



# MEDITERRANEAN DECLARATION "RISE FOR GENDER EQUALITY"



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## The “Rise for Gender Equality” Declaration

### [#Rethink Med](#)

This declaration gathers statements and visuals made by advocates for Gender Equality and Human Rights who took part in the #ReThink\_Med common action in Slovenia. The advocates who contributed to this declaration identify as women and are from Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Slovenia, Algeria, and Afghanistan and living in Slovenia; they participated and contributed to the workshops on critical thinking through arts and its based techniques for Gender Equality and in the online campaign “Rise for Gender Equality.”

The “Rise for Gender Equality” action consisted of workshops followed by an online campaign; this action was developed, designed, and facilitated by Med dialogue leader [Samar Zughool](#) (Jordan, Slovenia; She, They), an experiential trainer and performing artist at the Povod institute for culture and development of international relations in culture.

This action took place from 15<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2022 in Ljubljana and online; it advocated for critical thinking through arts and its based techniques to “Rise For Gender Equality” and Human Rights out of gender profiling and beyond borders in the Mediterranean region; it is part of the common action “[#Rethink Med](#)” by [the Med dialogue for Rights and Equality](#).

### “My Life My Rights”

**By Behnaz Ali Esfahanipour, Iran,  
Slovenia**

No, no, this is not me!

I am a woman; I am a human being; I have rights to myself!

I'm going to do whatever I want, any way I want to; I decide what to wear, so you do not decide for me.

This world is as much yours as mine! Don't decide for me! I don't live in the box; I am a person like you in this big world.

Here is my home; My home! You can not take it from me.



[Press to watch the video](#)

## “A world without women is nothing.”

by - Safa Hasan, Iraq, Slovenia

When we became aware of life, there was such a thing as "A woman cannot give her opinion, and she cannot be heard anywhere." "A woman should only be in the house," They say, "women were created for the house and nothing else."

Until When? A woman cannot express her opinion because of society's mentality and ignorance. We are now in the 21st century, and all of these things should change.

We must stop and change.

- Accept the woman's opinion (a woman can express her opinion freely)
- Change the mentality of society.
- Achieve Gender Equality (Equation)
- People shall accept each other with all of their differences.
- Women have the right to choose.
- The woman is the mind and success. Women are everything. A world without women is nothing.



## “Access to Health is a right to each woman equally regardless of ethnicity.”

By -Wafa Kanaan, Palestine, Slovenia

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Palestinian women, comprising 20% of all cancer diagnoses in Gaza. There are no radiotherapy services in Gaza, and certain chemotherapy treatments are unavailable locally. At the same time, the Israeli Occupation is restricting Palestinian Patients' referrals outside Gaza for treatment. Significant inequalities in screening, diagnosis, and treatment contribute to a much lower five-year survival rate for women with breast cancer in Gaza (65%) than among women in Israel (88%). **This must stop now.** Access to Health is a right to each woman equally, regardless of ethnicity.



## “End discrimination against single mothers”

By Bhagavati Devi, Slovenia

Single mothers are more likely (in 50%) to end up in poverty or live below the poverty line than couples with children or without children. The stress and stigma on single mothers should be considered when decisions about giving state support and access to work are made. Due to the hardship of this problem, NGOs and other stakeholders can support solving it too.

**SAY NO TO DISCRIMINATION.** The solution is in the problem. Be brave enough to find it.

## “End Gender Profiling”

By Saša Serdinšek , Slovenia

Even as young children, most of us were taught that boys do not cry, are strong, do not express emotions, and girls are emotional, gentle, and loving. And consequently, this is also reflected in later life. An example is when women are looking for a job; they are getting profiled as not strong enough for specific jobs or too emotional for certain jobs. Or women are not for football or kickboxing. But on the other hand, women are powerful. They are going to work, take care of the house, their partners, and children, and have a lot of other responsibilities, and in the end, they can survive the pain of childbirth. So for all employers, please, don't reject a woman just because you think she is not as capable as a man because she is. And especially, don't reject a woman just because she wants to have a child, and you know that she may choose to be on parental leave because, in the end, someone gave birth to you too.



## "End Homophobia and Transphobia"

By Behnaz, Iran – Slovenia

It is very strange that in the new century, with the claim of being intellectual and advanced, we still see hatred, harassment, and in some cases, severe harm and even murder in the case of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Homophobia and Transphobia are not limited to religion, but some heterosexuals and individuals in government practice even discrimination and violence.



What can be done to solve this problem? The solution is not simple, but it is not impossible.

We shall inform and hold various face-to-face meetings to advocate for the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community and get help from a well-known figure to support the group.

## “We are all Humans”

by Amadeja Šmigoc, Slovenia

I see a lot of profiling and underestimation everywhere.

