Are there any circumstances in which FGM is acceptable?

NO

FGM happens in a context of traditional norms and beliefs – including in Europe. Justifications provided for this practice range from abiding by tradition, to the preservation of virginity, social pressure, alleged reasons of hygiene, the control of women’s sexuality and as a prerequisite for marriage.

However, NONE of these stated reasons make it acceptable. FGM is a heinous form of violence against women and girls. It intentionally alters or injures the female external genitalia for non-medical reasons, and is performed against the will of the woman or girl. It takes away control over their bodies, their sexuality, and their right to have basic bodily functions free from infections and pain. In short, it violates their human rights.

Are any circumstances in which FGM is acceptable?

Are some types of FGM less harmful than others?

ALL forms of FGM cause long-lasting harm to women and girls and are a violation of their bodily integrity. All types of FGM affect the lives of survivors with physical and emotional consequences.

Are FGM a religious practice?

NO

There are no religions which make FGM a compulsory practice. Practising a certain religion DOES NOT indicate that someone is practising FGM. It is linked to traditions and customs based on family history, country and/or ethnicity of origin.

Is FGM a problem in Europe?

YES

Many believe that FGM only happens outside our borders, but it is a worldwide issue, which exists in Europe too. It is estimated that 100,000 girls and women are at risk of undergoing the harmful practice in 17 European countries alone and that over 600,000 women in Europe are living with the consequences of FGM.

What is the EU doing to tackle the problem of FGM in the EU?

A LOT

Ending all forms of violence against women and girls, including FGM, is one of the EU’s top priorities. The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 includes actions to work towards this goal. The EU generated a proposal to prevent and combat specific forms of gender-based violence in 2022 and will adopt a new recommendation on the prevention of gender-based violence in 2023.

The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, covering both internal and external dimensions, contains concrete commitments and actions to effectively prevent and put an end to violence against children, including FGM, and to ensure integrated protection. The EU continues to provide funding for projects from NGOs aiming to combat violence against women and girls.

Is it possible to end FGM globally once and for all?

YES

Ending all forms of violence against women and girls – including FGM – is a key aim of the EU’s equality policies. The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 includes actions to work towards this goal. The EU generated a proposal to prevent and combat specific forms of gender-based violence in 2022 and will adopt a new recommendation on the prevention of harmful practices in 2024.

The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, covering both internal and external dimensions, contains concrete commitments and actions to effectively prevent and put an end to violence against children, including FGM, and to ensure integrated protection. The EU continues to provide funding for projects from NGOs aiming to combat violence against women and girls.

The EU is working in line with international efforts to eliminate FGM globally, as outlined in the SDG Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 and the Gender Action Plan II for 2022-2025. The EU is working in line with international efforts to eliminate FGM globally, as outlined in the SDG Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 and the Gender Action Plan II for 2022-2025. The EU is working with survivors, affected families and communities, experts, policy makers and NGOs to achieve this goal. We will support the survivors and celebrate their resilience and strength and we encourage both men and women to play a role.

Because FGM is NOT only “a woman’s issue” – it is everyone’s concern.

Clear is possible – and it is happening. The EU contributes to international efforts to eliminate FGM globally, as outlined in the SDG Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 and the Gender Action Plan II for 2022-2025. The EU is working in line with international efforts to eliminate FGM globally, as outlined in the SDG Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 and the Gender Action Plan II for 2022-2025. The EU is working with survivors, affected families and communities, experts, policy makers and NGOs to achieve this goal. We will support the survivors and celebrate their resilience and strength and we encourage both men and women to play a role.

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