



**2017/2270(INL)**

7.6.2018

# **DRAFT OPINION**

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

Humanitarian Visas  
(2017/2270(INL))

Rapporteur for opinion: Malin Björk

(Initiative – Rule 46 of the Rules of Procedure)

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas gender is a ground for protection under the 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (the Refugee Convention) and women worldwide are affected disproportionately by sexual and others forms of gender-based violence;
- B. whereas the need for safe and legal pathways to the Union are pressing, also from a gender perspective, and whereas humanitarian visas can be complementary, although not replacing, other safe pathways such as resettlement and humanitarian admission;
- C. whereas the current lack of a possibility to request protection on humanitarian grounds outside of the Union means that persons seeking asylum are forced to enter Europe in an irregular manner thereby risking their lives and health, with particular and gendered consequences for women, girls and LGBTI persons;
  - 1. Emphasizes that oftentimes vulnerable economic and other type of dependence puts women and girls in third countries in a situation where it is even more improbable for them than for men to safely seek asylum - according to the UNHCR in 2017, women comprised from 9 - 22 % of the sea arrivals to Italy, Greece and Spain<sup>[1]</sup>;
  - 2. Condemns the ongoing situation where in order to seek asylum in the EU, women and girls, as well as LGBTI persons put themselves under the serious risk of sexual and gender-based violence along routes and in reception centers;
  - 3. Calls for a separate instrument on humanitarian visas, in addition and complementary to a Union programme on resettlement and humanitarian admission, to be established at the Union level and calls on the Commission to deliver the legislative proposal wherein the third country nationals will receive the possibility to apply for a European humanitarian visa directly at any consulate or embassy of the Member States, while ensuring its gender-sensitive approach and effective protection of persons suffering gender-based persecution.

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<sup>[1]</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63039>