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The EESC to issue recommendations to improve the situation of women in the Mediterranean

On 8 October the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), gathering for its first plenary session since its recent renewal, is to discuss an information report on *The situation of women in the Euro-Mediterranean region*.

To address the problems faced by women in this area the EESC calls on the **European Commission** to:

- create networks and mechanisms - including funding and training - to help the Mediterranean region fully harness the potential of women workers and entrepreneurs;
- raise the issue of discrimination against women workers' rights during policy and strategy dialogue meetings with Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries;
- address women's rights as part of the reform of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

It also urges **Euromed countries** to:

- sign, ratify and implement international conventions on women's rights effectively;
- ban honour crimes immediately. It also calls for a debate on both shores of the Mediterranean to eradicate female gender mutilation by introducing effective sanctions for perpetrators along with campaigns to change societal attitudes.

Finally,

- the **social partners and civil society** should actively cooperate to find sustainable solutions to the challenges that are preventing women from entering/remaining in the labour market;
- the **media** should support women's rights to equality by portraying women fairly and justly, reflecting their expertise in economic, political and social fields;
- associations of self-employed men and women should provide **platforms for women in vulnerable situations** to help them develop their own micro-enterprises;
- **microfinance** should be encouraged as a useful tool for empowering women.

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The European Economic and Social Committee represents the various economic and social components of organised civil society. It is an institutional consultative body established by the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Its consultative role enables its members, and hence the organisations they represent, to participate in the EU decision-making process. The Committee has 350 members from across Europe, who are appointed by the Council of the European Union.

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