



## **“The SURVIVOR Project: Enhancing Services for Refugee and Migrant GBV Survivors in Greece**

### **Exchange Visit Report- France 2019**

#### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

##### **Chapter 1. Introduction**

1.1 Objectives of the GBV Exchange Visit -Terms of Reference (ToR).....	4
1.2 Three days Exchange Meetings Agenda (Lyon and Paris).....	7

##### **Chapter 2. General context: France’s GBV available data, prevention, protection, prosecution, integrated policies**

2.1 Key statistics regarding Gender- Based Violence.....	9
2.2 Sexual and reproductive rights.....	11
2.3 Empowerment of women and representation at all levels of responsibility.....	11
2.4 Women’s rights and the Sustainable Development Goals in France.....	11
2.5 Violence against women and children - the Istanbul Convention.....	11
2.6 Domestic violence in the context of refugee and migration.....	12
2.7 The problem of commercialized sexual exploitation of migrant women and girls.....	12
2.8 Within the scope of the European Union’s external actions.....	13

##### **Chapter 3. France’s National Response on GBV**

3.1 A strategy to place the principle of gender equality at the heart of France’s projects.....	13
3.2 France’s National Info Helpline, for survivors of domestic violence (DV).....	14
3.3 Women’s shelters in France.....	14



## **Chapter 4. Highlights of main activities and discussions during the three days GBV exchange visit in France (Lyon-Paris)**

4.1 Meeting with Forum réfugiés-Cosi.....	15
4.2 Global round table with civil society NGOs, associations and group of volunteer.....	16
4.3 Meeting with the Head of Asylum Mission and Head of Service and Jurist Detention Expert of Forum réfugiés-Cosi.....	19
4.4 Meeting with the Head of Documentation and Training Center of Forum réfugiés-Cosi.....	20
4.5 Round table meeting with regional authorities in Lyon.....	21
4.6 Meeting with the Head of Section of the Reception Centers for Asylum Seekers (CADA) of the Ministry of Interior.....	22
4.7 Meeting with France's Police Head Quarters in Paris.....	25
4.8 Meeting with OFRA the Identification of Applicants with Special Needs in France.....	26

## **Chapter 5. Lessons Learned-Findings- Recommended Practices Following the Exchange Visit**

5.1 France's and Greece's common challenges on preventing and responding to GBV.....	28
5.2 Good Practices that Have Emerged in Recent Years both in Greece and France.....	29
5.3 Measures to prevent and respond to GBV at any form of detention and identifications center in France and Greece.....	30

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**CADA** Centre d'accueil de demandeurs d'asile  
**CAO** Centres d'accueil et d'orientation  
**CRWI** the Center Research for Women's Issues Diotima  
**CRA** Centre de rétention administrative  
**CIDFF** Centres d'Information sur les Droits des Femmes et des Familles  
**DV** Domestic Violence  
**EU** European Union  
**ECRE** European Council on Refugees and Exiles  
**ENS** European Network on Statelessness  
**EFRA** European Fundamental Rights Agency  
**EASO** European Asylum Support Office  
**EIGE** European Institute for Gender Equality  
**FRC** Forum Réfugiés-Cosi  
**FGM** Female Genital Mutilation  
**FNSF** Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes  
**ENCIDFF** Fédération Nationale des Centres d'Information sur les Droits des Femmes et des familles  
**GBV** Gender-Based Violence  
**GSGE** the General Secretariat for Gender Equality  
**IRC** International Rescue Committee  
**IPV** Intimate Partner Violence  
**KETHI** Research Centre for Gender Equality  
**LGBTI** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual, Intersex  
**MIPROF** La mission interministérielle de protection des femmes contre les violences et de lutte contre la traite des êtres humains  
**NGO** Non-Governmental Organization  
**OFFI** L'Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration  
**OFRA** Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides  
**UASC** Unaccompanied and Separated Children  
**UNHCR** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
**VAW** Violence Against Women  
**VIFFIL** - SOS Femmes (Violences Intra Familiales Femmes Informations Libertés)

*For the reader's convenience the present report is structured as follows: The second and third chapter is a desk research of France's refugee and migration context, on GBV available data, prevention, protection, prosecution, integrated policies. The fourth chapter is the interaction of meetings during the three days exchange visit in Lyon and Paris. Finally the fifth chapter is common challenges and good practices as well as recommendations which are mostly focusing on the protection of women and girls in the identification and reception centers in both Greece and France.*





## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Objectives, Terms of Reference (ToR)

Exchange visit under a common goal to address GBV was organized by IRC Hellas with the valuable support of the Forum Réfugiés-Cosi (FRC). FRC is a non-profit association working for the reception of refugees, the defense to the right of asylum and the promotion of the rule of law in France.

The exchange visit took place in Lyon and Paris in the framework of European Union (EU) partnership with the FRC as for “**The SURVIVOR Project:** Enhancing Services for refugee and migrant GBV survivors in Greece” (henceforth: the SURVIVOR project) Co-funded by DG-Justice program “Rights, Equality and Citizenship of the European Union (for the period of 24 months -3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2018 to 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2020).

Project leader in Greece, the Center Research for Women’s Issues (CRWI) Diotima, a GBV prevention and response organization. Local consortium partners, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE), the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) and International Rescue Committee (IRC), Hellas.

[FRC](#) is one of the four EU non-financial partners of the SURVIVOR project, in specific for Work Package 5: “*to strengthen GBV programming through transnational dialogue and sharing GBV best practices, resources and tools in Greece and Europe*”

**GBV Exchange Visit Terms of Reference (ToR):** Conduct exchange visits to boost cross-border learning, and European skills sharing on best practices for GBV prevention and response.

Exchange visit will seek to improve the GBV knowledge and practices of the GBV experts and their organizations, and to integrate the experience gained from the visit into their organisations. This exciting opportunity will enable members to share their work with others, learn from innovative GBV programming outside own countries, connect with other activists, and reflect on how to enhance GBV prevention and response programs.

Members will also use the time of the exchange program to reach out to different Network members within the same town or city through a half-day meeting, sharing experience, challenges and reflecting on lessons to enhance GBV programming in the region. In addition, it is crucial to ensure that the exchange visit is not based exclusively on theory but also in practical steps, experience, context, trends and other. After the study visit, participants will be required to document their experiences which will be shared with the rest of the members to further foster learning beyond borders. Exploring in to differences in socioeconomic, and cultural contexts, approaches to GBV prevention and response that are somewhat different or with many similarities.



### **GBV exchange visit learning objectives**

Connecting organisations to new information and opportunities across Europe (SURVIVOR project EU partners: France, Italy, Bulgaria and Germany).

- Catalyzing innovative thinking and generating better development solutions for GBV prevention and respond.
- Inspiring collaboration between individuals, institutions, EU countries/regions.
- Increased European access to best practices and resources.
- Understand the refugee and migrant's law related to GBV issues, vulnerabilities in the specific context.
- Changes that occur in the broader organizational or social environment, which are embodied in improved processes or in new GBV products and services.
- Concrete examples and to understand the advantage of subsequently adapting these GBV practices and applying them to organizational circumstances/context/needs.
- Giving feedback and applying lessons learned and make an equal contribution to achieving the objectives of the exchange visit.
- On return from the exchange visit, demonstration of a formal commitment to disseminate a plan with the GBV information and knowledge acquired from the visit.

