

# HUMAN RIGHTS & MIGRANT WOMEN

Migrant and displaced women have emerged as a population group of critical concern in recent years and will likely be more so in the future. Women and girls make up 51% of total migration in the ECE region with higher percentages in some countries. All 12 areas of critical concern in the Beijing Platform for Action apply

to migrant and displaced women, although there remain severe gaps in implementation in some areas – particularly for migrant women in irregular situations. This session provided an understanding of the condition of migrant women in the legal and social context of the ECE region while also demanding recognition of migrant women as central to the conversation about women’s rights.

**Interactive Roundtable**  
**4 November 2014, 9:30h—11h, Room IX**  
**Palais des Nations**



First and foremost, we must reframe the discourse around migrant women. Human rights are women’s rights and women’s rights are inherently migrant women’s rights. Migrant women face a battle on two fronts: equality with men and equality with native-born women. We do migrant women a great injustice when we reduce them to their legal status, their victimhood, or their contribution to economic development. We should celebrate the knowledge, expertise and experience migrant women bring to all Member States. In order to provide a context that allows equal

access to the full experience of life in the ECE region, Member States have a responsibility to formulate gender-sensitive, rights-based policy on the basis of equality and non-discrimination. International law has provided the region with various international instruments that protect the rights of migrant women. It is not a lack of rules the region suffers, but generally a lack of implementation due to political will.

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which are inherently migrant  
women’s rights.*





States should ratify key international conventions on migration, develop domestic law and policy that reflect the rights based framework upon which these conventions and standards are built, and ensure that mechanism are in place to uphold and enforce such standards.

Speakers and participants raised a series of concerns relating to the welfare of migrant women, refugees, asylum seekers, minorities, victims of trafficking, and displaced women. Key areas of concern range from equality and participation in economic and

social life to discrimination at all stages of migration. Issues of continuing concern include integration into host cultures and labour markets, access to social protection and healthcare, and an increasing debate about government policy on sex work, especially as it pertains to trafficking of women and girls. Discussion also included reference to legal empowerment and rights literacy of migrant women, access to education and training, and self-organization of migrant women for the purpose of advocacy and collective bargaining efforts. Critically, speakers and participants noted the increasing deskilling of migrant women due to lack of recognition of foreign credentials and limited opportunities for upward mobility.

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## PANEL MEMBERS

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### CONVENERS

Joyce Jett, International Representative, Medical Care Development International and Solar Cooker’s International

Colette Samoya, Fondatrice de BANGWE et Dialogue

Patrick Taran, President, Global Migration Policy Associates (GMPA)

### SPEAKERS

Krishna Ahooja-Patel, International Representative, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Gloria Moreno Fontes, Senior Labour Migration Specialist, International Labour Organization (ILO)

Patrick Taran

Monica Cristea, Board member, European Network of Migrant Women (ENOMW)

Nunu Kidane, Director, Priority Africa Network (PAN)

### RAPORTEURS

Dylan Terry, Global Migration Policy Associates

Katherine Youtz, Global Migration Policy Associates

### RESOURCE TEAM

Rachel Babecoff, International Council of Jewish Women

Dinara Gozalova, Geneva School of Diplomacy

Olga Kadyшева, Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation



Migrant women actively contribute a wealth of diverse skills and knowledge to the ECE region. It is critical to halt the divisive conception of society in terms of “us” and “them.” Recommendations from this session are intended to protect and support migrant women in the ECE region, but it is equally important to celebrate the achievements of migrant women. Using their own language, migrant women continue to challenge policy and re-frame the debate on displacement and migration. In solidarity with these efforts, we urge the Forum and all ECE member states to promote and implement the recommendations offered here to ensure that the rights of migrant women are upheld.



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. Uphold and Promote the equality of treatment and non-discrimination of all migrant women, recognizing first and foremost their humanity and innate dignity.
2. Reframe our discourse and framework on migrant women to recognize that human rights are women’s rights which are inherently migrant women’s rights.
3. Extend the Beijing Platform for Action with specific reference to the condition of all migrant women and girls, regardless of status.
4. Ratification and Implementation of international conventions on migration as well as international labour standards to strengthen the protection of migrant women.
5. Empower migrant women to self-organize, support migrant women’s organizations, and facilitate networking and advocacy by migrant organizations and women organizations.
6. Regularize migrant women and children in irregular situations.
7. Support migrant family unity and integrity by family reunification policies and an immediate end to deportation practices that separate families.
8. Extend social protection, social security coverage and full health care including covering sexual and reproductive rights to migrant women.
9. Demand equal treatment for refugees, asylum seekers and displaced women.
10. Provide quality secondary, vocational, and tertiary education and lifelong learning for migrant girls and women particularly to support integration and access to employment.

***Contact or collaborate  
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