



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

DEMOCRACY, SOCIAL COHESION AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES COMMITTEE

Recommendation adopted on 26 June 2012
CONF/DEM(2012)REC1

Gender Equality – A condition for success of the Arab Spring

The Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe

1. **being aware** that the Arab Spring, in which women took part and played a major role, was at its core a social-political movement led by young people unable to realise their full potential, lacking job opportunities and freedom;
2. **being aware** that the present situation present opportunities as well as risks of regression, particularly in the field of women's rights;
3. **supports** those women and men who defend Human Rights as universal and rejects any infringements on these rights;
4. **refers** to the Recommendation [[CONF/PLE\(2012\)REC4](#)] and the Resolution [[CONF/PLE\(2012\)RES2](#)] of the Conference of INGOs "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;
5. **welcomes** the hearings of Representatives of Women Organisations from the MENA Region held by the joint and separate sessions of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Political affairs Committee and its Committee on Non-Discrimination and Equality;
6. **welcomes** 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;
7. **refers** to Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly's [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](#)).
8. **welcomes** 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.
9. takes note that in the Council of Europe's Neighbourhood Co-operation priorities for Tunisia 2012-1214 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.

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10. **supports** these Council of Europe priorities and is ready to co-operate.

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11. **urges** the Council of Europe, the European Union and its member states

- 11.3 to ascertain that assistance given benefit women and men equally by adding conditions to such assistance and financial aid;
- 11.2 to continue to listen to women and their representative;
- 11.3 to bring the views, demands, wishes and priorities as expressed by national and regional women's rights movements and civil society organisations and their representatives to the attention of the authorities of the countries concerned;
- 11.4 to use the following 20 measures for equality* as a summary of those demands and priorities and as indicators for its own policies and evaluation.

Measures on Constitutional and legislative reforms

- 12. **enshrine** in the constitution, the principle of equality between men and women and the prohibition of all forms of discrimination against women;
- 13. **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).

Measures on women's participation in political and public life

- 14. **guarantee** women's access to all political posts;
- 15. **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;
- 16. **ensure** the effective participation of women in all stages of elections, including within the body overseeing elections;
- 17. **conduct** outreach and civic education campaigns to explain the rights of women, as voters and candidates in the electoral process;
- 18. **adopt** measures aimed at increasing the representation of women in the judiciary.

Measures on implementation of international women's rights protection instruments

- 19. **withdraw** all reservations to CEDAW;

20. **ratify** all international conventions on women's rights and ensure the full implementation of their provisions;
21. **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.

Measures on Violence against women

22. adopt laws prohibiting all forms of violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence and sexual harassment;
23. put in place adequate shelters and medical and psychological support services for victims of violence;
24. fight impunity of all perpetrators of violence against women, by ensuring effective investigations, prosecution and punishment of these crimes;
25. ensure that women have full access to justice, including the provision of free legal services and establishing appropriate complaint mechanisms;
26. 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;
27. adopt preventive measures, including information and education campaigns, to eliminate violence against women.

Measures on education, employment and health

28. establish policies to ensure access for girls and women to education and eradicate illiteracy;
29. enact laws and policies to reduce high unemployment 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;
30. promote the representation of women in the decision making bodies of trade unions;
31. strengthen measures aimed at increasing access of women and girls to adequate health services, particularly with regard to reproductive health.

* as summarised by International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) in their report "Women and the Arab Spring: Taking their place?" March 2012, signed by 23 MENA based organisations.