**Cross Border Host organization(s) profile:** GBV Prevention and Respond Organizations/Institutions for refugees and migrant women girls, LGBTQI+ people, persons with Disabilities etc. An ideal framework for peer exchange (between practitioners who are service providers to women, girls and survivors of GBV role) it will give the opportunity for acquiring new knowledge, making comparisons with one's own practices and experiences, opening up to new partners, discovering new environments and pausing to reflect on one's own situation.

- National authorities/policy makers
- Organisations providing direct GBV Case Management/ Legal Aid Support / Psychosocial Support/ Healing Trauma/ Empowerment Activities etc.
- Women and Girls GBV counseling centers/Safe Shelter (state or NGOs)
- Women's and Girls Community Centers/Associations
- Asylum authority's institutions/organisations in charge of vulnerabilities (chance to use in-depth group exchanges on laws and implementation of laws in the field of work with survivors from the refugee and migrants population)
- Medical organizations providing care to survivors of GBV



### **Impact of the exchange visit**

The experience from the exchange visits will hopefully lead to organizational changes which can enable a new practice to be discovered, understood, assimilated, adapted and subsequently applied. An exchange visit does not just enable organizations/institutions to learn about a new practice, it also encourages to organisations to think through access and holistic services for women, girls and GBV survivors previously unavailable, as well as share common problems and seek practitioner led solutions together. Alternatively, assessments can be specifically worked into the organization's monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

### **Lessons learned/ Findings and Recommended Practices following the study visit**

A dissemination plan from each consortium partner on how they apply best practices to their work or organisation will be developed at the Regional GBV Workshop in Greece (end of 2019) where representatives from each local and EU organisation will be invited to participate. Partners will work together, supported by IRC, to share resources, training materials, best practices and guidelines on how to adapt existing social services for GBV survivors from the refugee and migrant populations.

### **The Greek partners “GBV expert members” exchange visit in France**

Diotima's Gender-Based Violence Supervisor / Trainer and technical advisor
Diotima's Lawyer, expert in GBV law and asylum in Greece.
Sociologist/Criminologist, Scientific Responsible for the National Network of Counseling Centers and Safe Shelters for women survivors - Research Center for Gender Equality (KETHI)
GBV consultant and expert in the refugee crisis representing the General Secretariat for Gender Equality
IRC Hellas' -GBV Specialist

*Diotima's lawyer was recommended to support the visit, while one of the main objectives of the exchange was the law knowledge/experience for refugees, asylum seekers, migrant and host community, women and girls, those who are in high risks of violence and specialized needs under the assessment of vulnerabilities criteria's and international protection law for GBV survivors.*





**1.2 The agenda of the three day's meetings** was as follows: agenda was organized and supported during the three days exchange visit by the Réfugiée Forum - European Advocacy Officer.

### **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March – Lyon**

**9:00 – 10:30:** Visit of the Forum health center office **Essor** – Exchanges with medical and psycho-social service

**10:30 – 12:30:** Support from civil society organizations for GBV survivors– (global round table):

- Forum réfugiés-Cosi <https://www.forumrefugies.org/>
- Amicale du Nid, Support and inclusion of people experiencing or at risk of prostitution training and research on prostitution <http://amicaledunid.org/>
- VIFFIL- Women's association for respond to GBV Survivors. <http://www.viffil.com/>
- CIDFF - National Federation of Information Centers on the Rights of Women and Families is an essential relay of the action of the authorities in terms of access rights for women, combating gender discrimination and promoting equality between women and men. <http://www.infodemmes.com/v2/accueil.html>
- La Cimade- volunteers association that receives and advises migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and provides legal support to foreigners, assisting them in accessing their rights. <https://www.lacimade.org/la-cimade-english/>
- Le Refuge (LGBTQI+ -The national association Le Refuge offers accommodation and personalized support to LGBTQI+ youth, 18 to 25 years old, victims of homophobia or transphobia and in a situation of family rejection. [www.le-refuge.org](http://www.le-refuge.org)
- Passerelle Buissonnière- a non-profit organization whose mission is to support women in isolation, out of illness or exile. <http://www.passerellesbuissonnieres.org/>

**12:30 – 15:00:** Lunch

**15:30-16:30** Visit of Forum centers in Lyon

### **Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March – Lyon**

**9:00 – 11:00:** Forum réfugiés-Cosi, the Head of asylum mission and Head of service and jurist detention expert

**11:00-12:30** Forum réfugiés-Cosi \_Documentation and training on GBV

**13:30 – 14:30** Lunch



**15:30 – 17:00: Round table: with regional authorities in Lyon:**

- Regional Director of women rights and equality – General secretariat to regional affairs to the Auvergne-Rhône Alpes region Prefecture (representation on Government at regional level)
- French office of immigration and integration
- Head of mission in charge of solidarity, citizenship and housing at the General secretariat to regional affairs to the Auvergne-Rhône Alpes region Prefecture (representation on Government at regional level)

**Friday 29th March – Paris**

**9:30-10:30** Head of section in charge of the reception centers for asylum seekers (CADA) and the first reception mission and coordination of the national accommodation system – French office of immigration and integration under the Ministry of Interior

**12:00 -13:00** Technical adviser for the inter-ministerial mission on the protection of women against violence and fight against trafficking (MIPROF) and Head of mission at MIPROF

**15: 00- 16:00** Head of mission on Vulnerabilities at the French office for the protection of refugees and stateless persons (**OFPRA**):– head of the working group on sexual orientation and gender identity and the representative of European and international affairs office – OFPRA.





## **Chapter 2. General context: France's GBV available data, prevention, protection, prosecution, integrated policies.**

In 2019, the population in France is estimated to be around 65.13 million. France has one of Europe's oldest—and largest—administrative immigration detention regimes. Detainees in France spent on average 12.8 days in detention, far below the 45 days legal limit in place at that time. France operates 24 long-term immigration detention centres, euphemistically labelled centres de detention administrative ("administrative detention centres"), which have a total capacity of 1,543 beds.

2018 statistics resulted to 122,000 asylum applicants, a + 22% increase compared to 2017. Around 47,000 positive decisions (refugee status and subsidiary protection, first instance and appeal) 2019 main trends with a constant increase of asylum flux: 25,000 asylum applicants in the first two months of 2019 (+23% compared to the first two months of 2018) the continuous growth of Albanian applications, the substantial growth of Georgian, Malian and Ivorian applications. Significance of secondary movements: in the first two months of 2019, 35% of the first applicants under the Dublin procedure.<sup>1</sup>

### **Top 10 source countries of asylum seekers in France (2018)**

Afghanistan, Republic of Guinea, Albania, Ivory Coast, Georgia, Mali Nigeria, Bangladesh, Somalia and DRC.<sup>2</sup>

### **2.1 Key statistics regarding GBV**

The reception conditions, which are insufficient and sometimes precarious, expose asylum-seeker and refugee women and girls to a large number of violent acts, such as those indicated by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2016 and those in the findings of several recent studies. Women on the streets or in makeshift camps in France have faced proposals to trade sexual relations for accommodation, or experienced sexual assaults. Precarious administrative and economic conditions, as well as difficulties linked to adapting to the host country (isolation, language difficulties, rejection and racism from the local population) are equally highlighted as factors that can have a strong bearing on the exposure of asylum-seeker and refugee women to GBV.

