



Visit of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality of the European Parliament to Rwanda

Thursday 22 September 2016

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality of the European Parliament is promoting the rights of women and girls, both in the EU and in the world. In the last three days, we succeeded to organise a fruitful and highly interesting visit to Rwanda.

Rwanda is one of the countries with the highest number of female parliamentarians in the world and high number of female decision-makers, some of whom we had the possibility to meet. We very much appreciated the meetings with the Speaker of Parliament Donatille Mukabalisa, the Gender and Political Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, with the Minister for Gender and Family Promotion Diane Gashumba and with the members of the Forum for Women Parliamentarians.

We will forever remember the strong message of the Kigali Genocide Memorial. After the traumatic events of the 1994 genocide, Rwanda achieved great progress. The country was able to recuperate and look towards the future. And women played a great role in the reconstruction of the society.

There are still challenges to overcome, and we have visited very interesting projects trying to provide support to those that need it most. We have visited Solace ministries, helping orphans, widows or mothers with children by building communities. We were also impressed by the great work done by the Isange One Stop Center in the Kacyiru hospital, helping victims of gender based violence.

One of the most important priorities of our Committee is empowerment of women in all areas of life. Therefore we very much enjoyed the visit in the Akilah Institute, providing quality education to women and girls, who can then receive good quality offers of employment.

We are very pleased that the European Union is also funding projects in Rwanda in the area of governance and access to justice, that have positive effect on the equality between women and men. It is our common endeavour to achieve true equality.

The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The Union is guided by these values also in its external actions. In this respect, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on 23 May 2013 on Rwanda: case of Victoire Ingabire. The delegation has tried to meet with Ms Ingabire, which wasn't unfortunately possible this time. We hope that it can be organised at a future occasion.

In our Committee, we firmly believe in true equality being possible to be achieved in pluralistic and democratic societies, based on the principles of the rule of law.

We are looking forward to continuing our cooperation with Rwanda in order to achieve our common goals in the area of the promotion of the rights of women and girls and empowering them in all areas of life.