



The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality

Support services for victims of violence in asylum and migration

Greece, 20-21 February 2018

Summary Report



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Introduction

The seminar took place on 20-21 February 2018 in Athens, Greece. Participants included representatives of the European Commission, the European Institute for Gender Equality, government representatives and gender experts from 14 Member States, including the host country Greece.

The topic of the seminar is highly relevant, considering that a report¹ by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency found in 2014 that 1 in 3 women have experienced physical violence, sexual violence, or both, since the age of 15. The survey results indicate that women who are not citizens of their current country of residence experience an even higher likelihood of being subjected to physical and/or sexual violence.

Combating gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the five key priorities of the EU's Strategic Engagement for gender equality². With regard to EU legislation, the Victims' Rights Directive³ constitutes the main instrument on the rights of victims of GBV, ensuring that all victims, regardless of migration status, are supported and protected, including by specialised services such as shelters.

1. The good practice of the host country

Greece is tackling an unprecedented number of new arrivals of refugees, which, coupled with the impact of the recent economic crisis, has put enormous strains on public finances and the capacity of services to respond effectively. Currently there are around 60,000 refugees living in Greece, 60 per cent of whom are women and children. The management, financial and protection challenges faced by the Greek government are substantial. Significant numbers of women refugees are at risk of GBV in transit, on arrival and during resettlement in Greece. GBV is one of the biggest protection concerns facing refugee women, many of whom may be without their families and without financial support.

Finding innovative solutions to the humanitarian effects of this situation has been vital. It is in this context that the Greek good practice has been developed by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE, Ministry of Interior) as an immediate response to provide protection and support of refugee women experiencing violence. It constitutes an innovative, coordinated and gender-focused response that builds on Greece's progressive legal framework concerning GBV, and the adoption of minimum standards on rights, support and protection of victims. The importance of working with women refugee victims of violence, potential victims of violence, and women refugees who are single mothers and their children, is reflected in the GSGE's core work and is one of the priorities of the 2016-2020 National Action Plan for Gender Equality.

¹ FRA (2014): Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Main results. Available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>

² Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/justice-and-fundamental-rights/discrimination/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

³ Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1421925131614&uri=CELEX:32012L0029>

The Greek practice reviewed in the seminar centres on a Protocol of Cooperation, signed in 2017 between GSGE and nine governmental and non-governmental actors. The Protocol utilises existing resources and services to help staff in public administration, municipalities and NGOs to cooperate and find common solutions. The emphasis is on coordinating all relevant authorities for the identification, referral, provision of accommodation/shelter and counselling services to refugee women, victims and potential victims of violence and their children. Under the Protocol, partners have responsibilities that are relevant to their remit and there is an understanding amongst partners about their respective roles, which assists with referrals and coordination. GSGE argues that it uses its structures to empower women to make decisions about what to do with their lives, and other agencies provide housing and other supports to enable women to resettle and gain access to training and the labour market.

The Protocol coordinates services provided through the 'National Network of Structures for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women', comprising 40 Counselling Centres, 21 Shelters and a 24-hour helpline. Under the Protocol, specific procedures exist for admission to shelters, for medical examinations, psychosocial support and other services for women living in camps. Data is collected by the Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government and a database is regularly updated with information about services provided to refugee women and their children who are supported and accommodated through the network. Additional cooperation takes place with international organisations and through national and European projects on the issue. Further activities include gender-relevant training and awareness programmes for front-line service providers in public administration and NGOs; public awareness campaigns in cooperation with local government institutions; and the holding of cultural and other events with the participation of refugee women. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the UNHCR Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Working Group, a leaflet has been prepared and administrative forms are available in the main languages spoken by refugees.

The evaluation of the reviewed Greek practice found that it is working well, particularly as regards to GSGE's role in coordinating, utilising and opening up existing structures and services to meet the needs of refugee women and their children. In this regard, it is described as an example of the active involvement of the Greek State in protection issues that is having a positive impact on the awareness, confidence and knowledge of public services and professionals to tackle these problems in a very demanding environment. It is also described as a good example of welfare in action showing innovative synergies in the public sector and a holistic (social, psychological and legal) approach.

