



**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL  
END FGM EUROPEAN CAMPAIGN  
November 2013**

**EUROPEAN UNION DIRECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION  
Compilation of key provisions for applicants affected by female genital mutilation**

**1- Qualification Directive**

**Deadline for transposition in European Union (EU) member states: 21 December 2013**

**Recital 17**

With respect to the treatment of persons falling within the scope of this Directive, Member States are bound by obligations under instruments of international law to which they are party, including in particular those that prohibit discrimination.

**Recital 18**

The 'best interests of the child' should be a primary consideration of Member States when implementing this Directive, in line with the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In assessing the best interests of the child, Member States should in particular take due account of the principle of family unity, the minor's well-being and social development, safety and security considerations and the views of the minor in accordance with his or her age and maturity.

**Recital 28**

It is necessary, when assessing applications from minors for international protection, that Member States should have regard to child-specific forms of persecution.

**Recital 30**

It is equally necessary to introduce a common concept of the persecution ground 'membership of a particular social group'. For the purposes of defining a particular social group, issues arising from an applicant's gender, including gender identity and sexual orientation, which may be related to certain legal traditions and customs, resulting in for example genital mutilation, forced sterilisation or forced abortion, should be given due consideration in so far

as they are related to the applicant's well-founded fear of persecution.

**Recital 38**

When deciding on entitlements to the benefits included in this Directive, Member States should take due account of the best interests of the child, as well as of the particular circumstances of the dependency on the beneficiary of international protection of close relatives who are already present in the Member State and who are not family members of that beneficiary. In exceptional circumstances, where the close relative of the beneficiary of international protection is a married minor but not accompanied by his or her spouse, the best interests of the minor may be seen to lie with his or her original family.

**Recital 46**

Access to healthcare, including both physical and mental healthcare, should be ensured to beneficiaries of international protection.

**Article 4 (3) (4)**

**Assessment of facts and circumstances**

3. The assessment of an application for international protection is to be carried out on an individual basis and includes taking into account:

- (a) all relevant facts as they relate to the country of origin at the time of taking a decision on the application, including laws and regulations of the country of origin and the manner in which they are applied;
- (b) the relevant statements and documentation presented by the applicant including information on whether the applicant has been or may be subject to persecution or serious harm;
- (c) the individual position and personal circumstances of the applicant, including factors such as

background, gender and age, so as to assess whether, on the basis of the applicant's personal circumstances, the acts to which the applicant has been or could be exposed would amount to persecution or serious harm;

(d) whether the applicant's activities since leaving the country of origin were engaged in for the sole or main purpose of creating the necessary conditions for applying for international protection, so as to assess whether those activities would expose the applicant to persecution or serious harm if returned to that country;

(e) whether the applicant could reasonably be expected to avail himself or herself of the protection of another country where he or she could assert citizenship.

4. The fact that an applicant has already been subject to persecution or serious harm, or to direct threats of such persecution or such harm, is a serious indication of the applicant's well-founded fear of persecution or real risk of suffering serious harm, unless there are good reasons to consider that such persecution or serious harm will not be repeated.

#### **Article 5 (1) (2)**

##### **International protection needs arising sur place**

1. A well-founded fear of being persecuted or a real risk of suffering serious harm may be based on events which have taken place since the applicant left the country of origin.

2. A well-founded fear of being persecuted or a real risk of suffering serious harm may be based on activities which the applicant has engaged in since he or she left the country of origin, in particular where it is established that the activities relied upon constitute the expression and continuation of convictions or orientations held in the country of origin.

#### **Article 6**

##### **Actors of persecution or serious harm**

Actors of persecution or serious harm include:

- (a) the State;
- (b) parties or organisations controlling the State or a substantial part of the territory of the State;
- (c) non-State actors, if it can be demonstrated that the actors mentioned in points (a) and (b), including international organisations, are unable or unwilling to provide protection against persecution or serious harm as defined in Article 7.

#### **Article 9 (2) (f)**

##### **Acts of persecution**

2. Acts of persecution as qualified in paragraph 1 can, inter alia, take the form of:

[...] (f) acts of a gender-specific or child-specific nature.

#### **Article 10 (1) (d)** **Reasons for persecution**

1. Member States shall take the following elements into account when assessing the reasons for persecution:

(d) a group shall be considered to form a particular social group where in particular:

- members of that group share an innate characteristic, or a common background that cannot be changed, or share a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce it, and
- that group has a distinct identity in the relevant country, because it is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.

