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Panel: Voices of women must be heard. Strengthening civil society cooperation in the OSCE region with regards to security, human rights, conflict resolution, and gender equality

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(note of reference for oral input)

WIDE is a forum, a space and a network for and with women's NGOs, civil society organizations individual experts working in a democratic manner on burning issues concerning women's rights and gender justice. WIDE uses a feminist approach and fosters transnational cooperation, analysis and practical work by means of a strong exchange with trans-border networks and actors.

Forced migration has been identified as one of the most sensitive issues. It threatens human and women's rights by enhancing all types of discrimination and opening space for multiple forms of violence preventing any form of safety and security. The reasons for leaving home are multiple: On the road, many new risks come up; and when women finally arrive in one of the rich and so called democratic, rights based and safe countries of the Western hemisphere they face new forms of discrimination and obstacles on their way to get settled.

What happens to all the women on the move and after arrival at a place or new home? What do they expect in the "receiving countries", what about their safety, their wellbeing and security? What about their right to have rights? What does a peaceful life mean to them?

As a network well linked to researchers we collect data, information, testimonies from "grassroots", practical experiences from daily life, we open spaces for subaltern voices to make them audible. The challenge is huge, since many of these women lose not only their voices but also their rights, once arrived. The feeling of discrimination and powerlessness blocks their energy and courage. The possibilities to mobilize their experiences, competences, resources are marginal.

Therefore, this raises the big question of state responsibility. Switzerland is a good example: One of the goals of its national action plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS 3, 2018-2022) is the protection of women and girls from sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). However, the field of intervention is limited to international interventions such as the Global Compact (GC) on Safe Orderly and Regular Migration and GC on Refugees ("migration-foreign policy"). The countries of origin fail to protect, and on the road, no country feels responsible to protect women from violence and disruption.

When women lose their clear legal status, defined by national belonging, they lose many of the basic rights essential to live a decent life. Lacking a legal status, they thus lose their voices and their power of complaint. They are exposed to any kind of discrimination and

exclusion. The access to health care, work, education or even public space is limited; states are not even under pressure to explain themselves. Why? Aren't they responsible to guarantee the human rights to all people living in their territory?

The big question: What does this mean for feminist activists, women's rights organizations? Where are the fields of action? What kind of strategy is there to improve the wellbeing and safety of all women living in a state like Switzerland? In spite of the fact that the governments have signed all different conventions and resolutions, they seem to look for the easiest way to avoid their responsibilities as duty bearers in their own country. The discrimination along the line of national belonging seems to be legitimate. However, Switzerland does not miss any opportunity to reclaim their (international) role as the guardian of a humanistic tradition. Is this the way a rich modern democracy like Switzerland understands human rights? Moreover, how should we deal with this field of tension between a hyper-acceleration in the process of technologization of security facilitating the militarization on one side and the humiliating policy of administrative order to wait under precarious conditions?

For feminist action, it will be essential to redefine security in terms of a comprehensive understanding of wellbeing and safety. This means not only safe from SGBV, but also providing a social security system with services for the care of one's and the others' wellbeing. It is about a security system, which is based on human and women's rights taking into account all the invisible work of women for the daily survival. It is about a new understanding of "value". Infrastructure in human wellbeing, in women's safety, in social infrastructure instead of investing in neoliberally structured profit sectors.

Feminists ask for an interdisciplinary approach including a sound economic analysis as a starting point for a gender just security policy centered on care conditions. The evaluation of the implementation of UNSCR such as 1325 (ff) are disappointing. The impact corresponds in no way with the enthusiasm of civil society when the whole process of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) started. It is even worse, since many key concepts and roles of WPS have been undermined, their protagonists – often unnoticed, and unintended – have been coopted. Feminists striving for sustainable gender justice must therefore really struggle for more power of definition, to change the meaning of security and... of peace. Only then, it will be possible to (slowly) move from (capitalist) war economy to peace and care economy.

Coming back to the situation of forced migrant women in Switzerland: Platforms and networks committed to women's rights, have invested a lot in advocacy and empowerment policies, a big challenge. Currently, receiving states are tending to authorize new forms of discrimination, which do not correspond to the human rights, and even less to women's rights and security. Of course, it is easy to trace the domestic problems back to the "alien cultures of immigrants" and identify the root causes of violence in the "patriarchate of whatever countries of origin", when it comes to SGBV. The dissemination of narratives, which reinforce the idea, that forced migrants are rather parasites than right holders allows the governments to treat them as second-class human beings, which offers a broad spectrum of exclusion and deprivation practices, even when it is just a matter of basic needs.

Gender Mainstreaming is never enough for Women, Peace and Security to be gender just. Therefore, we need a holistic approach that includes a sound macroeconomic analysis to understand the root causes of violence.