevalence data (from FGM-practising countries) and data on the female migrant population in the EU Member States. The qualitative component involved focus group discussions aimed at assessing migrants' attitudes and behaviours towards FGM and how these may be changing over time and within a migration context.

A growing number of EU Member States are improving their legal and policy frameworks, as reported by EIGE's study *'Female Genital Mutilation in the European Union and Croatia'* from 2013<sup>2</sup>. Finland, Italy and Portugal are currently implementing national action plans to specifically combat female genital mutilation, while Belgium, Croatia, France, Slovakia, Spain, the UK and Ireland are including measures in their national action plans and setting up awareness raising initiatives.

The European Institute for Gender Equality is gaining recognition as the EU knowledge centre on equality between women and men. Its work on combating violence against women has become increasingly significant. In recent years the European Institute for Gender Equality has focused on supporting the European Commission and the Member States in their efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation in Europe. To be able to do that, EIGE is gradually expanding the scope of its research and data relating to female genital mutilation, which includes: a database on good practices<sup>3</sup>, research guidelines<sup>4</sup>, and policy recommendations.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to support and to strengthen the promotion of gender equality and the fight against discrimination based on sex, as well as to raise awareness of gender equality in the EU and the Member States.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Study to map the current situation and trends of female genital mutilation in 27 EU Member States (MS) and Croatia': <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/female-genital-mutilation-in-the-european-union-and-croatia-report>.

<sup>3</sup> Good practices in combating female genital mutilation: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/good-practices-in-combating-female-genital-mutilation>

<sup>4</sup> Estimation of girls at risk of female genital mutilation in the European Union: Step-by-step guide: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/stepbystep-guide-estimation-of-girls-at-risk-of-female-genital-mutilation-in-the-eu>