Culture and Communication
Key factors for Changing Mentalities and Societies

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I. Executive Summary

This study on “Culture and Communication – Key Factors for Changing Mentalities and Societies” was prepared at the request of the European Commission as one of the three background documents for the preparation of the EuroMed Ministerial Conference on Equality of Opportunities, to be convened in November 2006.

The study is not a piece of research, in line with academic standards. It focuses on critical areas, gaps and needs. From this angle, it reviews recent research, policies and strategies, in particular good practice identified at national and regional levels as well as outcomes of intergovernmental conferences, meetings and reports. The essential part of the study are recommendations that are hoped to inspire the deliberations at the 2006 EuroMed Ministerial Conference and the two preparatory conferences in May and June 2006.

The study is presented in Arabic, English and French versions, the English version being the original. It is divided into three parts: Education, Media, and Cultural creation. Each part provides a set of challenges, objectives and concrete recommendations, with relevant indicators and expected results. All these sub-sections follow the same internal structure, in order to highlight the justification of the recommendations to each specific issue. For easy reference in debates, all recommendations are, in addition, given serial numbers.

The section on Education covers all fields of learning in society, not only formal schooling. Recommendations focus on gender-balanced and fair portrayal of men and women in educational contents such as school textbooks and in teacher training as well as through non-sexist language.

The section on Media covers print and audiovisual media as well as information and communication technologies (ICT), mainly Internet communication. Recommendations focus on gender-balanced and fair portrayal of men and women, on gender parity in media professions, on advocacy, on strengthening regional cooperation and on media legislation. Main modalities proposed are self-regulation, networking and monitoring.

The section on Culture covers artistic creation and cultural expression. Recommendations focus on gender parity in various related fields, on gender-fair arts festivals and on the status of women artists, including modalities of improving their professional career development.

Across the sections, several of the recommendations suggest transfer of good practice in intercultural dialogue to gender relations, and vice versa. Focus is on key qualifications which are equally important for intercultural dialogue and for gender relations, such as empathy, the ability to look at things from different perspectives, and appreciation of pluralism and diversity. All recommendations highlight the need for a coherent Euro-Mediterranean inter-institutional approach to the promotion of gender equality, one of the key objectives agreed upon at the November 2005 Euro-Mediterranean Summit.
Almost everybody believes in the power of communication. Companies, Governments, NGOs and other social actors spend significant amounts of money in PR, information materials and visibility strategies, addressed to the public at large and always hoping that the mass media take up the message and spread it to citizens. Other than institutional communication, independent media add their credibility to information they disseminate. The intrinsic link between credibility and independence of media, however, is often underestimated. Failing Governments, for example, tend to replace their PR agents rather than changing their policy, while overestimating the power of their institutional communication.

Culture is underestimated as factor of change. Culture, in the broad sense of the term, results from human interaction with nature and generalized ways of social interaction, including knowledge, languages and belief systems shared by a number of people. The dominant perception of culture is heritage, tangible and intangible, forming a cultural environment that shapes attitudes and behaviour and gives identity. Underestimated is the process of cultural creation. As knowledge is evolving, so are languages and belief systems. Every human being contributes as much to cultural changes as he or she is shaped by cultural heritage. Thus, diversity is inherent in culture, and no culture is an island. The Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development (1995) reflects this with its wonderful title “Our Creative Diversity”.

The power of education is definitely not to be overestimated. Too often, however, education is not fully perceived as interaction of teaching and learning, of formal schooling and informal learning in society. Modern concepts such as lifelong learning and learning society indicate growing awareness of the fact that, in the 21st century, learning has become as much, if not even more, important than teaching.

The contribution of the Anna Lindh Foundation to the 2006 EuroMed Women Ministerial Conference focuses on culture, education and communication media as key factors in changing attitudes, behaviour, and, more generally, societies. The authors take into account that neither education nor culture nor media can be seen as mere instruments, ready for achieving envisaged results from appropriate input. The challenges and recommendations gathered in this paper are based on the assumption that real changes in gender relations can only be achieved with clear focus on the human being as learner, creator and communicator.

The Barcelona Declaration referred to the role of women from a mainly economic point of view as it recognized “the key role of women in development” and expresses commitment “to promote their active participation in economic and social life and in the creation of employment”. As regards to the cultural partnership, women are not in focus.
Gender issues in the Euro-Mediterranean area were first specifically mentioned at the 5th Euro-Med Ministerial Conference in 2001\(^1\). They endorsed the conclusions of the "Forum on the role of women in economic development" (Brussels, 14 July 2001), which highlighted the need to promote the role of women in economic life in a way consistent with religious and cultural values.

The European Commission’s outline of general provisions for establishing a “European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument” stipulates the objective of “supporting policies to promote social development and gender equality, employment and social protection including social dialogues, and respect for trade union rights and core labour standards”\(^2\).

As regards to the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of 2005, a working plan has been adopted, designed to provide the basis for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation for the next five years. This document addresses specifically the promotion of gender equality.

In all countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, many recent efforts aim at increasing the participation of women in political, social, cultural and economic decision-making positions. With a view to contributing to this objective, Euro-Mediterranean Partners have committed themselves to take measures to achieve gender equality, preventing all forms of discrimination and ensuring the protection of the rights of women. The present study offers proposals on how these commitments could be pursued in educational, media and cultural policies. Several of the recommendations suggest transfer of good practice in intercultural dialogue to gender relations, and vice versa. Key qualifications for intercultural dialogue such as empathy, the ability to look at things from different perspectives, and appreciation of pluralism and diversity can be learned, be developed through cultural creation, and be communicated through quality media.

There are also lessons learnt from gender relations which would be needed for intercultural dialogue. The development of non-sexist language over the past 20 years, promoted and undertaken by public institutions, the media and professional organizations, does not only reflect demands by women organizations. If not merely imposed but resulting from public debate, terminology changes make people think and can induce changes in attitudes and behaviour.

Gender is a social construct to characterize roles, attitudes and behaviour of men and women in society. Gender equality is about men and women being equally visible in all fields of public, political, social, economic and cultural life. In their daily work, educators, journalists and other cultural actors do not need to be visionary to know how to make a difference for gender relations. The principle of equality of men and women is not difficult to understand, if objectives are clarified.

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\(^1\) Barcelona IV, Presidential Conclusions, Brussels, 5/6 November 2001.
The challenges and many good practices presented in this study reflect a number of viewpoints which oscillate between a “gender-neutral” and a “women only” approach. This study is committed to a human rights-based understanding of “gender-sensitive” action. That means: The principle of non-discrimination underlying the gender-neutral approach is the guideline. Wherever “women only” action is recommended in this study, it is understood as instrumental for the implementation of this principle. As long as most men do not invest as many efforts as would be necessary to balance the specific burden women are carrying, a gender-neutral policy includes necessarily women-specific elements of support. This report does deliberately not use the term “positive discrimination” whenever reflecting gender parity measures or specific support women need in public life.

The Anna Lindh Foundation fully supports the proposal to create as many synergies as possible between the European Years for Equality of Opportunities (2007) and for the Dialogue between Cultures (2008).

This paper results from the first common endeavour of the youngest common institution of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) working as network of 35 national networks, joining well established Euro-Mediterranean networks such as EuroMeSCo and FEMISE. All 35 Anna Lindh Foundation national networks, some of them still in embryonic stage, contributed with ideas, comments, and proposals. Three networks contributed with substantive papers (Spain, Finland, Egypt). The ideas and proposals collected, together with those developed within the Foundation’s Secretariat, were processed by a Task Force of staff members of the Foundation, coordinated by Gregory Kehailia and Fadia Nahhas. Research and development was done by Eman Qaraeen (Education), Pernille Brix and Dr. Ute Meinel (Media), Susanne Abou Ghaida (Culture) and Eleonora Insalaco (Coordinator of the National Networks). Editorial and translation assistance was provided by Neila Akrimi.

This document does not constitute a formal communication of the Anna Lindh Foundation, nor does it represent the official position of the Anna Lindh Foundation which would commit the Anna Lindh Foundation in any way.

Alexandria, 7 April 2006

Dr. Traugott Schoefthaler

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3 Finland, Tampere Peace Research Institute; Spain, IEMED; Egypt, AlexMed


### III Gender and Education

#### A- Perspectives and General review

The relation between gender and education is complex and often contradictory. Education systems simultaneously reinforce and challenge traditional gender roles.

In all 35 Euro-Med countries, the percentage of women teachers at primary and secondary education levels increased significantly over the last 30 years. In a number of countries, “feminization” of the teaching professions seems to be an ongoing tendency without, however, corresponding changes of educational contents.


The Millennium Development Goals, adopted by the 2000 UN Millenium Assembly, “Eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.” The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) integrated the gender issue into the new concept of Education for Sustainable Development which is subject of a UN Decade 2005-2014. Although many countries still lack reliable sex-disaggregated data to assess how close they are to achieving the 2005 goal, the 2015 goal of achieving gender equality in education requires even more sophisticated information gathering and analysis.

The World Education Forum (Dakar 2000) has concluded that gender equality in education reflects a need for root changes in governments policies. Non the less, the existing of gender inequalities in education in general and subordinate position of women in particular are often not a result of deliberate policies of exclusion but rather of the persistence of unchallenged social norms regarding the excepted gender roles.

In fact several key problems persist: content of curricula materials, the social organizational arrangements used in schools, teaching practices, and women's literacy rates and the design and scope of formal and non-formal educational programmes.

Both education and culture continue to transmit gender stereotypes deeply rooted in societies. Girls and boys are socialized differently and taught to embrace traditional gender roles. As a consequence, women and men often follow traditional education and training paths, which often place women in occupations that are less valued and remunerated.

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4 [Exploring and understanding gender in education: a qualitative research manual for education practitioners and gender focal points, 2005, UNESCO.](#)

5 [EC Road map for equality between women and men – 2006 -2010.](#)
In most countries school textbooks present men and women as having different gender roles. In particular, women are predominantly portrayed undertaking domestic activities at home. Textbooks usually present women as mothers and housewives in family roles, doing housework.

