

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000669/25
to the Commission
Hilde Vautmans (Renew)
(12 February 2025)**

Subject: Eliminating female genital mutilation: European approach and global responsibility

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a serious human-rights violation and a form of gender-based violence affecting more than 200 million women worldwide, including an estimated 600 000 living in Europe. Though FGM is chiefly prevalent in Africa and parts of Asia and the Middle East, an estimated 190 000 girls are at risk in Europe too. Determined action needs to be taken in order to bring about change and eliminate this practice so that the sustainable development goal of zero FGM — SDG 5.3 — can be achieved by 2030.

Accordingly:

1. The Commission has proposed new legislation to criminalise gender-based violence, including FGM, in the EU. Since not all Member States attach the same priority to enforcing the Istanbul Convention, and some are even hampering its ratification, how will the Commission ensure that these rules actually result in protection for victims?
2. How can and will the Commission make more effective use of its diplomatic and development cooperation instruments in order to support countries with high FGM rates in eliminating this practice?

Submitted: 12.2.2025

**Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(5 June 2025)**

1. The EU is fully committed to eradicating female genital mutilation (FGM). This commitment is evidenced in Directive 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted in May 2024 ⁽¹⁾. The directive requires Member States, by June 2027, to criminalise FGM as a specific criminal offence in their penal codes punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of at least five years. It also calls on them to ensure that the limitation period to prosecute FGM does not start to run before the victim has reached 18 years of age, to put in place specific prevention measures and trainings for health professionals, to provide victims with specific specialist support, and to collect data on cases of FGM. The Commission will conduct implementation workshops with the Member States and once the transposition period expires, will assess if Member States have complied with the directive. If they have not, the Commission will take necessary measures.

2. The EU has been supporting projects to combat FGM worldwide, engaging with communities, transforming social norms through collective action. Since 2016, the EU has been working with partners on programmes such as the EU-United Nations Spotlight Initiative to eliminate this practice. Combating FGM has been raised in several bilateral dialogues with third countries and the Commission consistently supports various United Nations resolutions calling for its eradication. The EU will persist in collaborating with global partners to adopt a zero-tolerance stance on FGM, to build a world where every girl and woman can live free from all forms of violence and discrimination.

⁽¹⁾ Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, OJ L, 2024/1385, 24.5.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1385/oj>