

Working group n° 1: the status of women's rights

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WORKING GROUP n°1

the status of women's rights

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I – General frame

Introduction on the social inequality condition of women in both Mediterranean shores.

Even Mediterranean women share the ultimate goal of *gender empowerment*, the existing disparities in terms of economic development and institutional progress framework between the two shores made it necessary to analyse the two areas separately: while the North is more developed, the conditions in the South are still penalising for women. Today the international cooperation approach has changed from the western concept of Nation, connected with the notion of democracy, to the sustainable concept of *good governance*. The prerequisite for the analysis and overcoming of the gap between men and women is the *institution building* (sharing the institutional governance), particularly after the ending of conflicts. Lastly, it should be underlined that each Country has different peculiarities, and cooperation activities should be organized considering and respecting all diversities.

1. TMC (Third Mediterranean Countries)

There are difficulties in the exercise of personal rights (property, free circulation but it will also be necessary to eliminate any kind of coercive violence). Absence of a female political class involved in women' rights enforcement. The religious traditionalism that has strengthened over time is based on a Koran interpretation (*Sharia*) that is prejudicial for women as it prevents women from enjoying their individual freedom.

2. Migrations

Women are involved in illegal migrations partly for their legal vulnerability: it comes out that a considerable number of women cross the Mediterranean Sea from the south to the north increasing the prostitution market and the black economy (trafficking of human beings).

3. EU Countries

Difficult access to the career: it is difficult for women to reconcile work with the family (especially in the Mediterranean Welfare States, where most social welfare tasks are in charge of the family, hence of women). Difficult access to decision *making*. Precarious job contracts and lacking of support from institutions hinder women's choice in managing work and family tasks at the same time. Although various institutional instruments have been provided (for instance female quotas) for encouraging women's active participation in political life, in Northern Mediterranean Countries (like Italy), the set goals are still far to be reached.

II – Recommendations and conclusions

Solutions suitable for all Countries:

- Strong women's NGOs;
- Significant presence of women in politics;
- Effective bodies for the promotion of sex equality.

Other instruments for TMC:

- Microcredit and funding measures directed to support women's entrepreneurship.

The commitment to ratify the international conventions on women protection (i.e., CEDAW: "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women") although it includes the opting out clause. (the possibility given to the contracting parties - the States -, provided for in the negotiation of an international treaty, of not adhering to a specified title of the international agreement ratified)