



From the participants of the European feminist conference “Security in Europe for whom?” (European Parliament, Brussels 18-19 /09 2006.)

### **ADDRESS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS**

European Feminist Initiative for Another Europe gathered feminist activists from 18 countries of the Balkans and the other European regions on a conference “Security in Europe for Whom? Which Europe do we want?” Feminists across geopolitical borders and contexts shared knowledge and experiences and brought forward feminist discussions for a different Europe. The goal is to broaden, vitalize and enrich the political debate in EU on human security, to make the women’s feminist and experiential voices heard in this field and to present different alternatives.

The statistics show that one in three women and girls has been beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime. Today more than 135 million girls and women have been victims of genital mutilations. In the past 10–15 years all forms of violence directed at women and girls have claimed more victims than the two world wars and all other wars of the 20th century combined!

Yet even with this knowledge, military conflicts and wars, racism and social exclusion continue to be presented as major threats to human security! Security politics and the policies behind continue to be based on threats that come from “outside”, on the construction of “the other” as the enemy and on the construction of those to be protected within state borders “women and children”. It continues to be based on the andocentric conception of power by way of dominance, authority, control, physical and finally military power and capacity to destroy.

Male violence against women in all its different forms and as a constitutive part of the patriarchal gender power system is structural and exists everywhere and the structures of violence in war and in patriarchal societies in “peacetime” whose faces are precariousness, poverty, unemployment, economic insecurity are tightly interconnected.

Today UN and the Commission for Human Security have launched the conception of "Human security" with the purpose to move the (security) focus from the state to the human being. But even this concept escapes the fact that the threat against women's security lies also "within" the relations of our affiliation. Women are namely the victims of violence committed by their nearest partners and men in their family, near relations and in their home. At the same time the military violence used by armies in war justifies and turns into rape and sexual humiliation during war and into violence against women at home and in the public space in "peacetime". But present security politics does not reach there. Security problem constitutes the everyday multilayered discrimination women experienced within the gender power structures of our societies that sustain women's oppression, subordination, inequality, discriminations and the feeling of in/security globally, in Europe -within EU and outside. The raising wave of religious fundamentalists and their increasing influence on state politics is another contributing factor in this aspect.

Although politicians can no longer remain silent on the issue of male violence against women, policies directed to concrete actions leading to transformative changes in the social, economical and political fields that would ultimately lead to women's increased sense of security are missing. There is no valid legal frame work which should oblige national governments to actively lead politics against patriarchal domination and violation of women's human rights.

The conference's conclusions stress that feminist analyses and critique is indispensable and is urgently needed to be taken into consideration by policy and decision makers. The Conference addresses therefore the European Parliament, European Commission and national governments with the following demands:

- To immediately start reshaping and re-conceptualizing security and defense politics of EU if the European project is to be a true bearer of peace, social justice and non-military democracy and an urgently needed vital alternative to human, environmental and self destruction.
- To apply multiple and radical approaches to challenge the conventional patriarchal concepts of war, peace and security with the urgency of viewing security as a position towards humanity and based on solidarity ethics with an immediate denunciation of all forms of militarization, violence and war as a way to solve conflicts.
- To urgently start re-examining the concept of democracy. The fact that only 17 of the 202 members of the Convention that produced the proposal for the EU constitution were women is an affront to democratic justice. **Equality between women and men should be recognized as a founding value of the EU.**
- To immediately renounce the European security and common defense model that creates federal security structure superior to that of the member states and that asks directly from the member states to increase military expenditure.
- To act for a complete disarmament, reorganization of military units into civilian units for humanitarian support and to act for conflict solving by non-military ways. To establish institutions on conflict prevention within the frames of both European and global security policy instead of The European Defense Agency.
- To widen the conception of the global security politics including the structural violence directed towards women in everyday life.
- To open and offer space for more participants and for those concerned: women, feminists, peace activists, organizations and researchers; to create space for new ideas, transparent discussions on new and innovative approaches for security policies.
- To promote a secular Europe as one of the main priorities of the European politics and to create policies that affirm women's reproductive rights, the freedom of choice over her body and the right to free abortion as a women's human right and an issue of security.
- To recognize and highlight the global marginalization of women's different needs and resources, including security needs, and to create policies that should affect the political, economical and just redistribution of resources and power.
- To establish for all the countries of EU binding legal frameworks based on the most advanced legislations in relation to women's human rights.

To promote urgently policies and attitudes that would lead to transformation of gender power relations both in the private as in public space.

