At the beginning of December 2011 a conference on “The Challenge of Gender in Ottoman, Turkish, and Middle-Eastern Studies: Attempting an Interdisciplinary Approach” was held at the University of Athens.

While there was a general strike going on outside the university building, gender researchers from Southeastern Europe gathered in the university hall to discuss the politics of location from the perspective of a common Ottoman history and a present European controversy. The sessions of the conference were organized according to some key topics in gender history such as “Gender Historiographies,” “Gender, Agency, and Community Boundaries,” and “Gender and Fiction in the Arab World.” Other sessions treated debatable political issues such as “Gender, Violence, and Justice in the Ottoman World” and “Gender in Contemporary Debates on Religion in the Middle East.”

The main organizer of the conference, Efi Kanner, presented her hypothesis of a shared cross-cultural space in the past between Ottoman women of different ethnicities who studied in the same elite Istanbul schools such as Zappio and Robert College. Based on the publications of recent Aspasia forums, Krassimira Daskalova discussed “the city of gender studies” and specifically the institutionalization of women’s and gender history in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Nadezhda Alexandrova offered some solutions to the challenges that all gender studies programs in Europe face in the present time of austerity measures. The historians Lerna Ekmegcioglu, Paris Papachronachis, Eleni Gara, and Dario Miccoli dug deep into silenced memories of violence that Armenians, Jews, Greeks, and Egyptians shared during the first half of the twentieth century in the severe exclusionist landscapes of Istanbul, Salonika, and Cairo. Nora Şeni, Fotini Tsibirdou, Anastasia Falierou, and Konstantina Andrianopoulou discussed cities such as Istanbul, Beirut, Cairo, and Damascus as topoi of cultural commonalities and religious differences. The interlingual and interreligious gender aspect was the focus of papers by Maria Couroucli, Niki Papageorgiou, and Aggeliki Ziaka. Arzu Öztürkmen, Sophia Nikolaidès-Salloum, and Eleni Kondyli in their contributions focused on the issue of creativity and women’s capacity for revolt.

New ideas, new projects, and new interconnections of topics came out of this fruitful two-day conference in Athens, which was highly inspired by the calamities in the Greek social arena.
Call for Papers

The European Journal of Women’s Studies

Special issue: 25 years later: The New Europe

Deadline: 30 September 2013

Editors: Kornelia Slavova and Barbara Einhorn

What is the “New Europe”? Does it describe more accurately the new member states of the EU, or has it simply replaced the label “Other Europe” that used to designate the countries of Central and Eastern Europe during the Cold War? Until now, this term has suggested a hierarchy of unequal partners as somehow responsible for the crisis in the Eurozone. It is constructed through binaries such as: “East” and “West”; the EU and the “others,” the “bordering” or “candidate” countries; the “established” versus the “new” and somehow – in this perception – “unfinished” democracies; the supposedly successful market economies versus those economies on the periphery – whether that be to the east or to the south – that are either perceived as struggling or as liabilities. This special issue suggests that the term “New Europe” could signal a context in which we cease to conceptualize Europe as a relationship of masters and subalterns, but rather view it as a single entity, or at least a project of desirability for inclusivity, in which all European countries participate on an equal footing.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 the political, economic, and cultural landscapes in both former communist states in Central and Eastern Europe and Europe as a whole have been radically transformed. This is not least due to the persistent dominance of unhelpful neo-liberal conceptions of the state as problematic and a constraint on enterprise and creativity, while the unfettered market is conceived of as an unmitigated good. This special issue of The European Journal of Women’s Studies explores the gendered consequences of the social, political and cultural transformations within the context of the overall crisis currently affecting Europe as a whole.

Over the past 25 years women in both Central and Eastern Europe, and in “Western” (Northern and Southern) Europe, have shown incredible survival skills in times of social instability. However, traditional notions of masculinity and male-dominated economic sectors have also been decimated. Yet while there have been shifts in gender roles and imaginings, they have not substantially altered the imbalances in gender relations as relations of power. Moreover, feminism continues to be met with suspicion and resistance in the former Soviet bloc, while there is a considerable “backlash” against feminist political projects in Western Europe. What have women lost and what have they gained in the last two and a half decades of historic changes? How have notions of masculinity and femininity changed? In what ways has the diminished role of state and public social provision affected cultural and social perceptions or impacted gender relations at the societal, family and personal level?
We welcome submissions that address, but are not limited to, the following concerns:

- Gender in the New Europe: What structures of inclusion and exclusion do women and men face on local, regional and European levels? What old and new lines of division still demarcate the topographies of Europe and how can they be transgressed?
- Becoming European: Issues of European citizenship. Who belongs, who has rights within the EU and other European countries? How are gendered identities re/shaped in the framework of EU shared values, lifestyle(s), legal frameworks and institutions?
- Private and Public Reconfigured: How has the relationship between women and the state changed? What about the problem of re-traditionalization and re-positioning of women in the gender hierarchies of late capitalism?
- Lost in “transition” or in post-communist nostalgia? What social and economic anxieties have affected gender relations since 1989? How have poverty, privatization and rising nationalism affected women?
- Europeanization and migration: Shifting dynamics in the relationship of Central and Eastern to Western, Northern and Southern Europe. The relationship between labor mobility, migration, trafficking in people and seeking asylum.
- European feminism: Feminism from below or from above (the impact of EU integration)? In what ways has the newly emerging feminism in Central and Eastern Europe complicated international feminism(s)? Is organized feminism in Western Europe dead?

We welcome contributions from diverse regions both in and outside Europe, as well as diverse approaches and perspectives such as historical, sociological, anthropological, political as well as literary, media, and film representations. We particularly welcome contributions from/on the countries of Central and South Eastern Europe.

All articles will be subject to the usual review process. Articles should be prepared according to the guidelines for submission on the inside back cover of the journal or at http://www2.lse.ac.uk/genderInstitute/journals/EJWS/Home.aspx. Articles should be submitted online to http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ejw by 30 September 2013. Informal queries to Hazel Johnstone, managing editor of EJWS [Email: ejws@lse.ac.uk].