

# Overview of Women issues

- My story
- Women in Europe
- Older women as migrants
- Women as they age, with HIV
- Specific action



My story .....

**10 December 2009**



**What were my feelings.....?**

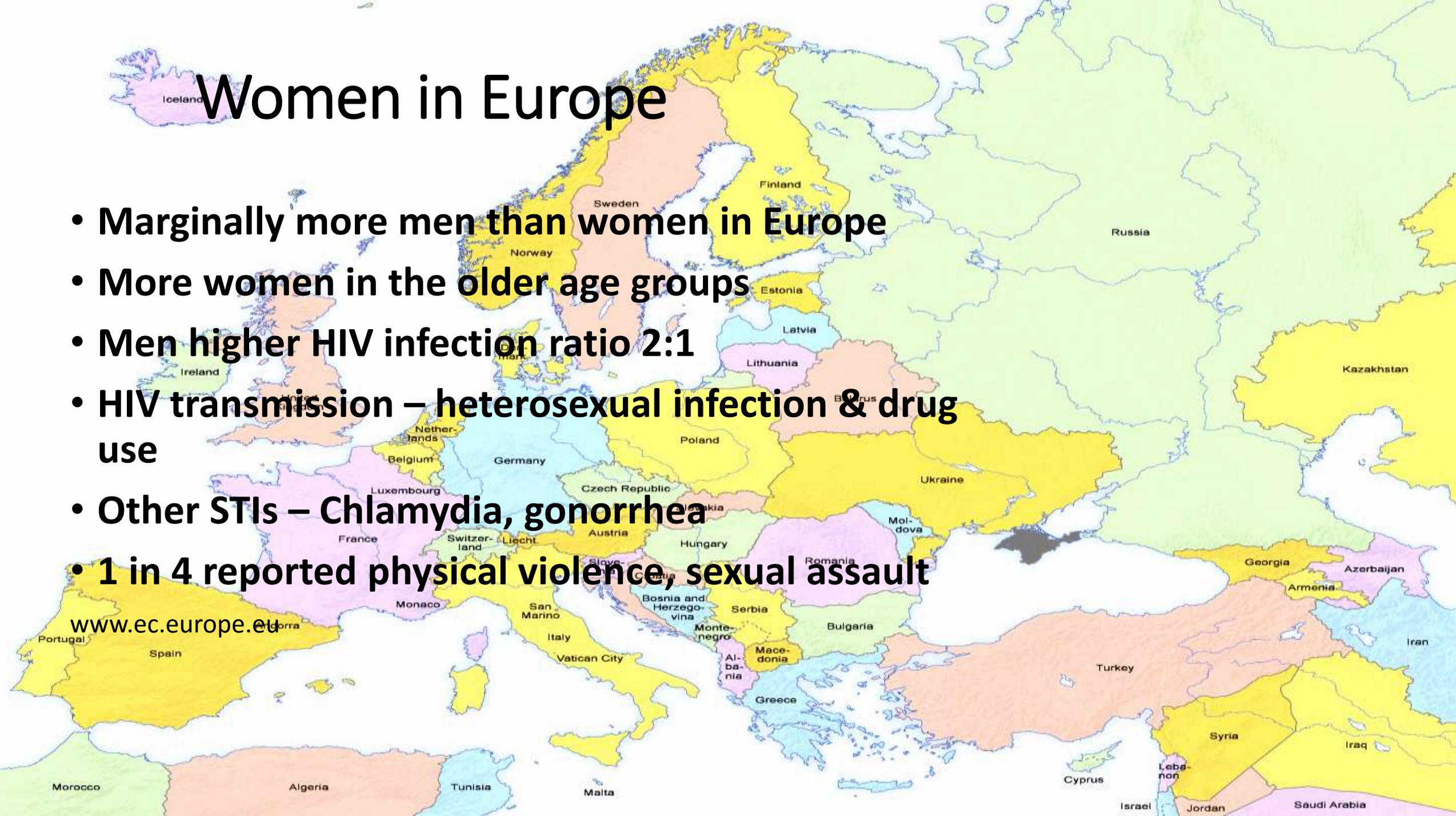


**Lonely, isolated, scared, numb, afraid, betrayed,  
cold.....**

# Women in Europe

- Marginally more men than women in Europe
- More women in the older age groups
- Men higher HIV infection ratio 2:1
- HIV transmission – heterosexual infection & drug use
- Other STIs – Chlamydia, gonorrhoea
- 1 in 4 reported physical violence, sexual assault

[www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)



# Women in Europe

Issues:-

- Legal framework
- Societal expectations
- Religion
- Relationships
- Domestic violence
- Trafficking



# Women Migrants

- According to International Organization for Migration (IOM), approximately 192 million people (3% of the world's population) were international migrants in 2006, of which 95 million were women.
- Four out of every ten people with HIV in the [European Economic Area \(EEA\) is a migrant to the country in which they are diagnosed](#).<sup>1</sup>