The majority of textbooks contain traditional gender stereotypes by portraying girls and women at home and in childcare roles, very rarely depicting boys and men cooking, cleaning or taking care of children.\(^6\)

School textbook research has produced hundreds of studies on gender stereotypes, with similar results. An outstanding example is the survey of 96 textbooks on various subjects published in Jordan in 1999. According to the study, male actors account for 88 percent and female actors only for 12 percent of all social roles presented; and the limited number of women are to 65 percent portrayed in private roles.\(^7\)

Gender is a socially learned perception not only in the family or school. Teachers, curricula and learning materials can help overcoming stereotypes by creating positive role models for girls which deeply influence achievement.\(^8\) Combating gender stereotypes should start from an early age.

The gender question has a key role in the Memorandum of cooperation between the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) and the Council of Europe. Both organisations will undertake pilot projects on the elimination of illiteracy among young girls in rural areas and on “Education and the role of women in the Arab World”. These two major topics will be completed with a project aiming to promote “reading for all” and a project on evaluation of quality and of qualifications in higher education.\(^9\)

The Tunis Declaration issued at the 16th session of the Arab Summit in May 2004 highlights the necessity to “consolidate the comprehensive development programmes and intensify efforts aimed at promoting the educational systems, at disseminating knowledge and encouraging its acquisition, and at fighting illiteracy in order to ensure a better future for the young Arab generations” (point 2.4). Emphasis is also put on gender issues in the education area, including efforts to “widen women's participation … [in] educational fields” (point 2.3).

The European Commission (EC), in its Communication on the “tenth anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership” proposed to engage a dialogue on education. It is necessary to develop “a better coordination and involvement of other donors such as EIB, the World Bank and the UND. Mediterranean Partners are invited to devote a substantial percentage of national expenditure to education and the eradication of illiteracy (…)”. Three key goals should be achieved by 2015: “eradication of illiteracy in the region; all girls and boys enrolled in primary school; and the elimination of

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\(^6\) Gender and Education for all. The leap to equality. EFA Global monitoring report 2003, 2004 UNESCO.
\(^7\) Musa M. Shteiwi: Gender roles in school textbooks. Amman, 1999.
\(^8\) EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2006, UNESCO.
\(^9\) Agreement signed in October 2005. See the website of the Council of Europe, http://www.coe.int
gender disparity at all levels of education, requiring a particular effort to ensure the participation of women in education at all levels\(^{10}\).

Gender debates in relation to the Mediterranean and Europe cannot ignore the question of religion and its role in this regional space full of traditions, cultures and religiosity. The question of religions in gender debates is important for many reasons, since they affect education and societal roles of women.

In any attempt to Gender Sensitive Education, the concept of empowerment is central. One question remains open: Does more education for women lead to more empowerment?

Different point of views are expressed on this matter\(^{11}\). From one perspective, it was stated that external factors (societal, familial, economic, etc) are not necessarily in favour of empowerment. On the other, some argue that despite the different aims of education programmes (e.g. literacy vs parent training), a positive impact on empowering women can be noted. One effect seems to be clear from all international studies. Women who spent more years on education have significantly low numbers of children and, therefore, more opportunities for participation in society outside the family.

**Good practices overcoming gender stereotypes in the field of education**\(^{12}\)

**Spain**

**Development of gender awareness through training seminars and publications:**
- Publication of the bimonthly magazine (Being a Mother/Father) which contains articles on co-educational training.
- Training courses for parents on the choice of non-traditional careers and training” and on equal opportunities for both sexes (2002);
- New technologies training seminar for women members of parents’ associations (2002);

**Greece**

**Classroom and teaching practices:**
- Gender equality workshops for school textbooks authors:
- A programme of awareness for teachers on gender equality
- Designing of non-sexist teaching and learning materials

\(^{10}\) "The Commission proposes to engage in a dialogue with partner countries and Member States in order to substantially increase bilateral cooperation to the sector of education and vocational training. The goal would be to increase by at least 50% the proportion of financial cooperation devoted to education from 2007, in parallel with renewed efforts by national governments to invest in the sector.\(^{\prime}\), Communication from the Commission “ Tenth Anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership – a work programme to meet the challenges of the next five years \(^{\prime}\), point 2.3. " Contributing to a better education for all\(^{\prime}\), p. 10.

\(^{11}\) Conference Report, Women and Education in the Mediterranean Region. An event of the Trans-Mediterranean Civil Society Dialogue Programme. 15-17 June 2003 Istanbul, Turkey.

\(^{12}\) Promoting Gender Mainstreaming in Schools, Council of Europe, 2004 and contributions from ALF networks.
Germany

Textbooks and teaching materials:
- Organization of holiday camps with a gender purpose: e.g. where boys learn how to nurse animals and girls build technical devices.
- Development of guidelines for schools and teachers.
- Organization of the Girls’ Day Campaign

Cyprus

Pre-school education
- New series of textbooks for mathematics and language free of gender stereotypes prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture
- High Education courses and researches on gender
- Research project among on gender equality within the education system of Cyprus (2005)

Sweden

- Integration of gender equality within pre-school as a pedagogical approach that depends on the skills and knowledge of school staff.

Egypt

- Inclusion of stories about outstanding women in history into school textbooks
- Establishment of a gender community development association, providing gender sensitive literacy and post-literacy programmes.
- Publication of gender-sensitive stories for children by the Women and Memory Forum.

Palestine

- Summer camps and educational courses on family relations (Women of Palestinian Women Struggle Committees)

Jordan

- Ensuring 40 to 50 percent participation of women in curricula review and supervision committees.

Civil society
- **NGO International: The European Women’s Lobby**
  Works towards “mobilising Young Women for Equality in Europe”. It targets young women to be inspired to enter public sphere at local, national and -European level in areas such as health, education, politics…etc. A comprehensive guide is available in several languages.
  - **The Support Network: “Follow the Women”**
    Was set up to create a support network and for future action towards peace.
    - Empower women, especially those who live “out of reach” to have their say. This event is creating publicity mainly because of its nature; a cycling project that would attract the attention of those in decision making position.

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14 Ibid
B- Education as an important means towards women’s empowerment and closing the gender gap

1) Challenges

a) Gender Stereotypes in schools and other learning environments:

a.1. Social norms and customs guide people’s behaviour and determine the roles of women and men in family and community, including their educational participation and performance.

a.2. In most countries, school textbooks present men and women as having different gender roles. In particular, women are predominantly portrayed undertaking domestic activities at home. Textbooks usually present women as mothers and housewives in family roles, doing housework. They very rarely portray boys and men cooking, cleaning or taking care of children.

a.3. Everyday classroom practices reinforce prejudice. Schools are places where young people form identities and imagine their future. Teachers’ attitudes often require pupils to perform tasks for them in school in ways that reinforce gender differentiation. Teacher training, however, rarely focuses on issues of gender awareness.

a.4. Parental toy choices and child-parent interactions with toys send a clear message to children regarding gender-typed behaviours. Selection of children's toys influences the development of gender role identity in children and contributes to the differences noted in the cognitive and social skills of girls and boys.

a.5. Human rights education is insufficient in education and in youth work; therefore young people have little or no knowledge of women’s rights being a constituent element of all human rights.

a.6. There is no cohesive strategy for implementing a peace building agenda that defines gender-specific roles and opportunities; there is a lack of gender-sensitive education emphasizing a culture of peace and peace building, and of positive role models for women as peace-makers.

b) Gender Stereotypes and informal learning in society

b.1. Language determines the structure of collective representations and way of thinking, and contributes to building self-image. Oral and written language is not neutral. Masculinity is not only valued, but is the norm and grammar; the discourse become a channel for the invisibility, subordination, and even negation of femininity. Communication between young people is traditionally male-dominated and forces girls and women to adopt strategies that are imposing female gender roles.

b.2. Non-formal education has a huge potential in raising women's awareness and consciousness, it can be a powerful vehicle for empowerment.
b.3. There is a growing number of gender research at national level which is only in small parts available for practitioners.

b.4. Results from gender research and from its application to educational fittings is only in small parts available at international level.

2- Objectives

a) Avoid gender stereotypes from an early age and raise the level of awareness and understanding of gender equality and language in families and pre-school education.

b) Provide awareness training to teachers and students concerning their role as agents for change and encourage young women and men to explore gender-neutral educational methods.

c) Support changes in attitudes and behaviour and strengthen the vision, capacity and processes needed to build a more gender-responsive organizational culture.

3- Concrete recommendations, expected results & indicators

a) Enhancing gender awareness in the education system

Concrete recommendation 1
a.1. Involve parents in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Produce learning resources for parents, pupils, community and religious organizations.

Concrete recommendation 2
a.2. Organize joint committees for revision of school textbooks and curricula to incorporate a gender dimension into education of all levels. 50 percent of the members of such committees should be women. Compile good practices on overcoming gender stereotyping to be disseminated to educational institutions and youth organizations.

Concrete recommendation 3
a.3. Organize joint teacher training seminars for female and male teachers of all levels on issues of gender awareness and cultural diversity. Best practices of intercultural education should be adopted to gender-sensitive educational methods (role-taking, simulation etc.).

Concrete recommendation 4
a.4. Conduct and make use of existing research for the compilation of a list of toys and games that do not promote gender-stereotyping. Introduce changes in assignment of traditionally stereotyped toys to boys and girls.

Concrete recommendation 5
a.5. Organize campaigns for both boys and girls and engage them in activities aimed at sensitizing them about gender equality as part of education for democratic citizenship. Create a Gender Equality Forum for young people with representatives of NGOs, academics, social partners and the media.
Concrete recommendation 6
a.6. Support and better use of existing institutional networks, linking them and improving their possibilities of getting heard, and establishing contacts with concerned civil society organizations.

b) Enhancing gender awareness in informal learning in society

Concrete recommendation 7
b.1. Develop further existing guidelines for non-sexist language for public administration, professional organisation and the media and adapt them to different languages and learning environment.

