

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3232/00

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Subject: Female circumcision in the European Union

Given that female circumcision:

- is performed on children between the ages of 4 and 12 in around 20 African countries, ten south-east Asian countries and also in Europe;
- consists of the removal of the clitoris, the labia minora and part of the labia majora, and in the suturing of the vulva, with the attendant risk of mental trauma, tetanus, septicaemia, haemorrhaging, sterility and even death (one case in every six);
- has been performed on 140 million women worldwide, including 40 000 in Italy, where a further 20 000 are at risk;
- is performed under cover in unhygienic conditions and in breach of laws on the subject (Sweden, Norway, Germany and Belgium),

Will the Commission say:

1. how widespread this phenomenon is in the European Union and what national laws there are on this matter?
2. whether it believes a proposal for Community legislation should be drawn up to combat this form of torture, including even the withdrawal of economic aid for countries which authorise this practice (a provision already adopted in the United States in 1996) and with provision for deinfibulation to be performed on request under proper medical conditions and for appropriate public information, awareness and education campaigns to be undertaken in non-Community countries?