Depending on the circumstances in the country of origin, a particular social group might include a group based on a common characteristic of sexual orientation. Sexual orientation cannot be understood to include acts considered to be criminal in accordance with national law of the Member States. Gender related aspects, including gender identity, shall be given due consideration for the purposes of determining membership of a particular social group or identifying a characteristic of such a group;

#### **Article 15**

##### **Serious harm**

##### **(in Chapter on qualification for subsidiary protection)**

Serious harm consists of:

- (a) the death penalty or execution; or
- (b) torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of an applicant in the country of origin; or
- (c) serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict.

#### **Article 21(1)**

##### **Protection from refoulement**

1. Member States shall respect the principle of non-refoulement in accordance with their international obligations.

#### **Article 22** **Information**

Member States shall provide beneficiaries of international protection, as soon as possible after refugee status or subsidiary protection status has been granted, with access to information, in a language that they understand or are reasonably supposed to

understand, on the rights and obligations relating to that status.

#### **Article 23 (1) (2) (3) (5) Maintaining family unity**

1. Member States shall ensure that family unity can be maintained.
2. Member States shall ensure that family members of the beneficiary of international protection who do not individually qualify for such protection are entitled to claim the benefits referred to in Articles 24 to 35, in accordance with national procedures and as far as is compatible with the personal legal status of the family member.
3. Paragraphs 1 and 2 are not applicable where the family member is or would be excluded from international protection pursuant to Chapters III and V. (...)
5. Member States may decide that this Article also applies to other close relatives who lived together as part of the family at the time of leaving the country of origin, and who were wholly or mainly dependent on the beneficiary of international protection at that time.

#### **Article 30 Healthcare**

1. Member States shall ensure that beneficiaries of international protection have access to healthcare under the same eligibility conditions as nationals of the Member State that has granted such protection.
2. Member States shall provide, under the same eligibility conditions as nationals of the Member State that has granted protection, adequate healthcare, including treatment of mental disorders when needed, to beneficiaries of international protection who have special needs, such as pregnant women, disabled people, persons who have undergone torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence or minors who have been victims of any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or who have suffered from armed conflict.

#### **Article 34 Access to integration facilities**

In order to facilitate the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into society, Member States shall ensure access to integration programmes which they consider to be appropriate so as to take into account the specific needs of beneficiaries of refugee status or of subsidiary protection status, or create pre-

conditions which guarantee access to such programmes.

#### **Article 37 Staff**

Member States shall ensure that authorities and other organisations implementing this Directive have received the necessary training and shall be bound by the confidentiality principle, as defined in the national law, in relation to any information they obtain in the course of their work.

#### **2- Procedure Directive<sup>1</sup>**

**Deadline for transposition in EU member states: 20 July 2015**

#### **Recital 29**

Certain applicants may be in need of special procedural guarantees due, inter alia, to their age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, serious illness, mental disorders or as a consequence of torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence. Member States should endeavour to identify applicants in need of special procedural guarantees before a first instance decision is taken. Those applicants should be provided with adequate support, including sufficient time, in order to create the conditions necessary for their effective access to procedures and for presenting the elements needed to substantiate their application for international protection.

#### **Recital 31**

National measures dealing with identification and documentation of symptoms and signs of torture or other serious acts of physical or psychological violence, including acts of sexual violence, in procedures covered by this Directive may, inter alia, be based on the Manual on Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol).

#### **Recital 32**

With a view to ensuring substantive equality between female and male applicants, examination procedures should be gender-sensitive. In particular, personal interviews should be organised in a way which makes it possible for both female and male applicants to speak about their past experiences in cases involving

---

<sup>1</sup> Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast)

gender- based persecution. The complexity of gender-related claims should be properly taken into account in procedures based on the concept of safe third country, the concept of safe country of origin or the notion of subsequent applications.

#### **Recital 39**

In determining whether a situation of uncertainty prevails in the country of origin of an applicant, Member States should ensure that they obtain precise and up-to-date information from relevant sources such as EASO, UNHCR, the Council of Europe and other relevant international organisations. Member States should ensure that any postponement of conclusion of the procedure fully complies with their obligations under Directive 2011/95/EU and Article 41 of the Charter, without prejudice to the efficiency and fairness of the procedures under this Directive.

#### **Recital 42**

The designation of a third country as a safe country of origin for the purposes of this Directive cannot establish an absolute guarantee of safety for nationals of that country. By its very nature, the assessment underlying the designation can only take into account the general civil, legal and political circumstances in that country and whether actors of persecution, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are subject to sanction in practice when found liable in that country. For this reason, it is important that, where an applicant shows that there are valid reasons to consider the country not to be safe in his or her particular circumstances, the designation of the country as safe can no longer be considered relevant for him or her.

