



SOCIAL INCLUSION AND GENDER AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: CHALLENGES AND SUPPORTS IN THE MAGHREB REGION

Dialogue and capacity building of
local and regional authorities
in EU partner countries
in the fields of development
and local governance

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PLATFORMA
The European voice of **Local** and
Regional authorities for development



**Social inclusion and gender at the local level :
Challenges and supports in the Maghreb region**

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 4 |
| EDITORIAL | 5 |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 6 |
| DEFINITION OF THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH | 7 |
| SOCIAL INCLUSION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: WHAT IS AT STAKE IN THE MAGHREB? | 8 |
| What social inclusion, gender and local governance mean and imply | 8 |
| What is at stake in the Maghreb | 9 |
| Regional illustrations | 13 |
| THE EUROPEAN UNION'S SUPPORT TO SOCIAL AND GENDER INCLUSION | 17 |
| AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN THE MAGHREBB | |
| The European gender strategy in the Maghreb region | 17 |
| European and French financial instruments regarding gender equality on a local level | 20 |
| Good practices | 24 |
| FURTHER INFORMATION | 29 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 31 |



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EDITORIAL

PLATFORMA is the platform of European local and regional authorities in the field of development cooperation. Launched in the framework of the 2008 European Development Days in order to coordinate the voice of European local and regional authorities with the European Institutions, this network gathers 24 partners including, in France, the French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AFCCRE), which is one of the founding members.

In the framework of its activities and with the support of the European Commission, PLATFORMA initiated an ambitious three-year program for 2012-2015. Through the setting up of a regional seminar series (Latin America, Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eurasia, Mashrek and Maghreb) and the drafting of desk studies, this program aims on the one hand at contributing to the enhancement of the dialogue between the European Union Delegations and the local and regional authorities of the partner countries in order to favour the adjustment of the European support to the identified special needs of the region. On the other hand, it aims at identifying the potential support European local and regional authorities could provide in the framework of decentralised cooperation.

In that framework and on the basis of the conclusions of the 3rd Forum of local and regional authorities of the Mediterranean, of the work of the United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) gender equality committee and that of the Union for the Mediterranean, social inclusion of women at the local level was identified as a thematic priority, which is, besides, in direct link with the work of the AFCCRE.

Indeed, our association promotes the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, at the impetus of Jocelyne BOUGEARD, deputy mayor of Rennes and Head of the gender equality in local life committee of the AFCCRE. Initiated by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and launched in 2006, the Charta encourages local authorities to integrate gender issues in all their actions, including at the international level.

The AFCCRE has also been working for some time to promote the European dimension of decentralised cooperation. Beyond its involvement to the organisation of the regional seminar in Maghreb, our association decided to contribute to this PLATFORMA project through a study which aims at identifying the support provided by the European Union in the field of social inclusion of women in the Maghreb region as well as the potential added value of decentralized cooperation on this aspect, through a better integration of gender issues in the partnerships developed with the local and regional authorities of this region.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study raises the question of gender and social inclusion at the local level through two dimensions: a focus on the issues in the Maghreb region, and the financial supports available for the region in this area. These two dimensions are respectively examined in the first part and the second part of the document. As an illustration, policy, social and partnership examples are highlighted throughout the document. The last part gathers resources that the reader may consult for further reflection.

I. Social inclusion at the local level: what is at stake in the Maghreb?

The principle of social inclusion is multidimensional. It covers social, economic, political, civil, cultural, relational, digital, generational and gender areas. It has emerged as an objective of social policies at all levels as inequalities were growing at the global level and within States. Among social inequalities, gender inequality has been a universal and persistent issue. International law, but also development goals have put this priority high in the political agenda at the international, regional, national and local levels. Local public policies are a crucial level of action to prevent, diagnose and tackle local problems of social cohesion.

Statistics relating to equal economic opportunities, health, education and political participation of women are of concern for the Maghreb region. The region is at the bottom of the scale at the global level. Although the situations differ in the five countries considered here, some similarities can be observed particularly in the succession of progress and regression phases as far as the status of women is concerned. Overall the decentralisation system has not been completed enough to ensure that genuine social policies are implemented at the local level. However, the political transition caused by the Arab spring has raised expectations in terms of social, civil and decentralisation reforms.

The political representation of women has increased in recent years. Yet for the time being, the power struggle between reform and conservative movements may not bode well for significant progress in the area of women's inclusion in most of these countries.

II. The European Union's support to social and gender inclusion at the local level in the Maghreb

Enshrined in European law, equality between women and men is a core value of the European Union (EU) and thus of its external action. Based on several framework documents, the EU has developed a two-pronged approach: targeted actions in favour of equality between women and men in priority areas of development cooperation and gender mainstreaming in all of its actions.

