

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2017

### OFF CAMPUS VISIT TO PRESIDENZA DEL CONSIGLIO DEI MINISTRI

On Monday 6th March 2017, the students of the first year of Global Governance had the privilege to be invited at the *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri* in occasion of the International Women's day. The event was organized by the European Parliament with exceptional guests such as the Sakharov Prize 2005, Hauwa Ibrahim, and other great personalities actively involved in the field of women's empowerment.



Every year, a theme to be discussed at the international level is chosen in order to bring together women to fight for their rights: this year's theme was "*Freedom from violence as empowerment pre-condition*". But what does empowerment really mean? This was indeed our starting point of debate: the harsh reality of statistics shows that today women must constantly fight against their subordinated role when it comes to managing positions both in private and public sector. The member of the EU Parliament, On. Silvia Costa, underlined that this situation persists even if statistical data show how the presence of women in key-role positions is of great benefit for a firm. The income gap between man and women is still a major problem and in Italy a woman earns in average the 23% less than a man in the same sector. In many cases this means that women do not enjoy economic autonomy and are more exposed to violence, especially domestic one. However, women face different kinds of violence both physical and psychological as well as cyber violence. For this reason, the European Parliament is elaborating new directives to protect victims also on the social platforms. Coordinating efforts and harmonizing laws about violence on women is of great importance to succeed and make Europe a leader in the field of equality. This effort is strengthened also by the Istanbul Convention, an important step made by the

Council of Europe in 2011 to combat gender violence, enhance protection and prevention: today 44 countries signed the Convention. Even if legislative acts and coordinated efforts are essential, they alone are surely not enough: as Professor Francesca Brezzi said, a cultural change is needed; the patriarchal society has to be overcome through the education of young men and women to promote self-consciousness and respect. Thus, it's important to stress that the problem can't be reduced to the penalty aspect but must be faced also on the cultural one. Too often today the woman is seen as an object rather than a subject: also when are women's rights to be debated, women are treated as the object of debate rather than being the actual subjects of it. Empowerment also means giving the tools to be the active subject of our own life.

Furthermore, as Vittoria Doretti underlined, sometimes it's forgotten or underrated that women who are victims of any kind of violence are often alone and weak, or may feel lonely and abandoned. Therefore, it's necessary to provide and guarantee more conscious paths of protection, extended to women of all age range and gender, in order to give them a constant and substantial sustain. The national volunteer association "Telefono Rosa" is hardly working in this field, protecting women and their children, fighting alongside them for several years. Another tool through which a better protection of the victims could be reached is in a deeper and more solidified connection and collaboration between the healthcare and associations.

The hope is that preventing, protecting, and promoting, the need to punish will be always less and less, getting always closer to a state of equality and mutual respect between men and women.



Finally, Professor Hauwa Ibrahim shared her unique and powerful life experience in fighting against prejudice and injustice as a lawyer in Nigeria. Her inspiring speech started from the day she decided to flee from the destiny that her parents had chosen for her, which was the marriage at the early age of 12, and leave everything she knew to follow the route she believed was made for her: become the voice of the voiceless, defying every day in the Sharia Court where she practiced the bias against women. She saved many lives, escaped a death sentence and today, thanks also to the Sakharov Prize 2005, is still active to help those who are

forgotten. Her presence was inspiring for us all to understand how the change can start from us.

Chiara Muzi & Arianna Patrizi