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

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2053 (2014)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2053 (2014) "Women's rights and prospects for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation". It has brought it to the attention of the governments of member States and forwarded it to the Gender Equality Commission (DECS-GEC) for information and comments.

2. The Committee of Ministers reiterates that equality between women and men is an integral part of human rights and a fundamental criterion of democracy. The incorporation of the principle of gender equality into constitutions and other legislative instruments is therefore an important part of the democratisation process in the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, to which the Assembly refers. The Committee of Ministers welcomes the contribution of the competent Council of Europe bodies, such as the Venice Commission, in this field.

3. The Committee of Ministers is conscious of the fact that the effective achievement of gender equality will demand constant efforts and political resolve, in the years ahead, on the part of the governments and legislators of those countries. Developments to this effect require international support, including for civil society and, in particular, women's organisations, which play a crucial role in the process of democratic transition and consolidation.

4. Equality between women and men and action to stop violence against women form an integral part of the Council of Europe's co-operation priorities with the countries of the southern neighbourhood. The Committee of Ministers welcomes the exchanges and relations already established and urges continued co-operation to support and build on the progress already achieved in these countries.

5. In this connection, the Committee of Ministers emphasises in particular the co-operation activities carried out under the regional programme to combat violence against women and children and under the joint Council of Europe/European Union programme "Strengthening Democratic Reform in the Southern Neighbourhood" (South Programme) for strengthening political and democratic reform in the countries of the southern Mediterranean, which also supports the promotion of the Istanbul Convention² and the Warsaw Convention.³

1. Adopted at the 1221st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (4 March 2015).

2. Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210).

3. Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197).