For the Maghreb region, two regional strategies apply: the European neighbourhood policy and, for Mauritania, the Africa-EU strategic Partnership. Both have made gender equality a growing priority over the years. The EU action focusses on the policy dialogue at the bilateral and regional levels, in particular through the Union for the Mediterranean, and on the implementation of action plans. Nevertheless, the scope of such action is still difficult to assess.

In addition, the links between the European gender policy, the initiatives undertaken by local governments from the Maghreb and the institutional capacity building of the latter are barely developed and should be encouraged. Many local governments networks work in this perspective. The EU financial instruments will be renewed in January 2014 for a period of seven years. They range from bilateral cooperation with States to regional and cross-border cooperation, as well as thematic programmes and instruments. The French strategy, which has included a greater scope on "gender and development" since 2013, is also under scrutiny. France is the first donor for official development assistance in the Maghreb region. Its own supporting programmes for gender equality and for decentralised cooperation have been developed through the Ministry of Foreign affairs and the French Development Agency.



DEFINITION OF THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Initiated by PLATFORMA, the study is part of a broader set of research on issues that are specific to local governments in different regions of the world.

For the Maghreb region, three related studies have been conducted on the following themes:

- the national legal framework and the role of local governments in the possible evolution towards decentralisation;
- the regional dimension of development cooperation in the Maghreb;
- the decentralised cooperation with cities from the Maghreb.

This study intends to offer an introduction to the subject in a simple and concise manner. The intermediate goal is to raise the awareness of public stakeholders in the region but also in the EU Member States on issues related to social inclusion and gender equality, to promote some experiences already implemented, and feed reflections for the EU support to match even closer the region's challenges. Stimulating the debate in the region and encouraging more ambitious research work on these issues may be considered the ultimate goal of this document.

During this introductory work, some challenges have emerged and could not be fully tackled because of the scope of the study.

Firstly the geographical area is fairly heterogeneous at the political, geopolitical and economic levels. It embraces the member countries of the Arab Maghreb Union, an institution that has remained of a symbolic nature due to disputes between its members, in particular on the Western Sahara conflict. However, these countries share significant social, political and religious challenges although the Arab spring has made them particularly sharp and topical issues in some countries more than in others.

Then, this document falls into the category of "desk studies": it was based on a literature search and a few targeted interviews. Because it is a very specific issue, it has not been the subject of any other research work so far. Few indicators exist to assess the situation at the local level. There are few experiences in this field and the existing ones have not been disseminated. It is therefore difficult to both take stock of a state of play and analyse the actions' impacts from the available tools. The subject of the study, which is a crucial challenge for the social, political and economic development of the five countries considered, would deserve more ambitious means for more in-depth research work.

Finally, this publication coincides with the entry into force for a period of seven years of the new EU financial framework, which is discussed in the second part of the document. Whereas the 2007-2013 programmes could be analysed, the brand new programmes to start early 2014 could not be put into perspectives.

I. SOCIAL INCLUSION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: WHAT IS AT STAKE IN THE MAGHREB?

a. What social inclusion, gender and local governance mean and imply

Definitions

Maghreb: Means “where the sun sets” in Arabic. This term is used to define the region of North Africa, west of Egypt, as opposed to the Mashreq region (« where the sun rises »). In this document, it refers to the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) countries, which are as follows: Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya.

Local: Sub-national level where the mandate and powers of decentralised local governments apply.

Social inclusion: Opposite of social exclusion, this concept was used by the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1927-1998) to characterise the relations between individuals and social systems. Inclusion is multi-dimensional. It should cover the economic, social, cultural as well as political sectors of society.

Gender: Social relations between women and men, which refer to their attributions, roles, statutes and consecutive stereotypes. Such relations result from social, historical, and symbolical constructions and change continuously. The gender approach aims at a greater equality in social relations and the empowerment of women.

The concept of social inclusion has gained recognition as challenges subsequent to the liberal globalisation such as accelerated change, instability and fragmentation were leading the governments to redefine their social policies. Its opposite, exclusion, has emerged as a social trend since the second half of the twentieth century. It was a consequence of structural changes in societies, economic globalisation and eroded social roles relating to the family and the social class among others. Social stratification generating inequalities has increased although equality before the law has greatly improved in most countries in the world. Based on the theory of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, such continuous inequalities may be emphasised given that they are maintained by the cultural, economic and social capitals of individuals, whose decisions are conditioned by the socially constructed structures that they have interiorised.

