



Recommendation 1996 (2012)¹

Equality between women and men: a condition for the success of the Arab Spring

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Referring to its [Resolution 1873 \(2012\)](#) on equality between women and men: a condition for the success of the Arab Spring, the Parliamentary Assembly reiterates its conviction that no State can be called truly democratic unless it relies on the balanced participation of women and men in public life and recognises that women and men have equal dignity and should enjoy the same human rights.
2. The Assembly believes that the Council of Europe has both an interest and the instruments to contribute to building an area of democratic stability in its neighbourhood, sharing the same values and the same commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It therefore welcomes the timely initiatives taken by the Secretary General and a number of Council of Europe bodies to establish closer dialogue with the countries of the region, especially Morocco and Tunisia.
3. The Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers to pursue this course of action through political dialogue, country-specific action plans and co-operation programmes, drawn up in consultation with the authorities of the countries concerned and other stakeholders. It asks the Committee of Ministers to ensure that, in this context, gender equality and the enhancement of the status of women are included as high priorities.
4. Recalling that both Morocco and Tunisia are members of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the Assembly recalls that it attaches great importance to the role that this body can play in providing advice on the new Tunisian Constitution, on legislation which will be adopted to implement the constitutions in Morocco and Tunisia, as well as on the reforms which are necessary to bring the national legislation of these countries into line with international human rights standards. It therefore encourages the Committee of Ministers to support the Venice Commission in these tasks.
5. The Assembly is of the opinion that, in addition to a process of legislative reform, the citizens of Morocco and Tunisia, in particular women, would benefit from a more consistent and efficient implementation of the law. To this end, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers propose to the authorities of Morocco and Tunisia that its relevant bodies:
 - 5.1. organise and/or deliver training to members of the judiciary in the area of human rights law;
 - 5.2. provide advice and exchange of good practice on the removal of practical and legal barriers to women's effective access to justice.
6. Considering that violence against women is a widespread problem, the Assembly proposes that the Committee of Ministers offer the countries of the region, in particular Morocco and Tunisia, extensive co-operation in this area, in particular as regards:
 - 6.1. the organisation of awareness-raising campaigns and activities, addressed to the general public;
 - 6.2. exchange of best practice and advice on legislative reform in order to effectively prevent violence against women, protect its victims and prosecute the perpetrators;

1. Assembly debate on 24 April 2012 (13th Sitting) (see [Doc. 12893](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Saïdi). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 April 2012 (13th Sitting).

6.3. information and training on the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210).

7. With a view to promoting an evolution of mentalities among the general public, the Assembly encourages the Committee of Ministers to propose to the countries of the region the organisation of activities aimed at:

7.1. training civil servants in gender equality and human rights;

7.2. teaching gender equality and human rights education in schools;

7.3. training and raising awareness of the media on gender equality, and sharing good practice on how to avoid the stereotyping of women;

7.4. enhancing the capacity for action of civil society and non-governmental organisations.

8. The Assembly believes that the consolidated experience of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) is an important asset in the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of action plans with Morocco and Tunisia, as well as in the establishment of co-operation with other countries in the region. It therefore calls on the Committee of Ministers to confirm its support to the North-South Centre and to its specific activities aimed at:

8.1. developing further the network of the North-South women's empowerment process, which was set up in the framework of the follow-up to the conference "Women as Agents of Change in the South of the Mediterranean", organised by the North-South Centre in co-operation with the Italian Parliament (Rome, 24-25 October 2011);

8.2. strengthening relations with civil society and non-governmental organisations and contributing to capacity building, in particular for youth.