ON SEPTEMBER 12, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PASSED A RESOLUTION (489 MP’s voting for, 114 against and 69 abstentions) which “resolutely affirms that the denial of services related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the possibility of safe and legal abortions, constitutes a form of violence against women and girls.”

In 1974 in France, Simone Weil courageously demonstrated before a hostile Assembly that the denial of the basic freedom to have an abortion when one does not wish to bear a child was a form of violence. In order to bring this debate to the Assembly and to obtain a vote on the law which put an end to abortions carried out in inhuman conditions, it took not only her own determination but all but one of the thousands of women and men who for decades had tirelessly denounced the plight of women forced to give life to unwanted children. – women and men – organized to provide free contraception, with attention given to the physical, sexual and mental health of women who had been so shunned in the past. They publicized the issues with the Movement of the 343 and the Dobigny trial and mobilized their efforts and energy to welcome and offer reproductive rights and health, following the needs of women are increasing, funding is decreasing... and their efforts and energy to welcome and offer reproductive rights and health, following the needs of women are increasing, funding is decreasing... and their efforts and energy to welcome and offer reproductive rights and health, following the needs of women are increasing, funding is decreasing... and their efforts and energy to welcome and offer reproductive rights and health, following the needs of women are increasing, funding is decreasing...

The Mediterranean Women’s Fund therefore continues to advocate for more funding dedicated to women’s rights, and for more financial support for organizations defending women’s rights. Again this year, on the occasion of World Contraception Day on September 28th and International Safe Abortion Day on September 28th, in response to actions and policies threatening women’s lives and rights, we co-organized with the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, the UN Women France Committee, Equilibrium and Populations, the Women’s Foundation, the High Council for Equality between Women and Men and Women’s World Web, on September 20th at the EESC; a symposium entitled “Where is the money for sexual and reproductive rights and health?”

The general consensus, from United Nations Family Planning to the European Parliamentary Population Forum, is that while the needs of women are increasing, funding is decreasing under pressure from conservative groups which are extremely well financed. The conference ended with the call for France (6th wealthiest country in the world) to invest more money in sexual and reproductive rights and health, following the example of other countries which are less wealthy but more generous and the organization of their force is critical now and always. These organizations must be supported for them to be able to continue their work of educating, raising awareness, protecting, and affirming the emancipation of women which is ESSENTIAL for everyone to fulfill their potential and for society to be more joyful.

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After Donald Trump’s announcement to reinstate the Global Gag Rule, which concerns the reproductive rights of women around the world, by signing the financial disengagement of the USA from any structure outside the USA that provides abortion-related information or provides safe abortions, the global She decides movement was initiated by the Dutch Ministry of International Development and supported by around 50 organizations and 450 parliamentarians, organizations from 40 countries on 2 March 2017. Its objective is to financially support girls and women to decide freely and for themselves questions regarding their sex life and if, when, with whom and how many children they will have. This is just a new way of denigrating this movement, and of denying the long history of women’s efforts, based on systematic organization, in every country of the world, and for dozens of years, to fight the violence they are subjected to... including sexual harassment.

During our meeting last summer in Paris, it became clear that, for everyone, no matter what shore of the Mediterranean they may be, THE priority in their country is the fight against violence against women. This violence takes many forms, particularly that of sexual violence. This is nothing new in any of the Mediterranean countries. For years, women have been organizing against sexual harassment, harassment sexuel, assaillissement sexuel, sexual violence, harassment sexual, sexual violence, sexual harassment. Harassment sexual, violence sexuelle, sexual violence, assaillissement sexuel, molestation sexuelle, assaillissement sexuel, molestations sexuelles, seksuel omslagning, seksuella omslagning, molestation sexuelles, molestation sexuelles, seksuelle hærangslag, seksuelle hærangslag, sexuella hærangslag, seksuelle hærangslag, sexual violence, harassment. They write plays, draft legislation, develop applications to support victims, form an respectful, egalitarian culture, lead campaigns on social networks... And they have managed to gradually chart the dam of societal violence, each working alone and with everyone in the rest of the world, all together. Today, because their action is relayed by millions of women, in certain countries, the dam is crumbling... And this is only the beginning. !
PROVIDE SAFE SPACES
The Women’s Solidarity Association for Rural Development (ASPERD), located in the village of Toudoute in the Atlas Mountains, aims to fight child marriage, register births in the civil registry, and accompany divorced women and widows in their efforts to receive financial assistance from the State. It also conducts awareness-raising campaigns to discourage girls from dropping out of school and the ensuing illegitimacy. The association’s project is to guarantee a meeting space for the women of two isolated villages, Toudoute and Imagens, and to organize literacy training programs.