The Protocol of Cooperation is a pro-active and positive response to the need to expand existing national protection structures in order to implement Greek, European and International protection frameworks. However, it was stressed that the 'refugee crisis' facing Greece and the rest of Europe, is in fact a 'reception crisis' which requires considerable mobilisation of resources and expansion of existing international protection services to women and children who are on the move. This crisis particularly affects the Greek islands where resources have been stretched to the limit and where an unprecedented number of refugees seeking international protection are stranded. Women are in highly vulnerable situations, particularly on the islands. In the reception centres and camps, it can be very difficult for women to report violence if a perpetrator cannot be removed and also because women risk further isolation from their community and networks.

The challenge for service providers is that women and girls may have faced multiple forms of violence in their countries of origin and they may have been exposed to violence during their journeys to Greece, for example, in the form of early marriage or trafficking for sexual exploitation, and exposure to rape and abuse. Women may also be exposed to violence when they arrive and stay in Greece, but may find it difficult to report or access services because of lack of information, cultural or language barriers, or because they fear they may lose their right, and/or their perpetrator's (often an intimate partner) right, to international protection if they report violence.

Of the women who had reported violence and accessed services, 302 women were receiving shelter and other services in 2016, rising to 779 women in 2017. In the 21 shelters across Greece, the majority of women accessed social support services, followed by psychological support services. Of new entries to shelters in 2016 and 2017, more than half reported that they were escaping domestic violence, with smaller numbers reporting sexual harassment, trafficking, rape, prostitution or other forms of violence. These numbers, however, reflect a small proportion of a much larger number of refugee women and children who have experienced violence and who do not access services.

Although the Protocol of Cooperation works well with regard to co-operation between the different entities involved, it is insufficient to tackle the enormous problems faced by refugee women and their children and their specific experiences of violence. Women continue to face major barriers in accessing services: language interpretation and cultural mediation services are not provided for appointments with public health and other services, and there are still large numbers of public servants who are not aware or trained in the cultural and gender-specific problems faced by refugee women and their children. However, there has been a great deal of interest in and uptake of intercultural training by e.g. nurses, doctors and social workers working with refugees in the camps and on the islands. There is also an ongoing project run by the Ministry of Health for the training of cultural mediators.

GSGE notes challenges facing the implementation of the Protocol, and a lack of adequate resources to provide truly integrated services. Wider challenges exist, including long-term integration for refugee women, which has become a major issue as Greece is no longer a transition country. Partners in the network report concerns about the deterioration of women's mental health and wellbeing brought about by violence, loss of and separation from families and in some cases women waiting long periods of time to join their husbands in other EU countries. In the future, GSGE wants to ensure that all shelter and support services are decentralised and locally governed at the municipal level.

During the discussion about the Greek good practice, participants highlighted problems linked to women's financial dependence, which is reinforced through the issuing of prepaid cards to the heads of households by UNHCR to cover food and essential items for children. There is no other system of social support if a woman leaves a violent partner and this is a further barrier to taking up shelter services. In some cases, women have preferred to return to a violent partner in the absence of other options to support their financial independence. Lack of interpretation often means that women are isolated and poorly informed about their rights. Further issues were raised about providing support to professionals who may be emotionally affected by the work with vulnerable migrants and the importance of ensuring cultural awareness in and synergies between public health and mental health services.

Visit to the Schisto Accommodation Camp

The Schisto accommodation camp provides a residence framework (short and medium term) that includes accommodation and services to meet health, psychosocial, educational and other needs, including support for children and language learning. The camp recognises a person's individual value, dignity and the importance of skills development.

The visit to the Schisto accommodation camp was a good way to learn how the Protocol of Cooperation was working in practice, enabling participants to meet and learn from accommodation staff, psychologists and medical staff working with women experiencing GBV. The camp is a former military camp which currently accommodates 850 men, women and children, who are housed in UNHCR standard sized container units with cooking facilities. There is a safe zone housing of 30 unaccompanied minors, six housing units for disabled people, a communal area for food distribution, a washing area for clothes, a praying area, kindergarten and woman/child friendly space, and a men's tea room. Services are provided by a wide range of other government departments, UNHCR and NGOs, such as the Refugee Council of Greece.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, the EU-funded PHILOS programme provides onsite health and psychosocial services for women refugees who are victims of GBV. Multi-disciplinary teams provide services to support victims in line with international guidelines. A comprehensive individual case management approach includes initial assessment and referrals to appropriate services and medical examinations prior to entering a camp. A coordinated approach to addressing GBV is set out in a manual covering the roles of all professionals and referrals for psychological support. Staff are trained to follow procedures and to provide information and support to women victims. The GSCE protocol has been a particularly important part of the effective provision of these services and clearly sets out the roles of different agencies in addressing multiple discrimination faced by refugee and asylum-seeking women and their children.