#### **Recital 46**

Where Member States apply safe country concepts on a case-by-case basis or designate countries as safe by adopting lists to that effect, they should take into account, inter alia, the guidelines and operating manuals and the information on countries of origin and activities, including EASO Country of Origin Information report methodology, referred to in Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office ( 1 ), as well as relevant UNHCR guidelines.

#### **Article 2 (d) Definitions**

(d) 'applicant in need of special procedural guarantees' means an applicant whose ability to benefit from the rights and comply with the obligations provided for in this Directive is limited due to individual circumstances;

#### **Article 4 (3) Responsible authorities**

3. Member States shall ensure that the personnel of the determining authority referred to in paragraph 1 are properly trained. To that end, Member States shall provide for relevant training which shall include the elements listed in Article 6(4)(a) to (e) of Regulation (EU) No 439/2010. Member States shall also take into account the relevant training established and developed by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Persons interviewing applicants pursuant to this Directive shall also have acquired general knowledge of problems which could adversely affect the applicants' ability to be interviewed, such as indications that the applicant may have been tortured in the past.

#### **Article 6 (1) Access to the procedure**

[...] Member States shall ensure that those other authorities which are likely to receive applications for international protection such as the police, border guards, immigration authorities and personnel of detention facilities have the relevant information and that their personnel receive the necessary level of training which is appropriate to their tasks and responsibilities and instructions to inform applicants as to where and how applications for international protection may be lodged.

#### **Article 7 (1) (3) Applications made on behalf of dependants or minors**

1. Member States shall ensure that each adult with legal capacity has the right to make an application for international protection on his or her own behalf.

3. Member States shall ensure that a minor has the right to make an application for international protection either on his or her own behalf, if he or she has the legal capacity to act in procedures according to the law of the Member State concerned, or through his or her parents or other adult family members, or an adult responsible for him or her, whether by law or by the practice of the Member State concerned, or through a representative.

#### **Article 10 (3) Requirements for the examination of applications**

3. Member States shall ensure that decisions by the determining authority on applications for international protection are taken after an appropriate examination. To that end, Member States shall ensure that:

a) applications are examined and decisions are taken individually, objectively and impartially;

(b) precise and up-to-date information is obtained from various sources, such as EASO and UNHCR and relevant international human rights organisations, as to the general situation prevailing in the countries of origin of applicants and, where necessary, in countries through which they have transited, and that such information is made available to the personnel responsible for examining applications and taking decisions;

(c) the personnel examining applications and taking decisions know the relevant standards applicable in the field of asylum and refugee law;

(d) the personnel examining applications and taking decisions have the possibility to seek advice, whenever necessary, from experts on particular issues, such as medical, cultural, religious, child-related or gender issues.

#### **Article 11(3)**

##### **Requirements for a decision by the determining authority**

3. For the purposes of Article 7(2), and whenever the application is based on the same grounds, Member States may take a single decision, covering all dependants, unless to do so would lead to the disclosure of particular circumstances of an applicant which could jeopardise his or her interests, in particular in cases involving gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or age- based persecution. In such cases, a separate decision shall be issued to the person concerned.

#### **Article 13 (2) (d)**

##### **Obligations of the applicants**

(d) the competent authorities may search the applicant and the items which he or she is carrying. Without prejudice to any search carried out for security reasons, a search of the applicant's person under this Directive shall be carried out by a person of the same sex with full respect for the principles of human dignity and of physical and psychological integrity;

#### **Article 14 (1)**

##### **Personal interview**

[...] Persons conducting personal interviews of applicants pursuant to this Directive shall also have acquired general knowledge of problems which could adversely affect an applicant's ability to be interviewed, such as indications that the applicant may have been tortured in the past.

#### **Article 15**

##### **Requirements for a personal interview**

1. A personal interview shall normally take place without the presence of family members unless the determining authority considers it necessary for an appropriate examination to have other family members present.

