

A PUBLICATION BY THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY



# FROM CONFLICT TO PEACE? #WOMENSVOICES

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PREVENTING & COMBATING  
VIOLENCE AGAINST REFUGEE WOMEN & GIRLS ON THE MOVE

From January to June 2016, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) developed, together with the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) and the European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW), the **#womensvoices** project **“From conflict to peace? Women and girls’ voices on the move”**.



## Why?

Because European and national policies are **gender blind to the reality faced by women and girls on the road**, especially when it comes to the different forms of violence they face at all stages of their journey towards peace.

Because women and girls fleeing conflicts and travelling to or settling in Europe are at **higher risk of suffering from male violence**. On the way and in the centres, they face rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, from different perpetrators; they have to resort to prostitution in order to get access to food, housing or transport; they face domestic violence; girls are being sold for marriage or trafficked for sexual exploitation...



IT IS IMPORTANT THAT FEMINISTS ENGAGE IN REFUGEE POLITICS IN ORDER TO CHANGE THE MALE NORM OF "WHO IS A REFUGEE."

Swedish Women's Lobby



# The #womensvoices project: a unique and impactful 6-month project putting violence against refugee women and girls on the European political agenda



A unique project methodology:

- A bottom-up approach
- Questionnaires sent to all EWL members (50 national and European coordinations)
- Stakeholders' mapping to identify and meet key actors
- #womensvoices Forum convening EWL members and key players on the issue
- #womensvoices recommendations with advocacy tools
- #womensvoices European Dialogue, bringing women's voices at EU level
- Country findings factsheet





### THREE KEY DEMANDS:

- **Comprehensive policies to end all forms of violence against women and girls** in the EU and its member states, and specific measures to ensure that women and girls refugees and asylum seekers are protected and get access to justice.
- **A humanitarian response** which succeeds in protecting women and girls from male violence and exploitation.
- **Gender-sensitive asylum policies and procedures** to help women and girls to escape or denounce male violence and access to their full human rights.

## THREE ADVOCACY TOOLS

THE 5 Ps FRAMEWORK TO END ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS



EWL CHECK LIST 'IMPLEMENTING A GENDER-SENSITIVE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE'



EWL CHECK LIST 'ENGENDERING THE ASYLUM SYSTEMS'





# ENDING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS

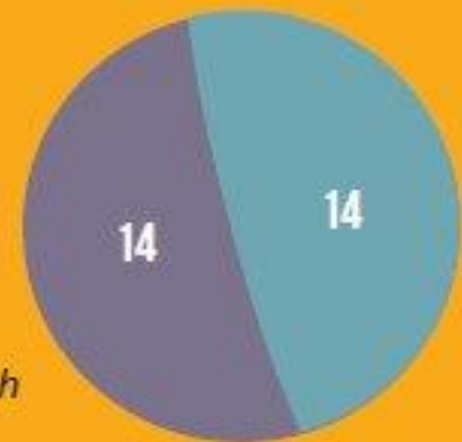
Our demands:

- Ratification of the Istanbul Convention
- Comprehensive and coordinated policies on all forms of violence against women
- A victim-centred approach including specific measures for refugee women and girls
- Systematic and adequate data collection and research
- Appropriate financial and human resources
- National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security

## STATUS OF THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION IN THE EU REGARDING THE NUMBER OF SIGNATURES AND RATIFICATIONS

-  **EU Member States** that have signed & ratified:  
AT, BE, DK, ES, FI, FR, IT, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SI, SE
-  **EU Member States** that have signed and are to ratify:  
BG, CZ, CY, DE, EE, EL, HR, HU, IE, LT, LV, LU, SK, UK

*The Istanbul Convention is the first European instrument which creates a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combat violence against women.*



# ENDING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS



## TESTIMONY - SANA

*"I arrived in Finland with my husband as asylum seekers. Already in the very beginning of the process, I stated that I wanted our applications to be handled separately. Because of the political activity of my husband, I had been gang raped in my country. I did not want my husband to learn this. The marriage is a forced one and there has been all kinds of violence throughout the marriage, and also in the reception centre in Finland. I sought help from a social worker and the police has also visited our home because of domestic violence. I want a divorce, but it is very complicated because of religious reasons."*





# ENDING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS

## THE 5 Ps FRAMEWORK TO END ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS

The 5 Ps framework is a policy and advocacy tool to ensure that all aspects for a comprehensive policy to end all forms of male violence are included, analysed, and implemented. Based on the establishment of a holistic policy framework, the 5 Ps refer to: partnership, prevention, service provision, prosecution and protection. Here is our advocacy tool to ensure that the rights and situation of women and girls refugees are integrated into general policies and measures on ending male violence. These demands are directed at the EU, its member states and acceding/candidate countries, and should be implemented at all levels.



