



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Recommendation adopted on 27 January 2012
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Gender equality perspectives in political and democratic processes in the MENA Region (Middle East and Northern African)

The Conference of International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs) of the Council of Europe, meeting in Strasbourg on 27 January 2012

Recognising the major role of women in the MENA region in acquiring liberty, justice, human rights and democracy and the contribution they could further make when fully included in the democratic processes

Being aware of the concern of many women and men in those countries for a resurgence of patriarchal structures and fundamentalist ideas

Being aware of and referring to the demands formulated by women and women's organisations in the countries concerned

Referring to international human rights law, in particular to the UN Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

Referring to the Council of Europe's values and commitments as laid down in the Council of Europe Conventions, Resolutions, Recommendations and Action Plans

Referring to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1831 (2011) on Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the emerging democracies in the Arab world

Recognising the important role the Venice Commission is playing in the democratic transition processes and welcoming its stance on gender equality

Congratulates Tunisia for the application of the gender parity rule to the election lists

Referring to the INGO Conference's Resolution on Gender perspectives in political and democratic processes in the MENA Region of 27 January 2012

Confirms their conviction that women's equal participation in shaping the future of their countries is not only a human right, but is also smart since women introduce alternative perspectives in solving problems and overcoming conflicts in society

Underlines the urgency of getting women included in the democratic and political processes right from the outset, therefore

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urges the International Community, particularly the Council of Europe and the European Union

to listen to Women and Women's organisations in the MENA countries

to support their aspirations, demands, and priorities and use these in their contacts with the authorities in the MENA region, notably

- the immediate, full and effective implementation of international human rights law, particularly the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its additional Protocol, and the lifting of all reservations on CEDAW
- that in accordance with CEDAW art.7.a and b. women participate and have equal representation in all democratic processes, such as in the committees drafting election laws and organising elections and in the constitutional reform committees drafting new constitutions
- that for the present a quota system is necessary with a minimum of 30%-40%
- that Gender equality and Women's rights are fully guaranteed and included in all constitutional and legislative reforms in conformity with international law

to promote hearings of representatives of women and their organisations from MENA countries

to present best practices by ensuring equal participation in their delegations and also in their own institutions, such as PACE's Political Affairs Committee and Committee on Equal Opportunities

to promote all necessary assistance for political, leadership and employment training of women and men at all levels and gender sensitive training for policymakers, judges, lawyers, police etc.

to ensure that financial and other assistance benefit women and men equally by earmarking such assistance.

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urges media

to report on the activities and contributions of women activists in the revolutionary and transitional reform processes in the MENA region

to show on television women marches and other activities by women when these occur, such as the women's street demonstrations in Yemen and Syria reported by BBC radio

to report on women's concerns, wishes, demands and priorities

to develop media campaigns to diminish discriminatory attitudes

to develop media campaigns to promote women in political life

to generate increased support to reform initiatives such as equality laws in the constitutions

Recommendation proposed by the Democracy,
Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee