



Resolution 2440 (2022)¹

Gender mainstreaming of migration policies

Parliamentary Assembly

1. While women and men can migrate for similar reasons, migration is a gendered phenomenon since gender norms and expectations, power relations and unequal rights shape the migration choices and experiences of women and girls, as they do for men and boys. Gender-based persecution can also be a reason for flight and give grounds for asylum in another State. Failure to take into account gender-related considerations can expose people on the move to certain vulnerabilities, exacerbate inequalities and may render inappropriate the measures taken and services provided for their needs.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly stresses that migrant women and men experience intersectional discrimination based on multiple factors, including age, (dis)ability, social origin, ethnicity, religion, migration status and, of course, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation. Experiences of discrimination and violence are key reasons for flight and migration, particularly for groups fleeing due to serious human rights violations or persecution, such as women victims of violence, notably sexual violence, single mothers and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer+ (LGBTIQ+) persons. The simple fact of being categorised as a migrant in a receiving country can also expose a person to gruesome treatment, motivated solely by sexism, discrimination, racism and xenophobia.

3. The Assembly is particularly concerned with the situation of migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees, in reception centres, where men and women are not confronted with the same situations and difficulties. Many migrant women and girls face all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination; they also face high maternal mortality rates, unmet needs in relation to safety, health, (menstrual) hygiene and family planning, complications following unsafe abortions and an increased risk of gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as sexually transmitted diseases, including Aids. Unaccompanied and separated girls, LGBTIQ+ persons, and women and girls with disabilities face particular risks in the context of reception.

4. The Assembly refers to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, Istanbul Convention), in particular Article 4 and Articles 59, 60 and 61, as well as to the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023, which includes the protection of the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls as a priority. The Assembly welcomes the work of the Drafting Committee on Migrant Women (GEC-MIG), which is preparing a recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 31 May 2022 (see [Doc. 15456](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Ms Petra Stienen; and [Doc. 15457](#), opinion of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Sena Nur Çelik).



5. The implementation of gender mainstreaming in migration policies requires the full integration of a gender equality perspective into all legislation, policies, programmes and infrastructure that regulate migration and cater for the needs of migrant people. It is also necessary to address the violence, inequalities and discrimination experienced by migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees, in particular when such phenomena are gender-based and intersectional. To this end, the Assembly calls on member States to:

- 5.1. ensure that gender-based violence is recognised as a form of persecution within the meaning of Article 1 A.(2) of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention;
- 5.2. ensure that single-sex accommodation facilities are available for migrants, but that mixed gender facilities are also permitted, in particular to enable families to remain together and where this facilitates family reunion;
- 5.3. pay special attention to the need to provide young boys, especially adolescents, with separate accommodation facilities from those for young girls, but also from those for adult men;
- 5.4. in accordance with Objective 3 of the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, provide migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, during their displacement, application processes, settlement, resettlement and integration, as well as during return procedures, with accessible, accurate, timely, gender-responsive information, available in relevant languages, on the policies, regulations and services available in the host country, covering topics such as protection against gender-based violence and discrimination, and access to justice, the labour market, education, health and housing, as well as to asylum and migration procedures and services;
- 5.5. provide legal assistance and interpretation services by trained staff for women and girls seeking asylum or residency, with full respect for human rights and due consideration for the gender-sensitive needs of migrant women (namely provision of female interpreters where appropriate, psychological support, information on rights, etc.);
- 5.6. recognising that women and girls are the most at-risk and vulnerable group among migrants, with a range of different needs, provide specific protection for unaccompanied girls, single mothers, pregnant women, women with young children and women experiencing intersectional discrimination in particular;
- 5.7. facilitate access to gender-specific healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health and hygiene services, education for migrant and asylum-seeking women and girls and obstetrical and prenatal and postnatal services (including breast-feeding facilities), as well as sexual health and hygiene education and services for men and boys, ensuring respect for privacy and confidentiality, and reform legislation and policies that deny or limit access to health services on the basis of residence or migration status. As far as possible, health services should be mainstreamed nationally;
- 5.8. ensure that feminine hygiene products are supplied to reception centres for migrants and asylum-seeking women and girls, and ensure adequate assistance in using them;
- 5.9. take into consideration the family situation and the possibility of family reunification to guarantee a better life for migrants and the right to family life;
- 5.10. ensure that migrant women and girls arriving in Europe, including through family reunification, obtain personal documentation of long-term validity within a short time;
- 5.11. develop a common system to recognise migrants' qualifications, skills and diplomas and adopt gender-sensitive employment policies and support frameworks;
- 5.12. take measures to regulate and improve the working conditions of migrants to eliminate intersectional forms of exploitation and discrimination;
- 5.13. take into account the fact that a higher proportion of women than men are in informal employment, such as care and domestic work, and ensure that the rights of migrant women in this type of employment are ensured through adequate supervision and accessible assistance;
- 5.14. take a gender-sensitive approach to policies dealing with the protection, education and integration of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking children, in order to take into account the heightened vulnerabilities of girls, notably in relation to gender-based violence and trafficking, particularly for sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

6. The Assembly points out that gender-based discrimination is likely to be detrimental to a migrant's integration, as stressed in its [Resolution 2159 \(2017\)](#) "Protecting refugee women and girls from gender-based violence". In order to eliminate such violence, gender-related stereotypes, which are among the root causes of discrimination, need to be addressed.