Concrete recommendation 8
b.2. In the field of non formal education, there is a need to better document and disseminate models and lessons from the region, as well as to ensure more and continued support to capacity building/multiplier as well grass-roots organizations working with women.

Concrete recommendation 9
b.3. Building linkages between the academic world and practitioners, and ensuring that research findings are fed into educational policy development.

Concrete recommendation 10
b.4. Support to international networking, sharing of experiences, research findings and lessons learnt among academics and practitioners.

Expected Results:
- Increasing ability to cooperate and work between students and teachers on issues of gender equality and cultural diversity.
- Improving knowledge and development of positive changes in gender issues and cultural diversity.
- Mutual enrichment of intercultural and gender-sensitive educational methods.
- Adaptation of success stories and best practices.
- Improving knowledge about ways for induces changes among pre-school teachers and parents into early formation of gender roles.
- Regular use of gender neutral language among teachers, students and others.

Indicators:
- X number of training organized on gender awareness and other related topics and sub–themes.
- Degree of cooperation and networking among schools and number of teaching and learning produced.
- Degree of cooperation and networking among concerned NGOs.
- Changes of gender attitudes indicated in periodic comparative school achievement tests (such as PISA).
- X Number of teachers, principals and students used neutral language.
IV Gender and Communication

A- Perspectives and General review

The Beijing Platform for Action, endorsed at the United Nation’s fourth World Conference on Women held in 1995 adopted two main strategic objectives for women and mass media. They called on governments and all stake-holders to 1) increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication (ICT) and 2) promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media. Most of women’s advocacy on gender and media has since pushed for realisation of these demands.

Since Beijing, the importance of a balanced portrayal and women’s access to media has been consistently noted, however international conferences and research identify minimal change in the way gender roles are generally depicted by the media.

More women are working in the realm of mass media today than ever before, especially in broadcasting. The press lags far behind the electronic media, with only 29% of stories written by female reporters in 2005. In broadcast media of the region, women are now a significant on-screen and on-air presence as reporters and news-readers. The visibility of women reporting on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq or on the ongoing conflict in Palestine has put an end to the stereotype of war reporting as a male domain.

At the same time, sexist and pornographic images of women have multiplied with the spread of ICTs, and as a consequence of increasing commercialisation and concentration of media ownership.

In the Euro-Mediterranean region as a whole a diverse spectrum of inequality and negative media stereotyping can be found, despite the significant efforts deployed.

Participation and portrayal

The most extensive worldwide research on gender in news is the “Global Media Monitoring Project - Who makes the News?” issued regularly and based on analysis of almost 13,000 news stories on television, radio and in print media. Since its first edition was prepared for the Beijing conference in 1995, little progress has been identified.

According to the report, expert opinion in the news is overwhelmingly male. Only 21% of news subjects – the people who are interviewed or whom the news is about – are

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15 Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project 2005
16 Critics argue that war is given added drama when reported on by a good-looking female journalist, while the presence of a woman journalist also presents a distraction from the horror of the events themselves. Such chauvinistic comments only highlight the difficulty of women in being judged on their professionalism only. See. Margaret Gallagher: An unfinished story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment, UNESCO 1995
female. Men are 83% of experts and 86% as spokespersons. Particularly in stories that dominate the international agenda, news content reflects male priorities and perspectives. “News on gender (in)equality is almost inexistent” and there is not a single major news topic in which women outnumber men as newsmakers. This absence of women from news is the “most powerful and pervasive stereotype of all” and represents a “glaring democratic deficit”.

Though media portrayal of gender relations, and topics such as violence against women, equality before the law, women’s right to education etc. play an important role in international debates, they are almost non-existent in the news. The authors of the report note that, according to their experience, criticism of media content often results in lack of trust and of interest by media professionals. Their recommendation is therefore: “Interaction and dialogue between gender specialists and media professionals is the only way forward”. To date, self-regulation regarding gender stereotyping is lacking in the region.

To date, meetings and exchanges among the various stakeholders in the world of media, regional networking among journalists associations and women’s groups as well as self-regulation regarding gender stereotyping are either in their initial stages or entirely lacking in the Euro-Med region.

A major study on ‘Women’s rights and the Arab media’ proposes more networking for journalists in the Arab world to ensure that women's rights gain the highest possible profile in any part of Arab print or audiovisual media. It calls on Arab media establishments to seek regularly the opinion of female express on all subjects covered.

In a recent review of national processes to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the United Nations Development Programme note that negative portrayals of women in the popular media and media insensitivity to women’s rights have been identified as major impediments to gender equality by governments and civil society alike and that “attempting to achieve the MDGs without promoting gender equality will both raise the costs and decrease the likelihood of achieving the other goals”. However, only two of the National MDG Reports mention the role of the media in countering negative stereotypes of women. This indicates a persisting lack of understanding of the role played by media in counteracting inequality.

Towards new Gender Culture: the role of media

The pattern in portraying gender roles apparent in media content all over the Euro-Med region is deeply rooted, not just in professional practice, but in tradition and culture. Such cultural traditions have shaped wider social assumptions about female and male

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17 The report acknowledges that perceptions of stereotypes differ widely even within one specific culture, so that they are ultimately difficult to define. Gallagher, Margaret. *Who Makes the News: Global Media Monitoring Project 2005*, Global Media Monitoring Project, 2006.
attributes, roles and competencies are transmitted during earliest childhood\textsuperscript{20}. Media does not determine opinions or attitudes. Rather media mirrors social realities as well as prevailing values and in turn contributes to affect and shape people’s perceptions as one of the major socializing agents in modern society: “The influence of the media in shaping attitudes and beliefs, in selecting images of reality and of possibilities is an element both of stability and of change in gender relations”\textsuperscript{21}.

Even though the role of the media, and particularly of TV is often debated, few studies on how media influences the daily lives and habits of people are available. Thus discussions remain “more captive to impressionistic perceptions than to empirically verifiable facts”\textsuperscript{22}. Experience over the past ten years has shown that attempting to actively change gender patterns transmitted by the media is an “uphill struggle” and demands concerted actions\textsuperscript{23}.

So far, the great majority of men find it to their short-term advantage not to question the dominance of the masculine ideal\textsuperscript{24}. Patriarchal structures in society and political culture alike are the dominant feature prevailing across the entire region. Therefore strategies are needed and specific alliances should be built based not on gender issues alone but also on other ideals and concerns that men can more easily share with women.

From this perspective, women presenters and reporters deeply impressed their audiences, especially in the Middle East and have offered new role models. The eloquence and “energetic femininity” of the “forceful female news anchors” of Al Jazeera were praised by the prominent Moroccan feminist and writer Fatema Mernissi. No doubt, this much commented phenomenon of strong women appearing on TV screens has male and female audiences alike and has paved the way for a new trend on satellite TV in general and for new generations\textsuperscript{25}.

While media and new communication technologies play a key role in the development of societies and therefore gender relations, traditionally journalists feel strongly about the principle of objective coverage and are reluctant to be seen as promoting certain causes. Unquestionably, independence of the media is a fundamental cornerstone in democratic societies, but as the Global Media Monitoring Project and many other studies have demonstrated, today’s media is far from (gender) neutral and is actually maintaining stereotypes and thereby preventing equality between the sexes.

**How stereotypes are maintained by the media**

If gender stereotyping and the behaviour of men and women towards each other is to change, attempts to alter media content should be made first for the youngest media

\textsuperscript{20} Who makes the news?
\textsuperscript{21} Council of Europe: Equality between Women and Men: Priorities for the Future, 2000
\textsuperscript{22} Muhammad Ayish, The Impact of Arab Satellite Television on Culture and Value systems in Arab countries: Perspectives and Issues.
\textsuperscript{23} Who makes the News?
\textsuperscript{24} Council of Europe: Equality between Women and Men: Priorities for the Future, 2000
audience. Scrutinising children’s programmes and producing quality media for kids all over the region is therefore of major importance.

With the proliferation of satellite channels, children’s entertainment programmes, particularly dubbed cartoons of American and Japanese origin, are steadily taking up larger shares of children’s everyday life. This is a particularly dominant trend in countries without a strong tradition for public service broadcasting, and in the southern Mediterranean region, the amount of TV programmes specifically produced for children is generally very low.

The increasing internationalisation and commercialisation of media is reflected in common trends in production of TV shows, soap operas and reality-TV. All of these tend to purvey traditional images of women, often with a stress on women as sexual objects or as ‘the weaker sex’. TV entertainment mainly target women because they are seen as the main consumers. In the Arab world women constitute 64% of the audience. However, with their focus on slimming, fixing house and garden etc. such programmes only reinforce traditional images of women’s roles as caretakers and homemakers.

Recent strategies on the information society in the Arab World stress the importance of extending information to women. There is a focus on the creation of relevant digital content in local languages, particularly on women’s activities in all fields and dealing with questions of the rights of women and the problems of local development. Combining new technologies and audio-visual media and allowing independent community broadcasting is recommended in order to reach rural, remote and marginalised areas.

The World Summit on the Information Society process (WSIS), held in Tunis in November 2005, was instrumental in highlighting the “Gender Digital Divide”. The Divide denotes that women’s limited access to and control over new technologies deepens their already disadvantaged position in society. The full participation of women in the information society is necessary to ensure the inclusiveness and respect for human rights and gender equality and women’s empowerment must therefore be a constituent principle of knowledge societies.

The Tunis commitment and the Tunis Agenda comprise a political and operational roadmap of the international community in addressing the challenges of the information society.