2. The situation in the other participating countries

The following section gives a short summary of the situation in the other participating countries, which formed the basis for discussion about challenges and an exchange of policy initiatives and practices.

Belgium has a framework for the protection of victims of gender-based and specialised centres for vulnerable persons, including shelters, support and accommodation for victims. NGOs point to insufficient provision of specialist centres and psychological support services for women who suffer from GBV, and women's lack of safety in existing reception centres. Guidance has been developed for a 'European Frame of Reference for Prevention of Sexual and GBV' in the asylum system by the University of Ghent. Good practices from NGOs include a 'buddy project', consisting of former asylum seekers helping new female arrivals with integration into Belgian society; group discussions with women in reception centres; resilience training courses held with migrant women's organisations; and training courses on violence against women for professionals. An information campaign is planned in 20 languages for women suffering from intimate partner violence. A creative project for professionals includes a puppet theatre for women and

professionals to help them to discuss topics such as gender, violence, and the needs of women in asylum.

Croatia recently faced an unprecedented number of refugees seeking to enter the EU and among the most vulnerable groups were women and girls who are victims of GBV. In response to this, a new Action Plan has been drawn up for integration of persons to whom international protection has been granted. Support services for victims of GBV include women's shelters, although they are poorly resourced. Victims and Witnesses Protection Units have been established in some courts, and counselling services are offered to women victims of violence. The 2015 Act on international and temporary protection defines a wide range of vulnerable groups, but no system is in place for the identification of victims of GBV among asylum seekers. A good practice example is a project run by the Croatian Law Centre which has addressed the social, psychological and legal needs of vulnerable groups of migrants, including in the early identification of victims of GBV among asylum seekers.

In **Ireland**, national policies and strategies recognise that women migrants and asylum-seekers experiencing violence are vulnerable. The health service has a policy on GBV and the national intercultural strategy sets out health related supports for women victims of violence, under which NGOs have been funded to train health care professionals on domestic violence and responding to trauma and sexual violence. Women asylum seekers are accommodated in Direct Provision centres and a policy exists on safeguarding asylum seekers from GBV. However, Direct Provision centres are not safe for women, increasing risks of violence, trafficking and prostitution. Limitations on the right to work and study and lengthy waiting times for cases to be processed have a negative impact on women and children. Good practices include the 'Victims of Domestic Violence: Immigration Guidelines' published by the government in 2010 following a campaign by NGOs; dedicated legal and counselling services provided by NGOs; the Women's Aid national 24-hour helpline offering support in 170 languages through their telephone interpretation service; and a peer-education project to improve the sexual and reproductive health of asylum seekers.

In **Finland**, services provided by reception centres cover accommodation, reception allowance, spending allowance, social services, health care, interpretation and translation as well as work and study activities. A basic safety rule is that accommodation of single women and families is arranged so that they live separately from single men. Information on gender equality, the rights of women and children and Finnish legislation is provided to all asylum seekers. Identifying and assessing special needs and vulnerability is an integral part of the initial customer meetings in the reception centres. The needs of women and girls are taken into account in all services provided internally as well as externally and asylum seekers have the right to maternity and child health guidance provided by the municipality. Good practice examples include a project of the reception centre of Joutseno focussing on training reception centre workers in the early identification of special needs of women who have experienced violence and creating practical ways and working models to take these needs into account. Alongside the provision of psychological first aid, a model for security strolls was also created inside the reception centre together with the women customers in order to identify the places where women felt unsafe. The reception centre of Oulu is providing training to their staff on preventing violence, including domestic violence.

France has seen an increase in the numbers of women claiming asylum on the basis of GBV. Women are exposed to further GBV in the camps around Calais, Paris and the Italian border, where numerous reports detail the operation of networks recruiting

young women into prostitution. There are good legal and national plans aimed at protecting women from GBV. The most recent inter-ministerial plan contains two specific objectives on informing women migrants and asylum seekers of their rights and providing a network of health and other support services to women victims of GBV. France has made progress in its refugee status determination process in taking into account claims made based on gender-related forms of persecution and violence, which has been implemented through a gender focal point and working group on the issue. Good practices include support services to women asylum seekers who are survivors of GBV; a support and legal service for victims of GBV by a national NGO; and training on violence against migrant and asylum-seeking women and their needs. In 2016, a centre dedicated to the reception and accommodation of women asylum seekers who have been victims of violence was opened in Nantes, which protects women from domestic violence, prostitution and trafficking.

