

## **Western Genital Mutilation a.k.a. Cosmetic Genital Surgery performed on Children Switzerland 14<sup>th</sup> Universal Periodic Review 2012**

### **Summary:**

#### **Clitoris amputations and other cosmetic "genital corrections" in children's clinics**

Clitoris amputations on young girls have been prevalent in western medicine since the 19<sup>th</sup> century as therapy for a) masturbation, b) hysteria, and c) "enlarged clitoris". While amputations motivated by a) and b) had been abandoned between 1900 and 1945, amputations of "enlarged clitorises" took a sharp rise after 1950 and became de facto medical standard on newborns in the 1960s, partly in combination with gonadectomies (castrations). Doctors argued, these amputations would not affect the ability to achieve orgasm. However, in the 1980s they switched to new techniques involving only partial removal of the clitoris, allegedly now preserving sexual sensation. In addition, a new trend emerged towards "masculinizing surgeries". Since the 1990s, the persons concerned denounce all of these surgeries as "immensely destructive of sexual sensation", as western genital mutilation, and as violation of their right to physical integrity and self-determination. 2011, UN-CAT criticized cosmetic "genital corrections" and recommended investigations into the practice (CAT/C/DEU/CO/5, point 20. "Intersex people", p. 6-7).

### **14<sup>th</sup> Universal Periodic Review**

In 2012 for the first time an NGO of persons concerned and supporters from Switzerland, [Zwischengeschlecht.org](http://Zwischengeschlecht.org), is asking the Human Rights Council for help in order to abolish these harmful practices. See issue 18 from Swiss NGO Coalition's Submission (p. 9):

#### ***18. Cosmetic genital surgery performed on children***

*About 1 child in 1000 is born with "inconclusive" physical sexual characteristics (hermaphroditism, intersex, disorders of sex development). Such children are very frequently operated on "for cosmetic reasons" at a baby age. Those affected often see these operations as unwanted surgery without medical necessity and evidence. Furthermore, such interventions represent an infringement to the right to physical integrity and self-determination.*

#### ***Recommendation***

*Switzerland should establish a commission to deal with the issues of those affected by the consequences of cosmetic genital surgery in an unbiased and fair manner.*

**In the name of the persons concerned, we petition the members of the Human Rights Council to consider their pleas and to help forcing the Swiss government to abandon mutilating cosmetic surgeries on defenseless children.**

#### **Contact:**

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