26 In Northern European countries, women are the main decision-makers when it comes to purchasing goods for the family and the home.
27 Fatema Mernissi, The Satellite, the Prince, and Scheherazade
29 The role of culture and Media as Key-instruments for the evolution of mentalities, IEMed contributions to Anna Lindh Foundation preparatory document, Barcelona, 2nd March 2006.
30 “Tunis Commitment”, 2005, ITU.
31 Ibid
The Tunis Agenda includes pledges to implement effective training and education for women in ICT science and technology and to develop gender-disaggregated indicators to measure the digital divide but the section on financial mechanisms contains no references to women, the gender gap or specific gender budgeting. Their point of departure is that it is essential to bridge the digital divide so that “people everywhere can create, access, utilise and share information and knowledge, to achieve their full potential and to attain the internationally-agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.”

Development and diversification of media in the southern Mediterranean

In the past decade, the emergence of more independent-minded newspapers and of private, pan-Arab satellite channels media have changed the Arab media landscape. This is mainly due to the increasing competition that has followed.

The Arab Human Development Reports (AHDR) prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2003 examines in-depth the challenge of building a knowledge society in Arab countries.

The overall challenges to the development of Arab media are identified as:

- Insufficient access to media and information technology
- Dilution of the social and intellectual benefits of mass media due to government restrictions on content and to superficial market preferences
- The public’s passive reception of the media and lack of active participation

Data suggest that viewing time has increased dramatically in some Arab countries in recent years, to an average of over four hours per individual per day. However, studies have shown that “in its 50 year experience, Arab World television’s contribution to cultural enrichment and revival has been far less than impressive.”

A survey of Arab World television shows that programmes of the major commercial broadcasters are shaped by global cultural orientations and that the majority include imported Latino soap operas, Lebanese, Egyptian and Syrian drama series, game shows, talk shows, foreign movies, music videos and feature films. Such programmes are most often based on repetitive patterns of old fashioned gender representation, with women dressed up like blond dolls, usually occupying supportive roles, while men are generally depicted as dynamically pursuing more substantial activities in society.

Pan-Arab satellite stations have transformed news reporting in Arabic by giving viewers access to news in their own language that more openly criticise local establishments and governments. A new phenomena on Arabic TV is also the large amount of talk shows in

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32 “Tunis Commitment”, 2005, ITU.
33 “Tunis Commitment”, 2005, ITU.
34 Naomi Sakr, Arab Satellite Channels Between State and Private Ownership: Current and Future Implications
35 Muhammad Ayish
36 Ibid
which all kinds of topics are hotly debated with active participation in form of phone-ins. A large number of women have made their voices heard in these fora.

Rather new to this part of the world in the past few years have also been TV shows dedicated to the discussion of gender relations and sexual problems – matters that are surprisingly openly discussed – leading to high numbers of viewers and popularity of this new style of presenters (for example in the Egyptian Satellite Channel Dream TV). In these popular and provocative shows, old stereotypes on gender are challenged. However, these programmes are still rare exceptions.

Critics have noted that the flow of foreign television products particularly from the USA, into Arab television contributes to the erosion of local cultures and indigenous life patterns through the promotion of permissive and consumerist attitudes. In heated debates about the role of TV that take place in the press and in TV talk shows, some argue that especially the young are getting increasingly vulnerable to Western cultural values that undermine the basic fabric of Arab-Islamic value systems.

The development of private satellite stations has exacerbated the global trend of concentration of ownership. Media conglomerates merge and purchase smaller media enterprises in the whole region. In Europe, buyers are increasingly of American origin while in the Arab world they mostly come from the gulf. In spite of a larger offer of critical news and freer expression, Arabic satellite stations retain a conservative profile. New and creative ways of seeing gender roles have not been stimulated, while the global trend of increased commercialisation and consumerism dominates.

Just as marginal groups, women living in rural areas and in regional sub-centres are also excluded. The Report calls for broader news values and stories because such journalism helps the ordinary citizen comprehend events and develop a considered and informed point of view. Critical journalism and citizenship is closely interlinked exactly because it works to increase public awareness.

In the whole region, production of quality TV programmes is the only way to counterfeit commercialisation. Many studies have shown that if quality drama or informative programmes are offered on TV, these programmes attract viewers. Such investments have usually been affordable only by public service institutions. Public Service Broadcasters should therefore be encouraged and funded to take on their role of promoting gender equality e.g. by screening and producing productions that show the possibility of creating a new gender culture.

Contrary to hopes held by women’s advocacy groups, the increase of female reporters has not contributed to a change in news content. One of the reasons is that women in the Euro-Med region as a whole have remained excluded from the level of decision-making and production.

37 Ibid.
Gender and media in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP)

Ten years of dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership have sought to improve mainly political and economic cooperation and to advance mutual knowledge and understanding among the people. Culture did not play much of a role in these efforts initially. Even more neglected were gender issues, not to speak of gender and the media.

Within the framework of the Euro-Med Audiovisual Programme, series of 24 television documentaries, each focusing on a prominent Mediterranean Arab woman who has made a major political, artistic or literary contribution to society were included in the projects chosen in the spring of 1999.

However the series of seminars on “The Euro-Med and the Media” arranged for senior journalists in the fall of 2005 examining critical aspects of the media’s contribution to progress in the EMP to influence policy affecting the media in the next phase of the Partnership, omitted the topic of gender stereotyping.

A Euro-Med women’s conference was organised in Barcelona, on the occasion of the summit held on the Partnership’s tenth anniversary, resulted in a recommendation to apply the gender perspective in a cross-cutting way in all public policies. In particular, women’s rights should be made explicit in the EU-Mediterranean partner’s Association Agreements. Unfortunately, the conference conclusion does not mention the central topics of media stereotyping and access of women to the media.

Good Practices in the field of Communication and gender

Access to information and media promoting equality:
Jordanian/Syrian/Danish cooperation on production of children’s TV programmes portraying children as actors and decision-makers in their own lives, with an emphasis on equality and creating role models, also for girls.

Avenues for expression and balanced portrayal:
The goal of Les Pénélopes is to promote, edit and diffuse information from the point of view of women using all types of media, and to ensure the exchange and updating of this information in favour of all women of the world to affirm themselves as users and creators of new forms of technology and communication, to ensure visibility of all initiatives brought by women and to multiply networks. Les Pénélopes are frequently highlighted for their forceful insertion of women’s visions in the media.

Two Algerian associations, Femmes en Communication and Rassemblement Algérien des Femmes Démocrates have developed a joint project to provide young girls from different environments and educational levels with technical skills in the field of radio broadcasting in order to discuss problems of discrimination, inequality in the family, society and in the work place. This has enabled the girls to better defend their rights and critically evaluate media.
Guidelines:
The *International Federation of Journalists* organised a conference on gender equality in journalism and trade unionism in 2001, adopting a policy and an action plan on Mainstreaming Equality in Journalism. The plan addresses the issues of women in the union, equal pay for equal work, portrayal of women in the media, IFJ women network and access to training. The implementation of this plan aims to mainstream the gender aspect in all fields of journalism.

The *European Network of Female Journalists* has developed a guide of best practices for journalists on coverage of prostitution and trafficking of women in the media.

Monitoring:
The Global Media Monitoring Projects (GMMP) organised by the *World Association for Christian Communication* presents a worldwide effort to study the representation and portrayal of women and men in the media. The results have been used in many ways — to illustrate global patterns in news content, to highlight the persistent lack of women in national news media and to start dialogue between media advocates and media practitioners.

A “Media Suitcase” is developed by the *German Association of Female Journalists*, provides media observation groups with the tools needed for critical examination and analysis of media content.

Gender-sensitizing and Research:
The *Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Göteborg University* employs a body of researchers working on topics of Gender and Media, including women in journalism, gender monitoring/advocacy, history of female journalists and gendered elites in the media and diversity in the newsroom.

Awareness Campaigns:
The *Collectif 95 Magreb-Egalité* is a coalition of women’s and labour organizations from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, which engaged North African governments in a debate over the interpretation of Islamic law and designed a campaign on violence against women thereby engaging media and the population at large.

Overcoming stereotypes since early age:
Swedish children’s TV, often based on the stories of celebrated author Astrid Lindgren portraying strong and independent girls such as Pippi Longstocking and Ronja Robber’s Daughter, has provided positive inspiration and role models for children for decades.
B- Generating understanding of culturally constructed gender roles and relations in the region

1- Challenges

a- Venues for women’s expression

In some countries of the Euro-Med region, legislative frameworks still restrict the development of an open and pluralistic media scene and broadcasting legislation is lacking. Although most countries have signed and ratified international human rights conventions these have sometimes not been fully integrated in the relevant legislation or the legal culture.

Community media provides venues of expression, offers women-centred local content and facilitates the development process. High illiteracy rates among women in some parts of the Mediterranean region and barriers to access the internet (lack of telephone lines in impoverished and rural areas) are still major impediments for women’s use of ICTs.

b- Women in management and decision-making positions in media and communication

Women still have very limited access to management and decision-making levels, in spite of growing numbers of women entering professions in the media sector and holding positions previously considered as men’s domains, e.g. reporting on armed conflicts. Working conditions demand a large amount of flexibility and overtime, which is generally not conducive for women, who still shoulder the largest share of family responsibilities. The educational gap between women and men, especially in technical fields, leads to male-dominance in policy-making, control, design and development of ICT.

c- Portrayal of women in media and communication products

Women’s points of view, voices, information needs and concerns are alarmingly absent in most journalistic products. Media in most countries do not provide sufficient reports on women, or present a balanced picture of women’s diverse lives and contributions to society. However, new forms of independent and un-censored communication have emerged with the Internet. The potential for furthering inter-cultural dialogue and the emergence of a new gender culture through new communication technology is promising but has not yet been fully researched.

The traditional role of public service broadcasting in promoting democratic values as well as appreciation of equality and diversity is endangered by concentration of media ownership and the resulting commercialisation.

