



Plenary sitting

B9-0092/2020

5.2.2020

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on an EU strategy to put an end to female genital mutilation around the world
(2019/2988(RSP))

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on behalf of the ID Group

**European Parliament resolution on an EU strategy to put an end to female genital mutilation around the world
(2019/2988(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Council conclusions of June 2014 on preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls, including female genital mutilation (FGM),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 8 March 2010 on the Eradication of Violence Against Women in the European Union,
- having regard to the joint statement of 6 February 2013 on the International Day against Female Genital Mutilation, in which the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and five Commissioners reaffirmed the EU's commitment to combating FGM in its external relations,
- having regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Target 5.3 on eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation,
- having regard to the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe of 13 September 2017 on the need to intensify the efforts to prevent and combat female genital mutilation,
- having regard to the UN General Assembly Resolution of 20 December 2012 entitled 'Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation',
- having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
- having regard to the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative of September 2017 on eliminating violence against women and girls,
- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas UNICEF's 2016 statistical report indicates that more than 200 million girls and women worldwide have endured FGM, but the exact figure remains unknown;
- B. whereas in 2020 alone, 4.1 million girls around the world are at risk of experiencing FGM;
- C. whereas UNICEF states that unless urgent action is taken to end FGM, a further 68 million girls will have endured the practice by 2030;
- D. whereas FGM is now recognised as a global issue; whereas the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies FGM as a harmful practice which is to be eliminated by the year 2030;

- E. whereas FGM is mainly concentrated in 130 countries in the western, eastern and north-eastern regions of Africa, along with the Middle East, and is practiced in some countries of Asia and Latin America; whereas this harmful practice is now widely carried out in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, and more specifically among immigrant communities from countries where FGM is common;
- F. whereas, according to UNICEF, seven of the top eight countries with very high rates of female circumcision (between 83 and 98 %) are majority Muslim;
- G. whereas research by the Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology at the University of Oxford has demonstrated that there is a 'large significant positive correlation between the percentage of women subjected to FGM and the prevalence of Islam', and that there is an almost equal negative correlation between the percentage of women subjected to FGM and the prevalence of Christianity;
1. Underlines the fact that FGM constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against girls and women; is of the opinion that this practice violates a girl's or woman's right to health, security and physical integrity, the right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the practice results in death;
 2. Is of the opinion that FGM is mainly carried out because it is socially accepted within certain cultures and because of religion; points to the fact that in many cultures, FGM is regarded as a prerequisite for marriage and that girls or women who have not undergone FGM are regarded as unhealthy, unclean or unworthy; stresses that FGM is intended to impose patriarchal norms of purity and virginity on the bodies of girls and women;
 3. Is of the opinion that although FGM is not limited to Islamic countries, it is primarily a Muslim issue; stresses that there is a factual, empirical relationship between Islam and FGM; observes that there are numerous indications that FGM is widely carried out in Muslim-majority nations across the world; notes that a 2010 study conducted in a Saudi Arabian hospital found that there was a high prevalence of post-FGM medical complications among women and that the practice is widespread in this almost exclusively Muslim country; notes that a 2010 WADI report found that the FGM rate in Iraqi Kurdistan was 72 % and that it exceeded 80 % in the districts of Garman and New Kirkuk, and that FGM was most common among Sunni Muslims but was also practiced by Shiites, but, on the other hand, that Christians were not found to engage in FGM; points to a 2013 study by UNICEF on FGM in Africa that found that in all but one country surveyed, respondents said that FGM was a religious requirement; notes that in Malaysia, where 93 % of Muslim women have undergone FGM, 82 % claim that it is a religious obligation;
 4. Observes that FGM is one of the ways in which the inferior position of girls and women in most Islamic countries is expressed; notes that in many Muslim communities it is demanded of women that they should be virgins and their sexuality is controlled;
 5. Notes, in this context, that EU financial support to Islamic countries has very limited impact in the field of human rights for women, combating violence against women and increasing equality between men and women;
 6. Notes that the practice of FGM remains very prevalent and that in western Asia,

between 1997 and 2015, the rate of FGM among children aged 14 and below increased from 16.9 % to 21.7 %; is concerned that in many parts of Indonesia and across Asia more broadly, this harmful practice is so ingrained that if a woman gives birth to a baby girl in a hospital, FGM is automatically offered as a medical service;

7. Notes with concern that, hand in hand with migration from Muslim countries and African states in general, the rate of FGM has increased in Europe, the United States, Australia and New Zealand; notes with concern that in the United Kingdom and in the EU Member States, FGM is increasingly being performed on babies and infants, and that it is therefore almost impossible to detect, since the girls are not in school or old enough to report it;
8. Deplores the fact that although most countries in Africa where FGM is endemic have legislation criminalising the practice, enforcement is generally very weak and prosecution rare;
9. Notes that Nigeria accounts for a tenth of the estimated 200 million girls and women globally affected by FGM; notes that the federal law banning FGM only automatically applies to the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja and that only 13 out of 36 states have outlawed FGM, with penalties ranging from modest fines to five years' imprisonment; notes that law enforcement is very weak and that there have been almost no convictions;
10. Deplores the fact that in most countries in Europe, criminal laws designed to protect girls and women from FGM are also rarely enforced and that the authorities fail to tackle FGM; notes, in this regard, that in 2016, the UK House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee said that the lack of convictions for FGM was a 'national scandal'; notes that in March 2019, a mother was jailed for 11 years in the first British FGM conviction;
11. Is of the opinion that FGM is a barbaric practice that should be compared with other forms of clandestine violence against girls and women, such as honour violence and the child sexual exploitation activities of 'grooming gangs'; strongly underlines the fact that cultural and religious beliefs that profess, approve or tolerate FGM have no place in liberal societies that aim to ensure the human rights of all their citizens;
12. Calls on the Member States to enforce mandatory reporting of FGM to healthcare professionals, teaching staff, police and social services, as is already the case with other types of child abuse; calls on the Member States to adopt a zero tolerance policy towards FGM by tightening their criminal laws and by systematically detecting, investigating and prosecuting cases of FGM; is of the opinion that a zero tolerance policy is the only viable solution for deterring the practice of FGM; strongly believes that only policies of zero tolerance and systematic prosecution can send the right signal to women and girls who are too young, too disempowered or too scared to speak up; believes, furthermore, that only by engaging in a comprehensive fight against this harmful practice can the Member States give a good example to the outside world;
13. Calls on the Member States to deport convicted perpetrators of FGM;
14. Stresses that FGM is an expression of the deeply rooted inequality between men and women in many countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia; emphasises that the

strengthening of the position of women should and must be central to any external development policy; is of the opinion that ensuring that all girls attend school and developing the preconditions for the economic empowerment of women are also necessary steps in the fight against FGM;

15. Calls on the Commission to make FGM and other violent practices against girls and women a central issue in its human rights dialogues with the third countries concerned; calls on the European External Action Service and the Member States to intensify talks with third countries to encourage them to adopt national laws banning FGM, and also to effectively implement this legislation;
16. Calls on the Commission to monitor and report in detail on the results of the different financial instruments used in the fight against FGM;
17. Calls on the Commission to make EU development assistance to third countries dependent on concrete, real and visible progress in the field of women's rights and the fight against FGM;
18. Encourages the Member States to make their own development assistance dependent on improvement of the situation of women's rights and the fight against FGM;
19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the Council.