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THE 59th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW) will take place 9-20 March 2015 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. This session is particularly important because it will be reviewing the progress made in applying the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 20 years after it was adopted during the 4th World Conference on Women en 1995. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/day/beijing/beijenvan.html A large number of ECOCSOL accredited women’s associations will be participating to bear witness to the difficulties encountered to achieve equal rights in their countries.

THE 4TH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN held in Beijing in 1995 was followed by the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Platform for Action is an instrument to promote equality but also to strengthen their existing rights.

The platform for action was also a call to action for States to promote equality and development of women – and men – who never ceased to raise their voices for their rights and those of others.

Women from the Mediterranean are subjected to a common form of patriarchy and despite living in apparently very different situations, share many similar aspects of their condition. In some countries, some towns, some neighbourhoods.

First, in countries at war, where violence between different groups encourages and intensifies domestic and sexual violence of men against women.

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A monstrous wave appears to be rolling straight at us, headed for the fragile edifices that most of whom are women.

As we celebrate International Women’s Day on March 8, and the 20th anniversary of the World Conference on Women in Beijing, it is no longer very clear whether the situation of women in the Mediterranean region is improving or getting worse.

There is reason to believe that it is getting worse. Evidence may be found nearly everywhere in the region, in some countries, some towns, some neighbourhoods.

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MEDITERRANEAN INSTITUTE OF GENDER STUDIES

Women’s Safe House was established in 1999 in Podgorica to provide support to women and children victims of domestic violence and raise awareness about violence against women. The support for shelter’s costs enables the maintenance of a secure place where women in need can find shelter. 147 women were accommodated in 2013, providing psychological and legal assistance.

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Association for Culture and Arts - CREVANA based in Casablanca has created in 2011 in Tizi-Ouzou seeks to create a framework for action for young educated women, and to raise awareness in civil society about feminist issues. Its project, “What has our struggle given us?”, aims at developing an online archive that collects and shares information and evidence on the undermined work of Arabist Front of Women.

MONTENEGRO

The YTOO Foundation for the accommodation and rehabilitation of abused women, established in 2004 in Casablanca, fights against socio-economic, legal, and cultural violence against women. It implements programs to raise awareness in Moroccan society regarding these questions and the economic integration of women. A retreat organized to assess, discuss, and implement a strategic plan for the next two years was aimed at enabling the team to take the time to evaluate and improve its work to strengthen the association.

PALESTINE

Palestinian Women Developing Center founded in 2004 in Tulkarem aims to develop female leadership in political, social, and economic life. The project seeks to strengthen the management, accounting, and fundraising capabilities of the directors of women’s organizations.

IN THE SECOND HALF OF 2014, WE HAVE SUPPORTED SOME TWENTY INITIATIVES WHICH INVOLVED, AMONG OTHER THEMES...

AWARENESS-RAISING AND THE MOBILIZATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH ART AND CULTURE

CONSOLIDATING ASSOCIATIONS

IN CROATIA, A SECOND STRATEGIC REFLECTION MEETING

The urgency grant is used to relocate shelters in safe areas and to enable the team to take the time to evaluate and improve its work. Strengthening & consolidation of the association aims at further developing its work. The project is being implemented by the Norwegian Church Aid, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and the Norwegian Church World Service.

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Souriat Safe Shelters founded in 2012 to help women cope and survive in the current situation, runs several shelters for women victims of violence or escaping ISIS control. The urgent appeal is used to relocate shelters in safe areas and open a new one.

ORGANIZED

IN MOROCCO THE FIRST TWO SESSIONS OF OUR FEMINIST TRAINING IN COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE PROGRAMME

This training aims to reinforce activists, organizations, and the women’s movement by providing a space for women fighting for their rights. The project seeks to strengthen themselves individually, mutually reinforce each other, and create links which will serve them in their work. In October, 17 young women between the ages of 18 and 36 (4 in their 30s, the remainder between 18 and 20) from 9 different associations and 9 different towns/villages: Casablanca, Rabat, Asilah, Fes, Az Ouir, Bens Mellal, Ait Kalla, Toudoute, Meknes, and Montpellier attended the first session “Meet others and get to know oneself?”

In December, 22 young women between the ages of 18 and 33 participated in the second session of the training entitled “Respect and defend oneself in public”. Forty women were under 25 years old.

In the second session, the training focuses on collective intelligence, an approach for and by women. The project is being implemented by the Norwegian Church Aid, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Norwegian Church World Service, the Norwegian Church in Croatia, and the Norwegian Church Aid in Montenegro. It is being financed by the Norwegian Church Council.

The discussion focused in particular on the Catholic Church’s power in Croatia and its negative impacts on women’s rights, notably sexual and reproductive rights. While these rights are officially recognized, in practice they are being upheld less and less despite government commitments before the European and international community.

SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCTED

Among the new participants, it came from villages in isolated areas, some requiring members of their association who had already participated in the first session, others who had been enrolled in the first session but who had been prevented from participating by their entourage. These young women are active members (some on the boards of directors) of 9 different associations: Fondation Yto, Taharoute, Espace vivant (Future Space), Samiratine association, Aya association, association de solidarité féminine pour le développement rural (Women’s association for rural development), Women chouf chouf, centre de travail pour femme (Centre of work and training for women), association pour le développement et la famille (association for development and families).

We will see what happens in the next episode!
The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies created in 2000 and affiliated to the University of Nicosia aims to stimulate interest in gender research in the Mediterranean region. The purpose of the project END FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) is to strengthen the End FGM network in order to facilitate a structured dialogue with European institutions aimed at repositioning female genital mutilation as a development issue.