On average, each year, approximately 223,000 women aged 18 to 75 are survivors of the most severe forms of DV physical and/or sexual abuse by their partner or ex-spouse). Of these, only 14% have filed complaints. According to the estimates, 68% of survivors reported that the violence has had serious

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/europe/france>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/france/statistics>



repercussions on their psychological health and 54% that the violence led to disruptions in their daily lives. 143,000 children live in a home where a woman reported being survivors of physical and/or sexual abuse from a spouse or former spouse. In 2015, 36 minors were killed in the context of domestic violence or following the homicide of one of the partners: 96 minor children became orphan.<sup>3</sup>

The defense of women's and girls' rights, the promotion of gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence are one of the major priorities of France's internal action in the area of promoting and protecting human rights.

In 2018 around 107,000 refugee and migrant women amongst the 2,900 currently protected people in France. Women can also remain exposed to violence situations once in France. Continuing increase of GBV in asylum applications such as genital female mutilation risk. In 2018, 7,550 young girls were protected against genital female mutilation and domestic violence (Balkan countries, Caucasus) as well as trafficking of persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation (western Africa, Nigeria) and hate crimes due to gender identity.<sup>4</sup>

## **2.2 Sexual and Reproductive Rights**

The Beijing Conference helped set out shared definitions of concepts such as sexual and reproductive rights. It affirmed that the fundamental rights of women include the right to manage their sexuality and their maternity, the freedom to make decisions without any constraints or violence. It is on this basis that France wishes to act, to ensure these internationally-recognized rights are fully accessible to women and girls.<sup>5</sup>

## **2.3 Empowerment of women and representation at all levels of responsibility**

France is also committed to defending women's empowerment throughout their lives and their participation at all levels of responsibility. The President underlined these commitments again in September 2015 on the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Conference. With this in mind, United Nation Women launched their "Step It Up" campaign asking States to make national commitments to overcome the challenges which prevent men and women from developing their full potential.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://euromedrights.org/campaign-violence-against-women-is-not-fate/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/00\\_arm2018\\_synthesis\\_report\\_final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/00_arm2018_synthesis_report_final_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/human-rights/women-s-rights/france-s-actions-for-women-s-rights-and-equality/>



## **2.4 Women's rights and the Sustainable Development Goals in France.**

France has ensured that women's rights are fully considered in negotiations on development funding and the sustainable development goals - gender and gender equality issues are the subject of Sustainable Development Goal 5 and across the various goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In a context dominated by the return of conservatism and obscurantism, much remains to be done..

## **2.5 Violence against women and children - the Istanbul Convention**

At the United Nations General Assembly, France supported the first resolutions condemning and fighting against **FGM and forced marriage**. FGM is a crime and is punishable with a prison sentence of up to 15 years. France likewise actively participated in establishing the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence- the Istanbul Convention, which it ratified on 4 July 2014. It is the first legally-binding international text which includes provisions to combat crimes that are allegedly committed in the name of honour. Since November 2014, France has been asking the European Union to launch an appeal for all Member States to quickly ratify this convention. France is the tenth state party to undergo the procedure.

France adopted a **new sexual violence law** as well, aimed at tackling, sexual harassment and sexual violence against children. The law makes street harassment an offense, raises the statute of limitation on sex crimes against children, and gives judges the power to rule on a case by case basis that sex by an adult with a child under 15 is rape, but falls short of criminalizing all such sex with a child under 15 as rape. <sup>6</sup>

## **2.6 Domestic violence in the context of refugee and migration**

French national legislation on violence against women covers many forms of GBV, such as Domestic violence which is criminalised and covers psychological, physical and sexual abuse and exploitation. Rape within marriage is also recognised as a crime. Stalking is criminalised and covers harassment perpetrated by a current or former partner. Aggravating circumstances apply to physical violence offences when the perpetrator is the partner of the survivor, or when the perpetrator's motivation is based on the survivors's opposition to marriage or partnership. Forced marriage itself is also illegal.

However it is common across all social classes, cultures and nationalities, the male domination/violence over female partners due to patriarchal global society which fuels this. In addition certain social constructs, such as those based on place of origin, age or sexual orientation, are sometimes the source of inequalities that may foster or reinforce the hold one partner has over the other. So it is not a matter of regarding these different characteristics as cumulative elements, but rather as elements of a complex

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/france-passes-new-law-on-child-rape-sexual-harassment/a-44919914>



system of inequality and domination, in which different forms of discrimination and exclusion overlap and reinforce each other.

Foreign women who are both irregular migrants and survivors of DV face compounding acts of discrimination, from sexism in the home and community to racism in the community and society. They often believe that, by reporting their situation to the justice system, the police or social services, they will risk losing any chance they may have of being allowed to stay in France. Returning to their country of origin in such circumstances means exposing themselves to rejection, ostracism and even threats or attempts on their life, because of a perception that they have failed in their marriage and therefore sullied the dignity of the entire community.

The police and justice system sometimes hold back from responding to this type of violence on grounds of cultural difference, which is not surprising considering the rates of violence against women and girls in the French society as well. Sexist and controlling behaviour are thus legitimised by male social norms which the system would prefer not to take a position on. The attention given to survivors of domestic violence in police stations has considerably improved in recent years. Several organizations have said, however, that the police do still sometimes discourage survivors from lodging a complaint, particularly if they are unable to supply a medical certificate to support the violence.<sup>7</sup>

## **2.7 The problem of commercialized sexual exploitation of migrant women and girls.**

Repressive policies in the name of migration control, public order, and women's rights in France. Commercialized sexual exploitation (the exchange of sexual acts for money called prostitution as the legal term in France) was legal until April 2016, but several surrounding activities were illegal, like operating a brothel, living off the avails (pimping), and paying for sex with someone under the age of 18 (the age of consent for sex is 15). In France, 28% of the dismantled prostitution networks in 2016 were Nigerian. On 6 April 2016, the French National Assembly voted to punish customers of prostitutes by a fine of €1500. This occurred because migrant women coerced into commercial sexual exploitation due to economic hardships were seen as connected to trafficking networks; they embodied a form of transnational criminality taking root in France. The implementation of the UN Trafficking Protocol, migrant women and girls who were arrested for soliciting were given the opportunity to access anti-trafficking mechanisms and receive temporary residence permits on the condition that they reported their pimps and/or traffickers.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Combating violence against women FRANCE

[file:///C:/Users/liamo/Downloads/2016.5478\\_mh0216772enn\\_pdfweb\\_20170215100604%20\(3\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/liamo/Downloads/2016.5478_mh0216772enn_pdfweb_20170215100604%20(3).pdf)

<sup>8</sup>[https://www.fondationscelles.org/pdf/RM4/1\\_Book\\_Prostitution\\_Exploitation\\_Persecution\\_Repression\\_Fondation\\_Scelles\\_EN\\_G.pdf](https://www.fondationscelles.org/pdf/RM4/1_Book_Prostitution_Exploitation_Persecution_Repression_Fondation_Scelles_EN_G.pdf)



## **2.8 Within the scope of the European Union's external actions**

Within the EU, building on the "EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them", adopted in 2008 under the French Presidency, France supports the priority given by the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to **promoting women's rights** in the EU's external relations.

