

Resolution 2244 (2018)¹

Migration from a gender perspective: empowering women as key actors for integration

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Europe is more than ever a destination for people seeking international protection due to wars and political turmoil or escaping from poverty and extreme hardship. The most recent inflow adds to the numbers of migrants and refugees who have permanently settled in European countries, sometimes for several generations.
2. While the issue of migration has become the focus of much media and political attention and has been heralded as a priority in the manifestos of all populist political forces, emphasis is all too often placed on dramatic events such as large-scale arrivals of migrants and refugees, the actual or purported limited absorption capacity of, and financial burden on, some States and societies, or the crisis of the migration management policy of the European Union.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that political and public debate should pay greater attention to integration policies since, ultimately, the degree to which migrants and refugees become a resource and strength for the host country and are able to contribute to its cultural and economic richness depends on their level of integration.
4. In addition, for integration policies to be successful, they must take into account the demographics of migration: whereas women used to represent a low proportion of the inflow of migrants and often arrived in Europe through family reunification, today they migrate independently and in larger numbers. As they flee for a better life, a number of women face violations of their rights, including falling victim to trafficking, slavery and systematic sexual abuse, as well as ethnic or racist discrimination and violence. This makes it even more necessary for integration policies and measures to be gender sensitive, in order to tackle the vulnerabilities of women throughout the migration process while at the same time empowering them as key actors for and multipliers of integration.
5. The Assembly refers to its [Resolution 2159 \(2017\)](#) on protecting refugee women and girls from gender-based violence and recalls that several provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, "Istanbul Convention") specifically refer to migrant and refugee women. Regretting that migrant women are subjected to multiple and intersectional discrimination, the Assembly welcomes the inclusion of a strategic objective to protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls in the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023.
6. The Assembly underlines the importance of the Istanbul Convention, the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201) and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197), and the need to effectively implement them in order to provide protection to migrant and refugee women and girls and to ensure that all the necessary conditions are in place for these women to become a source of strength for our societies.

1. *Assembly debate* on 11 October 2018 (35th Sitting) (see [Doc. 14606](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Gabriela Heinrich; and [Doc. 14630](#), opinion of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Ms Eva-Lena Jansson). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 11 October 2018 (35th Sitting).



7. Because of the role they play within their families and communities, the Assembly is convinced that investing in the integration of migrant and refugee women enables the creation of a solid basis for the inclusion and integration of future generations, and for the development of peaceful, inclusive and cohesive societies based on shared values and respect for diversity. In this sense, the present resolution should be considered as complementary to Assembly [Resolution 2176 \(2017\)](#) Integration of refugees in times of critical pressure: learning from recent experience and examples of best practice.

8. In the light of the above, the Assembly calls on the member States of the Council of Europe to:

8.1. ensure gender sensitivity in the design, implementation, evaluation and follow-up of all integration policies for migrants and refugees;

8.2. promote empowerment of migrant and refugee women by countering all forms of gender-based or gender-specific discrimination, including in access to education and work, and devise specific measures and programmes with a view to facilitating their access;

8.3. ensure that the protection provided by legal treaties, notably the Istanbul Convention, the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, is well known to all those responsible for dealing with migrant women and that these treaties are efficiently implemented;

8.4. ensure that the social rights of refugees and migrants are respected in a gender-neutral way, in accordance with the revised European Social Charter (ETS No. 163), in particular regarding parental leave;

8.5. raise migrant and refugee women's awareness of their rights, including as regards access to education and work, participation in social, economic and cultural life, protection against gender-based and domestic violence, and access to justice;

8.6. ensure that the right to family reunification is enforced without undue delay, especially for unaccompanied child refugees or family members who are in need of family support;

8.7. encourage and support initiatives aimed at empowering migrant and refugee women within their families, in their communities and in society at large, by developing their self-confidence and self-determination and by protecting women and girls from negative social control;

8.8. protect migrant and refugee women from all forms of violence against women, including child marriages, female genital mutilation and so-called "honour crimes";

8.9. provide migrant and refugee women with gender-specific information on the cultural norms and expectations of the host society, with a view to helping them to identify their role, their responsibilities, their fundamental rights and freedoms, and the opportunities available to them;

8.10. provide opportunities for language training specifically targeted at women and available from an early stage after their arrival in the host country;

8.11. provide opportunities for vocational training and higher education, taking into account the skills and specific needs of migrant and refugee women and recognition of educational and professional qualifications;

8.12. conduct information and awareness-raising activities targeting migrant and refugee women and men on gender equality and women's rights as enshrined in the law of the host country;

8.13. support and co-operate closely with civil society and all those willing to contribute to migrant and refugee women's integration and empowerment, including social partners and migrant and refugee women's organisations;

8.14. establish mechanisms to ensure the systematic consultation of migrant and refugee women's organisations and organisations that represent these women;

8.15. integrate the concept of gender equality into the training of professionals and public officials at all levels involved in the design and implementation of integration programmes;

8.16. support mentoring programmes aimed at migrant and refugee women and support the use of positive role models;

8.17. collect and produce detailed gender-specific statistical data on migrants and refugees, in order to define the most pressing needs, to detect specific vulnerabilities and strengths and to allow for the development of targeted and more individualised national integration policies.

9. The Assembly recommends enhancing gender mainstreaming in its work relating to migration and refugees, and in the activities of the Parliamentary Campaign to End the Immigration Detention of Children and of the Parliamentary Network on Diaspora Policies.