2. A personal interview shall take place under conditions which ensure appropriate confidentiality.

3. Member States shall take appropriate steps to ensure that personal interviews are conducted under conditions which allow applicants to present the grounds for their applications in a comprehensive manner. To that end, Member States shall:

(a) ensure that the person who conducts the interview is competent to take account of the personal and general circumstances surrounding the application, including the applicant's cultural origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or vulnerability;

(b) wherever possible, provide for the interview with the applicant to be conducted by a person of the same sex if the applicant so requests, unless the determining authority has reason to believe that such a request is based on grounds which are not related to difficulties on the part of the applicant to present the grounds of his or her application in a comprehensive manner;

(c) select an interpreter who is able to ensure appropriate communication between the applicant and the person who conducts the interview. The communication shall take place in the language preferred by the applicant unless there is another language which he or she understands and in which he or she is able to communicate clearly. Wherever possible, Member States shall provide an interpreter of the same sex if the applicant so requests, unless the determining authority has reasons to believe that such a request is based on grounds which are not related to difficulties on the part of the applicant to present the grounds of his or her application in a comprehensive manner;

(d) ensure that the person who conducts the interview on the substance of an application for international protection does not wear a military or law enforcement uniform;

(e) ensure that interviews with minors are conducted in a child- appropriate manner.

4. Member States may provide for rules concerning the presence of third parties at a personal interview.

#### **Article 18 (1)**

##### **Medical examination**

1. Where the determining authority deems it relevant for the assessment of an application for international protection in accordance with Article 4 of Directive 2011/95/EU, Member States shall, subject to the applicant's consent, arrange for a medical examination of the applicant concerning signs that might indicate past persecution or serious harm. Alternatively, Member States may provide that the applicant arranges for such a medical examination. [...]

#### **Article 24**

##### **Applicants in need of special procedural guarantees**

1. Member States shall assess within a reasonable period of time after an application for international protection is made whether the applicant is an applicant in need of special procedural guarantees.

2. The assessment referred to in paragraph 1 may be integrated into existing national procedures and/or into the assessment referred to in Article 22 of Directive 2013/33/EU and need not take the form of an administrative procedure.

3. Member States shall ensure that where applicants have been identified as applicants in need of special procedural guarantees, they are provided with adequate support in order to allow them to benefit from the rights and comply with the obligations of this Directive throughout the duration of the asylum procedure.

Where such adequate support cannot be provided within the framework of the procedures referred to in Article 31(8) and Article 43, in particular where Member States consider that the applicant is in need of special procedural guarantees as a result of torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, Member States shall not apply, or shall cease to apply, Article 31(8) and Article 43. Where Member States apply Article 46(6) to applicants to whom Article 31(8) and Article 43 cannot be applied pursuant to this subparagraph, Member States shall provide at least the guarantees provided for in Article 46(7).

4. Member States shall ensure that the need for special procedural guarantees is also addressed, in accordance with this Directive, where such a need becomes apparent at a later stage of the procedure, without necessarily restarting the procedure.

#### **Article 36**

##### **The concept of safe country of origin**

1. A third country designated as a safe country of origin in accordance with this Directive may, after an individual examination of the application, be considered as a safe country of origin for a particular applicant only if:

(a) he or she has the nationality of that country; or

(b) he or she is a stateless person and was formerly habitually resident in that country, and he or she has not submitted any serious grounds for considering the country not to be a safe country of origin in his or her particular circumstances and in terms of his or her qualification as a beneficiary of international protection in accordance with Directive 2011/95/EU.

2. Member States shall lay down in national legislation further rules and modalities for the application of the safe country of origin concept.

### **3- Reception Conditions Directive**<sup>2</sup>

**Deadline for transposition in EU member states: 20 July 2015**

#### **Recital 9**

In applying this Directive, Member States should seek to ensure full compliance with the principles of the best interests of the child and of family unity, in accordance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms respectively.

#### **Recital 14**

The reception of persons with special reception needs should be a primary concern for national authorities in order to ensure that such reception is specifically designed to meet their special reception needs.

#### **Recital 22**

When deciding on housing arrangements, Member States should take due account of the best interests of the child, as well as of the particular circumstances of any applicant who is dependent on family members or other close relatives such as unmarried minor siblings already present in the Member State.

#### **Article 2 (f) (g) (k) Definitions**

(f) 'reception conditions': means the full set of measures that Member States grant to applicants in accordance with this Directive;

(g) 'material reception conditions': means the reception conditions that include housing, food and

---

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast)

clothing provided in kind, or as financial allowances or in vouchers, or a combination of the three, and a daily expenses allowance;

(k) 'applicant with special reception needs': means a vulnerable person, in accordance with Article 21, who is in need of special guarantees in order to benefit from the rights and comply with the obligations provided for in this Directive.

#### **Article 5 Information**

1. Member States shall inform applicants, within a reasonable time not exceeding 15 days after they have lodged their application for international protection, of at least any established benefits and of the obligations with which they must comply relating to reception conditions.

