

Information on the implementation of A/RES/73/149 on “Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation”

Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation (A/RES/73/149)

The Council of Europe Independent Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) monitors the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) in relation to the prevention of, protection from and support for as well as prosecution of acts of female genital mutilation. From the 13 country reports published so far, it appears that data on the prevalence of female genital mutilation is rarely if not at all available, and victimisation surveys or other population surveys do not seek to assess the scale of women’s and girls’ exposure to this practice in state parties to the Istanbul Convention. This would include immigrant and refugee populations.

However, more and more measures are being taken in the health sector, including through maternal health, the education sector and through community-based action to prevent the performance of this practice on the next generation. More and more state parties to the Istanbul Convention are introducing protocols or standard operating procedures for the health care sector to identify and respond to women and girls at risk of being cut. In some, identification of girls at risk leads to follow-up interventions in the family via community-based social workers, consisting of a process of awareness-raising among parents and extended family members with the aim of revoking the practice. The potential of the education sector, ranging from pre-school to primary school and beyond, is being more and more tapped into and teachers, school psychologists and other well-being staff are identifying girls at risk more frequently. Notifications to authorities and the practice of asking parents to sign a declaration of honour to not have their daughters cut are gaining ground in some countries.

The Istanbul Convention has led many state parties to introduce a criminal offence of FGM, and many newly introduced offences are very closely worded after Article 38 of the Istanbul Convention. However, the level of prosecution remains low, as these are new offences and expertise in investigation and prosecution is only slowly developing.