

WIE

women

Flüchtlingsfrauen

in Exile

werden laut

"WIE" is a group of refugee women, who are focused on asylum seekers problems from a woman perspective and who fight against laws, that damage emancipation of women and children. 2011 WIE+sisters+friends startet the campaign: No to Lagers for Women! Close all Lagers!

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All over the world, women groups are celebrating the international women day, eighth of March, and all over the country events and discussions take place with the aim to better the situation of women and to find ways to develop new perspectives for women.

We, the refugee women, who have to live segregated from society in collective accommodations in the outskirts, are the forgotten women: we are the women with no perspectives; we are the women who are not invited to celebrations and events. Therefore we bring this way our open letter to Minister Baaske, to your knowledge and ask for your support and your solidarity: Please take a few minutes to read our open letter to the Minister for Labour, Social Affairs, Women and Family and go to our online-petition and support our demands by signing it.

Thank you!

Open letter to the Minister for Labour, Social Affairs, Women and Family, Mr. Baaske:

06/03/2012

Dear Mr. Minister Baaske,

**Last year at the 8th of March we met with you and discussed our problems with you.**

Once again thank you for your concern about our sorrows and needs.

We appreciated that you said you support our demand to accommodate refugees in flats, even more that you share our demand. **In this meeting you promised us to take care that the living conditions in collective accommodations will be -especially for women- improved.**

**Let us now review what happened since then:**

After a following up meeting with representatives of your ministry your ministry sent a circular letter to the authorities of the districts which clarified something which should be natural: Our privacy has to be respected by the staff of the Heims. They have to knock at our doors before they enter our rooms. We are grateful about that, because it informed the staffs of the accommodations about one of our basics rights and it changed their behavior. Nevertheless it is a scandal that for this change they needed a directive from the higher authorities.

At the 14 of April 2011 the parliament of the country of Brandenburg adopted a resolution to improve the living conditions of refugees in Brandenburg. In that parliament decision the government was requested to prove whether the minimum standards for accommodation and social assistance have to be changed. For that purpose a working group was formed by your ministry to discuss with experts and representatives of authorities on these issues. Since January of this year the government report about the outcome of this working group has been published. It includes 'advices about the need for changes of the minimum standards for collective accommodations and the social assistance'.

**To our surprise the suggested changes are very little and will not really improve the living conditions of women and children in the collective accommodations.**

We want to explain it with some small examples:

- The advices include a suggestion, that every adult should get a key in order to have the possibility to lock the bathrooms. Which is nice, but it shows to us that either the staff of your ministry never saw a 'Heim' from inside or didn't understand the problem: If 10 persons are supposed to use one shower, which is in most cases in the same room with the others (e.g. in Luckenwalde two) showers, supposed to be used by other 10 people, and one person locks the front door, 29 people will have to wait outside until the one person has finished. There is only one sufficient solution for this problem: either each shower has a cabin with lockable door and space enough to dress and undress, or we need apartments with one bathroom for each room or family.
- It is also suggested that every adult should get 8<sup>2</sup>m living space instead of 6<sup>2</sup>m as it is now. 2<sup>2</sup>m more or not - the fact still remains that, we are sharing the rooms with someone from a different background who we have not chosen.
- A good suggestion is also that every "Heim" should have a room where children can play and do their school-homework, since the 6<sup>2</sup>m, which are supposed to cover the need of children up to now, are really not enough and children need to play in the corridors and to do their homework sitting on beds. It is unrealistic to have such different needs as playing and doing school-homework in the same room. This is why we believe children should not be in the "Heim" at all.

We could list some more small but important details, but we are afraid to bore you and we believe that this examples pointed out something already very clearly: we, the women in the collective accommodations struggle for something which we can not get in collective accommodations: A home for us and our children, which is a save space for us and our children. And the suggestions for very little changes in the minimum standards will not change this.

**The report of your government makes it even more obvious: It is impossible to improve the living conditions in the "Heims" in a way that they become acceptable accommodations in which our privacy is protected.**

**Therefore, we still demand 'women out of the camps!'**

**Dear Minister Baaske, you have promised us, to support our demands.**

**We kindly ask you to keep your promises**, by using your power to implement a country-wide regulation to define refugee women and children as groups of refugees with a special need for protection and by ordering that we should be accommodated in flats. We have heard, that in other German Federal States most refugees are accommodated in flats. We therefore believe that the nation wide law will not hinder you, to issue a decree, which really would better our living conditions.

Yours sincerely,

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