In **Italy**, national policies and strategies address the needs of migrant and refugee women experiencing GBV. Training is provided for all public and private sector operators involved in the reception process, setting out a gender-sensitive approach to identification and procedures for referral of victims of violence to relevant services. Participative awareness and information activities are run for asylum-seekers. Through the second tier of reception, the objective is for each municipality to coordinate reception with anti-violence centres run by NGOs. Examples of good practices include guidelines for the early identification of victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or other harmful practices; specialised victim support, counselling and assistance for asylum seekers; and awareness raising, cultural mediation and training. A further good practice is the project 'Gender based Empowerment of Migrants through a Multiagency Approach', which is developing a multi-disciplinary intervention model for the prevention of GBV for migrant women and girls.

Latvia is not a destination country for asylum seekers but primarily a transit country for trafficking in human beings. The country has accepted to host refugee families with children within the EU relocation programme. Recently, cases have been made of migrants requesting status of trafficking victims, but to date there have been no successful cases. Various laws and provisions exist on GBV, and the state finances social rehabilitation services to victims of violence and perpetrator programmes, while NGOs provide crisis centres/shelters and social, legal and psychological support. However, the state financed support services can be provided only to nationals of Latvia, those with permanent residence and persons who have received refugee status. A major challenge is that women seeking asylum are only covered by the services provided by the immigration authorities where there is a very limited focus given to migration and GBV.

Lithuania has relatively low levels of migration and of people seeking asylum. The country has made a commitment to relocate families and children. However, support for refugee integration, access to housing and employment, is very limited. Women asylum seekers who are victims of GBV are not referred to in the recent national programmes and the related action plans on domestic violence, although migration law does refer to victims of human trafficking, rape, sexual assault and physical violence as being vulnerable. NGOs are critical of the lack of implementation of the law and report that reception centres are unsafe environments for victims of trafficking and violence. Good practices include the network of 17 specialised centres providing support to victims of domestic violence. Caritas operates a helpline to support for victims of prostitution and human trafficking. A European Refugee Fund project has drawn up guidelines for dealing with vulnerable asylum seekers.

Malta's first strategy and action plan on GBV was issued in 2017 and refers to awareness raising on trafficking, but not to migrants and asylum seekers. Measures are currently being implemented to include acts of GBV and domestic violence as a basis for protection and subsidiary protection. The Migrant Women Association Malta provides legal advice, psychosocial support, shelters and integration. The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers manages reception facilities, and provides information on employment, housing, health, welfare and education. Good practices include a UNHCR project with NGOs working with women living in detention and in reception centres. In 2017, UNHCR organised workshops for front-line service providers to improve their understanding and responses to GBV. The Human Rights and Integration Directorate has a 'Zero Violence' project with a multi-sectoral approach for professionals on GBV. Standard operating procedures 'Breaking the Cycle of Violence', are being developed with reference to vulnerable groups of women.

Portugal has made significant efforts to prevent and combat violence against women and girls. National Plans covering gender equality, citizenship and non-discrimination, GBV, trafficking and FGM, amongst others, have been drawn up. Actions related to asylum seekers and GBV include seminars, workshops, awareness raising covering all sectors and NGOs, and training of professionals working directly with women victims. Discussions are taking place about how to improve identification of GBV amongst refugee women. Training is carried out under the National Programme for Mental Health and a 'Cooperation Protocol Support addressed to Applicants and Beneficiaries under International Protection' is being developed. A good practice is the specialist support provided for women victims through the Family Violence Unit in the Centre for Prevention and Treatment of Psychological Trauma in Coimbra.

Romania has a legal framework on the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, including for vulnerable persons and victims of GBV. Emergency and long-term shelters exist for women victims and there is a national help-line for victims which provides counselling and information. The national integration plan for vulnerable persons is currently being monitored by the Ombudsperson in the regional centres for asylum seekers. Although the reports are positive regarding integration of vulnerable persons, there is no reference to GBV. Good practices include a project for integration, legal and social counselling for beneficiaries of international protection. Professionals from migration agencies work in partnership with state social services in the provision of services for women victims of domestic violence.