## **Chapter 3. Frances National Response on GBV**

### **3.1 A strategy to place the principle of gender equality at the heart of France's projects**

In France, **feminists** have been actively denouncing forms of violence against women and girls since the beginning of the 1970. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development adopted a gender and development strategy for 2013-2017 in July 2013, which places the principle of gender equality at the heart of all the projects and development programmes conducted by France thereby defining, a framework for action that advocates **integrating gender across the board in all sectors of activities**.

France has also supported the creation of a programme specifically dedicated to projects which promote gender equality and seek to end violence against women entitled, "Rights, Equality and Citizenship", as part of the 2014-2020 multi-year programme, the adoption of the Council conclusions on gender quality, on 16 June 2016, and the work conducted by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). A third action plan on gender equality for 2018-2022 is currently being drawn up in cooperation with civil society. It aims to boost gender-based achievements by improving traceability and accountability to help development.<sup>9</sup>

### **3.2 France's National Info Helpline, for survivors of domestic violence (DV).**

Seventy four women killed by their partners in 2019 in France, as NGOs denounce rise in **femicides**. The Violence Femmes Info helpline 3919 (7 days a week, 365 days a year) is free of charge and provides multilingual support for survivors of DV. Since then, it has been further developed and addresses all forms of violence against women. The helpline is run by the Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes (FNSF).

The SOS Viols Femmes helpline (0800 05 95 95) is a free-of charge. **Rape and sexual assault crisis helpline** operates by the non-governmental organisation Collectif Féministe Contre Le Viol (CFCV). In

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/human-rights/women-s-rights/france-s-international-strategy-for-gender-equality-2018-2022/>



2014, the call center processed 50,780 calls. Among them, 38,972 were related to violence against women and girls <sup>10</sup>

### **3.3 Women's shelters in France**

Today in France, more than half of migrants are women (41% versus 32% for the majority-population homeless), particularly the population from sub-Saharan Africa and non-EU and ex-Soviet European countries (around half the numbers in each of these groups are women). The migrant population is also younger and comprises more families with children.

According to FRC 42% of migrant is accommodated in Lyon and half are in the streets/squats in high risk of violence, abuse. Death might also occur for homeless people due to low temperature during winter time.

There are only 42 women's shelters in France but clearly accommodation stock is grossly inadequate for the number of homeless people, but neither it is adapted to the profiles of people: temporary accommodation for women survivors and their children is few and far between.

Despite their poor health status, homeless women encounter many barriers to care. Associated relationships with the following factors: financial and spatial access to care, housing history, migration status, healthcare utilisation, victimization history, caring for children, lack of social network and self-perceived health status. In a context of over increasing numbers of homeless people, temporary accommodation which is accessed via an emergency phone number that is overwhelmed by the volume of calls, struggles to provide appropriate long-term response, adapted to these people needs.

The 115 Helpline (7 days a week, 365 days a year) in France is to access emergency accommodation in France for homeless people and are generally delivered by NGO's which are funded by the state. The aim of the hotline is to provide information about and signposting to available services over the phone to people who ask for help through it (women fleeing domestic violence, single people or families, young homeless people etc.) but also general information to individuals or information for social workers about:

- Emergency accommodations and day center in the area.
- Facilities providing access to health care, showers free food etc. <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.euronews.com/2019/07/06/france-74-women-killed-by-their-partners-in-2019-as-ngos-denounce-rise-in-femicides>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.feantsa.org/download/access-to-shelter-in-france3385873972280013712.pdf>





## **Chapter 4. Highlights of main activities and discussions during the 3 days GBV exchange visit in France (Lyon, Paris).**

The visit proposed very good opportunities for exchange between experts from France and Greece at national, regional, organizational and community level approach. A broad range and variety of protection and GBV organizations experts were present at the meetings (government bodies, regional, local organizations & associations and group of volunteers).

### **Meetings of day one (27.03): Lyon**

#### **4.1 Meeting with FRC**

The Head of Office, Jean-François Ploquin gave a warm welcome to Greek partners. Followed an organizational presentation by the Head of Essor mental health care center Valérie Abjean, on the refugee and migration context in Lyon and the scope of work and main activities of the RFC health care center “Essor”. The Health centre Essor in Lyon provides medical appointments, psychological therapies, physiotherapy sessions, art therapy workshops and organises preventive initiatives. Since 2007 the health center has been helping migrant and refugee’s people who have been exiled in mental distress, suffered intentional violence and torture. The health center deals with trauma resulting from persecution and intentional violence in a context of social and legal exile and precariousness.

As for GBV response the Essor health center support staff is trained and have the professional experience to identify these specific needs of survivors and to support in a survivor –center approach, protect and after informed consent refer to specialized social and services provided by NGO’s/associations, in addition to the direct mental care provided by the health internal team. FRC is also supporting their beneficiaries that suffered GBV on asylum application under the law of isolated women in France, as well as networks survivors with social services, public health, NGOs and associations but do not follow up the case after being referred, excepted on the health issues as long as the survivor is an active patient of the Essor center. Characteristics and consequences of gender-based violence were identified during the presentation by all partners as well as the different dimensions of violence according to cultural, ethnic, political, social, community factors, in France and Greece.

Main types of GBV reported by FRC is DV within IPV, sexual violence as a weapon of war at country of origin, psychological emotional abuse, commercialized sexual exploitation and abuse trafficking, forced marriage, FGM and violence on the way to EU. Women and girls from Albania, Kosovo, Congo and women from Nigeria that have suffered many forms of GBV through their life time.

As regards to legal aid response difficulties for survivors of GBV in France, FRC noted that “pertaining to obtaining protection from violence through common law, two situations were singled out”: fear of losing residence permits or international protection when the latter is attached to that of their spouse; and the belief that filing a complaint or reporting a violent incident may be detrimental to their asylum

15







application. Complaints that are filed and often not acted upon, as well as a lack of clear information on the rights framework of women and girls in France, fuel the survivors' fears. Moreover, failure to account for gender-specific needs when designing reception centres can lead to women having to share some common areas, such as toilets or bathrooms. This may lead to new situations of violence, particularly sexual. **Also highlighted the absence of systematic GBV training for professionals, especially for police, judges, civil courts, family law cases officers, health and social workers.** The absence of training, coupled with the systematic lack of consideration of the issue, translates to an “invisibility” of the violence suffered by asylum-seeker and refugee women residing in France.

#### **4.2 Global round table with civil society NGOs, associations and group of volunteer at FRC office in Lyon.**

Greek colleagues presented the SURVIVOR project and the main context updates related to refugee and migration flow in Greece, as well as the existing GBV prevention and response programming at national, organizational and community level.