Associated with the project is the Women’s Safe House – Senaya, which was founded in 2010. It was founded by 10 girls wishing to join forces and create space for promotion of feminism through art and culture. The project “What has our struggle given us?” aims at developing an online archive that collects and shares information and evidence on the underestimation of women’s political, social, and economic life. The project seeks to prove its work to strengthen the association. A retreat organized to assess, discuss, and implement a strategic plan for the next two years aims to enable the team to take the time to evaluate and improve its work to strengthen the association.

The Democratic Association of Women, created in 1963, in Kabal, aims to reinforce the independence and capabilities of women in both the public and private spheres. While participating in the CSW59 Side event - Beijing+20, the association plans to organize a parallel workshop on 16 March 2015 to share the findings of its report on the status of women in Morocco.

The Feminist and Secular Women International Network was created in 2013 by ten associations in ten different countries. It aims to be a tool for action and reflection to develop secular feminism at the international scale. The conference organized in Paris 7-8 November 2014 by Femmes Solidaire, a French women organization, made it possible to present its work to a larger audience, with a focus on four themes: the treatment of bodies as commodities, femicide (killing a woman because she is a woman), convergence of movements fighting against extremism and secularism.

The Babelmed association, founded in 2001 and based in Rome, strives to highlight the cultural wealth of Mediterranean societies and to publicize the major debates taking place in the region, with a particular focus on equality and gender. The project aims to highlight new digital works by young female Mediterranean journalists in the framework of meetings and workshops on journalism, “New media and young journalists in the Mediterranean” organized in Marseille.

The ANIMA – Centre for Women’s and Peace Education was founded in 1996 in Kotor. Its mission is to create non-patriarchal society of free individuals by spreading culture of peace and non-violence as well as promoting gender equality. The Conference « Justice for the victims » on 8th of March aims at strengthening the women’s movement in Montenegro, especially because of the realization of the Women’s Court and marking 20 years of genocide in Srebrenica.

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WHY DO WE NEED A MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN’S FUND?

Belonging to the same cultural area, under the influence of three monotheistic religions, women from the Mediterranean region are subjected to a common form of patriarchy and despite living in apparently very different situations, share many similar aspects of their condition. Whether they come from the southern or the northern shores of the Mediterranean, women know that they must not only fight to obtain equality but also to strengthen their existing rights which have been obtained thanks to their tenacity and their struggles.

They act in a climate of general regression which is the effect of radical conservative movements in societies undergoing changes and they are experiencing many difficulties in finding the necessary funding for their actions at a local or regional level. This is why in 2008, women from North Africa and Southern Europe have taken the initiative to create a Mediterranean Women’s Fund whose aim is to help with improving women’s condition and to promote gender equality throughout all those countries in the Mediterranean region.

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12 FEMINIST FUNDS, MEMBERS OF INWF working in Europe – including MedWF – have been invited to participate in our campaign. Similar events have also taken place in other Mediterranean countries. The meeting mainly focused on an exchange of information and experiences and the study of collective fundraising options, particularly among corporations and the European Union, to better support women’s rights organizations. The contributions of representatives from INWF and Else, a Brazilian fund, pointed to paths the European chapter of INWF should review.


THE BEIJING + 20: WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CAMPAIGN

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And lastly in countries where monetary powers, multinational companies and large financial institutions, have set their hearts on exercising crushing economic violence against the poorest people…

A monstrous wave appears to be rolling straight at us, heading for the fragile edifices that have been built, brick by brick, by the defenders of women’s rights.

We might remain paralysed if it were not for signs that a current in favour of the emancipation of women also exists, and is developing and rising, often where it is least expected.

For example, in Tunisia, the Constitution insti- tutes equality between women and men despite a highly repressive climate; in France, an all-out con- servative campaign failed to stop the enactment of a law to establish marital rape between women and men in Egypt notwithstanding a very unfavourable climate for women, a law punishing sexual harass- ment was enacted; in Spain, an attempt to restrict a law to establish real equality between women and men was defeated; in Algeria, a law against domestic violence was just adopted despite aggressive opposition from Islamists.

Behind each of these advances are the efforts of women – and men – who never ceased to raise awareness and mobilise their entourage and society to defend women’s rights and have them written into law.

These same efforts have enable the unexpected emergence of new generations of feminists, including the fifteen young women from Souss in Morocco, who, in order to be able to participate in our collective intelligence training, forced their families to allow them to leave the village, and were the first women to do so.

If we continue to reinforce the current, it will certainly have an effect on the wave...
Les femmes de la Méditerranée ont besoin de vous !

JE FAIS UN DON AU FONDS POUR LES FEMMES EN MÉDITERRANÉE

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□ PAR CHÈQUE
à l’ordre de : Fonds pour Femmes en Méditerranée
5 rue marceau - 34000 Montpellier France

□ PAR VIREMENT BANCAIRE
□ PAR VIREMENT BANCAIRE MENSUEL

Crédit coopératif, Montpellier France - Compte 42559 00034 41020011495-42
IBAN FR : 76 4255 9000 3441 0200 1149 542

Le Fonds pour les Femmes en Méditerranée est une association reconnue d’intérêt général. Sur présentation du reçu qui vous sera envoyé avant la fin décembre, vous pouvez bénéficier d’une réduction d’impôt égale à 66% des versements pris en compte dans la limite de 20% du revenu imposable.

JE SOUHAITE RECEVOIR LE REÇU FISCAL
□ PAR EMAIL ..........................................................

□ PAR COURRIER ..................................................................

JE SOUHAITE RECEVOIR LA LETTRE D’INFORMATION
□ PAR EMAIL ..........................................................

□ PAR COURRIER ..................................................................
D'avance, un grand merci pour votre soutien et votre générosité