



Resolution 2012 (2014)¹

Final version

Women's rights and prospects for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Three years after the uprisings which started the “Arab Spring”, women’s status on the southern shore of the Mediterranean has a mixed record. Moreover, significant differences exist between the various countries: on the one hand, Morocco and Tunisia, by creating or consolidating democratic institutions, have achieved significant progress in this area; on the other, Egypt, struggling to restore stability, and Libya, on the brink of civil war, have not made any progress in this area. Algeria’s progress is insufficient.
2. Gender equality is an indicator of a country’s degree of democratisation and of its resolve and capacity for the inclusion of all citizens without discrimination of any kind. Likewise, breaches of women’s rights often act as an alarm bell, revealing threats to the rights and freedoms of everyone.
3. Morocco and Tunisia have hitherto been prime interlocutors of the Council of Europe, and these productive relations should be perpetuated in the future. At the same time, these countries can play an exemplary modernising role in international forums, such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, by proving that it is possible to advance towards gender equality without renouncing one’s cultural and religious roots.
4. The Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the enshrinement of the gender equality principle in the new constitutions adopted by Egypt and Tunisia in 2014. Making this principle a reality will call for a sustained effort on the part of these countries’ governments and legislators during the years ahead.
5. An alert and watchful stance regarding the situation of women in the countries of the region remains necessary, since where human rights are concerned regressions are always possible and the political and institutional frameworks are particularly unstable in some of these countries.
6. Civil society, including women’s organisations, has played a crucial part in the processes of democratic transition or consolidation, and should be supported by the national institutions and the agents of international co-operation.
7. In general, media also have an important part to play in modernising society and supporting gender equality; this is especially true in societies where illiteracy remains widespread (oral tradition). They have a potent influence on attitudes and should exercise it to instil the principle of equality and eradicate gender stereotypes.
8. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly reiterates the recommendations directed at the countries of the region both collectively and individually in [Resolution 1873 \(2012\)](#) “Equality between women and men: a condition for the success of the Arab Spring”. Furthermore, it calls on the countries of the region to:
 - 8.1. apply the principle of equality enshrined in their constitutions coherently and in depth, including through specific policies and programmes;

1. *Assembly debate* on 30 September 2014 (31st Sitting) (see [Doc. 13596](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Fatiha Saïdi). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 30 September 2014 (31st Sitting). See also [Recommendation 2053 \(2014\)](#).



- 8.2. make sure that the law on the family and inheritance is in keeping with the principle of equality, particularly as regards the role of the head of family, parental authority, divorce, custody of children and inheritance;
 - 8.3. combat violence against women by means of a legal framework founded on prevention of violence, protection of victims and punishment of perpetrators, which addresses all forms of violence against women in the ambit of criminal law, including domestic violence, female genital mutilation, neglect of daughters, so-called “honour” crimes and sexual violence; this legislation should be coherently implemented and regularly evaluated;
 - 8.4. eliminate all barriers impeding women’s effective access to justice and guarantee their access to and participation in the mechanisms of transitional justice;
 - 8.5. support civil society, including women’s organisations, and involve it in preparing and implementing laws and policies likely to have an impact on the status of women;
 - 8.6. promote the full participation of women and of women’s organisations in public and political life, in particular by introducing provisions into electoral legislation aimed at promoting the representation of elected women in public bodies. Within these bodies and, as appropriate, political parties, information and training activities should be organised to improve the aptitudes of all elected representatives without distinction as to gender;
 - 8.7. promote women’s representation in the judicial system and the legal professions, as well as in the police force;
 - 8.8. involve the media in promoting equality, both by combating gender stereotyping and by increased representation of women on the staff of the various information agencies, particularly radio and television;
 - 8.9. guarantee equal access to education at all levels without gender-based discrimination and intensify the fight against illiteracy, including that of adults and especially women;
 - 8.10. intensify co-operation with the Council of Europe, in particular by acceding to the relevant conventions and enlarged partial agreements, notably the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), if they have not already done so;
 - 8.11. consider accession to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197) and to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, “Istanbul Convention”);
 - 8.12. strengthen interparliamentary co-operation with the Council of Europe by using available tools such as the partner for democracy status and through co-operation under the Strengthening Democratic Reform in the Southern Neighbourhood programme (South Programme);
 - 8.13. strengthen co-operation within the region in order to exchange good practices for improving the status of women.
9. Furthermore, the Assembly calls on Morocco to:
- 9.1. guarantee that the Family Code is uniformly implemented in the various courts of the country, in particular through activities for the information and training of magistrates and by facilitating access to justice for women who are disadvantaged and live in rural areas;
 - 9.2. ensure the implementation of the Government Plan for Equality ICRAM (Concerted Initiative for Enhancing the Attainments of Moroccan Women) adopted in June 2013 on the basis of a partnership agreement with the European Union;
 - 9.3. combat the phenomenon of underage marriages;
 - 9.4. eradicate the phenomenon of illegal employment of minors, particularly in a domestic setting, by enforcing the current labour legislation;
 - 9.5. complete the legislative process under way so as to introduce adequate legislation on violence against women.
10. The Assembly calls on Tunisia to:
- 10.1. reform electoral legislation in order to guarantee the effectiveness of provisions in favour of women’s representation;

- 10.2. complete the process of creating legislation on violence against women and trafficking in human beings and guarantee its implementation and evaluation.
11. The Assembly calls on Algeria to:
 - 11.1. reform the Family Code in a truly gender-balanced manner by eliminating the provisions that discriminate against women, notably in respect of legal capacity to marry, parental authority and conditions for seeking divorce;
 - 11.2. reform Law No. 12-06 on associations, or apply it in such a way that it does not curb freedom of assembly and association.
12. The Assembly calls on Libya to guarantee the implementation of the decree enacting a law to recognise women victims of rape during the 2014 revolution as “war victims”, adopted on 19 February 2014, by allocating sufficient human and financial resources.
13. The Assembly calls on Egypt to:
 - 13.1. promote women’s participation in public life and their political representation, specifically by means of adequate electoral legislation;
 - 13.2. combat violence against women in all forms, including psychological and sexual harassment and female genital mutilation.