*However the big number of associations/ organizations presented in the meeting and due to time limit the focus of exchange was mainly on getting to know activities related to protection and response for women, girls and boys (limited national response system protecting male survivors of sexual assault). The members of the meeting did not went through deep diving lesson learned but recognized the benefit of networking organization and reflection on programming that responds to different group of people, such as persons in traffic, IPV within DV, commercialized sexual exploitation and abuse and abuse, women isolated, women and girls living in the street as well as the presence of an LGBTQI+ protection youth organization in the meeting gave a greater understanding on programming for young refugees that have suffered violence, rejection from family members and threat of prosecution due to their gender identity, sexual orientation and gender expression.*

*To be highlighted the welcoming and supporting refugee and migrants communities in Lyon with the **high spirit of volunteerism**, and harnessing the energy, skills, and commitment that volunteers bring to the welcoming movement has become an integral part of strengthening inclusive communities in Lyon. Volunteers in Lyon share skills, help mobilize resources, organize community activities and act as bridge builders between long-time residents and newcomers.*

Most of below protection NGOs are state funded, supporting and advocating for women's and girls' rights, safety, health and access to social benefits. They mainly operate with the power of “trained volunteers” in the spirit of solidarity. They are daily defending human rights, dignity and safety of people living in the streets, detained or to the ones that are under the asylum process or already recognized as refugees.



As for the GBV prevention and response programming in Lyon, **IPV** within domestic violence remains the main focus of most organizations/associations. Follows **barriers to access specialized health care and legal aid**. The main challenge recognized by all bellow actors was the **lack of safe accommodation for women and girls** that experienced violence or are at high risk while living in the streets. It was also mentioned the **challenge of reporting incident of violence to police, survivors with no legal papers will have to be detained even though they are in a severe vulnerable position**.

**Amicale du Nid**: An association created in 1946. The association is working with people in prostitution, provides comprehensive and specific support to individuals in order to support exit survival sex, increase social inclusion and empower migrant women under France law get a legal status in France. In addition the association supports professionals with capacity building trainings on the issue of prostitution.

The associations fight against the commercialized sexual exploitation of migrant women and girls system in France, defends the rights of women and girls and all forms of discrimination, homophobia, transphobia, racism and sexism.

**VIFFIL**: SOS Women's Association, which for forty years has been working with women and their children survivors **of IPV within DV**. Amicale du Nid **runs emergency shelters** for the total of five days and networks with other support shelters network in France. Mainly responding to severe cases that demands urgent actions. Accredited and funded under state welfare, the shelter is one of the first of its kind in France. The structure has an accommodation capacity of limited to 100 beds located in the municipalities of Villeurbanne and Saint-Fons in Lyon.

The association is in close collaboration with the national helpline 3919 for domestic violence. It is also collaborating with Police, a pilot project started in 2019. Through the 3919 hotline 24/7 police officers coordinate with social workers (all Lyon region). They assess the situation and the woman needs for emergency actions. There is a list of criteria to follow by the social worker, if the woman meet the criteria is accommodated for 5 days in protective accommodation center. The legal procedure is ongoing (husband arrested) or family or hotel until durable solution. **Police involvement is mandatory while it falls under the national response**. In addition the shelter has an educational team that is made up of qualified professionals of social workers, family social economy counselors, specialized educators, a social and family intervention technician and a clinical psychologist. Specific actions of minimizing social abuse for the survivors of IPV is undertaken by the association that also **provides legal support for children custody and legal separation**. VIFFIL is pushing the Government to make places available after the 5 days of emergency accommodation and also to be expanded to other regions as well.

**CIDFF**: Founded in 1972 at the initiative of the French State, the FNCIDFF - **National Federation of Information Centers on the Rights of Women and Families** (former CNIDFF) is an essential relay of the action from the French authorities in terms of combating gender discrimination and GBV and promoting equality between women and men. Funded by state Ministry of labour, State Secretariat for



Women's Rights and vocational trainings for professionals. The actions carried out on the field by its multidisciplinary teams (lawyers, employment advisors, marriage counselors etc. They offer basic SRH consultations such as contraception methods and they do organize GBV raising awareness campaigns such as the 16 days of GBV activism.

**La Cimade:** The goal of the Cimade is to work in active solidarity with oppressed and exploited people. It defends the dignity and rights of refugees and migrants, regardless of their background, political opinions or beliefs. The association is supported by 2,000 volunteers in 88 local groups in 8 regions. Every year, the organization reach more than 100,000 migrant, refugee and asylum-seekers. It shelters nearly 200 people in its centers of Béziers and Massy. They work in reception centers and 75 prisons across country and provide legal support to refugee and migrants assisting them in accessing their rights. The organization leads also advocacy actions towards policy makers in France and it informs and raises awareness on migrations issues among the public opinion (press, website, social networks, and Migrant Scène festivals).

**Le Refuge LGBTQI+:** The association Le Refuge offers accommodation and personalized support to refugee LGBTQI+ youth, 18 to 25 years old, victims of homophobia or transphobia and in a situation where their family have rejected them due to their gender identity and sexual expression. The association funded by government is trying to minimize isolation of youth LGBTQI+ and risk of suicide, they also network youth people accommodated to social network and education. The organization is trying to push government for more funds to have adapted support at national level for all LGBTQI+ refugees and migrants despite their age.

**Passerelle Buissonnière:** An association that was born by two activists five years ago, a doctor and a lawyer with an NGO pack round joint their power to support vulnerable women migrants and refugee in distress due to their health condition or legal status in France. The association as well has built on innovative and unique support system and actions towards employment for women migrants, develop women's capacities to strengthen their autonomy, legal advice, primary health care and capacity building for lawyers and doctors in the frame of migration, social inclusion and health.

## Meetings of day two (28.03): Lyon

### **4.3 Meeting with the Head of Asylum Mission and Head of Service and Jurist Detention Expert of FRC**

*The one hour meeting was a focus on the up-to-date information and analysis of the legal framework and practice with regard to asylum procedures, reception conditions, detention and content of international protection for refugees and asylum seekers.*



FRC it has responsibility in six different administrative detention centres (Lyon, Marseille, Nice, Nîmes, Perpignan and Sète) the project is funded by state. Administrative detention centres (CRA) are controlled and managed by the border police. Under the law, these centres are not part of the regular prison administration. Placement in a CRA results from an administrative decision (not a judicial decision). Despite being held together with other third-country nationals, asylum seekers are never held with common law criminals or prisoners. There are 25 CRA on French territory, including in overseas departments and very few have specific places for women and families. According to FRC that provides legal aid, a person may be placed in a CRA (centre de rétention administrative) after going through detention in a waiting zone at the border, police custody, or imprisonment inter alia for immigration-related offences. The main nationalities of people being detained or repatriated are Algerian, Albanese, Moroccan, Tunisian and Romanian.

According to FRC few victims of Trafficking or LGBTQI+ people are seeking for international protection or identified by professionals in those detention centers. Even though GBV survivors applying for asylum are most likely granted refugee status in France or subsidiary protection, survivors themselves have enormous difficulties to express their individual story, because they are most of the time under influence, not always aware of their rights, while also went through traumatic experiences in the past.