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39 Blogging offers a “free-speech arena” for discussion of topics which have found no space in main-stream media and women are surprisingly outspoken about their lives and the restrictions they face in such blogs. According to women bloggers in Egypt, the search for identity is a major motive for engaging in this form of communication, one sign of this is that a large numbers of them choose to communicate in Arabic.
d- Self-regulatory mechanisms and monitoring of portrayal of women

In some countries national regulatory bodies are often seen by journalists' associations as an obstacle to freedom of the media and journalists’ free expression, in others ombudswomen institutions are in place. Codes of ethics on media portrayal of women have not been thoroughly implemented at national levels nor established regionally.

Only few organisations in the Euro-Med region monitor media content, including portrayal of women, and such efforts are neither comprehensive nor carried out on a long-term basis. No regional monitoring mechanism exists thus far.

e- Research on women and communication

Analytical comparison of questions of access and portrayal of women in the media in Europe and in the southern Mediterranean region is difficult or impossible due to lack of reliable figures and databases. One of the main concerns, as highlighted throughout the WSIS process, is the lack of research providing gender-disaggregated indicators to measure the digital divide and to assess the gender impact of ICTs and women’s position in the ICT sector.

Other priority research themes include the construction of ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity” in communication media, and the question of how globalisation of media affects society and cultural diversity.

f- Gender-sensitization of students and media professionals

‘Gender and media’ is not included in curricula of most journalism schools or given adequate weight in journalism and mass communication studies. Moreover, only limited amount of training opportunities on gender-sensitivity are offered to media professionals.

g- Advocacy and networking regarding women and communication

Advocacy regarding women’s rights issues, domestic violence, trafficking, and gender equality legislation in the region is not up to date. Women NGOs “still do not exploit the full potential of ICTs as an effective tool for research, lobbying, campaigning, and communicating. Awareness of the potential for individual empowerment of women through ICTs is also limited”\(^{40}\). Coordination among locally-based women’s rights groups is weak and networking is still in the early stages\(^ {41} \).

Language barriers and a significant North-South digital divide are obstacles to effective networking and exacerbate the disadvantage of marginalised regions. In particular for multi-lateral projects in this domain, funding is hardly available.

\(^{40}\) ‘Bridging the Gender Digital Divide’, UNDP Regional Centre for Europe and the CIS & UNIFEM Central and Eastern Europe, 2004.

2- Objectives

a) To ensure an enabling environment providing venues for women’s expression, reach-out and inclusion of marginalised and illiterate women.

b) Increase the participation and access of women to decision-making in the media and new technologies of communication.

c) Facilitate the establishment of fair working conditions and equal treatment legislation for media professionals.

d) Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the Media.

e) Strengthen public service broadcasting, stressing its role to promote equality and fair portrayal of women and men.

f) Establish a code of ethics on portrayal of women.

g) Establish a regional media monitoring mechanism by organisations of media professionals.

h) Encourage and seek funds for research on the impact of media and communication products on women and girls, on the evolution of gender roles and stereotyping, and produce gender-disaggregated data to facilitate such research.

i) Integrate Gender and Media in all curricula of journalism schools and studies of mass communication in the region.

j) Ensure that gender-sensitizing training is offered to media professionals and media literacy enhanced in the population at large

k) Enhance advocacy skills and increase networking among women’s organisations and journalists associations.

3- Concrete recommendations, expected results & indicators

a- Adopting effective legislations and institutions

Concrete recommendation 11
a.1. Where not existing, adopt effective legislation in accordance with the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action and develop appropriate broadcasting legislation that facilitates establishment of a pluralist media scene.

Concrete recommendation 12
a.2. Ensure freedom of expression and pluralism by introducing and supporting women’s opportunities for self-expression and sharing of information e.g. community radios, relevant online content, a women’s news agency, blogs and other forms of communication, such as story-telling, drama, poetry and song reflecting local languages and culture. Strengthen funding dedicated to establishment of such media.
**Expected Results**
- New venues for women’s expression providing local, women-centred content in local languages created.

**Indicators**
- Effective legislative measures enhancing gender equality in place in at least two thirds of the countries of the EMP by 2010.

*b-Number of women in management and decision-making positions in media and communication*

**Concrete recommendation 13**
**b.1.** Promote women’s full and equal participation in all levels of media, including management, programming, education, training and research and ensure that gender equity is enhanced through implementation of fair employment policies, equal opportunities legislation and gender mainstreaming.

**Concrete recommendation 14**
**b.2.** Through investment in infrastructure, increase women’s access to new information and communication technologies. Encourage media and ICT enterprises and other key stakeholders to enhance participation of women in policymaking, development and design of ICTs by establishing dialogue among them to open avenues for cooperation and joint action.

**Expected Results**
- At least 1/3 of decision-making positions in field of media and ICT held by women by 2010.

**Indicators**
- Equal opportunities and fair employment policies in place in at least 2/3 of the Euro-Med countries by 2010.
- Gender parity of government representatives engaged in national, regional and international ICT policy processes in at least 2/3 of the Euro-Med countries by 2010.

**c- Projects and incentives promoting balanced and diverse portrayal of women in media and communication**

**Concrete recommendation 15**
**c.1.** Promote balanced and diverse portrayal of women and men in the media; combat the growing sexualisation and pornography in media products via a regional media watch project.

**Concrete recommendation 16**
**c.2.** Create incentives for creative and visionary coverage of gender relations contributing to the emergence of a new gender culture. Encourage journalists to increase coverage of women’s positive contributions to society by encouraging journalists to present women as key actors, experts and opinion-makers.
Concrete recommendation 17

c.3. Counter prevailing stereotypes of women from disadvantaged and immigrant communities by encouraging media coverage of their concerns.

Concrete recommendation 18

c.4. Strengthen the key role of Public Service Broadcasting as an integral part of the shared culture of the Euro-Med region.

Expected Results

- Coverage of women’s positive and diverse contribution to society in media and communication products significantly increased.

Indicators

- Creative and visionary coverage of a new gender culture and of the diverse roles of women and men highlighted through increasing number of good practices identified by independent institutions.
- Increasing number of broadcasting programmes focusing on gender equality and cultural diversity.

*d-Self-regulatory mechanisms and monitoring*

Concrete recommendation 19

d.1. Encourage self-regulation of media enterprises and support the joint development of a regional code of ethics by journalists associations and publishers.

Concrete recommendation 20

d.2. Encourage the establishment of ombudswomen offices as well as independent self-regulatory bodies, where not existing, and ensure their gender parity.

Concrete recommendation 21

d.3. Develop, in cooperation with such bodies, toolkits in the form of concrete checklists aimed at eliminating gender-biased language as a service to media professionals along the lines of guidelines for gender-fair use of language developed by leading academic institutions.

Concrete recommendation 22

d.4. Establishment of a Euro-Med media watch project that will monitor the implementation of relevant legislation as well as media and communication products and expose cases of sexist portrayal of women.

Expected Results

- Self-regulation and gender-sensitization of the media and communication profession resulting in a reversal of the increasing sexualisation in the media.

Indicators

- A regional code of ethics on balanced portrayal of women and gender relations developed by 2010 in line with gender equality action plan by journalists associations.
- Toolkit for elimination of gender-biased language developed.
- A Euro-Med media watch project implemented.
- Number of female members of self-regulatory and monitoring bodies.

*e-Research on women and communication*

**Concrete recommendation 23**

e.1. Increase public funding for research into all aspects of the impact of communication products on women and girls; identify their information needs and point to key agents of change. Fill the research gaps identified above and make recommendations on women-centred local as well as regional content.

**Concrete recommendation 24**

e.2. Compilation of a regional directory of women experts in all major fields of reporting (economy, politics, society, culture, science etc.).

**Concrete recommendation 25**

e.3. Establish, in cooperation with broadcasters, a regional video library on the portrayal of women to be used in gender-sensitising training of media professionals and the general public.

*Expected Results*

- The role of media in changing mentalities and combating stereotyping exposed and communicated to decision-makers and the broad public.

*Indicators*

- A directory of women experts compiled and a regional video library on portrayal of women in the media established.
- X number of studies on the implementation of gender-sensitive policies, the impact of media products on women and girls, identification of their interests and content-related needs etc. conducted.

*f- Gender-sensitization of students and media professionals*

**Concrete recommendation 26**

f.1. Support academic institutions to design and offer gender-sensitising training programmes and curricula for media managers, editors, journalists and students of mass communication and journalism, enabling them to be vigilant against discriminatory and stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

**Concrete recommendation 27**

f.2. Create means to support a comprehensive training strategy on management, negotiation and leadership training for women, as well as mentoring systems to enhance women’s capabilities and potential for advancement in the media and ICT sectors, with a view to promote women’s media enterprises.

**Concrete recommendation 28**

f.3. Include into media literacy programmes for the public at large and for the educational system critical reflection on media products and discriminatory and stereotyped images of women.
Concrete recommendation 29  
f.4. In line with the WSIS Tunis Agenda, support the development and use of ICTs as a resource for the empowerment of women and girls, to increase their involvement in political, economic, social and cultural spheres of life, as well as to enhance access to new employment opportunities.

Concrete recommendation 30  
f.5. Create scholarships for girls and create concrete incentives to encourage their careers in ICT in order to increase the number of female students at all educational levels, including in distance and e-learning, in media- and ICT-related subjects, science and technology.

Expected Results

- Media professionals reducing biased coverage of women
- Public rejection of discriminatory images (following the example of established international consensus on rejection of racist and xenophobic expressions).

Indicators

- X number of gender-sensitizing training programmes for media professionals and students implemented.
- Media and ICT literacy, particularly regarding gender issues, streamlined in educational curricula in at least half of the EMP countries by 2010.
- Public surveys indicating increasing public rejection of discriminating portrayals of women.

g. Advocacy and networking regarding women and communication

Concrete recommendation 31  
g.1. Encourage advocacy groups to develop Euro-Med awareness raising campaigns on the crucial importance of eliminating discrimination against women for the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Concrete recommendation 32  
g.2. Strengthen national and regional networking among women’s and journalists’ organisations and improve their access to decision-makers by organising and financing regular regional meetings.

Concrete recommendation 33  
g.3. Create a Euro-Mediterranean twinning and exchange programme for journalists and media professionals aiming to enhance professional standards and intercultural competence.

