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Press release

180,000 girls and women at risk in Europe: TERRE DES FEMMES is launching an international project on Female Genital Mutilation within African communities in the European Union

Berlin, 17 April 2013. The EU-Parliament estimates that 180,000 girls and young women are at risk of mutilation in a country of the EU or in the home country of their parents. A study by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) points out the need for closer cooperation in Europe to overcome this massive violation of human rights of girls and women. NGOs and African communities can contribute to the end of Female Genital Mutilation in Europe by increased Europe-wide collaboration.

Therefore RISK, Riksföreningen Stoppa Kvinnlig Könstympling together with partner organizations, is starting the two-year EU-project CHANGE, coordinated by TERRE DES FEMMES. The objective of CHANGE is to diminish the social pressure in African communities in Europe and thereby protect girls at risk. For that purpose 48 persons of influence, so called *Change Agents*, are needed. *Change Agents* can be male or female; they should come from a country of origin with a high FGM-rate and desire to become involved in their communities.

“Only by continuous training and intensive dialogue can we alter attitudes toward Female Genital Mutilation. As a women’s organisation we want a world in which girls and women are no longer denied physical and mental integrity. Female Genital Mutilation is a massive violation of human rights and can have lifelong consequences that may even lead to death,” states Christa Stolle, Director of TERRE DES FEMMES.

On April 18th and 19th, the kick-off meeting for CHANGE will be held in the TERRE DES FEMMES headquarters in Berlin. Partner organizations EuroNET-FGM, FSAN from the Netherlands, FORWARD from Great Britain, RISK from Sweden and Plan International from Germany will participate in the meeting. The project is co-funded by the European Commission under the Daphne Programme, and Isabelle Louis, Project Officer at the EU, will also be present. These partners will manage the selection and training of *Change Agents* for African communities.

For further information on the CHANGE project please contact the project coordinator: TERRE DES FEMMES, Katharina Kuss, Tel. +49-304050469926, email: change@frauenrechte.de