An individual or a group may be considered excluded when he/she does not have access to basic human rights. Therefore, exclusion covers many dimensions such as social, economic, political, civil, cultural, relational, digital, generational and sexual dimensions. It can be reflected through poverty, unemployment or job insecurity, lack of education, disability, dependency, overload of household tasks, discrimination (based on sex, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic origin), or weakening community links.

Among social inequalities, gender inequality remains a major issue because of its persistence and its scope: it affects all countries in the world and potentially affects half of the population. The unequal and discriminatory treatment towards women is reflected in all spheres of our lives in society. It recalls how important it is to make equal social relationships a priority of social policies at all levels, including at the local level.

This may be justified by the law. Equality between women and men and the rejection of any form of discrimination based on sex lie at the heart of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Since 1979, the vast majority of States has ratified the international Convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW). In 1995, the 189 States attending the Beijing world Conference on women unanimously adopted the twelve objectives of the proposed Action Plan¹.

¹ The 1995 world Conference on women is a milestone. The Beijing Declaration consolidated and further clarified the work launched twenty years earlier. Governments acknowledged that « Equal rights, opportunities and access to resources, equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women, and a harmonious partnership between them are critical to their well-being and that of their families as well as to the consolidation of democracy ».



This may also be justified by efficiency. The OECD Development Centre's work demonstrates a correlation between the reduction of gender discrimination and the improvement of key development indicators. According to this source, the probability that teenage girls are infected with HIV is for example two times higher than boys in countries where there is no law against domestic violence². Similarly, in another sector, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) considers that if women had equal access to productive resources (land, inputs, credit, training, technologies), they would produce 20-30% more, enough to save 100 to 150 million people from hunger in the world³.

Another question arises yet. What is the border between inclusion and exclusion? What social criteria allow assessing that an individual or a group is included and that a social policy is successful? If we look at inclusion through employment, the issue becomes particularly important for women, whose level of participation in the labour force is lower than that of men in most countries, especially in the Maghreb region. For example, would the recognition of informal jobs or unpaid work increase social inclusion?

Faced with such complex issues, multiple levels of action are required. At the local level, public policies may be particularly effective for diagnosing areas or groups at risk or in situations of exclusion, defining and implementing local actions towards social inclusion with social and economic partners and the civil society. Local policies for social inclusion should then ensure universal access to basic services and the respect of human rights. Six dimensions of inclusion corresponding to six basic human needs should be taken into account and inflected with a gender approach: employment, social welfare, recognition, education, social interaction and participation⁴. In concrete terms, overcoming gender inequalities involves achieving the following goals:

- Building the capacities of girls and women to live a free life (in terms of contraception and marriage),
- Free and equal access of women to justice and the protection against any form of violence,
- Free and equal access of women to services, particularly (sexual and reproductive) health and education,
- Access to decent work and equal opportunity in the workplace,
- Participation of women in economic, political and social decision making

As much as possible, local governments should use a preventive approach for social issues. This implies, on the one hand, to work on all the six aforementioned dimensions. On the other hand, this means to establish local diagnoses of needs at the basis of their action. Vocational training for administrations, cross sector coordination, evaluation and financial sustainability are crucial success factors of these local policies.

b. What is at stake in the Maghreb

Tentative progress in regional statistics

At the world level, the women's access to health, education, their political participation and economic activity have generally increased since the second half of the twentieth century. This was mainly a result of opening up of economies, of accelerated recognition thanks to feminist movements and the pressure put by the first international conferences on equality. In the run up for the 2015 international conference on women, however, vigilance is called for given the rise of conservatism, which questions some of the international acquis since the Beijing action plan in 1995.

² *Transforming social institutions to prevent violence against women and girls and improve development outcomes*, OECD, March 2013.

³ *Women, key to food security*, FAO at work, 2010-2011.

⁴ *Social inclusion and participatory democracy, from conceptual discussion to local action*, AUB, IGOP, UCLG Commission on social inclusion, participatory democracy and human rights, 2010.

The situation of women's social inclusion is of particular concern in the Maghreb region. A key figure: while the United Nations establish that a minimum rate of 30% of elected women is needed to ensure that their needs are taken into account in public policies, in 2013, women represent 17.6% of parliamentarians in North Africa. According to the 2013 UN report on the achievement of the Millennium development goals, the region is no longer the last one at the global level, but remains however below the world average, which stands at 21%⁵. According to the Global Gender Gap report directed by the World Economic Forum⁶, the Middle East and North Africa region is the only one that has not improved its score in 2013. The report ranked 136 countries based on their ability to bridge the gap between genders in four key areas: health and survival, education attainment, political empowerment and economic participation and opportunity.