RAISE AWARENESS THROUGH ART, CULTURE AND SPORTS
Women Now for Development is a Syrian organization founded in Paris in 2012 by Samar Yazbek, a Syrian writer and journalist. The association sets up the centres to provide women and girls in Syria and refugees in Lebanon and Turkey a safe space, psychosocial counselling and capacity building training sessions. In certain areas, Women Now for Development is the only available resource to fill the vacuum created by the complete collapse of the government and civil society organizations. Thanks to crowdfunding, nearly 20,000 has been raised for this project.

CULTURE AND SPORTS
Defend sexual and reproductive rights
The Knowledge Workshop (Al Muqata) established in G Fortress in 2015, aims to democratize knowledge about women who have marked and been marked by history. To do this, the organization organizes seminars on both historical and feminist/women’s history, but also more broadly on human rights, and on feminism in Arab countries. In order for many people to access to knowledge, the Knowledge Workshop is consolidating its library of works in Arabic, English and French.

IN FEbruary...
DayDream Art Production, established in Cairo in 2013, produces social films, including the short film, “A normal day” which focuses its work on the health and sexual and reproductive rights for young people. Support for its institutional costs aims to help ensure its sustainability.

GET INVOLVED...
The Tunisian Association of Democratic Women, founded in 1989, works to promote a culture of gender equality at all social, economic, political and cultural levels. This project is a theatre performance addressing equal inheritance rights. Played by young members of the association, it will close the Maghreb Equal Inheritance Day and eventually may be used to sensitize public opinion and deputes since it will be filmed.

MINOTERIES
Urbanova Nova Zena was founded in Herceg Novi 4 years ago. The mission of its members is to make young people and women promoters of a non-violent culture through culture and artistic expression. In 2017, they moved to the second step of their project, “Why wait?” which consists of 10 theatre forum workshops. The aim is to strengthen the women participating, but also to promote the participation and visibility of women in Montenegrin society.

END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
Since 1990, the Autonomous House of Women of Zagreb has offered free accommodation and support to women and their children who have survived violence. The association also organizes public actions such as media campaigns about violence against women to raise awareness. This all takes place against a national backdrop particularly marked by the growing influence of conservative clerics. The grant awarded is used to guarantee the maintenance of the reception facility (cover up to 50% of the operating costs, the salary of some of the staff), and also contributes to advocacy actions.

IN OCTOBER, DECEMBER, AND FEBRUARY, A FEMINIST TRAINING IN COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE (FTCI) IN FRANCE
This FTCI was also an opportunity to invite three young women previously trained in Algeria and France as trainers-in-training so that they soon may take over

AND ORGANIZED...
...AND FOCUS ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
"Pokretac", Center for Women War Victims, Association Vukovar (ZAR), Civil Association for Growing Up Healthy (Idem i ja), Women’s Group Brod, Women’s Room, Support and Development of Civil Society, Initiative for the City, Women’s Room, Lesbian Group Kontra, 8.O.S for Women Rajka, Center for Growing up Healthy (Hkon i ja), Women’s Group Brod, Women’s Association Vukor (ZAR), Civil Association “Pikretce”, Center for Women War Victims, Center for Civil Courage, Women’s Group Split, Rosa, Women’s Association “Ivrij”, Fanat, Women’s association of Croatian Roma. They came from 9 towns and cities: Zagreb, Pakrac, Split, Veli Losinj, Rijeka, Slavonski brod, Vukovar, Kornica and Osijek. A representative of the Care Foundation of Sarajevo was invited on that occasion to set up a meeting in Bosnia Herzegovina. The result of the meeting was a clear reinforcement of the network of Croatian women, involving more young women, and the implementation of collective actions for the defence of women’s sexual and reproductive rights, which are in extreme jeopardy today.