Expected Results

- Improved advocacy for gender equality at national and regional level and awareness of the general public of the negative effects of stereotyping.

Indicators

- Awareness raising campaigns and/or information programmes implemented in at least half of the EMP countries by the end of 2010.
A regional network of women journalists established offering expertise to the Euro-Med media watch project as well as the development of the code of ethics on gender-balanced portrayal.

V Gender and Cultural Creation

A- Perspectives and general review:

In the various inter-governmental conferences on culture and cultural policies, especially as related to development, there has been an emphasis on the need to promote creativity in all its forms without any discrimination as well as the need to respect gender equality in cultural policies. The importance of culture in terms of its potential to enhance the status and role of women has been highlighted.

In the context of this chapter, the term ‘culture’ refers to the diverse artistic expressions that produce and re-produce an image of the world as perceived by its author; these various expressions include literature, the visual arts, music and dance, poetry, film making, advertisements, and performance. Traditionally, artistic and cultural products have had a great potential to capture public attention, to shape social consciousness and to stimulate debates and sometimes controversy. In addition, a particular attribute of art is that it is a space that allows individuals to challenge and critique social conventions and to imagine new social realities. Among the social issues treated in art, gender and gender relations figure greatly.

Over the past century, the portrayal of women in artistic and cultural creations has developed in major ways, with both positive and negative implications. To fully understand and contextualize such changes, a review of the transformations that have taken place in the status of women as creators and decision-makers themselves in the artistic and cultural professions is necessary. This section deals with both aspects: the portrayal of women and gender relations in cultural and artistic content as well as the participation of women in the creative industries where this content is produced.

The diversity characterising the Euro-Med region and its richness in terms of cultural heritage and cultural creation is well reflected by women. Women have always been the

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42 The World Commission on Culture and Development and “Our Culture Diversity” the report by the Commission President Perez de Cuellar (1995) and the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, Stockholm 1998


44 IEMED, The Role of Culture and Media as Key-Instruments for the Evolution of Mentalities
guardians of common and collective memory at the family, community and regional level.45

In its preamble, the 1980 Recommendation Concerning the Status of the Artist clearly maintains that the artist has a responsibility and a role to play in contributing to their society’s development.46 As regards the specificity of the Euro-Med region, artists and women artists in particular should be granted more efficient participation in order to spread tolerance, mutual understanding and ultimately a culture of peace in the region.47

In addition, cultural creation is a tool for socio-economic development, especially for women; learning the art of manufacturing and crating artistic products is for them a source of income. Strictly related to this aspect is women involvement for the encouragement of cultural tourism: a concrete experience that can bring the peoples of the two shores of the Mediterranean closer to each other and lay the basis for mutual understanding and quality dialogue.48 Moreover, through their involvement in cultural associations and organisations, women artists contribute to the general improvement of women welfare in the cultural field and to promote their diverse interests and hopes and identities. However, women in this area face the same kind of challenges of those from other parts of the world, since their cultural creation very often goes unnoticed and unrecorded.

Given that gender is a social construct, representations of women in art tend to reflect the general conditions and discourses on women in society as well as the developments that occur therein. Historically, the dominant tendency has been to portray women in traditional roles as caregivers, housewives and mothers.

In films, for example, women characters suffered from being portrayed simply as secondary figures or as objects of male desire. The Tunisian and Algerian cinema of the 1960’s and 1970’s offers a good example of women being presented as secondary characters and insignificant to the major plot of action.49 An example is the portrayal of women as political heroines in post world war II Polish cinema by certain female directors. While such portrayal is positive, these women characters are difficult for ordinary women to identify with.

A leading trend of the past century was the unveiling of the female body in visual art forms50 ranging from television advertisements to motion pictures. While some have welcomed the increased freedom in the depiction of sexuality in art and culture, others have voiced concerns about the increased sexualisation of women and the exploitative

45 Akrimi Neila, "Pour une participation effective de la femme dans la promotion et le renforcement du dialogue interculturel dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen", article prepared in the frame of the workshop of CERPEM on the theme "Construire la région euro-méditerranéenne: l'approche culturelle".

46 Recommendation Concerning the Status of the Artist, UNESCO General Conference meeting in Belgrade from 23 September to 28 October 1980

47 Report from IFOR’s Women Peacemakers Programme’s “European Regional Consultation on Women and Conflict Resolution”. See website of www.ifor.org/wpp/networking_consultation.htm

48 Ibid.

49 Bouzid Discacciati, 2000

50 Sullivan, Mary Ann. “Oh What A Difference A Difference Makes: Gender in the Visual Arts”
use of female bodies for various ends, among which, to sell commodities and an ideal of the female body. Stereotypical and traditional representations of women have tended to persist; on the other hand, there have been some positive developments. Many cultural works are challenging traditional gender roles and are promoting a more realistic portrayal of women and the relations between the sexes.

This positive development is due, among other factors, to the increased participation of women in artistic creation. Women have always made valuable contributions to art and culture. To cite a few examples, women were early pioneers in the development of the art of photography in Europe. In addition, women were the most active pioneers in the emergence of modern narrative discourse in Arabic literature. Culture remains a field where women have made great advances. To take the example of the visual arts in Western Europe, women artists constitute 38%-45% of all artists and 30-60% of art students.\textsuperscript{51}

However, there remain many challenges. Within the culture sector, women’s representation in various careers is uneven. This was reflected in one of the recommendations of the Council of Europe Task Force on Culture and Development, which proposes equality or parity for women in its 1999 Report \textit{In From the Margin}. In terms their representation in various artistic fields, women are underrepresented in the field of music as composers and well-represented in the field of performance art. The major cause of this distribution is the gender stereotypes that channel women away from certain careers, for example those requiring technical expertise.

In the recording of art and cultural history, an account of their participation is largely missing, and a large number of female artists from antiquity remain unknown.\textsuperscript{52} Women are also less likely to get recruited for full-time teaching positions. In Europe, they represent only 3-20% of art professors in specialized schools.\textsuperscript{53} Consequently, positive role models for emerging female artists are few.

\textsuperscript{51} Cliché, Danielle, Ritva Mitchell and Andreas Wiesand (eds.). \textit{Pyramids or Pillars: Unveiling the Status of Women in Arts and Media Professions in Europe}. Bonn: European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ARCult Media), 2000.


\textsuperscript{53} Cliché, Mitchel, and Wiesand, ibid.
### Good Practices in the field of cultural expression

- Promoting of artistic creation of women and raising awareness of the value of women’s artistic contributions examples the production of a CD entitled “Women from the Mediterranean” issued on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Women’s Mediterranean Forum.

- Arts Festivals focusing on women artistic production for intercultural dialogue and the cultural peace, e.g. the Festival of Thessaloniki: Women Creators of the Two Seas and the City of Women, Slovenia.

- « Cool hunters » whose mission is to search for and recruit women artists for participation in arts festivals (example Rosa Martínez for the Biennale of Venice).

- Special courses for promoting women and gender relations at public schools of art and public conservatories for young male and female students (Finland).

- The fabrication of "heritage soap" by the Chambre de Beaux Arts de Lyon to promote the olive oil soap produced by the Palestinian women refugees of Natheef and Mahatta in Jordan.

- Initiatives to support artists that take into account the special career needs of women artists. The recent initiative “WIK” by the Dutch government to implement a scheme for male and female artists that grants artists subsidies for 4 years to start their professional life. It allows the possibility for female artists to use the scheme for a period of time, to interrupt it in case of maternity, and to re-enter the scheme at a later time.

### B- Improving the image of women as actor and subject in the field of artistic creation

#### 1- Challenges

*a) Research on Women and Cultural creation*

*a.1.* Deficiencies in research on gender stereotypes and the status of women in cultural professions in the Euro-Med region

*a.2.* Inadequacy of much existing measurement instruments and statistical data in presenting a full picture of the status of women working in the cultural sector

*b) Participation of women and stereotypical representations in the artistic and cultural creation*

*b.1.* Existence of structural obstacles that impede the advancement women artists in their careers as well as the lack of positive role models for female artists
b.2. Lack of Recognition of the value of women’s artistic production and the contribution of women to the arts

b.3. The persistence of stereotypical representations/images of women in cultural products (films, literature, music, etc)

2- Objectives

a) To encourage research on focus topics related to gender stereotypes and women in the arts in the Euro-Med region

b) To increase the availability of gendered data on women in the arts, following a unified methodology allowing country comparisons

c) To combat stereotypical representations of women in cultural products and promote more realistic and gender-sensitive portrayal of women

d) To promote legislation that enable women artists to combine their private and professional lives

e) To ensure greater recognition of value of women’s works and their contribution to the development of art targeting the general public, practitioners, and art students

3- Concrete recommendations, expected results & indicators

a-Research on gender stereotypes and the status of women in cultural professions

Concrete recommendation 34

a.1. Report on the representation of women in culture in the Euro-Med space under the supervision of competent academic institutions.

Indicators

- Number of individuals and institutions receiving hard and soft copies of report.
- Percentage of women in cultural professions.

Expected Results

- Report on prevailing gender stereotypes in the region produced at regular intervals and made available to the general public

Concrete recommendation 35

a.2. The support and coordination of links between existing networks in the Euro-Med region, focusing on gender and research, presenting a possibility for cooperation in research projects as well as the exchange of information and best practices.

Indicators

- Number of linkages between existing networks, number of concrete projects emerging from partnerships
Expected results

- Linkages created, reports produced, common projects implemented, increased networking and cooperation among research centres

Concrete recommendation 36

a.3. The encouragement of studies on women in the art and cultural professions in the Euro-Med region in general, and in specific fields of artistic production where women are under-represented (such as music composition and cultural management decision-making).