For example, in the house, the master is supposed to be a man because women do not know how to be masters and at the same time go to work, take care of things in the house, garden, children, et; or in the case of gender profiling where woman is not suitable for a particular job because she is too emotional; or in another case where there is labeling people of other religions or cultures as less valuable.

### What shall we do?

We need to stop judging by look, gender, skin color, and weight... and realize that we are all humans; we live, feel, and are all different but the same.

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HUMAN

# WeAreAllHuman

## “I am a Human”

By Veronika Vižintin, Slovenia.

What does it mean to be a human? I would love to believe that it is the power to be humane towards others.

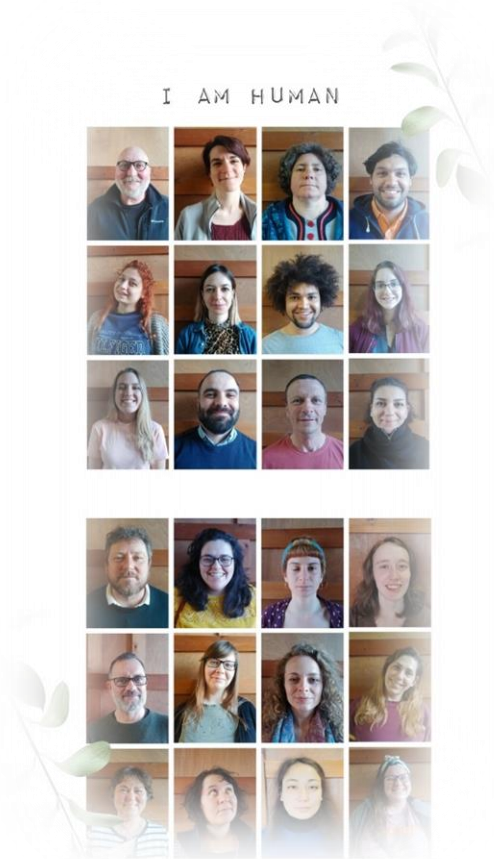
Generating kindness creates a ripple effect and can be much more powerful than spreading hostile points of view. Fighting for inclusion in one way and accepting diversity in the other way: Creating local, multicultural, multigenerational relations is key to the humane progress of our global society.

Understanding others locally can quickly develop into a global expression of love and, consequently, acknowledges each person's human rights.

Human rights are still not something universal. While the term is complex and can be interpreted in many ways, I would say the general meaning is equality and equity for all – in workplaces, families, and society... Accepting another human being based on their humanness, not their name, gender, skin color, abilities, ethnicity, or language.

Although we can pretend that in the 'Western society, there is only equality, that is not the case – many people are fleeing from war, and being sent back because of their skin color, people over 50 have a hard time finding a job, women can never get paid the same as men, kids that do not fit the exact societal mold are bullied a lot. To name a few.

What can you do about it? Start with yourself and try your best to be the best human you can be. Start with one simple step: Today, tell someone they are beautiful! And see their reaction.





## “Women’s rights to choose how to dress”

by N.D, Algeria, Slovenia

Today, I give myself the right to speak for all Muslim/Migrant women about an eternal struggle, about dignity I talk. About a dignity that is getting violated every day because of their choice of clothing.

I'm talking about the stare of contempt. I'm talking about developed countries that still maintain stupid standards for measuring urbanization (who wears the Chanel brand and other brands is civilized and modern and those who wear Abaya are ignorant and uncivilized).

Why, in the 21st century, do we still suffer from this endless racism in countries that consider themselves at the top and established associations to demand human rights?

Please reconsider building the infrastructure of your communities before you talk about humanity.





## “We women are strong.”

By **Gulshan Zafari, Afghanistan – Slovenia**

We live in a country called Afghanistan. There are no women's rights in this country. While the government is in the hands of the Taliban, women never have the right to education, work, and trade, they can not raise their voices, and they are not allowed to go to school above the sixth grade. Women are facing oppression and rape. I have a country that favors boys over girls, which does not even consider women legally. And this is very hard and unbearable. I do not understand why our country does not respect women; **maybe you are afraid of women who lead strong generations?** Without women, society is nothing. We, women, are strong.

## “Critical thinking for Gender Equality”

**Samar Zughool, Jordan - Slovenia.**

Sometimes we repeat some proverbs or statements without critically thinking about their meaning and how they impact our relations as individuals who live in one society and identify differently with the concept of genders.

Harmful statements such as “A brave woman like one thousand men,” but why not a brave woman for her characteristics? Who decided that braveness is connected to men? What does “Drama Queen” means? Why the term queen? And why are emotions perceived as weakness and not braveness? How does this impact us? Is there a connection between this example of profiling based on gender and some



[Video](#)



discriminatory laws? Such as the one that says the testimony of one man equals the testimonies of two women in Sharia courts in Jordan as an example?

Critical thinking decolonizes our bodies to liberate our rights from enforced limitations for individuals to live their true selves, not by imposed social roles.