APPROVED AND ORGANIZED
WHAT Brought TOGETHER 19 YOUNG WOMEN, aged 20 to 30, from Saint Denis, Grenoble, Montpellier, Naples, Paris, Montpellier, Grenoble and Toulouse, 33 of them are members of associations. In keeping with the spirit of FTCI, we have opened a meeting space for young women from different cultures and social and educational backgrounds, young women who do not usually meet each other and may hold fixed represen-
**PROVIDE SAFE SPACES**

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**RAISE AWARENESS THROUGH ART, CULTURE AND SPORTS**

Women Now for Development is a Syrian organization founded in Paris in 2012 by Samaa Yarbo, a Syrian writer and journalist. The association’s projects are to provide women and girls in Syria and refugees in Lebanon and Turkey a safe space, psychosocial counselling and capacity building through workshops on strengthening personal capacities, leadership, and training in effective economic tools. Once equipped on an individual level, the young women will be able to influence their own community and serve as models for other adolescents.

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Established in Grossoto in 1998, Olimpia de Gouges, in addition to its four domestic violence centres, conducts prevention workshops in schools of the region. Its project, “Love without Violence” includes education workshops about love in 10 classes. The goal is to lead children to deepen their knowledge of others, to recognize, express and share their emotions, to teach them to develop active listening, to think about gender stereotypes, and to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy romantic relationships.

**IN OCTOBER, DECEMBER, AND FEBRUARY, A FEMINIST TRAINING IN COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE (FTCI) IN FRANCE**

This FTCI was also an opportunity to invite three young women previously trained in Algeria and France as trainers-in-training so that they soon may take over!

**AND ON MAY 6 AND 7, A FOURTH STRATEGIC REFLECTION MEETING WAS HELD IN ZAGREB (CROATIA), WITH 29 WOMEN REPRESENTING 29 ASSOCIATIONS AUTONOMOUS WOMEN’S HOUSES ZAGREB, CENTER FOR CIVIL COURAGE, CENTER FOR SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY, CENTER FOR WOMEN’S STUDIES, DOMINE, INITIATIVE FOR THE CITY, WOMEN’S ROOM, LESBIAN GROUP KONTRA, B.O.S FOR WOMEN RIJKA, CENTER FOR GROWING UP HEALTHY (IKOM I JA), WOMEN’S GROUP BROD, WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION VUKOVAR (ZAR), CIVIL ASSOCIATION “PINKETE”, CENTER FOR WOMEN WAR VICTIMS, CENTER FOR CIVIL COURAGE, WOMEN’S GROUP SPILT, ROSA, WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION “IVR”, FABRIC, Women’s association of Croatian Roma. They came from 9 towns and cities: Zagreb, Pakrac, Split, Veli Losinj, Rijeka, Slavonski brod, Vukovar, Kornica and Osijek. A representative of the Care Foundation of Sarajevo was invited on that occasion to set up a meeting in Bosnia Herzegovina. The result of the meeting was a clear reinforcement of the network of Croatian women, involving more young women, and the implementation of collective actions for the defence of women’s sexual and reproductive rights, which are in extreme jeopardy today.

**IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORES**

Since 2004, the Women’s Solidarity Association for Rural Development (ASPERD), located in the village of Toundoute in the Atlas Mountains, aims to fight child marriage, register births in the civil registry, and accompany divorced women and widows in their efforts to receive financial assistance from the State. It also conducts awareness-raising campaigns to discourage girls from dropping out of school and the ensuing illiteracy. The association’s project is to guarantee a meeting space for the women of two isolated villages, Toundoute and Imagnar, and to organize literacy training programs.

**TALENTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORES**

**ISRAEL / GAZA**

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**LEBANON**

The Knowledge Workshop (Al Filan) was established in Beirut in 2015, aims to democratize knowledge about women who have marked and been marked by history. To do so, the organization organizes seminars to both highlight the figures of women’s history, but also more broadly on human rights, and on feminism in Arab countries. In order for many people to access to knowledge, the Knowledge Workshop is consolidating its library of works in Arabic, English and French.

**MOROCCO**

DayDream Art Production, established in Cairo in 2013, produces social films, including the short film, “A normal day” which focuses its work on the health and sexual and reproductive rights of youth. YAHA is the only association in Turkey working on sexual and reproductive rights for young people. Support for its institutional costs aims to help ensure its sustainability.

**TUNISIA**

The Tunisian Association of Democratic Women, founded in 1989, works to promote a culture of gender equality at all social, economic, political and cultural levels. This project is a theatre performance addressing equal inheritance rights. Played by young members of the association, it will close the Maghreb Equal Inheritance Day and eventually may be used to sensitize public opinion and deputies since it will be filmed.

