

Meeting in Malta on Maternal Health and Refugee Women OUTCOME DECLARATION

Taking Effective Policy Action to Ensure Maternal Health
for Refugee and Migrant Women
Malta, 20-21 March 2017

Under the Distinguished Patronage of Her Excellency, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, the President of Malta, a High-Level Meeting on Maternal Health and Refugee Women, hosted by the Women Political Leaders Global Forum, in partnership with MSD for Mothers, took place in Malta on 20 and 21 March 2017.

The High-Level meeting on Maternal Health and Refugee Women was convened to address the challenges migrant and refugee women face with regard to accessing high quality, affordable, timely and equitable maternal healthcare across Europe. Parliamentarians and Stakeholders attending the High-Level Meeting make the following outcome declaration:

- Maternal Health is an issue of Fundamental Human Rights, which must be applied equally, and equitably, to all;
- EU Member States are committed internationally to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular art. 24 (d), which refers to appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers;
- EU Member States are committed internationally to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular to SDG 3.1, stating that the global maternal mortality ratio must be reduced to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030;
- Although great progress has been made to reduce maternal mortality in Europe, there are still significant differences in the quality of, and access to, maternal healthcare across the Member States of the European Union, including for migrant and refugee women;
- In spite of positive developments, still today, 1 in 10 women in the European Union have no access to maternal health services in the first months of pregnancy, nearly 1800 maternal deaths occurred in Europe in 2015 and 54% of pregnant women seen at Doctors of the World clinics in nine European countries lack access to maternal healthcare and are living in poverty;
- Vulnerable groups such as migrant and refugee women are especially marginalised with regard to accessing maternal healthcare in Europe; taking in to account the root of the problem in countries of destination and transit which needs to be addressed as part of the EU external and development policy actions as well as in conditionality-based policies such as the European Neighbourhood Policy; also ensuring safer transit routes and a health system response to violence that occurs during transit;

- Synergies between Migration and Health Policy Agendas on EU level must be created and reinforced (for example, the inclusion of healthcare in the European Agenda on Migration) as currently these policies operate in silos, in order to create effective and coordinated strategies for the provision of high quality maternal healthcare for migrant and refugee women; better coordination between EU and national level is essential;

Under the Distinguished Patronage of Her Excellency, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, the President of Malta, Parliamentarians and Stakeholders attending the High-Level Meeting on Maternal Health and Refugee Women, urge the EU Commissioner on Health and Food Safety and all Members of the Council of Health Ministers of the European Union to:

- Make the health of every mother and her child, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, culture, skills, physical or mental capacity or administrative status, a political priority in Europe;
- Make Europe a role model for high quality, accessible and equitable maternal healthcare, ensuring that maternal health is mainstreamed in all relevant policy discussions and legislation on migration and asylum, respecting the safety and dignity of all migrant and refugee women;
- Guarantee a supranational funding mechanism targeted at EU neighbourhood countries and EU Member States, ensuring the delivery of a free package of standard maternal healthcare developed with the EU Member States for every migrant and refugee woman; the package must take into consideration maternal health services, including ante and postnatal care, mental health care and provide essential supplies. The maternal healthcare package should be financed through a supranational funding mechanism, established through a EU level initiative, with the joint support of EU Member States, Private sector and Civil Society;
- Building on existing initiatives on data collection and expertise on current migration trends in Europe, develop a roadmap on Maternal Health and Migrant and Refugee Women to be implemented at EU level. The focus of the roadmap should be twofold: improved mechanisms and coordination for data collection and research on the maternal healthcare needs of migrant and refugee women, as well as improved data collection for digital medical records serving to improve intra EU-transit, while still protecting personal data privacy as a safeguard towards migration authorities;
- Based on the outcomes of the roadmap, develop a common EU approach using effective and relevant policy instruments to address high quality maternal healthcare in a holistic way, based on need not status, taking into account social determinants of health and ensuring physical, mental and economic safety.
- Launch a supra-national and national level information and awareness-raising campaign on maternal health focusing on migration as well as the benefits of inclusive societies, which targets the general public but also migrant and refugee women specifically, and is adapted for individual EU Member States;

- Ensure support actions for systematic and coordinated training of the health- and social care workforce in Member States, including aspects of cultural competence, and which is co-developed with migrant and refugee women; the training will also optimise the efficient finance and human resource coordination for specific programmes aimed at improving the situation of migrant and refugee women;



H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca
President of Malta



Silvana Koch-Mehrin
Founder of the Women Political
Leaders Global Forum