



EuroMed Feminist Initiative – Press Release

Combating Violence against Women in the Southern Mediterranean Region

Launched in January 1st 2019, EuroMed Feminist Initiative EFI and a consortium of member women's rights organizations in Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine, Algeria, Jordan and Egypt started implementing a three-year regional project "**Combating Violence against Women in the Southern Mediterranean Region**", funded by the EU. The overall objective is to contribute to the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the Southern Neighborhood States, by promoting a social environment that does not tolerate VAWG and where decision makers address it as a political priority.

The project supports a multipronged, comprehensive approach to VAWG and encompasses three main actions that are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, these are: 1) Launching a **Regional Campaign on Zero tolerance for violence against women and girls (VAWG)** to help to get violence out of the private sphere and to support changing of public attitudes. 2) Strengthening the **women's rights CSOs-led dialogue with decision makers** and contribute to the balance of power needed to achieve legal and policy change. 3) Establishing a **Regional Civil Society Observatory** to follow up on governmental commitments in the field of VAWG, women, peace and security (WPS) and preventing violent extremism (PVE) and to ensure improved collective knowledge to support the adoption and implementation of policies.

Following up on recommendations from the [Gender Regional Platform](#) (2015-2017), the [Civil Society Conference Declaration](#) (Nov 2017, Cairo) and the [Outcomes](#) of national follow up dialogues on the 4th Ministerial Declaration (2018), EuroMed Feminist Initiative with the consortium members - Information Center on the Rights of Women and Children ([CIDDEF](#)) in Algeria, Association for Appropriate Communication Techniques for Development ([ACT](#)) in Egypt, Arab Women Organization ([AWO](#)) in Jordan, [Association Najdeh](#) and Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering ([RD.F.L](#)) in Lebanon, Women's Action Union ([UAF](#)) in Morocco, the Federation of Women's Action Committees ([PFWAC](#)) and Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development ([PWWSD](#)) in Palestine and Tunisian Women's Association for Development and Research ([AFTURD](#)) - launches a **regional campaign on Zero tolerance for VAWG in the South Mediterranean**. The regional campaign captures common challenges in the region, such as legal discrimination, cultural stereotypes, social tolerance, impunity for perpetrators, putting stigma and blame on the victim and weak mechanisms of protection and care for women and girls victims of violence. At the same time, the campaign addresses priorities specific to the different national contexts, aiming to reach out to over one million people and involve a broad variety of national and local actors: from women's rights organization and broader civil society, to decision makers,

first respondents (police, social workers, judges), relevant Ministries, opinion makers, academics, school teachers and students, victims of violence and discrimination, and globally, the whole society, women and men aiming to challenge gender stereotypes and achieving social change. The campaign encourages the whole society to stand up against VAWG, to demand adoption of a comprehensive legislation that criminalizes all forms of VAWG, and the implementation of such legislation when it exists. A rights-based approach and gender equality in education has a particular focus.

Furthermore, the project aims at enhancing the capacities and work of CSOs and CBOs on VAWG while further developing and sustaining the structured policy dialogue led by women's rights organizations since 2015, before the UfM Ministerial Conference on women's rights, Cairo 2017. The dialogue addresses VAWG as a political priority and aims at developing a comprehensive legal framework on this crucial issue.

Moreover, the **Civil Society Regional Observatory** established in Amman since 1st January 2019 enables the civil society to follow up and monitor the implementation of the [4th UfM Ministerial Declaration](#) from November 27th 2017, in particular in the area of VAWG, women, peace and security (WPS) and preventing violent extremism (PVE). The Observatory gathers data and provides a regional perspective on the status of VAWG policies in the Southern Neighborhood States. It contributes to the inclusion of women's rights and ending VAWG in national legislative and policy debates, and to the social acknowledgement of women as actors of national security, underlining the importance of their role in the prevention of violent extremism.

This project strongly contributes to the ongoing efforts of civil society and governments alike, to eliminate violence against women and girls in the Southern Neighborhood States.

EuroMed Feminist Initiative is a policy network that encompasses women's rights organizations from the two shores of the Mediterranean. It provides expertise in the area of gender equality and women's rights as inseparable from democracy building and citizenship, advocates for political solutions to all conflicts, and for the right of peoples to self-determination.

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