Spain has a comprehensive and integrated legal framework to support refugee and migrant women victims of GBV. A government commitment to preventing violence faced by migrant women is set out in a Compact agreed by the Parliament in 2017. GBV has been a ground of persecution for international protection since 2009, providing refugees with the same rights as nationals. Successive National Plans set out actions for the assistance and prevention of GBV in migrant communities. A gender perspective is included in the decision-making stage of the asylum procedure. Good practices include a National Observatory on violence against women; a catalogue of rights in nine languages; and gender-sensitive indicators and training for professionals. There is a national network of shelters and dedicated support and assistance for victims. Several protocols for inter-agency coordination on GBV are in place, but coordinating protocols to provide a better response to asylum applicants fleeing gender-based persecution are lacking.

Sweden has a comprehensive legal framework on GBV and international protection, The Swedish Migration Board is responsible for the reception of asylum seekers. Despite rights for undocumented women to gain access to the asylum process, the

so-called 'two-year marriage rule' makes it difficult for migrant women to leave an abusive partner. The recent national strategy on GBV aims to strengthen protection and support for women victims of GBV. However, this is difficult to implement in practice. In particular, reception centres are dangerous places for refugee women, girls and children, and women report that they are unable to leave their rooms due to the fear of being subjected to sexual harassment and rape. The Swedish Migration Board has adopted guidelines for how women should be interviewed for gender-related reasons and gender and sexuality are included in the grounds for protection of the Swedish refugee law in order to strengthen the position of asylum seekers.

3. Key issues discussed during the seminar

A lively discussion and exchange took place during the seminar - challenges were raised, good practices shared and discussed, and suggestions made for improving policy and service provision.

The **challenges** discussed related to the complex and multiple disadvantages refugee and migrant women often have to face which make them vulnerable to violence and abuse. One of the biggest challenges mentioned was the identification of GBV and how to reach women in extremely vulnerable situations. In addition, significant problems exist in accessing protection measures and enforcement of protection orders of women in hard to reach communities. Therefore, access to housing and independent financial support, along with culturally appropriate support services, are important in reducing women's economic dependence on men. A further challenge faced by some countries is that there is limited coordination between refugee/migration services and women's support services. Different identification systems also exist in Member States and in international organisations, and it is important that they are better synchronised on good practice models. A further issue discussed relates to the policy and resource implications for countries of first port of entry under the Dublin regulations as they are at the forefront of the refugee reception process (particularly affecting Greece, Italy and Malta).

Despite the challenges, seminar participants pointed to many **good practices** across the EU. These include the provision of multi-disciplinary support services, training of service providers, culturally and language relevant information for refugee women about their rights, and courses for men raising awareness about the negative impact on men of unequal gender roles, amongst others. Widely discussed was the learning from the reviewed Greek practice and the importance of cooperation and learning between relevant stakeholders. Participants noted the clarity and mutuality of roles held by public bodies, agencies and NGOs in identification, integration, support services and referrals, and particularly in working on sensitive issues such as sexual violence or trafficking. Many participants viewed the Protocol as a good practice that could be replicated.

The evolving **legal and policy frameworks** in Member States were also a topic in the debates. These are increasingly underpinning a gender-sensitive approach in the asylum process, with improved systems for identifying victims of GBV and provision of culturally appropriate information and services. Most Member States have implemented comprehensive legal frameworks and national action plans on GBV, leading to better coordination and implementation of gender-sensitive policies. However, the discussions revealed differences across Member States regarding the law and the provision of services for victims of GBV. In many countries asylum seekers do not have the legal right to work, which potentially exposes women to

greater risks of violence. Furthermore, there are sometimes also different approaches within Member States in relation to providing access to services for victims of GBV – some are mainstreamed while others are tied to the legal status of the victim.

All participants welcomed the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (**Istanbul Convention**) in providing a comprehensive framework for the prevention of violence against women and for the protection of victims. It has been signed by all EU Member States and ratified by 19 Member States thus far. Good processes have been introduced in countries where ratification has taken place. They cover non-discrimination on any ground including migrant or refugee status (Art. 4, para. 3); provisions relating to gender-based asylum claims and gender-sensitive reception procedures and support services for asylum seekers (Art. 60); and the application of the non-refoulement principle to refugees (Art. 61). Participants welcomed the measures contained in the Convention as providing an enabling legal environment for gender-sensitive responses to migration, and in the provision of gender- and culturally-sensitive services.

