



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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

**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 context of the current revolution in the MENA region for liberty, justice, human rights and democracy and referring to their motto “We were together in the streets; we will not go home now”;

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, such as in the Egyptian women’s charter and by the “*Ligue tunisienne des droits de l’homme*”, the “Libya Women’s Platform for Peace”, the “*Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc*”, the Yemen “Women Journalists Without Chains”, the “Centre for Egyptian Women Legal Assistance” and by “Karama” which has member organisations in 11 MENA countries;

Referring to international human rights law, in particular to the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the subsequent Security Council resolutions 1625, 1674, 1820, 1882 and 1888;

Referring to 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;

Referring to the recommendation to create a women’s network for democratic governance made at the North-South Centre Conference on Women as agents of change in the Southern Mediterranean region in October 2011;

Referring to the INGO Conference’s Declaration on the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia and Presidential statement of January 2011;

Referring to the INGO Conference's Declaration on "Leveraging Women's Equal Participation during and after Conflicts and Revolutions from the onset" of June 2011;

Referring to the INGO Liaison Committee's Recommendation on the situation in Kosovo of June 2008 and being aware of the long lasting negative effects on Kosovar women's rights as described in the March 2011 report of FRIDE¹ due to their exclusion at the onset from political participation

The Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe resolves :

to listen to NGO's in the MENA countries and bring their wishes and demands to the attention of policymakers within the Council of Europe, the European Union and their member states;

to advocate hearings of representatives of women and their organisations from MENA countries, to be organised by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;

to provide assistance to NGO's in the MENA countries on their request;

to support the demands, priorities and commitments of Women and Women's organisations in the MENA countries, notably;

- the immediate, full and effective implementation of international human rights law on gender equality, particularly the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its additional Protocol, as well as the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and subsequent Security Council resolutions and the lifting of all reservations on CEDAW;
- that Gender equality and Women's rights be fully guaranteed and included in all constitutional and legislative reforms in conformity with international law;
- that women from grassroots to university level be recognised as main contributors to their societies, not only as victims in need of extra resources, but be acknowledged as equal partners in all spheres of life, the political, economic, social and also in the security sector
- that women fully benefit from the fruits of present-day revolutions
- that women have equal representation and participation in all democratic processes right from the outset; such as in the committees organising elections and drafting election laws and in the constitutional reform committees drafting new constitutions
- that investing in women's empowerment, their leadership skills, their economic and political development be a national priority, which requires gender sensitive distribution of resources and technical support
- that women at all levels need training in political, economic and leadership skills
- that gender mainstreaming requires gender advisors at senior management levels and gender sensitive training for policymakers, judges, lawyers, police, etc.

¹ "Building a State that works for women: Integrating gender into post-conflict state building" March 2011 report by Fundación par las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior

- that a cultural mentality change take place away from the patriarchal approach for which the involvement of men is important to obtain such a change
- that women not be victims of conflict, armed or otherwise, and be protected
- that the International community pledge resources and technical support and acknowledge that development is not possible without the full engagement of half the population.

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