

# **Towards an EU external strategy against early and forced marriages**

The *Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality* of the European Parliament has, on 18 April 2018, adopted an opinion entitled "Towards an EU external strategy against early and forced marriages - next steps" (2017/2275(INI), PE616.622v03-00).

The Committee stresses that "child, early and forced marriage is a violation of the human rights enshrined in international standards such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action and the UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages and which form part of the core principles embodied in the European Union as an area of security, freedom, justice and human rights, including women's and girls' rights". Although "child marriage is ingrained in some traditions and cultures, [...] no culture or religion can justify such a practice, particularly when human rights and the rights of children are at stake." The Committee "[n]otes that many parents living in distress and extreme poverty in refugee camps feel the need to protect their daughters from the threat of sexual violence by marrying them to older men; stresses however that the EU and its Member States should be united and consistent in their dismissal of the requests of refugees for legal recognition of marriages where one of the alleged spouses is a child or teenager; underlines that refugee status cannot be used as a legal backdoor to recognition of child marriages in Europe".

The full text of the opinion is available [here](#). For a more detailed report, see [here](#).