



## Consultative Forum Thematic Meeting on gender-related persecution

### Discussion Paper

*Workshop 3: Harmful traditional practices as ground for asylum*

*Workshop leads: END FGM European Network, EASO*

#### Background

The continued migration to Europe from countries with high female genital mutilation (FGM) prevalence rates means that the relevance of the issue is increasing and the number of those affected or at risk continues to grow. According to the latest UNHCR 2018 “Too Much Pain” statistical report, in 2017, 66,000 women and girls coming from FGM-affected countries applied for asylum in Europe and estimates that over 24,000 of them could potentially have already been affected by FGM, although this figure is likely to be higher. Despite the overall drop of absolute numbers of arrivals compared to 2016, the report shows that the percentage of women and girls applicants from FGM-practicing countries has been steadily increasing in the past four years (going from 1/5 of the total number of female applicants in 2013 to almost 1/3 in 2017). Moreover, within the female applicants coming from FGM-affected countries, the percentage of women and girls potentially affected by FGM has also increased between 2016 and 2017. Such numbers confirm the need in Europe to pay increasing attention to survivors of FGM, among other forms of gender-based violence (GBV) and traditional harmful practices (THP).

We want human rights to be at the centre of the asylum process, and survivors of female genital mutilation and other THP (e.g. child early and forced marriage, honour crimes, etc.), human rights activists speaking out against them, women, girls and the families in fear of them to receive the protection they are entitled to, in the asylum process and as beneficiaries of international protection in EU Member States.

An assessment of the treatment of gender-related claims in EU Member States shows disparities between Member States, but also at national level between law, policies, theory and practice, and even between asylum officers. Advocating for a fair and sensitive asylum process across the EU for all asylum-seekers, especially for THP survivors, women and girls at risk and their relatives, and human rights defenders opposing these practices, this workshop intends to address a limited scope of issues impacting on THP-related claims in the asylum system, namely country of origin information, credibility and vulnerability assessment, as well as procedural rights, and intends to provide related recommendations to civil society, EASO, the EU and its Member States.

#### Structure of the workshop

Following an introduction that will be provided by End FGM European Network (20 min), the workshop will be articulated through discussions in smaller groups on the following topics:

1. Country of origin information
2. Credibility and vulnerability assessment
3. Procedural rights



Each group will be assigned one topic and will have the possibility to discuss it for 20 minutes. After that, the groups will move to the discussion of the following topic for another 20 minutes. Finally, the third topic will be explored for the last 20 minutes. At the end of the sessions, all participants will have the possibility to share their contribution on the different topics in plenary setting amongst workshop participants and to systematise all recommendations on the three topics discussed (30 min).

**Key questions to be discussed (max 5 points per group)**

- What are the challenges?
- What are the good practices at MS level?
- What are the recommendations to CSOs?
- What are the recommendations to EASO and EU?
- What are the recommendations to MS?