Indicators

- Number of women composers whose music is performed in public concert halls; number of women in management and decision-making positions.
- Number of specialised research projects, increase in funds available at the national and region level

Expected Results

- Research publications.
- Equal representation of women in all fields of cultural expression and production.

b-Monitoring activities and initiatives of gender representations in cultural products (films, literature, music, etc)

Concrete recommendation 37


Indicators

- Reports produced, complaints publicized against bad practices, annual lists of good and bad examples, amount of press coverage.

Expected Results

- Annual Lists Produced, increased awareness of stereotypical portrayal of men and women.

Concrete recommendation 38

b.2. The organization of a "gender fair" visual arts festival that focuses on the historical development of the representation of women and men in mass culture.

Indicators

- Numbers of posters distributed, number of festival participants and visitors, press coverage of event.

Expected Results

- Growing number of gender-fair art festivals.
Concrete recommendation 39  
**b.3.** Launch a special initiative in design schools and departments that teach public relations/marketing for the production of advertisements that tackle gender relations in innovative ways, followed by organization of an ‘alternative’ media/public service campaign on television, in the cinema theatres and on certain websites. The initiative should be designed and implemented according to the equal partnership scheme between European and Southern Mediterranean Institutions.

**Indicators**  
- Number of higher educational institutions involved and students participating, number of ads produced, number of times that ads are aired, number of reactions to ad campaign (e-mails, letters, etc),

**Expected Results**  
- Alternative images to promote positive gender representation in advertising
- Changes in public perceptions of the gender roles and representations of women measured by opinion polls.

Concrete recommendation 40  
**b.4.** Euro-Mediterranean Film Festival on gender equality

**Indicators**  
- Number of interested applicants to film festival, number of films and documentaries shown in festival, number of films subsequently broadcast on public television

**Expected Results**  
- Film Festival, Awareness raised and debate stimulated on issues of gender equality, laying a foundation for further artistic networking between the two shores of the Mediterranean

**c- Advancement of women artists in their careers and positive role models for female artists**

Concrete recommendation 41  
**c.1.** Campaigns for legislative changes that grant women more equity in the work space as well as flexible workplace measures that enable them to fulfill their family obligations without compromising career advancement.

**Indicators**  
- Concrete changes and amendments to laws governing the labour conditions of women artists or women workers in the cultural sector, number of parliamentary debates.


**Expected results**

- More equitable laws and regulations concerning the rights and benefits of women working in the artistic and cultural professions, more regulations that allow women to balance professional and family life adopted.

**Concrete recommendation 42**

c.2. The creation of a “Euromed Cultural Passport” (EMCP) where all the formal and non-formal work in the cultural sector is recorded and recognized in the region.

**Indicators**

- The existence and number of EMCP requested and given.

**Expected Results**

- Recognition of qualifications in the cultural sector and improvement of the status of artists.

**Concrete recommendation 43**

c.3. Mentoring schemes for emerging talents: professional and established women artists mentoring younger female students allowing them to enter informal networks, platforms to distribute their work or specific job opportunities.

**Indicators**

- The number of established female artists becoming involved in mentoring schemes, number of young female students benefiting from monitoring schemes.

**Expected Results**

- Career development for female artists facilitated.

**d-Recognition of the added value of women’s artistic production and the contribution of women to the arts**

**Concrete recommendation 44**

d.1. The coordination of efforts to monitor the presence of women in evaluation committees or juries, the number of women receiving awards and grants and participating in cultural festivals/initiatives, the number of special awards for women.

**Indicators**

- Number of regional reports or press releases presenting data, number of rewards to women artists and participation of women in evaluation committees and juries.

**Expected Results**

- Reports published and publicised, participation of women in evaluation committees and recognition of women artistic production.
Concrete recommendation 45

d.2. The promotion of art textbook revision to present and do justice to the contributions of women artists

**Indicators**

- Number of proposals submitted to national competent bodies for revision of arts textbooks

**Expected Result**

- Specialised committees established for revision of arts textbooks

Concrete recommendation 46

d.3. Collection of statistical data reflecting gender differences and the presentation of gender-transparent data for artists at the national and regional levels.

**Indicators**

- The number of new instruments that enable gender transparency in statistical data results, number of countries able to provide gendered data, changes to existing instruments.

**Expected Results**

- Increased availability of gender transparent data collected in the field of the media and arts professions.


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ANNEXE I

Exhaustive list of Recommendations

*Education as an important means towards women’s empowerment and closing the gender gap*

*Enhancing gender awareness in the education system*

**Concrete recommendation 1**
Involving parents in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Produce learning resources for parents, pupils, community and religious organizations.

**Concrete recommendation 2**
Organize joint committees for revision of school textbooks and curricula to incorporate a gender dimension into education of all levels. 50 percent of the members of such committees should be women. Compile good practices on overcoming gender stereotyping to be disseminated to educational institutions and youth organizations.

**Concrete recommendation 3**
Organize joint teacher training seminars for female and male teachers of all levels on issues of gender awareness and cultural diversity. Best practices of intercultural education should be adopted to gender-sensitive educational methods (role-taking, simulation etc.).

**Concrete recommendation 4**
Conduct and make use of existing research for the compilation of a list of toys and games that do not promote gender-stereotyping. Introduce changes in assignment of traditionally stereotyped toys to boys and girls.

**Concrete recommendation 5**
Organize campaigns for both boys and girls and engage them in activities aimed at sensitizing them about gender equality as part of education for democratic citizenship. Create a Gender Equality Forum for young people with representatives of NGOs, academics, social partners and the media.

**Concrete recommendation 6**
Support and better use of existing institutional networks, linking them and improving their possibilities of getting heard, and establishing contacts with concerned civil society organizations.

*Enhancing gender awareness in informal learning in society*

**Concrete recommendation 7**
Develop further existing guidelines for non-sexist language for public administration, professional organisation and the media and adapt them to different languages and learning environment.
Concrete recommendation 8
Future fields of non formal education, there is a need to better document and disseminate models and lessons from the region, as well as to ensure more and continued support to capacity building/_multiplier as well grass-roots organizations working with women.

Concrete recommendation 9
Building linkages between the academic world and practitioners, and ensuring that research findings are fed into educational policy development.

Concrete recommendation 10
Support to international networking, sharing of experiences, research findings and lessons learnt among academics and practitioners.

Communication, key instrument in generating understanding of culturally constructed gender roles and relations in the region

Adopting effective legislations and institutions

Concrete recommendation 11
Where not existing, adopt effective legislation in accordance with the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action and develop appropriate broadcasting legislation that facilitates establishment of a pluralist media scene.

Concrete recommendation 12
Ensure freedom of expression and pluralism by introducing and supporting women’s opportunities for self-expression and sharing of information e.g. community radios, relevant online content, a women’s news agency, blogs and other forms of communication, such as story-telling, drama, poetry and song reflecting local languages and culture. Strengthen funding dedicated to establishment of such media.

Number of women in management and decision-making positions in media and communication

Concrete recommendation 13
Promote women’s full and equal participation in all levels of media, including management, programming, education, training and research and ensure that gender equity is enhanced through implementation of fair employment policies, equal opportunities legislation and gender mainstreaming.

Concrete recommendation 14
Through investment in infrastructure, increase women’s access to new information and communication technologies. Encourage media and ICT enterprises and other key stakeholders to enhance participation of women in policymaking, development and
design of ICTs by establishing dialogue among them to open avenues for cooperation and joint action.

*Projects and incentives promoting balanced and diverse portrayal of women in media and communication*

**Concrete recommendation 15**  
Promote balanced and diverse portrayal of women and men in the media; combat the growing sexualisation and pornography in media products via a regional media watch project.

**Concrete recommendation 16**  
Create incentives for creative and visionary coverage of gender relations contributing to the emergence of a new gender culture. Encourage journalists to increase coverage of women’s positive contributions to society by encouraging journalists to present women as key actors, experts and opinion-makers.

**Concrete recommendation 17**  
Counter prevailing stereotypes of women from disadvantaged and immigrant communities by encouraging media coverage of their concerns.

**Concrete recommendation 18**  
Strengthen the key role of Public Service Broadcasting as an integral part of the shared culture of the Euro-Med region

*Self-regulatory mechanisms and monitoring*

**Concrete recommendation 19**  
Encourage self-regulation of media enterprises and support the joint development of a regional code of ethics by journalists associations and publishers.

**Concrete recommendation 20**  
Encourage the establishment of ombudswomen offices as well as independent self-regulatory bodies, where not existing, and ensure their gender parity.

**Concrete recommendation 21**  
Develop, in cooperation with such bodies, toolkits in the form of concrete checklists aimed at eliminating gender-biased language as a service to media professionals along the lines of guidelines for gender-fair use of language developed by leading academic institutions.

**Concrete recommendation 22**  
Establishment of a Euro-Med media watch project that will monitor the implementation of relevant legislation as well as media and communication products and expose cases of sexist portrayal of women.

*Research on women and communication*
Concrete recommendation 23
Increase public funding for research into all aspects of the impact of communication products on women and girls; identify their information needs and point to key agents of change. Fill the research gaps identified above and make recommendations on women-centred local as well as regional content.

Concrete recommendation 24
Compilation of a regional directory of women experts in all major fields of reporting (economy, politics, society, culture, science etc.).

Concrete recommendation 25
Establish, in cooperation with broadcasters, a regional video library on the portrayal of women to be used in gender-sensitising training of media professionals and the general public.

Gender-sensitization of students and media professionals

Concrete recommendation 26
Support academic institutions to design and offer gender-sensitising training programmes and curricula for media managers, editors, journalists and students of mass communication and journalism, enabling them to be vigilant against discriminatory and stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

Concrete recommendation 27
Create means to support a comprehensive training strategy on management, negotiation and leadership training for women, as well as mentoring systems to enhance women’s capabilities and potential for advancement in the media and ICT sectors, with a view to promote women’s media enterprises.

Concrete recommendation 28
Include into media literacy programmes for the public at large and for the educational system critical reflection on media products and discriminatory and stereotyped images of women.