**FRANCE**

L’Association pour la Visibilite des Lesbienne dans la Presse et les Medias (AVLPM) – (Association for the Visibility of Lesbians in the Press and Media) was founded in Paris in 2013. It aims to promote the visibility of lesbians, and more generally of sexual minorities, in the public and media sphere, to promote the history of the lesbian and feminist movement and knowledge on gender equality, to encourage dialogue between the different structures fighting for the rights of minorities, and finally to inform about sexual health and sexually transmitted infections. At the heart of its activities is the publication of the lesbian journal, WELL Wall.

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In 1974 in France, Simone Welou courageously demonstrated before a hostile Assembly that the denial of the basic freedom to have an abortion when one does not wish to bear a child was a form of violence. In order to bring this debate to the Assembly and to obtain a vote on the law which put an end to abortions carried out in inhuman conditions, it took not only her own determination but also all that of the thousands of women and men who for decades had tirelessly denounced the plight of women forced to give life to unwanted children. They – women and men – organized to provide free contraception, with attention given to the social, physical and mental health of women who had been so shunned in the past. They publicized the issues with the Manifest of the 343 and the Bobigny trial and mobilized their efforts and energy to welcome and offer help and support to organizations defending women’s rights. Again this year, on the occasion of World Contraception Day on September 26th and International Safe Abortion Day on September 28th, in response to actions and policies threatening women’s lives and rights, we co-organized with the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, the US Women’s France Committee, Equilibrium is Populations, the Women’s Foundation, the High Council for Equality between Women and Men and Women’s World Wide Web, on September 20th at the EESG; a symposium entitled “Where is the money for sexual and reproductive rights and health?”

The general consensus, from United Nations Family Planning to the European Parliamentary Population Forum, is that while the needs of women are increasing, funding is decreasing under pressure from conservative groups which are extremely well financed. The conference ended with the call for France (6th wealthiest country in the world) to invest more money in sexual and reproductive rights and health, following the example of other countries which are less wealthy but more generous.

Cracks in the dam

Suddenly, the code of silence has collapsed and waves of women’s accounts denouncing the humiliation they have faced throughout their lives is overwhelming the media and social networks in many countries, sweeping the streets and invaliding the best protected institutions – hospitals, parliaments, up to the European Parliament! And in the light of day, it is discovered that most – if not all – women have been sexually harassed at least once if not every day of their lives to greater or lesser degrees. These details only reflect the fact that there are two ways of being in the world for women. There are those who decide to be free at any price, even if they face many very unpleasant and even dangerous situations, imperilling their integrity and their lives, and refuse to give up their right to exist as they feel fit. And then there are those who, having early understood the capacity for violence of men convinced of their superiority, exist in a state of hyper-vigilance in all male-domi- nated spaces and reduce their dreams of ad- vance to the paths marked out for them to avoid at all costs finding themselves in a sit- uation where they are prey. In both cases, whether in avoidance or in confrontation, women are never allowed to keep their heads and hair in the clouds, or to smile at the wind, carelessness is not an option. This fabulous phenomenon is astonishing. Suddenly, all these feelings experienced by women of all ages, from all walks of life – fear, fragility, helplessness, revolt, disgust, rage, suffering, pain, shame – are thrown at the heads of a society officially founded on the principle of equality but whose daily culture is distilled into reducing a portion of its mem- bers (more than half) to the status of being the objects of desire of the other members.

It also is a surprise because for the first time in the history of the planet, millions of women who kept their pain and shame to themselves have been able, thanks to new technologies, to free themselves from individual humil- iation and finally utter the unspeakable. And as no one saw it coming, the movement is said to be spontaneous, emanating from individ- uals who are suddenly revolting without the support of any organization, detached from the feminist movement which seems to be regulated to the sidelines. This is just a new way of denigrating this movement, and of denying the long history of women’s efforts, based on systematic organi- zation, in every country of the world, and for dozens of years, to fight the violence they are subjected to… including sexual harassment.

During our meeting last summer in Paris, it became clear that, for everyone, no matter what shore of the Mediterranean they may be, THE priority in their country is the fight against violence against women. This violence takes many forms, particular- ly that of sexual violence. This is nothing new in many of the Mediterranean countries. For years, women have been organizing against sexual harassment, harassment, mobbing sexual, homophobie, séquestration, sexualisation, violence sexuelle. And although we do not mention it enough, the Mediterranean Women’s Fund acts on social networks... And they have man- aged to gradually crack the dam of societal silences, each working alone and with everyone in the rest of the world, all together... Today, because their action is relayed by millions of women, in certain countries, the dam is crumbling.

And this is only the beginning...