

Brussels, 12 April 2013

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Tabled on behalf of  
**the Committee on Women's Rights in the Euro-Mediterranean countries**  
By Chairwoman Mrs Samira MERAI-FRIAA (Tunisia)

on

### **‘The role of women in the new governance’**

The Committee on Women's Rights in the Euro-Mediterranean countries:

1. Urges Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to introduce constitutional reforms in order to consolidate the principle of full equality between men and women, to introduce rapid improvement in equal gender representation in elected institutions, to revise laws in order to establish an electoral system in accordance with the spirit of this principle and to review laws on political parties and trade unions to impose the principle of equal opportunities between women and men in their management bodies;
2. Recognizes the role of political parties and professional and non-governmental organisations as key elements in the promotion of women's political rights and asks them, consequently, to choose their election candidates on the basis of competence and integrity, while ensuring the principle of parity and to ensure the strengthening and promotion of women in political parties;
3. Considers it necessary to strive for parity in the most important decision-making positions, both at governmental and parliamentary level, and in big business and economic institutions, through the progressive implementation of the quota system or other forms of positive action in parliaments, political parties and local authorities, by imposing legal and financial sanctions in case of non-compliance, sanctions which have proven to be most effective in achieving parity in politics;
4. Calls for the establishment of ‘platforms of women’ in national parliaments that would aim to promote the awareness and participation of women in politics and the promotion of the gender aspect in politics and legislation;

5. Calls for the adoption of a system of co-presidency between women and men in national and local institutions in the Euro-Mediterranean countries to enhance the visibility of women and the leadership skills of women in politics;
6. Requests the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Lobby for women (following the example of the European Lobby), composed of members of the Committee on Women's Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, which would act in parallel with the activities of the Committee to put pressure on the Union and its institutions as well as the governments of the member countries in order to advance the status of women; the Committee also proposes to create a website for the interaction between its members and the exchange of ideas and experiences;
7. Calls for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Observatory for equality between women and men to gather, analyze and disseminate gender-related data in order to monitor the gender equality situation in decision-making positions in all sectors (public and private) and in economic governance at all levels, and to provide a basis that could be used to develop additional measures if targets are not met;
8. Takes note of the importance of media and education in promoting the participation of women in politics in fighting stereotypes and in reforming societal attitudes; requests the creation of a mechanism of incentives and financial support for the education of women; calls for the promotion of mentoring, appropriate training and exchange programmes of good practices with particular attention to women who are at the beginning of their careers and who have political responsibilities;
9. Suggests launching awareness campaigns to foster understanding that women and men are equal partners in all areas and to fight against all forms of discrimination against women; calls on non-governmental and local organisations to launch campaigns to make women and girls aware of their rights and of national and local governments' responsibilities and obligations in regard to upholding, protecting and promoting those rights;
10. Stresses the important role of parliaments and governments in making laws and ensuring their application as well as the certainty of punishment; requests them to initiate and intensify programs of awareness-raising, information and education on domestic violence, in particular addressed to young people, in order to ensure the physical and psychological integrity of women and to encourage the creation of mechanisms to assist and support victims and to prosecute perpetrators of violence; invites Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean, who have not done so, to become party to international instruments in the field of women's rights and the fight against violence and all forms of discrimination against women, in particular to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, known as the Istanbul Convention;
11. Welcomes the holding of the Third Ministerial Conference of the Union for the Mediterranean on strengthening the role of women in society on 3 and 4 July 2013 in Paris;
12. Welcomes the validation by the Union for the Mediterranean of the projects on "young women as job creators", "developing women empowerment", and "the skills to success: skills to promote employment of women", and calls for their rapid implementation;
13. Invites governments to take concrete steps to eliminate barriers to entrepreneurship related to gender, to encourage the creation of networks of local, national and international business leaders, to develop training programs and to facilitate access to microcredit as a particularly effective tool;
14. Welcomes the launching of the "NISSA TV" project, a Euro-Mediterranean television station dedicated to women which seeks to promote and strengthen gender equality in the Mediterranean region whose

registered office will be based symbolically in Tunisia and whose administrative will be in Brussels and which will establish offices in the main capitals of the Euro-Mediterranean area;

15. Expresses its solidarity with all women in Euro-Mediterranean countries and its indignation at all forms of violence, occupation, and social and economic injustice;

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Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the co-presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Secretary-General of the UfM, the League of Arab States, the Council of Ministers of the European Union, the High Representative/ Vice-President Catherine Ashton, the European Commission, the parliaments and governments members of the Union for the Mediterranean and the European Parliament.

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Activity report 2012-2013

The Committee on women's rights has chosen the topic "The role of women in the new governance." It met twice: 6 December 2012 and 24 January 2013.

The first meeting that was held in Zagreb was opened by Mr. Josip LEKO, President of the Croatian Parliament.

Mrs Cecilia ATTARD-PIROTTA, Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in charge of Social and Civil Affairs, participated in the this meeting.

The second meeting was held in Brussels and organized jointly with the Committee on political affairs, security and human rights in order to discuss the common topic "women in politics".

Given that the Committee had already made several recommendations during the previous sessions, but which had not been implemented, the members of the Committee underlined the necessity to concentrate on concrete action during this meeting.

The debates were rich and fruitful. The general impression of the Committees' members is that the number of women in the positions of political decision-making does not correspond to the ambition and hopes.

They emphasized that despite the efforts made on the national and regional levels, women in the Euro-Mediterranean area still suffer from numerous obstacles which deprive them from their fundamental rights and which hinder them from reaching parity, particularly as far as political participation is concerned.

They stressed the need to develop the concept of "parity democracy" and the integration of gender approach by the different governments.

On the other hand, and in her quality as Chair of the Committee, Mrs Samira MERAI-FRIAA participated in the preparatory meeting of the Civil Society Forum which was held in Casablanca from 22 to 25 November 2012 and which was dedicated to the topic "the contribution of women to dialogue and change", and participated in the Civil Forum which took place in Marseilles from 4-7 April 2013.

Finally, at the occasion of the International Women's day, the Committee Chair invited the members of the Committee's Bureau to meet in Tunis on 8 March 2013, but unfortunately the meeting had to be postponed since the members were not available.