



IFE-EFI STATEMENT

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Euromed Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI

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EU-TURKEY AGREEMENT:

A DEPLORABLE INFRINGEMENT ON THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM

Thousands of women and men lose their lives in an attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea in search of security. Those who survive are despoiled of their belongings by criminal groups and then are often confronted by the brutality of the border police. In the course of fleeing war and persecution a great number of people are left in legal limbo, fall victims to other forms of oppression, or are imprisoned in detention centers and overcrowded camps where they experience degrading conditions. Refugees are trapped in a vicious circle of violence that resembles the conditions that initially motivated their journey to countries they are now being bluntly expelled from.

The gravity of the situation escalated with a deplorable bilateral agreement between the EU and Turkey. In the agreement refugees are reduced to a token in a quid pro quo transaction. On one side Europe has agreed to accept a number of Syrian refugees equivalent to the number Turkey accepts back from Greek islands. In return, the EU promises to relaunch the process of Turkey accession, to facilitate the obtainment of visas for Turkish citizens, and to accelerate the payment of 6 billion euros for the reception of the refugees.

The myriad of demonstrations in Europe against this agreement have not yielded success and the humanitarian crisis is exacerbating. Some countries like Macedonia and Hungary have gone as far as placing wire fencing along their borders. Others such as France accept refugees on a preposterous quota basis.

This agreement is an utter disregard to human dignity and a violation to international law in regards to right of asylum. Moreover, it completely disregards the disproportionately negative consequences it imposes on women.

The migration wave of 2015 jammed the working order of the EU. Austerity policy measures witnessed surging unemployment, poverty, and unrest. In such a context chauvinistic and nationalist populist

governments emerged and stirred hatred and xenophobia.

The EU and individual governments must actively support an urgent political solution in Syria and put an end to the violence compelling the vast displacement of its people. More secure and legal channels must be created between Turkey and Greece in order to curb the work of smugglers. Opening the doors of solidarity in Europe is imperative if international human rights are to be respected.

The Euromed Feminist Initiative (IFE-EFI) objects to the terms of EU-Turkey bilateral agreement and demand the respect of universal human rights, particularly the 1951 Refugee Convention. IFE-EFI calls on governments to:

- **Develop and implement migration and asylum policies, while paying heed to the complexity of the MENA crises, as part of the responsibility of the EU member states and battle the criminal network of smugglers.**
- **Strive for the political solutions of the conflicts that force people to flee, while allocating human and financial resources for shelter, medical and psychosocial care of refugees.**
- **A special focus should be put on alleviating gender-related violence and persecuting perpetrators during all stages from the departure of refugees to their arrival in reception centers.**

Euromed Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI advocates for gender equality and women's universal human rights as inseparable from democracy building and citizenship, for political solutions to all conflicts, and for the right of peoples to self-determination.

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