

# The Human Rights-based Approach in Combating Violence against Women

Training of Experts

Tunis, Tunisia – 12-14 July

# REPORT

2017

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe (NSC) contributes to the empowerment of women in the Southern Mediterranean region by addressing the obstacles that hinder the achievement of their full potential namely through awareness raising and training activities. In line with the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy, the Council of Europe's policy towards neighbouring regions and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals - in particular Goal 5: to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls - the NSC organised a training of experts on preventing and combating violence against women in the Southern Mediterranean.

Taking into consideration that violence against women must be simultaneously addressed on multiple levels and multiple sectors of society, the NSC promoted the Council of Europe's comprehensive and integrated approach to prevent and combat violence against women through the coordination and cooperation of all stakeholders both at national and international level. Experienced workers and legal experts became acquainted with Council of Europe's standards and its human rights-based approach as guidance tools to eliminate violence against women through multi-stakeholders' and peer co-operation, as well as through the sharing of good practises.

*“Capacity building of the relevant stakeholders is the key in the implementation of actions plans to combat and prevent violence against women.”*

Through this training, the NSC enlarged its network of experts on Empowerment of Women from the Southern Mediterranean countries. The completion of the training enables these experts to disseminate Council of Europe's expertise at the national level, taking into account their current national contexts and needs. Additionally, these experts will contribute to the awareness-raising of specific issues women face in Southern Mediterranean countries, as well as to the promotion of Southern expertise in Europe.

Participants expressed their strong interest in furthering their knowledge and training about Council of Europe's standards and, in particular on the Istanbul Convention, as guidance tools in view of reinforcing their advocacy and training work.

The multilateral dimension of the training has reinforced participants' knowledge through peer-learning and exchanges of experiences and best practices. The present report constitutes as well a compilation of the needs and challenges to prevent and combat violence against women in Southern Mediterranean countries<sup>1</sup>, which participants identified both at national and regional level.



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<sup>1</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Palestine\* and Tunisia

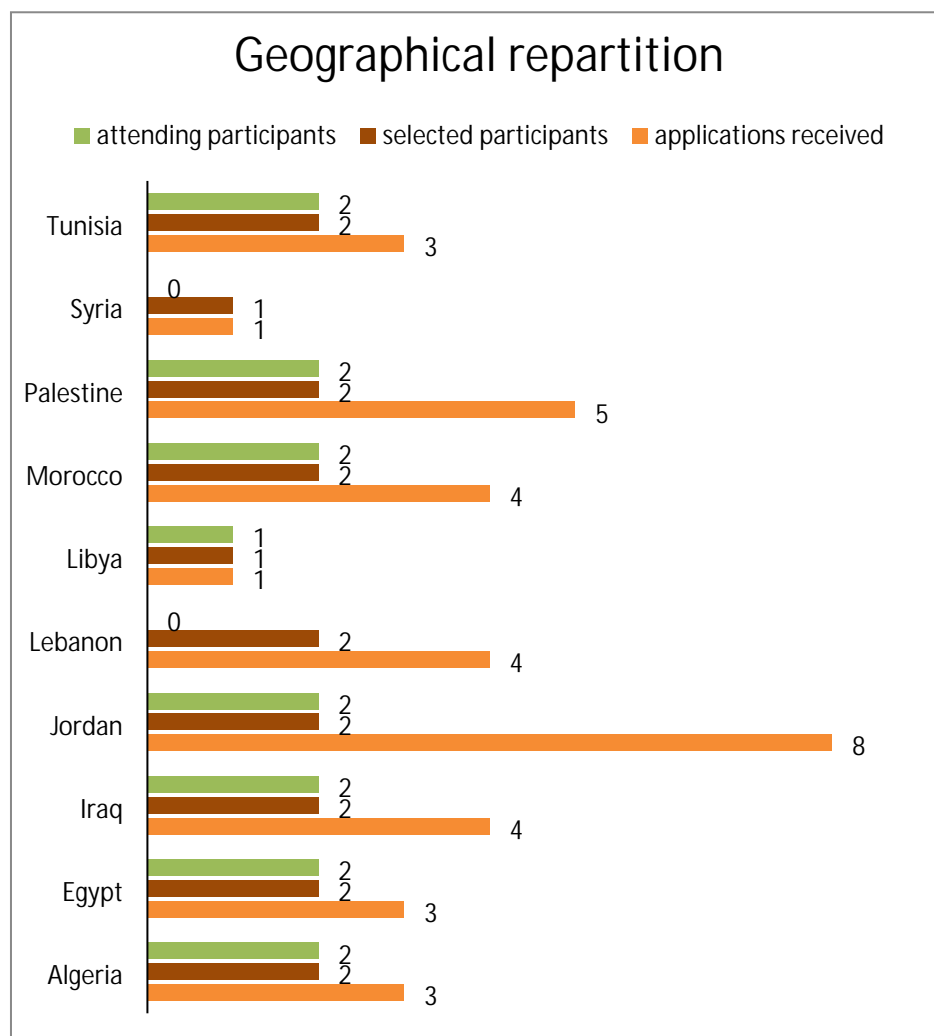
## 2. ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 PARTICIPANTS AND PEDAGOGICAL TEAM

