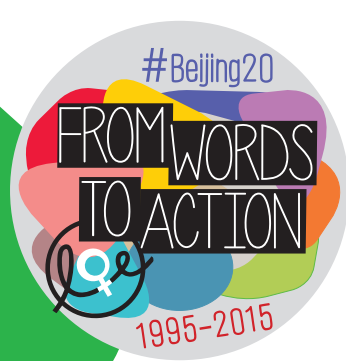




# MIGRANT WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

« I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasises how we are different rather than how we are similar. »  
**Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**



Women are half of the world and Europe's population, and should therefore fully enjoy all human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, not only on an equal footing with men, but also on equal footing among themselves. Indeed, women are not a homogenous group and have multiple identities. This diversity is what makes our societies so interesting and creative.

Despite some progress over the last decades, equality between women and men is still not a reality in Europe. Living in systems where racism, sexism and classism are still prevalent, women are rendered more vulnerable to discrimination, violence and violation of their rights in many spheres of society and life. Some women and girls are made more vulnerable to the violation of their rights due to their multiple identities. This is particularly the case of migrant, refugee, asylum-seeking and undocumented women, in a context of globalisation and increased migration flows.



## DISCOVER SELDA'S STORY

Selda is from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and takes care of her child by herself. In Belgium, a shelter for women victims of violence suggested that she join La Voix des Femmes. There, she spent two years taking French classes and taking part in life-long learning courses. These two years helped her to regain confidence and get back on her feet.

Selda, who can speak 4 languages, decided to use her competences for the benefit of other women experiencing difficult situations. Today, she works in an organisation which specialises in supporting and assisting women victims of violence.



## FACTS & FIGURES

- Higher-educated migrant women are twice as likely to be employed in low-skilled jobs as their EU-born and native-born counterparts.
- About 48,000 women and girls from FGM-practicing countries live in Belgium. Amongst them, around 13,000 have probably undergone the practice, and 4 000 girls are at risk to undergo female genital mutilation (FGM).
- In Belgium, the unemployment rate for women from Morocco (64.4%) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (65.3%) is three times higher than the average unemployment rate for women (19.7%).
- 98-99% of prostituted persons in Zurich are Hungarian citizens, of whom 80-85% are Romani women.



## OUR ACTIONS

**The ENoWM/EWL Documentary "This is my home now"** breaks stereotypes about migrant women (2012). The documentary follows the stories of four women with a migrant background living in the EU. While struggling for their equal rights, these women, like so many others rarely seen or heard, enrich their host communities in myriad ways. The documentary is intended as an educational and inspirational tool.

**EWL European Political Mentoring Programme: European women from ethnic minorities making their way into the European Parliament.** From January 2013 to the European elections in May 2014, this network connected women MEPs (the mentors) with women from a migrant or ethnic minority background and different political parties, who were interested in running for the 2014 European elections (the mentees).



# MIGRANT WOMEN IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

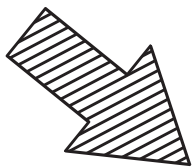


The European Union (EU) is a region of destination for many individuals, leaving their country for various reasons: refugees, displaced persons, unaccompanied minors, families, students, migrant workers; some of them might also be undocumented. Women are an integral part of these migration flows, and face specific situations which make them vulnerable to the violation of their human rights.

Some have fled their country because of gender persecution, but not all asylum policies implement the UN High Commission for Refugees' (UNHCR) gender-sensitive guidelines which would grant them asylum. Some women arrive in the EU on the basis of family ties, with a temporary residence permit connected to a partner; this lack of individual rights means

that access to basic services can be compromised. For women in abusive relationships, status dependency prevents them from claiming their right to life and dignity and leaving the relationships without fear of deportation. Women's vulnerability as domestic workers needs to be acknowledged more seriously, and the overrepresentation of migrant women in prostitution should alert policy- and decision-makers to the links between trafficking and the sex trade and push them to adopt abolitionist policies.

The European Parliament regularly raises the alarm on the situation of migrants, asylum seekers and undocumented persons in the EU, including women and girls (see in 2013 the EP resolution on undocumented women).



## OUR DEMANDS

- All public policies and measures should take into account gender and origin in their design, implementation and evaluation.
- All migrant women entering the European Union should be granted an independent legal status, whatever the reasons for the stay.
- The law of country of residence should be applied when it comes to personal status, in order to secure the fundamental rights of migrant women.
- Undocumented migrant women should have full access to their basic fundamental rights and channels for legal migration should be developed.
- All migrant women should enjoy full equality of rights. This involves the implementation of proactive policies - including the recognition of qualifications - so that they access their rights.
- Member States should ensure that asylum procedures at borders comply with the UNHCR Guidelines on International Protection, in particular with regard to gender-related persecution.
- Full access to the right to education and life-long learning that meets the needs and abilities of migrant and refugee women should be guaranteed.
- All forms of discrimination based on nationality in access to employment should be eradicated and the right to work should be secured, regardless of legal status, including for asylum seekers (awaiting the outcome of their asylum claims).

**The European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW)** is the largest umbrella organisation of migrant-led women's non-governmental organisations within the European Union (EU), working to promote migrant women's rights, the concerns, needs and interests of migrant women in the European Union.

[www.migrantwomennetwork.org](http://www.migrantwomennetwork.org) @ENoMW



**La Voix des Femmes** works towards promoting equality of rights for all women, fighting all forms of discrimination and violence against migrant women, and strengthening their power of action.

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



**The European Women's Lobby (EWL)** is the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union (EU), working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men. For a feminist Europe.

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



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