Concrete recommendation 29
In line with the WSIS Tunis Agenda, support the development and use of ICTs as a resource for the empowerment of women and girls, to increase their involvement in political, economic, social and cultural spheres of life, as well as to enhance access to new employment opportunities.

Concrete recommendation 30
Create scholarships for girls and create concrete incentives to encourage their careers in ICT in order to increase the number of female students at all educational levels, including in distance and e-learning, in media- and ICT-related subjects, science and technology.

Advocacy and networking regarding women and communication

Concrete recommendation 31
Encourage advocacy groups to develop Euro-Med awareness raising campaigns on the crucial importance of eliminating discrimination against women for the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

**Concrete recommendation 32**
Strengthen national and regional networking among women’s and journalists’ organisations and improve their access to decision-makers by organising and financing regular regional meetings.

**Concrete recommendation 33**
Create a Euro-Mediterranean twinning and exchange programme for journalists and media professionals aiming to enhance professional standards and intercultural competence

**Improving the image of women as actor and subject in the field of artistic creation**

*Research on gender stereotypes and the status of women in cultural professions*

**Concrete recommendation 34**
Report on the representation of women in culture in the Euro-Med space under the supervision of competent academic institutions.

**Concrete recommendation 35**
The support and coordination of links between existing networks in the Euro-Med region, focusing on gender and research, presenting a possibility for cooperation in research projects as well as the exchange of information and best practices.

*Monitoring activities and initiatives of gender representations in cultural products (films, literature, music, etc)*

**Concrete recommendation 36**
The encouragement of studies on women in the art and cultural professions in the Euro-Med region in general, and in specific fields of artistic production where women are under-represented (such as music composition and cultural management decision-making).

**Concrete recommendation 37**
The support of monitoring activities of gender representation in culture in the Euro-Med region.

**Concrete recommendation 38**
The organization of a gender fair visual arts festival that focus on the historical development at the representation of women and men in mass culture.

**Concrete recommendation 39**
Launch a special initiative in design schools and departments that teach public relations/marketing for the production of advertisements that tackle gender relations in
innovative ways, followed by organization of an ‘alternative’ media/public service campaign on television, in the cinema theatres and on certain websites. The initiative should be designed and implemented according to the equal partnership scheme between European and Southern Mediterranean Institutions.

**Concrete recommendation 40**
Euro-Mediterranean Film Festival on gender quality

*Advancement of women artists in their careers and positive role models for female artists*

**Concrete recommendation 41**
To support campaigns for legislative changes that grant women more equity in the work space as well as flexible workplace measures that enable them to fulfill their family obligations without compromising career advancement.

**Concrete recommendation 42**
The creation of a “Euromed Cultural Passport” (EMCP) where all the formal and non-formal work in the cultural sector is recorded and recognized in the region.

**Concrete recommendation 43**
Mentoring schemes for emerging talents: professional and established women artists mentoring younger female students allowing them to enter informal networks, platforms to distribute their work or specific job opportunities.

*Recognition of the added value of women's artistic production and the contribution of women to the arts*

**Concrete recommendation 44**
The coordination of efforts to monitor the presence of women in evaluation committees or juries, the number of women receiving awards and grants and participating in cultural festivals/initiatives, the number of special awards for women.

**Concrete recommendation 45**
The promotion of art textbook revision to present and do justice to the contributions of women artists.

**Concrete recommendation 46**
Collection of statistical data reflecting gender differences and the presentation of gender-transparent data for artists at the national and regional levels.
Euro-Mediterranean Youth Workshop
for the Simulation
of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs
“The Role of Women in Society: How to Fight Against Social Stereotypes”
(Naples, Italy, 17 – 20 December 2005)

• Having no country mandate, yet empowered with the spirit, faith and energy of youth, and
• Gathered in the framework of the EuroMed Youth Workshop organised by the Fondazione Mediterraneo and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Between Cultures,
• The participants in the workshop, 70 young citizens, men and women, coming from all 35 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
• Express their gratitude to Fondazione Mediterraneo and Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Between Cultures for organising and hosting this workshop in Napoli.
• Aiming to deliver results that will have a positive impact for all citizens in the region;
• Supporting the creation of a peaceful, stable and secure region;
• Having studied the Five Years Work Programme adopted by the Euro-Mediterranean Summit in Barcelona on 28 November 2005;
• They invite the Euro-Mediterranean countries’ leaders to conceive and implement a roadmap for youth; and
• Present the following proposals to the Senior Officials of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership member countries (EuroMed Committee) for concrete and rapid actions which:

a) Extend political pluralism and participation by citizens, particularly women and youth, through the active promotion of a fair and competitive political environment, including fair and free elections;
b) Enable citizens to participate in decision-making at all levels including by increasing the decentralisation of governance and the management of public affairs and delivery of public services;

c) Increase the participation in quantity and quality of women in decision-making including in political, social, cultural and economic positions;

d) Ensure freedom of expression and association, including participation by facilitating the work of independent information providers and increasing access to information for all citizens;

e) Foster the role of civil society in accordance with national legislation as appropriate and enhance its capability through improved interaction with governments and parliaments;

f) Enable the further implementation of UN and Regional Charters and Conventions on civil, political, social and economic rights, particularly of women, to which they are party and promote the ratification and application of other instruments in this area;

g) Work towards employment and employability for the increasing numbers of young people and for women across the region, reducing regional poverty rates and closing the prosperity and gender gap;

h) Work towards achieving universal literacy by ensuring quality of access to, participation in, and completion of education by all people at all levels by 2015;

i) Ensure that by 2015 all children complete at least primary education;

j) Increase awareness and understanding of the different cultures and civilisations of the region, including through conservation and restoration of cultural heritage;

k) Promote inclusive and development-oriented information society paying attention to rural areas, encouraging the safe, constructive and responsible use of the Internet and IT, acknowledging the present gender gap and closing it;

l) Co-operate to combat discrimination, racism and xenophobia and to increase tolerance, understanding and respect of all religions and cultures;

m) Enhance the role of the media for the development of intercultural dialogue, through supporting the establishment of independent, multicultural and multilingual channels and portals;

n) Strengthen youth dialogue through the EuroMed Youth Platform and other Euro-Med initiatives and promote youth exchanges;
o) Support the work of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Between Cultures as a network of national networks, to improve intercultural understanding through regular dialogue, promotion and facilitation of exchanges and mobility and interaction between people at all levels;

p) Also support other organisations that work with youth and gender issues in the Euro-Med area;

q) Further develop the initiative by Fondazione Mediterraneo and the Anna Lindh Foundation to convene this first EuroMed Youth Workshop which should be continued as part of the new Five Years EuroMed Work Programme.

In light of the above-mentioned objectives, they recommend the following 5 clusters of actions:

I. For socio-economic integration of women

In order to combat stereotyping and promote the socio-economic status and integration of women they propose to set up national agencies within signatory States of the CEDAW, which would operate under the auspices of the U.N in order to:

- Promote self empowerment among women in social, economic and employment fields through the use of media campaigns and NGO publications,

- Nominate an Ombudsman Representative from which information could be sought and complaints of discrimination could be sent,

- Monitor compliance with the directives of the CEDAW.

II. For women’s accesses to knowledge and education

- Eliminate any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods.

- Establish centres and social programmes targeting the problem of illiteracy. Make the education easy and accessible.

- Make primary and secondary school obligatory and give financial support to the secondary school students. Reduce the number of female drop-outs and organise programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely. Create scholarships-fund for university students. Combat sexual harassment and discrimination in schools.
- Ensure an equal access to education and specially reaching out to rural areas and to people with disabilities. Improve the personal and educational infrastructure.
- Make women’s rights and intercultural learning subjects in school.

**III. For political integration of women**

- Promote civil society measures by strengthening non-governmental organizations that support gender equality.
- Assign a coordinator to promote gender equality and combat social stereotypes in the national media.
- Enforce the presence of a minimum of 30% female candidates in local, parliamentary and presidential elections.

**IV. For combating discrimination, violence and sexual exploitation**

3-level-method to fight against discrimination, violence and sexual abuse:

**Research:**

- Assign to non-governmental organizations and academic institutions the task of research about the presence and forms of discrimination, violence and sexual abuse in each country.
- Cooperation and networking with other governments to share the information on these issues.
- Make researches on how to reduce prostitution.

**Prevention:**

- It is necessary to give more importance to sexual education and it should be applied in different areas specially the rural areas, parents and children.
- Campaigning against all forms of domestic violence (psychological, physical, virtual) using different methods (eg. Media, etc.).
- Non-formal empowerment measures for women (eg. physical, moral, etc.).
- Avoid distorted image of genders in media (especially the use of the body).
- End gender-stereotyping through campaigns and non-formal education directed to different groups like men, women, children, etc. in different regions.
- Encourage the establishment and work of special NGOs working for the protection of prostitute women and for reducing prostitution (support of women, access to medical care, etc.)

**Palliative Measures:**
- To apply international conventions as soon as possible and integrate them into national law and bring regular reports to an international community.
- Protect women from sexual exploitation and fight trafficking and sex slavery.
- Creation of an independent ombudsperson institution.
- Cooperation between the governments and the civil society to support the NGOs by creating hotlines, physical protection, facilities to legal action.

V. For promotion and implementation of legislation regarding women’s status

1. State parties shall accord to women equality with men.

2. Appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women shall be taken.

3. Men and women should have the same rights and possibilities as parents, as well as the same right to decide the number and spacing of children.
   a. Every woman should have the right to use contraception and receive education regarding this issue.
   b. Every woman should be entitled to appropriate access to information and professional advice on deciding crucial issues of maternity without feeling pressured, forced or threatened, so as to freely make a decision.
   c. Every woman should have the right to divorce.

4. State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate prejudices and customary based on the idea of inequality between the sexes or on gender based stereotypes.

5. Promote the socialization of youth towards recognizing parenthood and child raising as a social and community-oriented process of contribution, growth and development for men, women and the society at large.

6. State parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women, and inform the population of the consequences of purchasing sex.