



Press release - 07-02-2018

Plenary session / Women's Rights & Gender Equality

Zero tolerance for female genital mutilation

The Commission and member states must step up their efforts to help end female genital mutilation, said MEPs in a resolution voted on Wednesday.

- 500,000 women living in the EU are estimated to have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM)
- MEPs call for cross-sectorial cooperation to tackle this issue
- Preventive actions and training for relevant actors are essential

After a debate in plenary on Tuesday (on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation - FGM), MEPs adopted a resolution on Wednesday calling on the Commission and member states to include FGM prevention measures in all policy areas (including health, social work, education, justice, etc.), to step up cross-sector cooperation, to help build bridges between organisations working with communities and to guarantee strong preventive action in refugee camps.

MEPs also voice concern that, although criminal law protects women from FGM in all member states, only a handful of cases are brought to justice. Training schemes are especially needed for those responsible for detecting, investigating and prosecuting cases of FGM.

Finally, MEPs call on those member states which have not yet ratified the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women to do so without delay, so that the EU's commitment complies with international standards promoting an integrated approach to ending violence against women and FGM.

The resolution was adopted by show of hands.

Quote

Rapporteur Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D, LT) said: "FGM is an issue of global repercussions and the EU has an important role to play in combating this harmful practice. We recognise the positive steps undertaken so far and commend civil society for its tireless work, but the efforts can be better harmonised. It is also crucial that this issue is tackled by all sectors - from health to social work, asylum, education including sex education, law enforcement, justice, child protection, and media and communication - at both national and EU level."

Quick facts

According to the World Health Organisation, at least 200 million women and girls around the world are currently living with the harmful consequences of FGM. It is estimated that at least 500,000 women living in the EU have been subjected to FGM and that a further 180,000 girls and women are at risk of undergoing FGM. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is recognised internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals call for an end to FGM by 2030, under Goal 5 on Gender Equality.

Further information

Adopted text (07.02.2018)

Video recording of the debate (06.02.2018)

Procedure file

EP Research Service - Zero tolerance for female genital mutilation (February 2018)

EIGE report on FGM in the EU

Female genital mutilation: the scourge affecting half a million women in the EU

Women's rights and gender equality webpage

Multimedia centre

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