# IMPLEMENTING A GENDER-SENSITIVE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Our demands:

- Transit/accommodation centres built and staffed in a gender-sensitive manner
- Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights
- A coordinated global approach to prevent and respond to violence against women in crisis contexts
- Empowering women and girls as agents of change



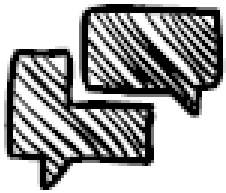
**ENSURE THAT HUMANITARIAN  
PROGRAMMING IS GENDER RESPONSIVE**

World Humanitarian Summit Core Commitment



# IMPLEMENTING A GENDER-SENSITIVE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

## TESTIMONY FROM A WOMEN'S NGO IN FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



*"A woman was physically assaulted by her father in her country of origin because she married a man from a different religion. Her father was a police officer and she could not protect herself in her own country. Therefore, she decided to leave the country. She arrived in Macedonia and asked for asylum. Her claim was refused by the authorities. Currently her case is in front of the constitutional court and she is in the asylum centre in Skopje. During this decision making process the women is being accommodated in the Vizbegovo asylum centre in Skopje. The centre is a collective facility where women are often exposed to gender based violence. The facility is not light enough, not secure for women, there is limited access to hygiene facilities, access to medical help is very also limited. Other women have complained that they were sexually accosted by police personnel and social workers in the centre. However, these claims never went into procedure due to the fact that women were scared to report for fear of this interfering with their asylum application.*



# IMPLEMENTING A GENDER-SENSITIVE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

## EWL CHECK LIST 'IMPLEMENTING A GENDER-SENSITIVE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE'



Hastily constructed transit, reception and accommodation centres are not designed to protect refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls from male violence or provide assistance to survivors. **This check list is an advocacy tool for EWL members and partners to put pressure on national and European authorities, as well as on humanitarian actors (agencies and organisations), and ensure concrete measures and change to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG).** These measures are organised around the 4 main areas of action in humanitarian response: human resources, spaces, services, and the response to VAWG.



# ENGENDERING THE ASYLUM SYSTEMS

Our demands:

- Asylum procedures comply with the UNHCR Guidelines on International Protection
- The EU asylum system include a gender perspective
- All women entering the EU should be granted independent legal status
- Gender focal points in the European Asylum Support Office



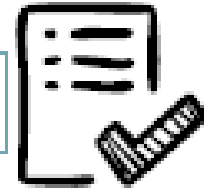
**THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM SHALL BE GUARANTEED WITH DUE RESPECT FOR THE RULES OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION OF 28 JULY 1951 AND THE PROTOCOL OF 31 JANUARY 1967 RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION AND THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION.**



Article 18 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

# ENGENDERING THE ASYLUM SYSTEMS

## EWL CHECK LIST 'ENGENDERING THE ASYLUM SYSTEMS'



Engendering asylum systems requires reading and applying asylum policies with a gender perspective (implementing gender mainstreaming). The following check list, addressed to the EU and its member states and acceding/candidate countries, looks at the 6 areas of action related to asylum policies: staff, interviews, reception centres, institutional mechanisms, public awareness campaigns, and the specific situation of unaccompanied girls.



# A timely, relevant & strategic project



EuropeanWomen'sLobby Retweeted

 **Věra Jourová** @VeraJourova · Jun 2

I welcome @EuropeanWomen report on combating #VAW refugees. More protection is needed to ensure their safety [bit.ly/1X0J6Ar](https://bit.ly/1X0J6Ar)

← ↻ 11 ❤️ 10 ⋮

EuropeanWomen'sLobby Retweeted

 **Anders Ahnlid** @AndersAhnlid · Jun 2

Proud to host #womensvoices European Dialogue at @SwedeninEU. Violence against refugee women and girls must stop!



← ↻ 16 ❤️ 16 ⋮

## 4 June 2016: adoption of EWL emergency motion on “Promotion of women protection in EU and UN refugee policies”

“We, the EWL, request the following urgent actions:

- that EU Member States should increase the number of UNHCR quota refugees and give priority to women within the quota system;
- that EU Member States implement the principle of family unification upheld in the UN Refugee Convention of 1951, in order that mothers, sisters and daughters of men refugees travel to Europe safely and avoid becoming victims of human traffickers;
- that EU Member States apply the principle of human rights to women refugees and children including internally displaced persons (IDP), taking into account especially women’s asylum claims, including child, early and forced marriages, as contained in international instruments such as CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- that EU Member States implement EU law dealing with asylum, including relevant Directives on gender and women’s rights.”





**Now is the time for action for Europe to implement a gender-sensitive humanitarian response!**



# #WOMENSVOICES COUNTRY FINDINGS

Preventing and combating violence against refugee women & girls

**Different Countries, Same Findings by EWL members:**

- No comprehensive policies to end violence against refugee women and girls
- No gender-sensitive humanitarian response
- No gender-sensitive asylum systems



No childcare during asylum interviews



Increase in self-harm amongst refugee women and high demand for sedatives



Asylum policies are gender blind



No positive public campaigns for refugee women



Dignity kits are not provided



No funding for policies to end violence against women



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Lack of accommodation centres



Ratio of social workers/refugees 4:6000



Massive lack of female interpreters



Only 2% of reported violence against women cases lead to conviction



Forced child marriages to Turkish citizens actively encouraged



Fear of mixed common rooms means women miss out on meals

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1 rape crisis centre that cannot cope



All staff in refugee aid working over their limits



In breach of its non-refoulement obligations



Women facing most risks of violence from family



No specific support for rape survivors



Stalking and sexual harassment not criminalised



OUR  
FUTURE  
STARTS  
NOW!



To find out more:

[www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org)

@Europeanwomen