# Women as migrants

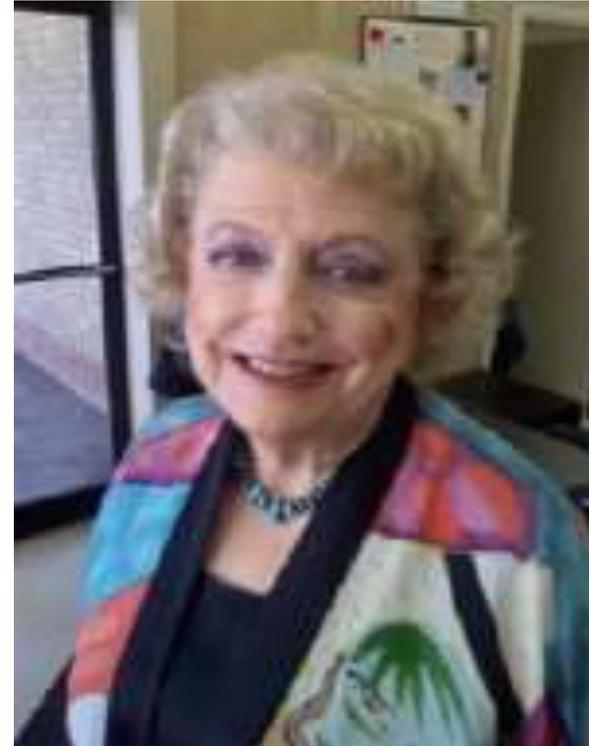
- Fleeing conflict
- Rape and sexual assault – weapons of war
- Sold into slavery, sexual exploitation
- No recourse to legal representation
- Istanbul Convention 1951 <sup>1</sup>

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/home>



# Women as they age with HIV

- Behaviour - more at risk
- Older women often invisible
- Ageism and HIV
- Symptoms similar to ageing
- Experience sense of loss
- Not comfortable in support groups
- Omitted from research, clinical drug trials, educational prevention programs and intervention effort



Jane Fowler US. Diagnosed aged 55, now in her 70s

# Women and ageing

- EU- Cardiovascular disease main cause of mortality
- Elevated risk of cardiovascular disease with HIV
- Contributory lifestyle factors
- Chronic infection - accelerated ageing
- Natural ageing effects

(WHO 2009)

# How ageing impacts on health needs

- Changing health demands
- Impact on use of services
- Prediction of rise in cancers, CVD, diabetes and dementia <sup>1 2</sup>
- Disadvantaged in a wide range of ways <sup>3</sup>

• <sup>1</sup> <http://www.who.int/world-health-day/2012/toolkit/background/en/> <sup>2</sup> <http://www.elsa-project.ac.uk/about-ELSA> <sup>3</sup> <http://www.tht.org.uk/myhiv/Your-rights/Ageing/50-plus>

# Do you have any concerns with growing older with HIV and ...?

<b>Gay/Bisexual men</b>	%		<b>White heterosexuals</b>	%
Difficulties with self-care	83.3		Financial difficulties	90.0
Mental health/depression	79.4		Inability to get healthcare	72.0
Financial difficulties	78.0		Mental health/depression	68.0
Inability to get healthcare	76.0		Loneliness	68.0
Social stigma/discrimination	67.9		Difficulties with self-care	66.0
Loneliness	61.7		Social stigma/discrimination	62.0
Employment	56.1		Employment	56.0
Finding a partner	44.9		Finding a partner	42.0
<b>Black African women</b>	%		<b>Total (N=410)</b>	%
Financial difficulties	72.2		Financial difficulties	79.0
Employment	72.2		Difficulties with self-care	76.3
Difficulties with self-care	58.3		Mental health/depression	72.9
Social stigma/discrimination	52.7		Inability to get healthcare	69.5
Inability to get healthcare	44.4		Social stigma/discrimination	66.3
Mental health/depression	44.4		Loneliness	61.0
Loneliness	47.2		Employment	57.6
Finding a partner	38.9		Finding a partner	43.2

# Case study 1

- **Mariah - Born in 1959** in Apartheid South Africa, Mariah grew up in a township on the outskirts of Cape Town.
- In her early 20s she was raped, fell pregnant and gave birth to a boy, only to be raped again just a few months afterwards. Unable to provide a home for her son as a single mother, she had to get married “to the first man that proposed”, with whom she had three more children.
- Divorced after years of physical abuse by her husband, Mariah decided to leave her home and look for work abroad. When she arrived in the UK, she found work as a domestic worker and nanny. In September 2001, the mother of the children she was looking after asked her to take an HIV test. To Mariah’s great shock, it came back positive:

# Case study 2

*I asked the consultant what could I do in terms of hot flushes and feeling exhausted and so on and could I continue with the herbal pills, and was quite shocked at his response which was 'I don't really know much about middle-aged women with HIV; my area of expertise is black Africans and the gay community.' I just found that so dismissive.*

<http://www.tht.org.uk/~media/Files/Publications/Policy/50-plus-final-report.ashx>

# Specific Action - summary.....

- Asylum processes
- Financial stability
- Societal expectations
- Inadequate social support
- Social isolation – mental health
- Gender based violence
- Women with HIV not seen as a priority group
- Knowledge limited in impact of care
- Other female health conditions

# Any questions?

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