7. With the aim of achieving a gender balance in decision making on migration and mainstreaming a gender equality dimension in migration policies, member States should develop specific measures to enable the application of equality between women and men in their national policies. To this end, they should:

7.1. implement and comply with the obligations contained in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as well as its Optional Protocol, committee reports and general recommendations;

7.2. use their influence to ensure that a gender equality dimension is mainstreamed in the European Union's New Pact on Migration and Asylum;

7.3. organise, finance and harmonise the collection of data on different aspects of migration policies, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity and legal status, including proper monitoring mechanisms to prevent the discriminative misuse of data, and support research in this area;

7.4. acknowledge that gender mainstreaming in all migration, integration and asylum policies should not be seen as an option but as an essential element in achieving the best possible results, which is provided with adequate resources and subject to evaluation mechanisms;

7.5. encourage horizontal debates on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in migration policies and measures that bring together political decision makers, local and national governments, civil society, educational institutions, private sector entities and migrants and refugees themselves, and ensure the active participation of migrant women in these debates;

7.6. develop newcomer introduction policies that take into account the different needs of girls and boys, and women and men, as well as persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ persons and others with specific needs, and make sure that migrant women and men are aware of the need to respect and uphold gender equality laws and policies;

7.7. provide for and adequately fund training on gender equality as well as on issues relating to violence against women and gender-based violence for all relevant authorities and staff working with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers;

7.8. ensure the presence of women among border, migration and other police or custody staff, as well as among counsellors, social workers and interpreters working with migrants, and give asylum seekers the option of interacting with a person of their own sex.

8. The Assembly also considers that the stereotypes associated with migrant women and men constitute one of the main obstacles to the successful integration of migrants, especially migrant women. Migrant women in particular struggle with a distorted view of their capabilities and place in society, often suffering from multiple discrimination based on gender, race, religion, class and socio-economic status. The Assembly calls on member States to pay special attention to measures aimed at dismantling gender-based stereotypes, including those supposedly based on culture, tradition and religion, as well as to measures aimed at empowering migrant women and girls. It also points out that migrant women are as diverse as women in the rest of society and should be treated as such and not as a homogeneous (and stigmatised) group. In this respect, the Assembly refers to the work of the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance, co-ordinated by its General Rapporteur on combating racism and intolerance, and to its ongoing work on Islamophobia.

9. Recalling its [Resolution 2244 \(2018\)](#), in which it tackled the issue of migration from a gender equality perspective in order to empower women as key players in integration, the Assembly notes with concern that women are under-represented in migration policy decision making. It encourages European governments to ensure the equal and meaningful participation of women, particularly women with a migration background, including through giving them the freedom to speak out, share valuable experiences and build support networks; the possibility to take part in formal and non-formal participatory mechanisms, raise awareness and

influence political decisions; and the opportunity to access information, build capacity and develop leadership skills in pursuit of particular priorities and outcomes. Therefore, as regards the empowerment of migrant women and girls, it calls on member States to:

- 9.1. lift structural barriers, such as restricted freedom of movement and dependent status, and expand opportunities for migrant women through gender-responsive livelihood strategies and targeted economic inclusion measures, such as skills validation, upskilling or job matching, as well as through effective access to the market system and to financial products, as a basis for their empowerment;
 - 9.2. establish quotas and other temporary affirmative action for migrant women, notably in public forums, consultative bodies, expert councils and focus discussion groups, in particular when devising migration, asylum and integration policies that affect their lives;
 - 9.3. create favourable conditions for migrant women, including young migrant women, to equally and meaningfully participate in activities relating to political life, by offering, for instance, childcare facilities for mothers and financial support to attend meetings;
 - 9.4. where needed, provide financial and institutional support and simplify administrative registration procedures for migrant women, civil society migrant organisations and diaspora initiatives and associations at the local, regional and national levels, in order to facilitate better democratic participation.
10. The Assembly invites member States to reconsider the place of women in migration policy making, since a greater involvement of women in the framing of these policies would lead to a better understanding of migrant women's needs, and the needs of migrants overall, including men, and help achieve gender equality. In this context it is necessary to:
- 10.1. implement Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making;
 - 10.2. achieve a balanced gender representation in decision making; promote the participation of women with a migrant background in all aspects of decision making and ensure a gender balance in decision making in migration-related institutions;
 - 10.3. collect disaggregated statistics and support research on the involvement of women in the management of the migration process and related policies and measures;
 - 10.4. promote genuine career development for women working in sectors dealing with migrants, in order to value their experience and benefit from it;
 - 10.5. ensure gender equality and the highest level of transparency in the selection process of candidates for positions involving responsibility for migration policy making;
 - 10.6. foster the financial inclusion of migrants by providing gender-responsive programmes and instruments that enhance the financial inclusion of migrants and their families, in accordance with Objective 20 of the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration;
 - 10.7. support migrant/refugee/diaspora-led organisations working on the promotion of gender equality.