

EMA Call for action statement



Pregnant women and children first!

Call for action by European midwives to refugee crisis.

The refugee crisis has reached dramatic proportions. Human suffering is immense; however the European parliament has yet to come with an adequate coordinated solution to this emergency. Of all refugees, pregnant women and infants are the most vulnerable group (notes 1). Reports in the media of births in trains, boats and train stations are just the tip of the iceberg (notes 2, 3, 4).

The evidence confirms what European midwives already know; all pregnant women need safe and respectful care during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period [1-5]. Appropriate information for refugees on *how, where and when* to find midwifery care is a human right. This is non-negotiable.

European midwives (notes 5) are united in one voice and calling for action concerning these basic rights for all pregnant women, their infants and families by providing:

1. Free access to midwifery care during pregnancy, birth and postnatal period, including breastfeeding support.
2. Priority in safe housing and food.
3. Information that is understandable and readily available.

The thirty five members of the European Midwives Association, representing thirty one countries (notes 5) will provide this care and will support their governments to organise the provision of this care for all pregnant refugees in their respective countries.

EMA General meeting, Bucharest, Romania. 26th September 2015

References:

1. Homer, C.S.E., et al., *The projected effect of scaling up midwifery*. The Lancet, 2014. **384**(9948): p. 1146-1157.
2. Renfrew, M.J., et al., *Midwifery: An executive summary for The Lancet's series*. Lancet, 2014. **20**: p. 1-8.
3. Renfrew, M.J., et al., *Midwifery and quality care: findings from a new evidence-informed framework for maternal and newborn care*. The Lancet, 2014. **384**(9948): p. 1129-1145.
4. ten Hoop-Bender, P., et al., *Improvement of maternal and newborn health through midwifery*. The Lancet, 2014. **384**(9949): p. 1226-1235.
5. Van Lerberghe, W., et al., *Country experience with strengthening of health systems and deployment of midwives in countries with high maternal mortality*. The Lancet, 2014. **384**(9949): p. 1215-1225.

Notes:

1. ICM statement: Women, Children and Midwives in Situations of War and Civil Unrest: http://www.internationalmidwives.org/assets/uploads/documents/Position%20Statements%20English/Reviewed%20PS%20in%202014/PS2008_020%20V2014%20Women%20Children%20and%20Midwives%20in%20Situations%20of%20War%20and%20Civil%20Unrest%20ENG.pdf
2. Birth on boats: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-pregnant-woman-rescued-from-sinking-boat-gives-birth-to-healthy-baby-at-sea-10492872.html>
3. Woman gives birth at railway station: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3220480/The-fight-Hope-Shelter-thousands-starving-refugees-wait-start-new-life-Europe-two-newborn-babies-born-migrant-couples-huddled-outside-Budapest-station.html>
4. Woman gives birth on train: <http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2015/09/14/refugee-women-give-birth-on-way-to-europe-even-on-boats>
5. Members of EMA: <http://www.europeanmidwives.com/membership/members-map>