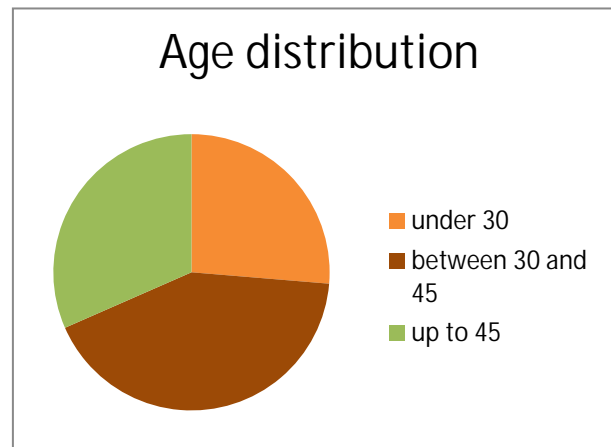
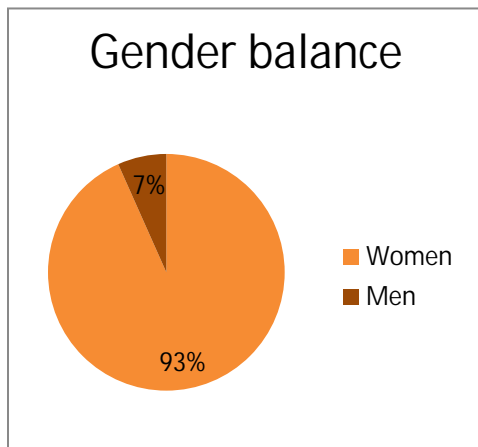
Following a selection process among women from civil society organisations, members of the Euro-Med Women Network, and in close consultation with its partners, the NSC chose 18 experts from the Southern Mediterranean region. 15 of which were able to attend the training in Tunisia<sup>2</sup>, 14 women and one man.

#### 2.1.1 Profile of participants

Experienced workers and trainers and/or legal experts from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia\* in the field of women's rights and gender equality with a proven experience and expertise on preventing and combating violence against women



<sup>2</sup> Participants from Lebanon and Syria were not present due to visa issues.



## 2.1.2 Participants

Ms Nadia AIT-ZAÏ - CIDDEF Fondation pour l'Égalité - Algeria  
 Ms Amel BOUCETTA - Association Action Bénévole pour la Citoyenneté et le Développement - Algeria  
 Ms Fatemah KHAFAGY - Egyptian Feminist Union - Egypt  
 Ms Nehal ALI - Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights - Egypt  
 Ms Ramziya ZANA - Gender Studies and Information Organization - Iraq  
 Ms Suzan AREF - Women Empowerment Organization - Iraq  
 Ms Maria Del Mar LOGRONA NARBONA - Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD)-Legal Aid - Jordan  
 Ms Nuha MUHREIZ - Women Helping Women Network - Jordan  
 Ms Rida ALTUBULY - Together We Build It Organization (TWBI) – Libya  
 Dr Prof Abdeljabbar ARRACH - Laboratory for Research on Compared Democratic Transition - Morocco  
 Ms Sara MORSLI - Youth Forum for Democracy and Citizenship - Morocco  
 Ms Rania SINJLAWI - Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling - Palestine  
 Ms Victoria SHUKRI - Community Center for Training and Development - Palestine  
 Ms Ghazoua LTAIEF - Fondation de France - Tunisia  
 Ms Hanen GADES - Court of First Instance of Ben Arous, Ministry of Justice – Tunisia

*The following organisations were not able to attend the training:*

Ms Sahar SAMHOUN - ABAAD-WGSS - Lebanon  
 Ms Fatima OUTALEB - Union of Women's Action, UAF - Morocco  
 Ms Malaak SWED - MADANI Organization - Syria  
 Ms Karima BRINI - Association Femme et Citoyenneté El Kef – Tunisia  
 Ms Celine EL KIK – KAFA (Enough) Violence and Exploitation - Lebanon