Moreover asylum application can be used by criminal networks of THB by exploiting victims and make sure they legally stay on the France territory. The legal advisors working in the detention centers are supporting identification of trafficked asylum seekers. Through individual legal sessions they do try to identify the special needs of women that offers to analyze the asylum-trafficking in human beings nexus through the prism of special needs and to equip national asylum authorities and civil society organizations to tackle crosscutting issues (i.e. protection, housing, rehabilitation, psychosocial support as well as security). These needs have to be addressed to allow them to benefit from an appropriated international protection by EU member States. OFPRA the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons has developed a system for the signaling of vulnerabilities in places of detention, namely waiting zones and CRA. Any person authorised to be present in waiting zones, including the NGOs such us FRC accredited to that effect, can alert OFPRA of the existence of vulnerabilities through a functional e-mail address. It should be noted, however, that this possibility seems marginally used in practice, as only one referral was made in 2017 and none in 2018. Protection Officers of the Border Unit are also trained in the detection of vulnerabilities in the same way as other OFPRA staff. According to FRC refugees and migrant women that are detained and disclose **forced marriage must be protected** by the law but in bad practice police border is not usually following.



#### **4.4 Meeting with the Head of Documentation and Training Center of Forum réfugiés-Cosi**

The goal of the educational department of RFC is to reinforce capacities of professionals- volunteers that comes in direct contact with refugee and migrants in France. According to head of asylum mission of RFC, in France IPV is a public issue, while 1 to 3 women in the general population is murdered by the husband/partner/boyfriend. Above estimation do not take in to consideration underreported cases. All trainings offered by FRC are within a price of a training package that are offered to public authorities, social workers, health staff etc. It was mentioned by Ms. Himbert that the training manuals on GBV case management developed by IRC and being available at GBV responders. **A good practice to share tools via online network, useful in the development of training packages**<sup>12</sup>.

In total 1,300 professionals are trained by FRC per year all over France. The profiles that mostly they provide trainings is OFPRA –OFI and the national court, prosecutors, judges. It was noticed by FRC that police officers /stations rarely respond to those type of trainings.

**Thematic of Trainings:** 2 days trainings: issues around GBV Law (ex FGM-THB, IPV), are targeted mostly for police officers, health and psychosocial support staff. According to RFC in France the most important training thematic are around the **Law** (asylum seekers with the right of legal stay in France) reception of refugees and migrants – psychosocial support profile of refugees, cultural background–vulnerabilities –topics around country of origin –mental and medical needs –multicultural interview process for suffering stories –attitudes open techniques and communication skills. Moreover FRC has developed Tool Box for State agencies working at reception and identification centers to be able to identify vulnerabilities of human trafficking and accordingly provide protection and link with services. In addition FRC every year provides documentation for sale on context of country of origin from the total of 6-8 countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Guinea, Nigeria, Georgia and Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan) as well as reports on annual report on asylum in EU.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://gbvresponders.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.forumrefugies.org/s-informer/publications/rapports/330-le-rapport-annuel-2019-sur-l-asile-en-france-et-en-europe>





#### **4.5 Round table meeting with regional authorities in Lyon**

The representatives of regional authorities included:

- Regional Director of women rights and equality – General secretariat to regional affairs to the Auvergne-Rhône Alpes region Prefecture (representation on Government at regional level)
- French office of immigration and integration
- The head of mission in charge of solidarity, citizenship and housing at the General secretariat to regional affairs to the Auvergne-Rhône Alpes region Prefecture (representation on Government at regional level)

*While the meeting time was limited (one hour) with above representatives of regional authorities, it was agreed the discussion and exchange to focus on “**integration and empowerment**” of women and girls at regional level in Lyon. The regional director of women rights and equality claimed that authorities in Lyon do supports actions such as campaigns around gender and equality, but not really actions that could sensitize local population against discrimination of refugee /migrants.*

In regards to empowerment of refugee women and girls it was clear that refugee women do not actually participate in any women’s networking event. However the group of team expressed the necessity of implementing activities that are proven to engage women and girls through community centers, safe spaces, events and recreational activities (similar to safe spaces). There is also lack of multidisciplinary coordination among civil society actors and state for the early integration support. In addition, the region have identified the need for increasing advocacy for DV and THB and work with the police officers and social workers on sensitizing them.

In regards to medical vulnerabilities criteria’s for refugees and migrants women seeking for safe place it is different for every region in France. In addition “vulnerability assessment” for accommodations is not the same for refugees and migrants. Refugees have more and better chances to access them. It was also mentioned once again that housing especially in Lyon is very difficult to find. After one year if the person is not integrated –is quite difficult to go to school to find a job –they try some action after of this period of one year. Through a single interview of 45 minutes and via a standardized questionnaire reevaluation of the case is sometimes possible. Main health vulnerability criteria around GBV are identified through the national psychiatrist that do value as a bad practice the consequences of violence such mental health disorders and/or illness. However, it was mentioned that national psychiatrists might not accept the interpretation for mental health assessment, claiming medical deontology (not trained interpreters). In addition it was noted by all participants in round table that politics need really to look at GBV prevention at community level –field level and more funds need to be allocated to protection organizations.



Finally as for strengthening GBV response system in Lyon through capacity building the Regional Director of women rights and equality claimed that all police officers should be trained on basic GBV core concept, guiding principles etc, something that was foreseen at regional level but eventually it was admitted to not being the case.

### Meetings of day three (29.03): Paris

#### 4.6 Meeting with the Head of Section of the Reception Centers for Asylum Seekers (CADA) of the Ministry of Interior

The Reception and Orientation Centers is a French government program for asylum seekers that **provide information and temporary accommodation**. At the CAOs, asylum seekers have access to health care, social and administrative support by agents and associations. Currently, there are around 450 CAOs in France. The CAOs were created by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Housing and Sustainable Housing in 2015, as a response to an increase in asylum applications and the creation of irregular encampments in Calais and Dunkirk, France. The reception centers aim to shelter asylum seekers, **and to orient them according to their particular situation**. The OFII (French Office for Immigration and Integration) is responsible for providing information on the asylum procedure, and to direct them towards accommodation in the **national system of reception for asylum seekers**. The average cost of a place in the CAOs is €25 per person per day, including accommodation, 3 meals a day and administrative support.

Accommodation facilities for asylum seekers under the national reception scheme (dispositif national d'accueil, DNA) are:

- Accommodation centres for asylum seekers
- Emergency accommodation for asylum seekers
- Reception and administrative situation examination centres

The management of reception centres is subcontracted to the semi-public company Adoma or to NGOs that have been selected through a public call for tenders, **such as Forum réfugiés – Cosi**, French Red Cross etc. These centres fall under the French social initiatives (action sociale) and are funded by the State.

