



EFECW

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN

**Message of the EFECW Coordinating Committee
and Mediterranean Neighbourhood Meeting
Corfu, Greece - March 2019**

The Coordinating Committee and members of the Mediterranean countries of EFECW gathered in Corfu, Greece to engage with the topic of violence against women. We reflected firstly on the theme in the Bible, with presentations by Myrto Theocharus (Professor, Greek Bible College, Athens) and Despoina Michalaga (Professor, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens). We then considered the current reality of women across Europe as reflected in the Istanbul Convention, presented by Maria Koutatzi (Head of Social Policy and Advocacy, Caritas Greece).

The Istanbul Convention is the first legally-binding instrument to create a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combatting violence against women.

Our call to action

The World Council of Churches released a Statement on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in November 2018 in Uppsala, which was a call for new commitments and contributions to stop, prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. Reflecting on this and the presentations during our meeting:

1. We urge our members to condemn sexual and gender-based violence and any form of violence against women, children and vulnerable people; to declare such violence a sin;
2. We urge our churches and ecumenical partners to continue working with local organizations and groups in opposition to all forms of sexual and gender-based violence;
3. We support the creation of new and more effective ways for communication and collaboration among churches, and local advocacy groups on gender justice issues, for example the Thursdays in Black Campaign;
4. We urge all remaining European countries to ratify the Istanbul Convention, which focuses on preventing domestic violence, protecting victims and prosecuting accused offenders;
5. We urge all European governments to move quickly to implement the policies and practices that will enable states to enact the Convention;
6. We call for EFECW members to engage nationally on advocacy for the implementation of the Convention.

As the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women, we seek to be voices for peace and reconciliation within our churches, communities and the wider world, and we continue to pray for wisdom, peace, justice and compassion to prevail.

The Co-Presidents of EFECW (on behalf of the Coordinating Committee)

Marijana Ajzenkol, Roman Catholic, Serbia

Marianna Apresyan, Armenian-Apostolic, Armenia

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