## 2.1.3 Pedagogical and Coordination Team<sup>3</sup>

### - Trainers

Ms Laura ALBU, Country expert for Romania - European Women's Lobby Observatory on Violence against Women, Romania  
 Ms Brunilda MINAROLLI PEÇI, Head of Human Rights, Minorities and Reporting Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Albania

<sup>3</sup> Experts' biographies are available in [annex 1](#)

- Moderator and Rapporteur

Ms Wiem MELKI, Curator, Global Shapers Tunis, Tunisia

- Coordination

Ms Narimen BENEDDINE, Empowerment of Women Programme Responsible, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

Ms Arianna CORONA, Coordination Assistant, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

Ms Imène KHALIFA COLOVIC, Human Rights Programme Responsible, Council of Europe Office in Tunis

## 2.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTIVITY

- To identify experts in the Southern Mediterranean countries on gender equality and women's rights;
- To enable them to disseminate Council of Europe's methods and tools on preventing and combating violence against women at the national level, while taking into account the current national contexts and needs;
- To raise awareness about specific issues faced by women in Southern Mediterranean countries;
- To promote Southern expertise.

### 2.3.1 Outputs

Fifteen participants from the Southern Mediterranean countries were trained on Council of Europe's standards on preventing and combating violence against women, including the coordinated and multi-agency methodology, as well as the victim-centred and human rights-based approach<sup>4</sup>. All beneficiaries agreed to be part of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe Pool of Experts.

### 2.3.2 Targeted Outcomes

- Enhanced coordination of institutional and other relevant stakeholders to prevent and combat violence against women;
- Recognition of the Council of Europe's standards and human rights-based approach by the participants as guidance tools in order to build the capacity of stakeholders in fighting violence against women;
- Increased understanding of the relevance of adopting a coordinated and integrated action at the international and national level to reinforce women's rights;
- The [Euro-Med Women Network online platform](#), monitored by the NSC, includes a specific section for the exchange of information and collection of good practices;
- Planning of local capacity building activities targeting the needs and specificities according to national contexts, on the basis of the good practices and testimonies shared during the activity;
- Reinforcement of the exchange of expertise between Southern Mediterranean countries and Council of Europe's members states through activities monitored by the NSC.

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<sup>4</sup> To see more on the Council of Europe's tools and standards promoted, consult the [annex 2](#).



## 2.4 PROGRAMME

Time	Tuesday 11	Wednesday 12	Thursday 13	Friday 14	Saturday 15
8:30-9:30		Breakfast			
9:30-10:30		<b>Introduction</b> <i>Wiem Melki</i> <i>North-South Centre</i> <i>Experts</i>	<b>Session 4 Part I:</b> Data collection and research to build the knowledge base necessary to combat violence against women <i>Laura Albu</i>	<b>Session 6:</b> Presentation of good practices and exchange of experiences <i>Laura Albu and Wiem Melki</i> <b>Session 7:</b> Identification of needs and challenges at the regional and national level and definition of successive steps <i>Laura Albu</i>	
10:30-11:00		Coffee Break			
11:00-12:30	A R R I V A L S	<b>Session 1:</b> Comprehensive introduction to Council of Europe's tools and methodology to combat violence against women <i>Laura Albu</i>	<b>Part II:</b> Data collection and research to build the knowledge base necessary to combat violence against women <i>Laura Albu</i>	<b>Evaluation and Follow-up</b> <i>North-South Centre</i>	D E P A R T U R E S
12:30-13:30		Lunch Break			
13:30-15:00		<b>Session 2:</b> The Human Rights-based approach <i>Brunilda Peçi</i>	<b>Session 5 Part I:</b> Co-ordinated measures and multi-agency partnerships <i>Brunilda Peçi</i>	Preparation for the side-event	
15:00-15:30		Coffee Break			
15:30-17:00		<b>Session 3:</b> The Victim-centred approach <i>Laura Albu</i>	<b>Part II:</b> Co-ordinated measures and multi-agency partnerships <i>Brunilda Peçi</i>	Free afternoon	
17:00-17:30	Evaluation and Reflection			Side Event – Global Shapers	

### 2.4.1 Participants' expectations

The main expectations of participants were to network with other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working on similar projects and aspects and share experiences and best practices from different countries. Participants were also eager to deepen their knowledge about combating violence against women tools and European conventions, to learn new practical ways to advocate for women's rights at local and regional level and unite all actors of society to end violence against women.