#### Lack of Accommodation for Asylum Seekers

Despite the increase in reception capacity and creation of new forms of centres, a number of regions continue to face severe difficulties in terms of providing housing to asylum seekers. As stated above, only about 44% of asylum seekers registered in 2018 received an accommodation place. In Paris, there are still





several informal camps as of early 2019, despite many dismantlement operations by the authorities.<sup>14</sup> In January 2019, France terre d'asile identified 2,230 migrants in Paris, mainly from Sudan, Afghanistan and Eritrea. Among foreign nationals living in these camps there were irregular migrants but also asylum seekers, many of them in a Dublin procedure.

According to the Prefecture, 15,640 migrants have been accommodated in emergency centres in 2018, including 5,400 identified in operations led by NGOs and OFII.

According to the head of CADA **good practices** at national level to project for a better support of vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees in France are as follow bellow: **Objectives** To establish a joint diagnosis of existing system/practices regarding:

- the identification/screening/orientation of vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees ;
- the support of vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees throughout their path
- To define priority actions to improve detection and support.

### **Methodology**

- A national working group (meets every two months, Asylum Directorate, OFII, OFPRA + ministry of health).
- Three thematic working groups (disabled people, psycho trauma victims, women survivors of sexual violence and/or human trafficking) .
- LGBTQI+ community) = institutional actors + specialized associations.

### **Expected results**

- Drafting of a national action plan at the end of semester 2019 (with administrative circular sent to regional administrators).
- Training program for concerned staff (social workers).

### **First results:**

Sub-working groups on LGBTQI+ community

- Consensus among actors to set up specialized accommodations centers for LGBTQI+ community (except for young refugees).
- Consensus to reinforce training regarding the discrimination faced by LGBTQI+ persons.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/france/reception-conditions/housing/types-accommodation>



### **Sub- working group related disabled people, psycho trauma victims**

- Increase the number of accommodations places adapted for persons with reduced mobility.
- Develop training curriculum for mental health support at all stages of the asylum process.

### **Identification and risk reduction regarding GBV in an emerging responses.**

Reception conditions adapted to women asylum seekers and refugees survivors of violence and/or human trafficking. This measure was officially adopted on 5 June 2018 by the inter-ministerial Committee on Integration. In total **300 reception places** (7/8 centers) for asylum seekers and refugees will be dedicated by the end of 2019 to vulnerable women with or without children to guarantee their safety.

- **Special specification** with security measures, psychological and social counselling.
- **Additional cost of 13€** per place and per day.
- **Involving cooperation** with specialized partners (specialized NGO, police, justice etc.).
- **Audit risk assessment** process in “common” centers.

### **Focus on reception conditions adapted to woman asylum seekers and refugees survivors of sexual violence and/or human trafficking**

- 2 regions concerned by this projec : Paris (105 places) and Marseille (26 places) 160 new places will be opened in 2019.
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#### **First lessons:**

- Different needs of protection (example of Marseille, a port city in southern France)
- Needs of standardized procedures for orientation to those centers (exfiltration).
- Needs of standardized procedures in cases of GBV and human violation in reception centers.

### **4.7 Meeting with France’s Police Headquarters in Paris.**

Partners meet with the inter-ministerial mission on the protection of women against violence and fight against trafficking: technical adviser for MIPROF and the head of mission at MIPROF.

*Main topic of the one hour meeting was around national protection and response to Human Trafficked people in France.* Concerning the enhancement of knowledge on violence against women (VAW), MIPROF has based its work on the recommendations of the Istanbul Convention. This involves a strengthened attention to administrative data. MIPROF has set up a working group gathering the main



institutional actors who produce data on Violence Against Women (VAW), which actually is a good practice to follow.

Briefly MIPROF mission, the interdepartmental unit for protecting women against violence and for combating trafficking in human beings was created in 2013 and is attached to the French Ministry in charge of women's rights at inter-ministerial committee.

**This structure has been assigned to three main missions:**

- Gathering, analysing and disseminating information and data related to violence against women (VAW)
- Creating training programmes for professionals who support of women who are survivors of GBV
- Coordinating the actions against THB at a national level.

To exercise its duties, the mission **has set up a steering committee** composed of representatives of local authorities, state representatives, high-profile experts and representatives of local organisations involved in VAW. This mission responds to the recommendations of the European Convention on preventing VAW and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). For its operation and development, the mission draws on the capacities of the staff of the different ministries, especially those of the Ministry for Women's Rights (Secretary of State of the new Secretariat of Equality between women and men). The coordination committee established in 2015 to reinforce human trafficking policies and cooperation is implemented at national action plan to fight against THB.

***Since 2016 the person forcing someone to commercialized sexual exploitation and abuse is punished under law which is an important change for the legal framework of the protection of survivors in France.***

According to MIPROF, in 2018 in total 1,857 trafficked victims were identified and supported by NGO's and associations. Out of total 1,300 were survivors of commercialized sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). However only 890 cases of sexual exploitation were reported by police, mostly women from Nigeria. It was also noted that many minors from east Europe Romania and Roma community are also survivors of sexual exploitation, forced to commit crimes by adults' from their community. The national plan for protection of children from trafficking is a pilot project to put children in safety (geographical distance between the criminal network and children). In regards to forced labour it was mentioned that authorities face difficulties to detect and protect people, such as Asian trafficking network in France.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – France <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3e0b3e127.html>



### The rights of the trafficked women in France:

- Get temporary legal permit to stay in France
- If the public prosecutor finds guilty the perpetrator, the victim gets 10 years legal permit.
- International Protection Status—if separated from the network 10 year's protection.
- Accommodations centers for trafficked women.

### 4.8 Meeting with OFRA the Identification of Applicants with Special Needs in France.

- Head mission on Vulnerabilities at the French office for the protection of refugees and stateless persons (OFPRA)
- Head of the working group on sexual orientation and gender identity
- The European and international affairs office – OFPRA

The reform of the Asylum Law in France in 2015 has introduced specific provisions regarding the identification of vulnerable asylum seekers. The law designates the French Office on Immigration and Integration (OFII) as responsible for assessing whether an asylum applicant has special reception conditions' needs.

In order to do so, **OFII has to conduct a vulnerability assessment within a reasonable timeframe with all asylum seekers.** In practice, OFII conducts such assessment on the same day that an asylum seeker has registered its asylum claim in the Prefecture. **The vulnerability assessment takes the form of a questionnaire-based interview.** The law clearly states that the assessment aims at identifying applicants with special needs, among which victims of trafficking are explicitly listed<sup>16</sup>.

Nonetheless, **only objective vulnerabilities such as pregnancy, disability and dependency are assessed by OFII.** Only if the asylum seeker takes the initiative to express her or his situation of trafficking for instance can OFII take it into account. However, in practice it is very unlikely that asylum seekers both in France and Greece will disclose their potential victimhood if they are not asked anything related to it. This is even more unlikely as very few of them might already have received any kind of support at that stage of the asylum process.

Consequently, the vulnerability assessment has very limited impact on the early identification of vulnerable persons such as victims of trafficking in France and Greece. During the interview with OFII, the asylum seeker is informed that can be benefit from a free medical examination. Although this medical examination represents an opportunity to identify a situation of trafficking, in practice it is rarely used for such purpose. **According to the law, any information collected by OFII on the vulnerability of an**

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<sup>16</sup> 2018 Country Report- France: [https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida\\_fr\\_2018update.pdf](https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_fr_2018update.pdf)



applicant has to be sent to the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA), which is the determination authority.

