

CONFERENCE

Migrant, Refugee and Asylum Seeking Women and Girls in the Euro- Mediterranean region

Athens, Greece
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Draft Concept Note

With the support of:



and

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BACKGROUND

Either in their country of origin, during the journey, or upon arrival, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls, are exposed to various forms of gender-based violence. In forcible displacement situations, women, with children, are considered the most vulnerable and those who are significantly exposed to human rights violations which include discrimination, violence, harassment, trafficking and other forms of exploitation and abuse.

The roundtable on “Women refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean: Meet the immediate emergency needs and find the longer term solutions” organised in the framework of the Lisbon Forum 2016, urged the need for a prompt co-ordinated intervention to support them. [The roundtable’s recommendations](#) underlined that a gender sensitive perspective is essential in developing and implementing measures and policies aimed at protecting and empowering refugee and asylum seeking women in order to allow them to become active contributors to the host society. However, their needs have to be recognised and fulfilled with reference to their background conditions. Based on their individual life paths, the needs of female migrants, refugees and asylum seekers could be developed by directly involving them in the planning, implementing, and monitoring phases.

As a follow-up of the roundtable’s recommendations, in line with the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023, in particular its fifth strategic objective to protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls and on “protecting refugee women and girls from gender-based violence”, the provisions of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence ([Istanbul Convention](#)) and other relevant Conventions, resolutions and reports¹, and in reference with the United Nations Sustainable Goals², the North-South Centre will organise an International Conference under the theme “Migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and girls in Euro-Mediterranean region”.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

The International Conference will be a one-day event gathering 100-120 participants from European and the Southern Mediterranean countries. It will be held in July 2018 in Athens, Greece.

The conference will bring together representatives of governments, national parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society experts from Europe and Southern Mediterranean countries. In addition, other relevant stakeholders in the field of migration and women rights will take part in the event, namely from international and intergovernmental organisations, Council of Europe relevant bodies, and Diaspora communities.

In order to translate the roundtable’s recommendations into action, the conference seek to **promote the cooperation and coordination of the relevant actors** in the region through the sharing of practices and mechanisms which have demonstrated success. To this aim, the North-South Centre will launch a call for best practices in protecting and integrating displaced women and girls. In parallel, the North-South Centre will rely on its pool of experts on women’s rights and gender equality to assess the state of play in the Southern Mediterranean countries. By raising awareness on different forms of violence in different contexts against migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and girls, the event will aim at **recalling the**

¹ With regard to the [Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse](#) (Lanzarote Convention), the [Convention on action against trafficking in human beings](#), the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe’s [resolution 2159](#) on protecting refugee women and girls from gender-based violence and migration from a gender equality perspective, the [1951 International Convention](#) relating to the Status of Refugees, the UNHCR, UNFPA and Women’s Refugee Commission Initial Assessment [Report: Protection and others](#) [main international reports](#) on conflict-related violence against women and girls listed by UN Women.

² In particular the [UN Sustainable Goals 5](#) to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and [16](#) to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies

existing standards and legal instruments related to prevention from violence and discrimination, protection and integration of displaced women and girls. The conference will also highlight **the role of Diaspora communities** as strategic partners in managing migration and in advancing social and economic inclusion, intercultural dialogue and peace building in the hosting societies.

Targeted outputs:

- relevant legal instruments and international standards are presented, in particular the Istanbul Convention, Lanzarote Convention and Convention on action against trafficking in human beings;
- the recommendations of the roundtable are promoted among the participants;
- best practices related to: i) international and regional cooperation; ii) coordinated intervention and multi-sectorial capacity-building of relevant actors; iii) effective implementation of laws and standards; iv) data collection and sharing of information; v) grassroots initiatives linked to prevention, protection and integration, are featured;
- civil society organisations and other quadrilogue representatives benefited from a multilateral cooperation platform that allowed the establishment of new connections and the reinforcement of existing ones between practitioners in the field of migration, gender equality and human rights;
- the role of Diaspora communities for a responsive and effective management of migrations is highlighted.

Targeted outcomes:

- increased will of relevant stakeholders in adopting a coordinated and integrated action at the regional, national and local levels to protect migrant and asylum seeking women's rights;
- enhancement multilateral and multi-level cooperation in the field of migration and women rights;
- development of strategic partnerships and projects and replication of best practices for the protection of migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and girls, as well as their social inclusion by the stakeholders;
- the gender sensitive perspective is taken into consideration when developing and implementing measures, policies and projects aimed at protecting and empowering migrants, refugee and asylum seekers;
- recognition of the role of Diaspora communities to reinforce the intercultural dialogue and to build bridges between new comers and host communities.

Targeted group(s):

- Council of Europe member states and Southern Mediterranean countries' representatives;
- migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women, men and children;
- diaspora representatives;
- experts and practitioners in the field of migration and with migrant and asylum-seeking women.
- Council of Europe: member States Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Gender Equality Unit, Violence against Women Division, GRETA, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, OING Conference of INGOs, Venice Commission, Division Media and Internet;
- European Union;

- international organisations, such as: IOM, UNHRC, UNRAW, UNICEF, Danish Refugee Council, GIZ, Union for the Mediterranean, Gynaecologists without borders, Red Cross, Red Crescent, Medecins du Monde, Save the Children, among others;
- Civil society organisations, such as: CIDDEF- Foundation for Equality (Algeria), Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (Cyprus), Women Refugee Route (Denmark), Egyptian Feminist Union (Egypt), Agisra e.V., Information and counseling Center for female migrants and refugees (Germany), Metadrasi Action for Migration and Development/Melissa-Migrant Women Network of Greece (Greece), FORIM (France), , Women Helping Women Network, General Federation of Jordanian Women, ARDD (Jordan), KAFA Enough Violence and Exploitation, Restart Center (Lebanon), Together We Build It organisation (Libya), Union of Women's Action (Morocco), SAWA (Palestine*), Madani (Syria), Legis ("The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"), Observatoire des Médias, du Développement et des Droits Humains (Tunisia), AFFORD (UK), KARAMA, European Network of Migrant Women, European Women Lobby, WIDE+, Women Refugee Commission, ADYNE, among others.

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* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe member States on this issue.