ABSTRACT

THE EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR THE PREVENTION AND ERADICATION OF HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HEALTH OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN, IN PARTICULAR FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

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During the last few decades, Europe has received thousands of immigrants and refugees of African origin who practise female genital mutilation (FGM). Consequently, several NGOs, governments and health professionals of various nationalities were inspired to explore means of preventing FGM. At international gatherings, the idea emerged of founding a network to fight FGM practised outside the African continent.

After the idea was aired in Beijing, a second conference on FGM took place in Göteborg (Sweden) in July 1998, and discussions continued during the expert meeting on FGM in Gent (Belgium) in November 1998. In December 1999, the International Centre for Reproductive Health proposed a network on the European level. Follow-up conferences have been held in Paris, Rome and Brussels. The European Network aims to

- Exchange information, share acquired experience on the subject, and promote good practices at the community level;
- Harmonise several directives for training and managing cases of excised and infibulated women and put them at the disposition of health professionals;
- Set research priorities in Europe.

Members of the network are representatives of non-governmental and community based organisations (NGOs and CBOs) and associations from Europe with expertise in working to stop FGM.