

What do we expect?



The history shows that achieving positive changes for women's rights always requires the involvement of women's themselves. That's why the backbone of our project is raising awareness, involving the grassroots associations and all the spheres of the societies in order to promote international conventions and regional agreements as a common working frame and as tools to improve the status of gender equality and women's rights and make our governments accountable of their implementation.

The expected results of the project are:

- ✓ Increased social knowledge and awareness of IFA and international conventions promoting gender equality and their integration in national policies;
- ✓ Strengthened capacity of women's NGO's and female politicians to use them as tools for promotion of women's rights and equality in all spheres of life;
- ✓ Increased women's participation through the development of a structural cooperation between State and non-State actors around the implementation of IFA and international conventions.

These results will be achieved through national and regional activities, campaigning and advocating for *Equality First!* By addressing civil society, State actors and broader the local communities the project will contribute to bridging the gap between international standards and women's daily lives.



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Equality First



A project implemented by IFE-EFI and the partners
AWO, RDFL, SIGI, EACPE, WSC,
Association Najdeh and ATFD

PROMOTING A COMMON
AGENDA FOR
EQUALITY BETWEEN
WOMEN AND MEN
THROUGH ISTANBUL
PROCESS



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Who are we?



A democratic coalition of advocacy and lobby women's rights NGOs from six Arab countries from Mashrek and Maghreb and the European Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI, a women's rights network represented in 15 countries in Europe have launched a two years' regional project "*Promotion a common agenda for equality between women and men through Istanbul Process*" funded by the European Union.

European Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI, Tunisian Association of Democratic Women ATFD, Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement EACPE, Association Najdeh and Democratic Gathering of Lebanese Women RDFL from Lebanon, The Women's Studies Centre WSC from Palestine, Arab Women Organization AWO, and Sisterhood is Global Institute SIGI from Jordan have developed a cooperation based on mutual respect of our differences but also on high consciousness of the strength of our common principles and values. Together we work persistently for the full implementation of women's rights as universal human rights, as these are conditions for

achieving a sustainable democracy. Our diversity is our common wealth.

Why this project?



The Millennium Declaration reaffirmed that gender equality is both a goal in itself and a condition for development. Therefore the obstacles to gender equality across the regional, national and local contexts comprise a major brake on the people's potential to fully achieve the MDGs. At a Ministerial meeting on "*Strengthening the Role of Women in Society*" in November 2006 in Istanbul, Ministers of Euro-Med region adopted conclusions which include a five years common framework of action to strengthen women's role in political, civil, social, economic and cultural spheres, and to fight against discrimination. This Istanbul Framework of Action was strengthened at the second Ministerial meeting in November 2009 in Marrakech, where Ministers further stressed the need to work for gender equality.

For us the Istanbul-Marrakech process is a valuable and unique opportunity for common

action towards democracy and social justice seen through the lenses of equality between women and men. Our project aims to "*A more friendly gender equality environment that contributes to strengthening of the democratic development in the Euro -Med region and the promotion of women's rights as a constitutive part of sustainable development*". We work to contribute to activating a gender positive discourse as an engine for enhancing public opinion in favor of social changes and implementation of women's rights.



We launched our working program in Cairo, beginning of October 2011 and developed a common methodology for building capacity to utilize Istanbul Framework of Action in the context of the Arab uprisings and transitions towards democracy. "*Equality first!*" was chosen as a central message of our regional campaign to promote equality and women's rights as a priority for the social and developmental governmental agendas and an issue of crucial importance for sustainable democracy. The Cairo meeting connected Istanbul Framework of Action with the International Conventions and Resolutions promoting equality and women's rights.