**FRIDAY NOVEMBER 24, 2017: EVENT CO-ORGANIZED BY EUROPEAN NETWORK OF MIGRANT WOMEN AND WOMEN REFUGEES ROUTE-COPENHAGEN**

The event began with a collective dinner between participants.

Then **Mina Jaf**, Vice President of ENoMW and founder of Women Refugee Route, presented this conference. She thanked all participants and introduced the interest of this meeting.

**Anna Zobnina**, Strategy and Policy Coordinator of ENoMW, presented the network, its objectives and work, and the importance of the network presence in Copenhagen and the conference. She moderated two panels.

**The first panel was composed of the following speakers: Salome Mbugua, president of ENOMW, Noura Raad board member of ENOMW and Legal expert bsed in France, and Layla Saidy, human rights activist, refugee in Denmark and survivor of FGM**

**Salome**, President of ENoMW and founder of AkiDwA, explained and presented the Istanbul Convention, its importance to fight violence against women and girls (VAWG) and presented the three pillars (3 Ps) of this Convention: 1- prevention of gender-based violence against girls and women; 2- the protection of women victims of sexist and sexual violence; 3- Prosecution of crimes of VAWG. Salome has also established the link between the provisions of this Convention and its effectiveness in combating violence against migrant women.

**Noura**, board member of FFM and ENoMW, spoke about the socio-cultural context, the “gender stereotypes” as the origin and vehicle of male violence against women, their influence on the law and the historic feminist struggle to eliminate these stereotypes and combat VAWG through the Istanbul Convention - an important and effective legal instrument that must be ratified and implemented by all States.

**Layla**, a women's rights activist, refugee and survivor of FGM from Gambia, shared her life and experience in her country of origin, where she was subjected to FGM and forced to marry and her consequent physical and psychological suffering. Then she recounted how she fled her house and how she got involved to fight FGM, to stop this practice and help the victims. Today, she lives in Copenhagen and founded an NGO to help victims of FGM and to raise awareness of the need to ban this practice around the world.

The second panel was composed of the following speakers: Francesca Cantarella, Pia Deleuran, Mozhdeh Ghasemiyani and Benedicte Preuthun Mortensen.

**Francesca**, lawyer in Italy and legal consultant in Copenhagen, works to identify women victims of trafficking and victims of gender-based violence. She presented her work in this area and the difficulties she faces in supporting the victims of trafficking due to legal and practical barriers existing in Denmark. She outlined the legal context, its substantial gaps and focused on Danish domestic law related to the criminalization of trafficking in human beings following the ratification of Palermo Protocol. She explained how the THB is treated in the Danish criminal law and underlined the terms used in the definition of this offense, the difficulties to identify victims and the limits to apply the law. She discussed the failure of Danish criminal law and spoke about the practice and, in particular, the behavior of police and the way they treat victims. Finally, she explained that police on many occasions arrests the women in prostitution ( prostitution is legalized in Denmark) with the cear knowledge that those women are victims of trafficking to only send them to the anti-trafficking center to identify them as such. Once the women are identified as victims, they are returned to the Immigration Minister and they don’t have the right to remain in Danish territory. Moreover, if they ask for asylum, their file is often rejected.

Then **Pia**, who is also lawyer in Denmark, works mainly on cases of women who are victims of violence including the domestic violence. She explained that in this area, the law and the courts are gender blind, they don’t take into consideration that women are the first victims of violence, abuse and exploitation. To illustrate this, she presented some of the cases she has worked on and she explained the difficulties of pursuing cases at the judicial level. Next, she referred to the report prepared by GREVIO (the expert group on action against violence against women and domestic violence that evaluate the implementation, the respect and the application of Istanbul Convention) on Denmark and said that, according to the first lines, it’s clear that the report ignores the reality and does not present the problems existing in Denmark on the subject of violence against women, not even the legal and practical difficulties. Finally, on the subject of migrant women, she also mentioned the problem of languages ​​since the law does not exist in different languages, so women do not know their rights and the legal procedure.

**Mozhdeh**, a refugee from Iran and living in Denmark, is a psychologist who works with women and children traumatized by the violence they have suffered. She spoke about domestic violence against women and the trauma as result of the violence, difficulties in decision-making and separation from abuser. She also focused on women victims who decide to return to their abusive husbands in their home countries because they cannot regularize their legal situation or for other reasons. She mentioned the difficulties they face at all levels and including the emotional turture. Then she spoke about her own experience as a refugee girl living with her single mother and five sisters. She recounted the difficulties and violence to which they were subjected and the fear of the mother that these girls are abused or raped or “dishonored” arising from the community pressure and the burden of honor on women . Then she talked about the trauma of women victims and the need for therapy to get out of this situation.

The last speaker, **Benedicte**, closed the panel by emphasizing the need for economic empowerment of women. She presented her project – a social enterprise that she founded, "Bike & Blooms company", that creates income and employment opportunities for refugee women who become trained as florists. She explained her background and how she came up with this idea of selling flowers, created by refugee women, on bikes around Copenhagen. She also explained the value of this work and the internships, which are obliged to be paid in Denmark, she offers to migrant women, refugees and girls. Her speech was inspiring, strong and motivating.

Finally, this event was closed by the announcement of Nadia Bakhshi Award, **by Mina Jaf and Catherine Mahoro** (board members of ENoMW), explaining the life of this refugee woman from Afganistan, her struggle, her fight, her strength and the interest of this award, which aims to raise funds for migrant women at Melissa Network (NGO in Greece that works with migrant women to help them and to support them at all levels)