Only OFPRA is competent to assess special needs linked to the merit of the claim and to adopt specific procedural safeguards pertaining to specific needs or vulnerability of an applicant. To this end, **the strengthening of OFPRA capacities through the setting up of working groups on vulnerabilities, including one on trafficking, the training of case-workers as well as the willingness to cooperate with all relevant actors to increase support for GBV survivors are positive developments and are considered a good practice to follow.**

However, when violence assessment by OFPRA happens, it arrives quite late in the asylum process compared to the stage at which OFII meets the applicants. Therefore, despite the introduction of a system explicitly meant to identify vulnerable categories of asylum seekers, including victims of trafficking, there are neither sufficient means nor mechanism so far to correctly articulate the identification process.

#### **OFPRA'S 5 expert/referents departments**

- LGBTQI+ asylum seekers
- GBV, with main focus on IPV, FGM, Forced Marriage/Forced Early Marriage
- Human trafficking. The victim can get asylum protection without involving the police.
- UASC and minors
- Victim of Torture and Trauma

To be highlighted as **a good practice** by OFRA that in case of couple asylum file separation, children automatically will be under mother's legal custody, as in Greece is the opposite, and even a court order is required by Greek government for the mother to get the custody of their children.

## **Chapter 5. Lessons Learned-Findings- Recommended Practices Following the Exchange Visit**

### **5.1 France's and Greece's common challenges on preventing and responding to GBV**

Refugees and migrants residing in France and Greece are often marginalised and discriminated, often having experienced multiple forms of physical, sexual and other forms of GBV. Service providers responding to survivors are often inadequately prepared to respond to their specific vulnerabilities, needs and wishes, increasing barriers to access, and inadvertently increasing the risk of exploitation and re-victimization. Smugglers, soldiers, and criminal networks benefit from their vulnerability during their travels, in refugee camps or in both host countries.

Despite this evidence, there is an alarming lack of data in France's and Greece's national level on the extent of violence against women and girls who newly arrived or are in need of international protection.



This lack of data may fuel the perception that violence against women and girls is not a major feature of this refugee and migration crisis that both EU countries are going through the last years.

In addition, a major challenge observed in **France and Greece** is the apparent reluctance of survivors themselves to report to reception and identification centre authorities or the police. **The main causes of the low reporting rates are considered to be:**

- The fear of what impact this could have on the asylum claim of the survivor and on the perpetrator (especially in cases of domestic violence).
- The lack of information on her rights or where to report and seek help.
- The lack of effective procedures to safely respond to GBV incidents;
- The fear for the perpetrator, stigma and cultural norms.
- Insufficient training of staff in charge of responding to GBV.
- A lack of responding to big needs of safe shelters for women and girls.
- Lack of state and EU funds allocated on mitigating and responding to GBV during early arrival, asylum process and early integration.

## **5.2 Good Practices That Have Emerged in Recent Years both in Greece and France**

The positive examples have emerged in recent years **both in Greece and France** that recognize ‘domestic’ or ‘intimate partner’ violence as a matter for state intervention rather than a private matter. Greece and France are encouraged to develop specific national action plans on preventing and responding to violence against women and girls. As a good practice followed in both countries, civil society actors working with women survivors of GBV are being involved in the development of action plans to help ensure that these can deliver practical results for survivors and are sustainable.

In addition a survivor-centred and rights-centred approach to women and girls needs to be reinforced in both countries. Even though France covered in this report seem to have one or more measures in place, however there is no specialized NGO that have procedures that address the empowerment of women and girls and responds to GBV in a **survivors-centered approach through direct case management including representation at the court and in a comprehensive and coordinated manner through GBV sub-working groups.**

Cases of GBV from the refugee and migrant community in France and Greece are often disclosed during “health checks”, and “social assessments” which makes the first line professionals, such as doctors, psychologists, social workers, including police officers in to protect and assist women and girls. Protection and mitigation of GBV of newly arrived refugee and migrant women and girls, who may be vulnerable to and/or are survivors of GBV is addressed partially through a number of measures in both **France and Greece**, including:





- Separate accommodation for women and men at reception and identification centres.
- Access to safe women's shelters for survivors of domestic violence.
- Medical and psychosocial follow-ups (mostly from NGO's).
- Carrying out asylum interviews with women in private rooms with trained staff and interpreters of the same gender, and separated from their husband.
- Legal information sessions (group or individual) to women.
- Provision of 'women-only' spaces (mostly in Greece).
- Provision of written information through leaflets or posters.
- Legal support services (in case of Greece representation at the court) and adequate interpretation for survivors of GBV at reception centres.

**Enhance coordination between state and Civil Society Organizations through the improved implementation of existing SOPs adapted to the specific needs of refugee and migrant survivors of GBV.**

In regards to **France's and Greece's** Guidelines or procedures on prevention and responding to survivors of GBV needs are in place or are being developed and reviewed by the national ministries of both countries. They are, however, not always considered effective for the specific needs of refugee and migrant women and girls. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) are recognized as international best practice during an emergency humanitarian action to boost coordination and quality of GBV prevention and response interventions.

In addition constant updates of the existing "referral path ways" for responding through case management to violence incidents is challenging in Lyon and Paris, because most of protection organizations operates within their own programing, however having basic information of available services but not in a formal and updated referral form. Once survivors disclose violence, a clear referral system should be in place with all legal, medical and psychosocial services, police, and other support services, working together to provide protection and support.

Unlikely GBV Sub-working group or Protection group for refugee and migrants survivors of GBV is not in place at regional level in Lyon nor in Paris. Even though UNHCR has a present in the country (Paris) such initiative is not in place. A **good practice** that have been implemented in **Greece** is involving General Secretary for Family Policy and Gender Equality, in leading the GBV Sub-working group in main land and islands, with civil society organization that do work around protection and empowerment of women and girls.





### **5.3 Measures to prevent and respond to GBV at any form of detention and identifications center in France and Greece**

- Better know **the routes and profiles** of women and girls from the refugee and migrant's community.
- **Improve reception** and support practices by valuing the resources available to each.
- **Mitigating GBV risk** at reception centres, in frastructure and housing measures (i.e. separate accommodation and separate sanitary facilities for men and women), and availability of security measures (for example, security staff and cameras).
- **Inter-agency coordination on the issue**; training of staff employed at reception centres; and multidisciplinary coordination among 1<sup>st</sup> line responders.
- **Provision of information** on what gender-based violence is, how to report it and where to seek help is considered a major weakness by staff in detention and identification centers.
- **Capacity building trainings**, reinforcing with proven tools and sensitizing first line service providers (such us police and health staff) to support and protect women and girls on the move.
- **Find referrals** to the most appropriate care in a survivors –centered approach.
- **More national funds allocated** on GBV prevention and response programming within detention centers or in urban settings.
- **Networking** and sharing program experience with other E.U protection organization, proven GBV tools and early integration tools adapted to refugee and migrant population.