Member States shall ensure that applicants are provided with information on organisations or groups of persons that provide specific legal assistance and organisations that might be able to help or inform them concerning the available reception conditions, including health care.

2. Member States shall ensure that the information referred to in paragraph 1 is in writing and, in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand. Where appropriate, this information may also be supplied orally.

#### **Article 17 (1) (2) General rules on material reception conditions and health care**

1. Member States shall ensure that material reception conditions are available to applicants when they make their application for international protection.

2. Member States shall ensure that material reception conditions provide an adequate standard of living for applicants, which guarantees their subsistence and protects their physical and mental health.

Member States shall ensure that that standard of living is met in the specific situation of vulnerable persons, in accordance with Article 21, as well as in relation to the situation of persons who are in detention.

#### **Article 18 (3) (4) (7) Modalities for material reception conditions**

3. Member States shall take into consideration gender and age-specific concerns and the situation of vulnerable persons in relation to applicants within the

premises and accommodation centres referred to in paragraph 1(a) and (b).

4. Member States shall take appropriate measures to prevent assault and gender-based violence, including sexual assault and harassment, within the premises and accommodation centres referred to in paragraph 1(a) and (b).

7. Persons working in accommodation centres shall be adequately trained and shall be bound by the confidentiality rules provided for in national law in relation to any information they obtain in the course of their work.

#### **Article 19 (2) Health care**

2. Member States shall provide necessary medical or other assistance to applicants who have special reception needs, including appropriate mental health care where needed.

#### **Article 21**

##### **General principle (*in* Chapter on Provisions for vulnerable persons)**

Member States shall take into account the specific situation of vulnerable persons such as minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation, in the national law implementing this Directive.

#### **Article 22 (1) Assessment of the special reception needs of vulnerable persons**

1. In order to effectively implement Article 21, Member States shall assess whether the applicant is an applicant with special reception needs. Member States shall also indicate the nature of such needs.

That assessment shall be initiated within a reasonable period of time after an application for international protection is made and may be integrated into existing national procedures. Member States shall ensure that those special reception needs are also addressed, in accordance with the provisions of this Directive, if they become apparent at a later stage in the asylum procedure.

Member States shall ensure that the support provided to applicants with special reception needs in accordance with this Directive takes into account their special reception needs throughout the duration of the asylum procedure and shall provide for appropriate monitoring of their situation.

#### **Article 23 (1) (2) (4) Minors**

1. The best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration for Member States when implementing the provisions of this Directive that involve minors. Member States shall ensure a standard of living adequate for the minor's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

2. In assessing the best interests of the child, Member States shall in particular take due account of the following factors:

- (a) family reunification possibilities;
- (b) the minor's well-being and social development, taking into particular consideration the minor's background;
- (c) safety and security considerations, in particular where there is a risk of the minor being a victim of human trafficking
- (d) the views of the minor in accordance with his or her age and maturity.

4. Member States shall ensure access to rehabilitation services for minors who have been victims of any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation, torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, or who have suffered from armed conflicts, and ensure that appropriate mental health care is developed and qualified counselling is provided when needed.

#### **Article 25 Victims of torture and violence**

1. Member States shall ensure that persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious acts of violence receive the necessary treatment for the damage caused by such acts, in particular access to appropriate medical and psychological treatment or care.

2. Those working with victims of torture, rape or other serious acts of violence shall have had and shall continue to receive appropriate training concerning their needs, and shall be bound by the confidentiality rules provided for in national law, in relation to any information they obtain in the course of their work.

#### **Article 29 Staff and resources**

1. Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that authorities and other organisations implementing this Directive have received the necessary basic training with respect to the needs of both male and female applicants.

2. Member States shall allocate the necessary resources in connection with the national law implementing this Directive.

#### **4- Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women<sup>3</sup>**

##### **Article 60 Gender-based asylum claims**

1. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that gender-based violence against women may be recognised as a form of persecution within the meaning of Article 1, A (2), of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and as a form of serious harm giving rise to complementary/subsidiary protection.

2. Parties shall ensure that a gender-sensitive interpretation is given to each of the Convention grounds and that where it is established that the persecution feared is for one or more of these grounds, applicants shall be granted refugee status according to the applicable relevant instruments.

3. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to develop gender-sensitive reception procedures and support services for asylum-seekers as well as gender

##### **Article 61 Non-refoulement**

1. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to respect the principle of non-refoulement in accordance with existing obligations under international law.

2. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that victims of violence against women who are in need of protection, regardless of their status or residence, shall not be returned under any circumstances to any country where their life would be at risk or where they might be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

---

<sup>3</sup> Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast)