

WORKSHOP

Strengthening Capacities of Women Organisations

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Concept Note

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BACKGROUND

The Southern Mediterranean region is facing decisive challenges that defy the democratic consolidation process. Currently, the rise of violence linked to radicalisation, extremism and discriminatory attitudes together with the sudden increase of migrants and refugees are threatening democratic achievements and fundamental rights, having a concerning impact on the rights of women. The conclusions of the North-South Centre [2015 and 2016 Lisbon Fora](#)¹, respectively on the themes of radicalisation and migration, demonstrated the negative impact that these phenomena are having on women's rights. Furthermore, the findings of the Fora streamlined that a comprehensive response cannot be achieved without gender-sensitive policies that require the active participation of women themselves.

Southern Mediterranean countries are at the core of these concerns, such as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which is facing an alarming rise in home-grown extremism. With more than 2.7 million refugees, Jordan tops a list of 10 countries that host more than half of the world's refugees². A [research](#) conducted by the Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development and Search for Common Ground on behalf of UN Women and the Jordanian National Commission for Women in February and March 2016 found that "women face heightened threats of the impact of radicalisation due to diminishing public space, stricter gender norms that define the spaces they may and may not occupy, and increased violence against women. Compounding the problem is the influx of Syrian refugees over the past few years where the incidence of gender-based violence is high and early marriage among the refugee population stands at 33 percent"³.

Recently, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan launched its [Comprehensive National Plan for Human Rights 2016-2025](#), to disseminate the human rights culture and increase awareness about it at the national level. The National Plan includes the consultation and the participation of all actors of the society⁴ as well as the goal to "enhance and protect women rights" by reviewing the legislations related to women rights and propose amendments thereto in a participatory framework.

FRAMEWORK

In line with the [Council of Europe Policy towards Neighbouring regions](#) and the [Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014 – 2017](#), and responding to UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 that aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, the North-South Centre's mission strives for the empowerment of civil society organisations, in particular, women, in the Southern Mediterranean region. Based on a bottom-up approach, the North-South Centre acts as an effective regional platform for cooperation, dialogue, partnership and solidarity and contributes to strengthen the capacities of institutions and organisations through peer-to-peer exchanges and networks.

¹ The Lisbon Forum is an annual high-level event, organised by the North-South Centre that sought to address key challenges faced by the Mediterranean Region.

² According to the Amnesty International report "Tackling the global refugee crisis" : <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol40/4905/2016/en/>

³ Quoted from the article Empowering women key to preventing extremism in Jordan, 27 July 2016 - See more at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/7/empowering-women-key-to-preventing-extremism-in-jordan>

⁴ Such as the civil society institutions, the national institutions, the political parties, the professional and trade unions, the woman and youth sector, the organisations concerned with disabled people and the international organisations operating in Jordan.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

In this context, the North-South Centre will contribute to the empowerment of women in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Southern Mediterranean region by organising, in partnership with Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD)-Legal Aid, a workshop on “strengthening capacities of women organisations” in Amman. By bringing together expertise on women’s rights and gender equality and encouraging exchanges of best practices from different countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region and Europe, the workshop attempts to reinforce cooperation between the four levels of the *Quadrilogue* (governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society organisation) in order to encourage a participatory approach in designing and implementing reforms.

Targeted outputs:

- Enhancement of participatory consultation processes involving all levels of governance (government, parliament, local and regional authority and civil society organisations);
- Challenges and opportunities for the effective protection of women rights are identified in the framework of current reforms in Jordan and in the region;
- Recommendations for the different members of the Quadrilogue on how to confront the identified challenges are agreed and put forward.

Targeted outcomes:

- The consultative role of women civil society organisations (CSO) is reinforced in the decision-making processes in Jordan and the region;
- Structured dialogue among the different Quadrilogue members is standardised as a joint platform for discussion with recognition in the national reforms and the democratic consolidation processes;
- International and regional cooperation is enhanced, in particular among networks of CSO's to reinforce the impact of their advocacy work;
- Council of Europe's standards are recognized as useful tools that can be adapted to specific needs and contexts.

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