



CONFERENCE OF INGOs  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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**Recommendation adopted on 24 January 2013  
CONF/PLE(2013)REC1**

**Gender Equality – a condition for success of the Arab Revolutions**

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**The Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) of the Council of Europe**

1. **Noting** that the Arab Spring, in which women took part and played a major role, was at its core a social-political movement for dignity, human rights and democracy led by young people unable to realise their full potential, lacking job opportunities and freedom;
2. **Being aware** that the current situation presents opportunities as well as risks of regression, particularly in the field of women's rights;
3. **Supporting** those women and men who defend Human Rights as universal and rejecting any infringements on these rights;
4. **Referring** to its Recommendation [CONF/PLE\(2012\)REC5](#) "Gender Equality: a universal value, principle and human right to be respected and promoted in all fields" adopted on 27 June 2012;
5. **Referring** to its recommendation [CONF/PLE \(2012\) REC4](#) and its Resolution [CONF/PLE \(2012\) RES2](#) "Gender Perspectives in political and democratic processes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region" adopted on 27 January 2012 in which the international community was urged to listen to women and women's organisations and support their demands and priorities;
6. **Welcoming** the hearings of Representatives of Women Organisations from the MENA Region held by the joint and separate sessions of the Political affairs and Democracy Committee and the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
7. **Welcoming** the Public Hearing on "The situation of women in North Africa" organised by the European Union's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality;
8. **Referring** to Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1996 \(2012\)](#) and its [Resolution 1873 \(2012\)](#) on "Equality between women and men: a condition for the success of the Arab Spring" and Mrs Saidi's report on the subject ([Doc.12893](#)).

9. **Welcoming** the Council of Europe Southern Neighbourhood Co-operation policy in which Gender equality is named as the first priority under the Protection and promotion of human rights.
10. **Noting** that in the Council of Europe's Neighbourhood Co-operation priorities for Tunisia 2012-2014 of 23 March 2012 {DGProg/INF(2012)3rev} and its Neighbourhood Co-operation priorities for Morocco 2012-2014 of 2 April 2012 {DGProg/Inf(2011)4rev} priorities are elaborated into overall objectives and expected results.
11. **Referring** to its members' reports "Women and the Arab Spring: Taking their place?" (Paris, March 2012) of the International League of Human Rights (FIDH) and "Wishes, Demands and Priorities of National and Regional Women's Organisations in the MENA region" (January 2013) by the International Alliance of Women (IAW).

### **The Conference of INGOs**

12. **Calls** upon the Council of Europe, the European Union and their member-States' governments
  - 12.1 to continue to listen to women from the MENA region and their representatives;
  - 12.2 to bring the views, demands, wishes and priorities as expressed by national and regional women's rights movements and civil society organisations from the MENA region to the attention of the authorities of the countries concerned;
  - 12.3 to use the "20 measures for equality" contained in the FIDH report and the "Wishes, Demands and Priorities" contained in the IAW report as an expression of women's demands and priorities and as indicators for its own policies and evaluation.
  - 12.4 to ascertain that assistance given through their Southern neighbourhood co-operation policy benefits women and men equally by adding conditions to such assistance and financial aid;

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The "20 measures for equality" contained in the report of the International League of Human Rights (FIDH) "Women and the Arab Spring: Taking their place?" (Paris, 2012) are:  
On women's participation in political and public life

1. Guarantee women's access to all political posts;
2. Adopt laws and policies requiring gender parity or at a minimum, quotas of at least 30% of women in all political decision making bodies and elected assemblies;
3. Ensure the effective participation of women in all stages of elections, including within the body overseeing elections;
4. Conduct outreach and civic education campaigns to explain the rights of women, as voters and candidates in the electoral process;
5. Adopt measures aimed at increasing the representation of women in the judiciary

#### On Constitutional and legislative reforms

6. Enshrine in the constitution, the principle of equality between men and women and the prohibition of all forms of discrimination against women;
7. Reform all laws that discriminate against women, including in the area of the family: marriage, divorce, guardianship, child custody, inheritance, the transfer of nationality to spouses and children and legal capacity; and ensure the full compliance of all legislation with international conventions, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

#### On Violence against women

8. Adopt laws prohibiting all forms of violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence and sexual harassment;
9. Put in place adequate shelters and medical and psychological support services for victims of violence;
10. Fight impunity of all perpetrators of violence against women, by ensuring effective investigations, prosecution and punishment of these crimes;
11. Ensure that women have full access to justice, including the provision of free legal services and establishing appropriate complaint mechanisms;
12. Ensure that all actors in the justice system (police, judges, lawyers) receive adequate training on laws protecting women from violence and the treatment of victims of such crimes;
13. Adopt preventive measures, including information and education campaigns, to eliminate violence against women.

#### On education, employment and health

14. Establish policies to ensure access for girls and women to education and eradicate illiteracy;
15. Enact laws and policies to reduce high employment rates among women, ensure that women and men receive equal pay for equal work; combat the gender-based division of labour; and ensure that women have full and equal access to economic resources, including in rural areas;
16. Promote the representation of women in the decision making bodies of trade unions;
17. Strengthen measures aimed at increasing access of women and girls to adequate health services, particularly with regard to reproductive health .

#### On implementation of international women's rights protection instruments

18. Withdraw all reservations to CEDAW;

19. Ratify all international conventions on women's rights and ensure the full implementation of their provisions;
20. Cooperate with UN mechanisms protecting women's rights (including the CEDAW Committee, the Working Group on law and practices that discriminate against women and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women) and implement their recommendations.