

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 25 November 2014

GEC(2014)16 rev

**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION  
(GEC)**

---

Draft Comments on PACE Recommendation 2053 (2014) –  
“Women’s rights and prospects for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation”

During its 1210<sup>th</sup> meeting (22 and 24 October 2014), the Committee of Ministers communicated PACE Recommendation 2053(2014) “Women’s rights and prospects for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation” (see appendix) to the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) for information and possible comments by 31 December 2014.

1. The GEC welcomes the Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2053 (2014) and underlines the importance of including gender equality as an indicator of a country’s degree of democratisation and draws attention to the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 which states: *“Achieving gender equality is central to the protection of human rights, the functioning of democracy, respect for the rule of law and economic growth and sustainability”*.
2. The GEC welcomes the enshrinement of gender equality in constitutions and other legislative acts, and agrees that the effective realisation of gender equality will require constant efforts and political will on the part of governments and legislators of those countries in the years to come. It also highlights the importance of providing these countries with international support, as well as the civil society, particularly women’s organisations which play a crucial role in the process of democratic transition and consolidation
3. The GEC recalls that Gender Equality and Violence against Women are defined as priority areas for Council of Europe co-operation with the Neighborhood countries and values the exchanges and relations established. The GEC encourages continued co-operation to sustain and further develop the progress made in the countries. The GEC recalls the tangible and positive developments achieved so far to consolidate changes in mindsets and behaviours as well as policy and legislative changes based on Council of Europe standards which include the preparation of draft laws on violence against women and on women and media, changes in the criminal code and family law, as well as the preparation of national integrated policies on violence against women.

## APPENDIX

### PACE Recommendation 2053 (2014) – “Women’s rights and prospects for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation”

1. Referring to its Resolution 2012 (2014) on women’s rights and prospects for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation, the Parliamentary Assembly notes that in the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, equality between men and women is developing unevenly, alongside democratic transition, with significant advances in certain countries and a situation of instability hampering progress in others.
2. The Assembly commends the efforts of the Council of Europe to strengthen co-operation with the countries of the region and contribute to these processes through interparliamentary co-operation, including by way of the partner for democracy status.
3. The Assembly reiterates the importance which it attaches to the activities of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), particularly in the light of the role which it played in the framing of the Tunisian Constitution. It encourages the Committee of Ministers to promote the Venice Commission’s actions in the region, both in its member States (Morocco, Tunisia) and outside them.
4. The Assembly encourages the Committee of Ministers to promote the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (ETS No. 210, “Istanbul Convention”), which came into force on 1 August 2014, vis-à-vis the southern neighbourhood countries, both through training activities on the content of the convention and by promoting the accession of these countries.
5. The Assembly considers that co-operation by the Council of Europe with the southern Mediterranean countries should continue assigning a major role to the “gender equality” component also in the interparliamentary context.