

## Press Release

### Lebanese activists gather for Dialogue Space:

#### *Till when will women in Lebanon stay #TwiceARefugee?*

Beirut 4 October 2019, "Till when will women in Lebanon stay #TwiceARefugee?" The dialogue space – a public sphere intended to initiate discussion about all women in Lebanon- was launched on October 3rd, 2019 at Antwork, in Beirut. The event was organized by the Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering - RDFL in partnership with the EuroMed Feminist Initiative – EFI under the project "Strengthening access to protection, participation and services for women refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and women in the host communities in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq". The project is funded by [the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the EU "MADAD" Fund](#).

More than 100 Lebanese youth and women attended the event, whose overall objective was to sensitize youth and women engaged in politics as well as parties on women's political rights and presence in public spheres.

At the beginning of the dialogue space, RDFL welcomed the audience and screened #TwiceARefugee campaign video.

MP Paula Yaacoubian addressed the audience saying: "my concern is to let people vote for more independents. A woman can do more than a man does. We are opening the way for a new generation to enter the political force". She added "we must empower men to be enlightened and view society as a better place with women". Then she responded to questions from the public.

The event continued over two panels. The first panel invited women in political parties who shared their experiences in including and applying gender-sensitive policies at their posts.

Moreover, MP Dima Jamali said:" I am working with all my heart to be the voice of dreams for youth and women, so they can reach decision-making positions and obtain rights". She referred to rights such as enabling women to grant their nationality to their children and secure equal pay.

The second panel revealed women's experiences and obstacles after reaching high- level posts in business. Women were asked to share their stories and obstacles at the high posts they held, and whether their surroundings accepted or rejected their presence in such leading positions.

On her part, MP Rolla Al Tabsh spoke to the audience. She said" until the female quota is secured it is important that parties support women" adding that 2 obstacles face women's reaching political life: 1- lack of laws, 2- masculine dominant society, citing laws of labor, marriage, and civil rights.

## **About the Campaign**

Women, who are subject to violence, find themselves trying to escape the act committed against them. But when they undergo repeated violence, they are forced to seek refuge (safe environment) more than once. Violence can take various forms among women, but the solution should be ultimate safety. These women are [#TwiceARefugee](#)” (لاجئة\_مرتين) (#). And here we do not mean “refugee” as the one running away from homeland to a new country. It is rather about women, no matter what their nationality is, seek refuge from violence to a safe environment in Lebanon. But unfortunately, they face violence again in the new environment, and then try to seek refuge a second time

## **About RDFL**

The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering- RDFL is a feminist, grassroots and membership-based organization working to advance gender equality through advocacy, networking and solidarity work in Lebanon. It was established in 1976. Our values are rooted in non-discriminatory, secular feminism, democracy, transparency and intersectionality. Our work focuses on creating an enabling environment where girls and women are protected and empowered to be agents of change.

## **About EFI**

EuroMed Feminist Initiative EFI is a policy network that encompasses women’s rights organizations from the two shores of the Mediterranean and advocates for gender equality and women’s rights as inseparable from democracy building and citizenship, for political solutions to all conflicts, and for the right of peoples to self-determination. EuroMed Feminist Initiative seeks to improve and promote women’s rights as universal human rights, the value of gender equality and the use of non-violent means to solve conflicts. Our criterion and position align with the international resolutions and conventions and regional instruments promoting the universality of women’s rights and strengthening women's impact and voices in conflict resolution.

## **About the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the EU “MADAD” Fund**

The EU Trust Fund (EUTF) provides support to more than 3 million Syrian refugees and local communities in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, the Western Balkans and Armenia. The EUTF’s programmes support basic education and child protection, vocational training and higher education, economic opportunities and social stability, better access to healthcare, improved water and wastewater infrastructure, as well as support to resilience, women empowerment and fighting gender-based violence.