



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

Committee on Women's Rights

in the Euro- Mediterranean countries

Meeting

Thursday, 11 April 2013

15:00- 18:00

European Parliament, Brussels

MINUTES

On the occasion of the 9th ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Commission on Women's Rights of the PA-UfM held its meeting on 11 April 2013 at the European Parliament in Brussels. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Samira MERAI-FRIAA, Member of the Bureau of the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly, in charge of Legislation and Relations with the Government and the Presidency of the Republic.

Attended the meeting, Mrs. Akila HACHICHI, Vice-chair of the Committee and member of the Algerian National People's Assembly

The two other Vice-chairs: Mrs. Mulita MULIC, member of the Croatian Parliament, and Mr Sergio SILVESTRIS, MEP could not attend the meeting.

The meeting was attended by delegations from the European Parliament and National Parliaments: Algeria, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg, Morocco, Mauritania, Palestine, Sweden, Tunisia and Turkey.

The meeting discussed the following points:

1. Adoption of the Draft agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held in Brussels on 24 January 2013:

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee was approved without modification.

3. Chair's announcements:

Ms. Samira MERAI-FRIAA welcomed the members of the committee, thanking them for their efforts and cooperation to ensure the success of the work of the committee. She also thanked the administration of the European Parliament for its cooperation with the administration of the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly for the good organization of this meeting:

She then informed the committee members that she participated, as Chairwoman of the Committee on Women's Rights, in the Forum of Civil Society held in Marseille from 4 to 7 April 2013.

The Chairwoman stressed that the Euro- Mediterranean region is in a period of political and social transition with many economic difficulties in both sides of the Mediterranean, and the woman is currently facing many challenges.

- First: to ensure her political, economic, social and cultural rights and guarantee the principle of full equality between men and women in the constitution and laws, given that the principle of equality is a constant value and a fundamental human right.

- Secondly: to fight against violence that is increasing day by day, especially with the intensification of extremism phenomenon.

- Third: to improve the economic situation of women who are the first victims whenever the situation worsens in the region.

Therefore, the participation of women in the development of economic, social and cultural policy is a guarantee for development, equality and the success of the democratic transition.

The Committee on Women's Rights has chosen the theme "The role of women in the new governance" in order to focus on the importance of the presence of women in decision-making positions in politics, but unfortunately we see today that women are absent from the Arab governments, especially those in transition, and their situations are below the expected ambitions in many countries of the North shore.

Then, the Chairwoman of the Committee presented the main proposals contained in the draft recommendation as below:

- Developing the principle of democratic parity, integrate "the gender approach" by all governments, and work to achieve parity in the most important decision-making positions, both at governmental and parliamentary level.

- Adoption of a system of co-presidency between men and women in national and local institutions in the Euro - Mediterranean countries to strengthen the leadership skills of women in politics and strengthen the principle of parity.

- Establishment of an Euro-Mediterranean Lobby for Women (following the example of European Lobby), which would act to put pressure on the Union for the Mediterranean and its institutions, as well as governments to advance conditions of women.

- Creation of an Euro-Mediterranean Observatory for equality between women and men to gather, analyze, and diffuse gender-related data at all levels.

- Fighting violence against women through making laws and ensuring their application, intensify programs of awareness-raising, information and education on violence and all forms of discrimination against women, in order to ensure the physical and psychological integrity of women.

4. Exchange of views on the amendments and adoption of the draft recommendation:

Ms. Samira MERAI-FRIAA said that, given the large number of proposed amendments to the draft recommendation, which reached 32 amendments (presented by Algeria, Tunisia, the European Parliament, Croatia and Turkey), She has prepared a document with compromise amendments in French that were distributed at the beginning of this meeting, to facilitate the discussion and approval of the draft recommendations.

This document has been appreciated by the members of the committee, who expressed their regret for not receiving it within a reasonable time before the meeting and in three languages.

After discussion of the proposed amendments, the members of the Committee adopted the draft recommendation unanimously.

Before the end of the meeting, the representative of the Hellenic Parliament has proposed a statement of solidarity with the Greek women whose basic rights, such as the right to work, to maternity, to retirement, to a dignified life, are undermined by the current crisis in Greece.

Despite the sympathy of members of the committee with the Greek woman that suffers from violation of her rights, most of the members refused to adopt a statement consecrated to her, regarding the existence of other women in many countries who also suffer from problems and abuses such as in Palestine, Syria and many other countries.

They suggested replacing the statement with a paragraph that will be added to the draft recommendation (penultimate paragraph) as follows: "The Committee expresses its solidarity with all women in Euro-Mediterranean countries and its indignation to all forms of violence, occupation, oppression against women, just as social and economic injustice".

However, Ms. Sari Essayah, MEP opposed to the word "occupation", and after a long discussion between the members of the committee, they agreed to keep this paragraph taking into account the reservation of the European Deputy.

At the end of the meeting, Ms. Samira MERAI-FRIAA thanked the members of the commission for the rich and fruitful discussions that took place, indicating that the draft recommendation will be submitted to the plenary for approval.

She suggested that the Committee will discuss the theme "Women and job creation" on the next Session of the PA-UfM.