Participants showed a strong interest in following-up activities of the NSC and practical applications of the knowledge acquired in their respective country.

Participants positively evaluated the methodology of the workshop referring to the effectiveness of its multilateral dimension.

### 2.4.2 Programme flow and content overview

Participants were presented with the Council of Europe's standards such as the [Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) (Istanbul Convention) and the [Anti-Trafficking Convention](#) and their respective monitoring bodies: the [Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence \(GREVIO\)](#) and the [Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings \(GRETA\)](#).

These tools, in particular the Istanbul Convention, were introduced as minimum of pragmatic and efficient standards related to prevention, protection, prosecution, provision and partnership both at regional and national levels. Ratifying the Convention is a fundamental step, but building the capacities of relevant stakeholders is a key for its implementation. As a holistic and comprehensive tool, the Istanbul Convention brings clear and detailed measures to compensate the lack of concrete measures in national strategies for women's rights.

The human rights-based approach in Combating Violence against women recognises that violence against women is a human rights' violation. Through this approach, countries should work on comprehensive services for combating violence against women, based on the Istanbul Convention as a legal tool and international instrument. Participants discussed how to use this tool in practical ways, namely through the adaptation of vocabulary when translating the most relevant articles to the national context and needs. In addition, considering the influence of the international community, legal international instruments reinforce the advocacy work of civil society organisations supported until now mainly by the [Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#).

*"The bulk of work shouldn't be on the shoulders of the civil society organisations"*

Participants stressed that international instruments' articles should be translated into laws and policies. The involvement of national governments is the guarantee of the sustainability of any plans to combat violence against women. Participants agreed that violence against women should be considered also as a public health issue and a matter of public security with repercussions on the national economy. The relevant bodies and ministries should thus be involved on the issue and data collection is fundamental to this plight. Collecting data is a crucial step for preventing violence and protecting women and for improving conditions and finding solutions based on concrete and documented facts.

Others specific themes tackled during the three days training:

- The role of the CSOs in combating violence against women
- Gender budgeting policies
- National Action Plans
- Capacities, resources and governmental support for service providers and civil society organisations
- Reporting of violence against women and domestic violence
- Centralisation of data and information
- Evaluations of national legislations
- Shelters' management and shelters' financing
- Costs of violence against women and domestic violence
- Mechanisms, laws and policies in practice in each country
- Violence against women in public and private space
- Implementation of perpetrator programmes
- Role of private sector such as media and private health centres
- Partnership with religious bodies and educational bodies

## 3. EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

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### 3.1 IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

During the session dedicated to sharing experiences, participants identified the following regional challenges and needs:

Main challenges:

- Patriarchal mentalities;
- Perpetuating negative or stereotyped images of women in media and education;
- Lack of political will;
- Rise of extremism and radicalism;
- Lack of skills and qualifications of victims' services providers;
- Women's and men's precarious living conditions;
- Sustainability of financial resources;
- Lack of national coordination;
- Discriminative laws and policies.

Needs:

- Legislation reform and improvement (laws criminalising all forms of violence against women and domestic violence, reform on penal and family codes and relevant tools for law implementation);
- Capacity building (for public and private sectors);
- Resources (data and researches, as well as technical and financial resources);
- Raising awareness (public awareness campaigns and media literacy).

### 3.2 EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING

Based on the participants' evaluation, the most useful session was the one dedicated to the presentation of good practices and exchange of experiences. Participants expressed the need to know more about the other national experiences and to assess together effectiveness of actions already tested, what needs to be improved and how. Participants also agreed that follow up actions are fundamental to give them more time and a privilege space for discussing strategies and methods to implement international instruments at the national and local levels.





100% of the participants considered the training on the Council of Europe's tools and methodologies useful and consider working with them in the future, as well as with the NSC.

### 3.3 FOLLOW-UP

Following the participants' needs and in order to meet the common objectives, the NSC will organise another activity to deepen their knowledge on Council of Europe methods and tools, as well as the human rights-based and victim centred approaches mainly through practical cases and the sharing and analysis of best practices. Regular meetings will be also organised in order to reinforce the peer learning and the sharing of experiences. In addition, these meetings will help participants define and design activities fostering the multi-stakeholders cooperation both at national and regional levels. Finally, the NSC will monitor and promote the southern expertise in Council of Europe member states thanks to experienced and remarkable experts.

For more information: [www.nscentre.org](http://www.nscentre.org)  
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