



Gender Regional Platform

Jordan, 26 April 2017

Press release

National Roundtable

From Ministerial Conclusions to gender equality policy making in the Euro-Med region 26th of April 2017, Jordanian Parliament

The national roundtable “*From Ministerial Conclusions to gender equality policy making in the Euro-Med region*”, organised by Euromed Feminist Initiative in partnership with the Coalition of Women’s MPs from the Arab Countries to Combat Violence Against Women, under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Atef Tarawneh, the Speaker of the Parliament of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, took place on 26th of April 2017 at the Jordanian Parliament. The one-day event gathered civil society partners, members of parliament, senators, representatives of concerned ministries, experts and academics, who discussed the policy recommendations for improving the status of gender equality, that have been developed during a one year process in the frame of the project “*Gender Regional Platform*” funded by the European Union. This national dialogue was part of the process to prepare for the 4th UfM Ministerial conference on women’s rights, scheduled to take place in Egypt in the fall this year.

H.E. Mr Mousa Maita, Minister of Political and Parliamentary Affairs opened the roundtable and emphasized the commitment of the Jordanian government to support women’s rights and issues. He also underlined the importance of the Abolition of article 308: “The Abolition of article 308 is very important and it indicates the Jordanian support for women's rights”.

H.E. Mr. Wajih Azaizeh, Minister of Social Development pointed out the several national achievements happened in Jordan in regards of women’s rights such as the flexible working law, penal code (Abolition of Article 308), anti- trafficking law, and the domestic violence protection law and he added: “We should concentrate more on preventing the domestic violence and solve it before it happens not after”. He also stressed on the importance of the economic empowerment for women as a condition for their full participation and exercising of their rights.

Ms. Wafa Bani Mustafa, Chair of the Coalition of Women MPs from Arab Countries to Combat Violence Against Women spoke about the two-major national accomplishments in Jordan: “The annulment of article 308 and the amendment of Article 98 are considered real accomplishments at the national level”.

H.E. Mr. Andrea Matteo Fontana, Ambassador of the European Union to Jordan underlined the commitment of the European Union to women’s participation and gender equality: “The inclusiveness of women in policy making was and will continue to be a main priority for the European Union in Jordan”.

Ms. Boriana Johnson, Executive Director of Euromed Feminist Initiative reminded the milestones of the civil society process and the important role Jordan has played in supporting this dialogue.

H.E. Mr. Atef Tarawneh, Speaker of the Parliament highlighted the role of the Jordanian government for women’s empowerment and participation. He reminded that this is the second time the parliament brings together the concerned decision-makers and representatives of civil society to discuss the Ministerial Conclusions in preparation for the 4th UfM Ministerial Meeting. “In Jordan, we are constantly supporting women’s efforts to reach the highest decision-making positions. Having the dialogue over women’s issues in the Parliament, at the presence of both the concerned decision-makers and the civil society, means the road is open for participation of all actors in the policy-making”.



Gender Regional Platform

In the first session, speakers presented and discussed the gender regional platform policy recommendations in the four identified priority areas:

- Ending discrimination against women and strengthening women's participation
- Reform education, changing gender stereotypes and attitudes towards gender equality
- Ending violence against women, wars and occupation.
- Ensuring freedom and independent action of the civil society as well as support to women's rights organizations

After listening to the open discussion that followed, H.E. Senator Haifa Najar expressed her appreciation to everybody's comments and feedback. "Finding new partnerships and expanding existing coalitions will lead to improving the opportunities for change", she stated.

During the following session experts from the civil society, political sphere and relevant ministries discussed ways to turn these recommendations into concrete actions. Ms. Muna Rfou, Director of Gender Unit, Ministry of Social Development talked about the gap between the legislations and the implementation in Jordan: "It is necessary to bridge this gap to achieve better results".

Ms. Nuha Zaidah, Assistant Secretary General Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) underscored the necessity of institutionalizing the change process and added that "The stage between adopting and implementing policies needs intensive efforts by civil society organizations and decision makers".

Ms. Layla Hamarneh, Director of Programs, Arab Women Organization praised the role of the Gender Regional Platform: "The Gender Regional Platform is a base to lift human rights in general and women's rights in particular". She also underlined the necessity of aligning the international conventions with national legislations.

In the end the participants expressed their optimism that the upcoming 4th UfM Ministerial Conference will take into consideration the Gender Regional Platform as it is an "effective tool to lift up women's rights in Jordan and in the whole region", as Dr. Wafa Al Khadra, Researcher in The American University in Madaba concluded.