The Maghreb countries face a complex and heterogeneous situation. A succession of progress phases and regression phases has been observed. In Algeria, for example, women took a very active part in the independence war. Universities were open to both women and men at the independence. But women have paid a heavy price during the dark decade of terrorism in the 1990s. Today, whereas the article 42 of the 1984 Constitution establishes equality, the family code yet still forces women to have a *wali*, i.e. a guardian.

The Arab spring, the hopes for a democratic transition and local governance

The Arab spring, which drew its roots in Tunisia, has blown a wind of freedom and social, economic and political demands in the region. Although not all the five countries were directly affected by this groundswell, the latter has influenced their societies and generated new debates and even new resistances. In the Arab world, the Maghreb countries were the first countries experiencing these movements, in which civil society played an important catalyst role. It is still early to assess the impact of the Arab spring, in particular due to the forces at work in these countries. Reform movements and conservative movements have different visions of society, which in particular impact the issues of social inclusion and social relationships between women and men. On the one hand, the influence of the hard-line society patterns imported from the Gulf countries is growing. On the other hand, more than anywhere else in the Arab world, civil society, including many feminist movements, is getting structured and wants to seize the opportunity for a national and local democracy.

Furthermore, at the local level, the ability of the Maghreb local governments to implement social inclusion policies and public services towards a greater inclusion should be put into perspective with their legal, administrative, and financial power. Presently, in any of the five countries, decentralisation is mature enough, neither legally nor in terms of financial transfers, to consider implementing efficient local public services, which would tackle gender inequalities. Nevertheless, the on going reforms in Morocco or the constitutional work underway in Tunisia and in Libya offer an opportunity to strengthen local governments and to make local governance a condition of democracy.

The overall situation country by country

Mauritania

The democratic transition led from 2005 to 2007 resulted in local, legislative and presidential elections deemed impartial according to international observers. However, the country experienced a new coup d'état in 2008, legitimised by elections won in the first round the following year. At the local level, the 2006 elections honoured the achievement of the decentralisation process. Yet, as highlighted in the UCLGA and Cities Alliance report in 2013, the system of financial transfers to the decentralised authorities remains unpredictable, and the local tax system underdeveloped⁷.

As far as the political representation of women is concerned, despite the introduction of a quota of 20% of women elected in 2006, a decline was observed in the allocation of administrative positions: the country has no woman Ambassador, wali (Governor) or hakem (Prefect). Before the elections of November 2013, among 216 mayors, only 5 were women.

⁵ <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2013/French2013.pdf>

⁶ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2013.pdf

⁷ *Assessing the institutional environment of local governments in Africa*, Cities Alliance, UCLGA, 2013



This led the group of advocacy initiatives for women political participation to request the amendment of the law in order to establish new quotas: 33% of the seats at the national Assembly, 33% at the Senate and 50% in the municipal Councils. This claim remained unsuccessful. An even lower representation of women should result from the new national list of 20 seats reserved for women in local elections, a system that was agreed following the national dialogue concluded in October 2011.

In the law, according to the Personal Status Code, women remain minors (who may be married by their guardian if the latter sees an obvious interest – article 6). In practice, according to the “Africa for women’s rights” campaign, the marriage of minors persists and sexual violence is rarely punished⁸.

Morocco

The Moroccan political system is quite stable. The institutional environment of local governments is the most favourable of the five countries under scrutiny⁹. 16 regions, 26 prefectures, 45 provinces and 1547 municipalities were recognised in the 2011 Constitution. The equivalent of 30% of the VAT is transferred by the State to the municipalities. The resources collected by local governments represent 49% of total local resources. The territorial reform emanating from the new Constitution is promising, although it has not been fully implemented yet.

The 2011 Constitution enshrines the principle of equality between women and men, particularly in civil rights. This should enable the implementation of existing laws and the compliance of Moroccan legislation with international declarations. As far as the political representation of women is concerned, the 2009 reform of the electoral code establishes a minimum rate of 12% for local elections. As a result, in 2009, 3424 women were elected municipal councillors (i.e. 12%), whereas only 127 women were elected in 2003. However, only 12 of them were elected chairpersons of municipal Councils. At for the House of Representatives, only 60 seats are reserved for women (i.e. 15%). In November 2011, 66 women were elected members of Parliament (i.e. 16.7%) whereas 34 women were elected in 2007 (i.e. 10.5%).