Another important theme discussed was the importance of **awareness and training** of all stakeholders and service providers involved in the protection and integration process. Seminar participants overwhelmingly agreed that more needed to be done to implement training on gender-sensitive and culturally sensitive approaches to understanding and responding to the needs of migrant and refugee women affected by GBV. In addition, discussion focused on the need for better awareness about the vulnerability of children of refugee women. For this reason, participants regarded it as important to see violence against women also as a family protection problem, recognising that children are affected by and have needs resulting from the violence.

A further theme concerned **provision of information** – translated into relevant languages and accessible for women refugees – about their rights, what to expect from the protection process and how to access shelter and support services. Participants argued that this should apply both during the asylum process and also after women have been granted asylum in order to assist with integration.

The general **lack of data on GBV** and asylum claims was also identified as a barrier to developing services that are relevant and responsive to the needs of refugee women facing multiple discrimination. Some participants pointed to the good practice of the Spanish Observatory on Violence against Women in this respect.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Recommendations discussed at the seminar are summarised below:

- A gender perspective should be included in all migration and asylum policies at the national and international level and there is a need to strengthen measures to identify and provide support to women and girls in asylum who are victims or at risk of trafficking. This should be integrated into all national policies, including national action plans on GBV. The approach to GBV needs to be inter-ministerial and should follow a rights-based approach.

- It is important to develop intersectional responses to violence against women. The significant support and protection need of women victims of violence in asylum and migration must be recognised. If the rights of marginalised and particularly vulnerable women such as asylum seekers are protected, the rights of all women will be strengthened.
- A gender-sensitive approach to the reception and identification process should be applied, supported by gender-sensitive guidelines and procedures for the reception of migrants, coupled with the training of staff. This would greatly improve responses to and support for women asylum seekers experiencing violence.
- The first stage of reception is a crucial time to ensure that women have access to information about how to access services if they are at risk of violence or have been exposed to violence during their migration journey. Women and girls need to understand that their past experiences may also qualify for asylum independently from male family members.
- Greater efforts are needed to guarantee the safety and protection of women and girls in reception centres, for example, through safety protocols, educational and childcare support for women in the centres, and in efforts to provide accessible information to women living in reception centres in a language they can understand.
- Provision of training and awareness training for professionals and agencies who come into contact with asylum seekers in culturally- and gender-sensitive approaches is necessary. This should have a specific focus on the situations and barriers refugee women and their children face, and the effects of multiple discrimination.
- Training should provide tools for and inform the process of identification and settlement, and how to provide appropriate shelter and support services for victims of GBV. In particular, cultural awareness training is important for understanding why some refugee women accept the violence they are exposed to. Training also needs to recognise the importance of taking time to build women's trust and to give women guidance and help to enable them to take action for their own safety and the safety of their children.
- Member States must ensure that interpreters are trained and available in the languages required in asylum interviews, and in appointments for health and psychosocial support services.
- Improved coordination and information sharing between EU Member State would help to ensure appropriate and effective support services for victims of GBV, particularly if women are being relocated or moving country for family reunification. Information sharing between Member States would be useful in cases of GBV, enabling relevant case information to be passed on to relevant social, medical and legal services in the destination country.
- Specific measures need to be addressed regarding the wider asylum process and how it can be restructured to reduce women's dependency on men (e.g. in applications for asylum and in financial support).

- Member States could utilise UN Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security in strengthening support programmes for victims of GBV in asylum and migration and implement the International Protocol on Investigating and Documenting Sexual Violence in Conflict (PSVI) in order to document women's rights violations and contribute to combatting impunity of perpetrators.
- Disaggregated data on women refugees, their age, region and situations are needed to inform effective responses to reception and integration. This should be coordinated through the provision of comparative national/EU level data.
- EU-wide solutions are needed, including plans and resources for the integration of refugees, and an EU-wide mechanism for women experiencing GBV. This is all the more urgent as countries at the forefront of the migrant crisis note that the proportion of women and children migrating has increased in recent years.
- The EU's ratification of the Istanbul Convention should form the basis upon which cooperation is promoted across Member States. This will help all EU Member States to have a more coherent strategy and data for uniform approaches towards the elimination of violence against women, and particularly as it applies to the asylum process. This should also encourage regular exchanges of good practice.