



Programme Online Event

Preventing, Combating and Responding to Gender Based Violence in the Context of Asylum and Migration

*co-organized by
UNHCR and the Council of Europe*

**28 April 2022
Zagreb, Croatia**

Working languages: Croatian & English

09:00 – 09:30	Opening remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Anna Rich, <i>UNHCR Representative in Croatia</i>- Johanna Nelles, <i>Executive Secretary to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence</i>- Helena Štimac Radin, <i>Head of Government Office for Gender Equality</i>
09:30 – 10:00	Overview of GBV protection concerns of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants arriving in Croatia, as well as of applicable protective standards and mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Margareta Mađerić, <i>State Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy</i>- Nebojša Paunović, <i>Advisor, Office of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality</i>
10:00 – 10:30	The importance of prevention, mitigation, early identification, and response to GBV and best practices <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Filip Stipić, <i>Head of Service for Reception and Accommodation of Applicants for International Protection, Ministry of the Interior</i>- Olga Vorontsova-Mykhailova, <i>Community-Based Protection Officer, UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, Geneva</i>
10:30 - 10:40	Coffee Break
10:40 – 11:00	The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – relevant provisions on prevention, protection and response – including Art. 60 on gender-based asylum claims and on Art. 61 on non-refoulement <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Louise Hooper, <i>Council of Europe Expert</i>

11:00 – 11:30	<p>Identification of victims of human trafficking amongst asylum seekers and migrants and their access to specific assistance and remedies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petya Nestorova, <i>Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Council of Europe</i> - Ivan Piteša, <i>Head of office, IOM Croatia</i>
11:30 – 11:40	<p>Coffee Break</p>
11:40 – 12:00	<p>Selected ECtHR case-law under Art. 3 ECHR and Art. 13 combined with Art. 3 ECHR, as well as Art. 4 ECHR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Franka Viljac Herceg, <i>Lawyer, Registry of the European Court of Human Rights, Council of Europe</i>
12:00 – 12:30	<p>Panel discussion: The implementation of international and Council of Europe standards on preventing, combatting, and responding to gender-based violence in the context of asylum and migration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Danijela Stiplošek, <i>Senior Officer , Croatian Red Cross</i> - Sanja Bezbradica Jelavić, <i>Attorney</i> - Nela Pamuković, <i>Coordinator, Center for Victims of War Rosa</i> <p>Moderated by UNHCR</p>



Concept Note

Preventing, Combating and Responding to Gender Based Violence in the Context of Asylum and Migration

*co-organized by
UNHCR and the Council of Europe*

**28 April 2022
Zagreb, Croatia
Online event**

Working languages: Croatian & English

Background

Gender-based violence (GBV)¹ is a serious human rights violation and major public health issue. GBV is under-reported but known to happen in all contexts. During displacement and times of conflict and crisis, the threat of GBV significantly increases. Asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons, and returnees are at heightened-risk of GBV, irrespective of their age, gender or other diversity considerations.

The majority of asylum seekers and refugees in Croatia are women and children, who are accommodated in reception centers for asylum seekers, as well as collective and private accommodation around the country. Many do not stay in Croatia for long and, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic measures restricting movement that were implemented over the past two years, this has had an impact on the identification, prevention of, and response to GBV.

With the rapid, ongoing arrival of a large number of refugees from Ukraine, the issue of GBV has become even more prominent and the need for all stakeholders to be able to address this in a holistic and appropriate manner is even more urgent. Over ninety percent of refugees from Ukraine are women and children, who are at a heightened risk of GBV and vulnerable to risks of trafficking, exploitation and

¹ UNHCR adopts the IASC definition of Gender-based violence (GBV) as “an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private.”

abuse. It is critical to ensure that all persons at-risk of GBV, exploitation, abuse and trafficking are protected, and that all survivors have access to safe and timely interventions and services that meet their specific needs. In that regard, scaling up prevention and mitigation measures, including strengthening referral mechanisms, information provision and awareness-raising among asylum seekers, refugees and service providers is key.

In Croatia, GBV survivors among asylum seekers, refugees and migrants have access to national referral and response services, including health care, legal and psychosocial support. However, underreporting remains a challenge, and national systems may not always be attuned to the specific needs of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, particularly due to language and cultural barriers.

UNHCR works closely with the government and civil society to strengthen prevention and response to GBV, including through awareness-raising and information provision to persons of concern, technical support and capacity building, as well as through its participation in the coordination group for reception center service providers. In 2021, this group issued SOPs on the prevention and response to GBV in reception centers, focusing on referrals to national service providers, prevention activities and data collection.

In light of the large number of recent refugee arrivals, the need to ensure strong and effective referral systems, awareness-raising and technical protection capacity is paramount. This is particularly the case given that existing services may be stretched, with many recent refugee arrivals accommodated throughout the country where services may be limited.

Objective

Against this context, the online event planned by UNHCR and the Council of Europe will contribute to strengthening capacity to better identify, prevent and respond to the ground realities of GBV in the current asylum and refugee context. It aims to bring together key stakeholders, raise awareness of the issue of GBV in the context of displacement, present relevant national and international standards regarding protection from and response to GBV, including ECtHR case law, and contribute to ensuring the inclusion of persons of concern in national protection and GBV systems.