Progress has been timid. The reform of the Family Code (Moudawana) in 2004 established the shared responsibility of spouses, the divorce by mutual consent and the legal age of marriage at 18 years. Morocco became, with Tunisia, a regional example. Legal loopholes remain however, and jurisprudence in favour of the conservative tradition has been established. Proof of this is the continuously increasing number of marriages of minors in the country. In 2012, a year after the adoption of the new Constitution, the whole country was in shock with the Amina Filali case. This 16-year old Moroccan girl killed herself after being forced to marry her rapist – the Penal Code cancels the proceedings against an abductor or rapist if the latter marries his minor victim. According to feminist associations, many challenges remain, among others: domestic violence, abortion, legislative revision on inheritance, polygamy, women’s access to administration and equal political representation¹⁰.

Algeria

As the 2014 presidential elections approach, the system remains highly centralised. The Constitution is neutral on local governments. The *wilaya* is the main unit of territorial administration, simultaneously a deconcentrated administration and a local government endowed with a people’s assembly. Financial transfers from the central government to the local governments are irregular. In addition, the mismatch between the powers of local governments and the resources allocated to them is emphasised in the 2013 UCLGA and Cities Alliance assessment. Local taxation consists of taxes determined at the central level¹¹. In practice, decentralisation is limited given that the central State has rather favoured a regional deconcentration.

After examination at the Parliament, the 2012 law related to women’s opportunities to access elected assemblies fixed an imperative rate of women’s representation on the candidates’ lists for legislative and municipal elections and within the *wilayas*, proportionally with the number of seats to be filled. With 143 women elected out of 331 members of Parliament in total, some real progress was made in the 2012 elections. They were only 30 in 2007 and 25 in 2002¹².

⁸ <http://www.africa4womensrights.org> – Mauritania Campaign.

⁹ Morocco’s score was 30/40 in *Assessing the institutional environment of local governments in Africa*, Cities Alliance, UCLGA, 2013.

¹⁰ Jeune Afrique (consulted on 2 December 2013)

<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Articles/Dossier/JA2741p074.xml0/maroc-pjd-parite-mohammed-viau-maroc-etre-une-femme-liberee-c-est-pas-si-facile.html>

¹¹ *Assessing the institutional environment of local governments in Africa*, Cities Alliance, CGLUA, 2013.

¹² 2013 directory « The Algerian woman in figures », CIDDEF, 2013.

In the region, Algeria is the only country that has more than 30% of women in the Parliament. At the local level however, women represent only 16% of local councillors in 2012¹³.

At the social level, the major stumbling block remains the Family Code, which came into force in 1984, incorporating components of the Sharia law. Despite its revision in 2005, it is still the most restrictive of the Maghreb countries. To get married, women must have the approval of a *wali*, i.e. a guardian, even when they are legally adults. Even though more severe regulation applies, polygamy is maintained. Mothers have not fully gained parental authority. Finally, unequal access to inheritance remains. For many years, many feminist associations have fought for abolishing this code, in vain. Furthermore, the decade of terrorism caused trauma, which is hard to overcome with the non-recognition of a status for victims.

Tunisia

The 2011 revolution nurtures hopes of democratic transition in this highly centralised country, yet with highly educated women and a flourishing civil society.

As for local governance, the principle of free administration by local governments is absent from the constitutional and legislative system. Decentralisation comprises of two levels: the municipality (municipal Councils are elected by universal suffrage), and the governorate (Governors are appointed by the President of the Republic). Financial transfers from the central government are unstable, and local governments do not have any autonomous fiscal power¹⁴. Following the dissolution of municipal Councils early 2011, special delegations were appointed at the head of municipalities for a specified period of time. Waiting for a date setting the next municipal elections, they remain in office for now. With the future Constitution, what is at stake for municipalities is the guarantee to get greater powers (and no longer be excluded from many urban services) and to create new economic regions.

The country was long regarded as a regional model with its Personal Status Code in 1956. Since the revolution in 2011 however, retrograde views have been expressed more easily. In August 2012, the first draft Constitution enshrined complementarity rather than equality between women and men. Following the public outcry, it was withdrawn. The vote on the Constitution has not been held yet. In 2013, there is a slight decrease in the political representation of women within the Government or in senior civil service appointments compared to 2010. For example, the Government currently comprises of only 7.85% of women compared to 12.5% in 2010, while women are appointed to only 15.2% of public service executive positions compared to 17.4% in 2010¹⁵.

Libya

Few indicators are available to analyse the Libyan situation. After the revolution, the 2012 polls appointed 200 members of the General National Congress to take over from the National Transitional Council (NTC). The current 68 local Councils were established under the NTC, but administrations remain under the supervision of the Government. The 59 Bill on local self-government, which was adopted in 2012, will be effective only after the local elections, which will confirm the creation of 90 municipalities (Decree No. 520 of September 2013). In June 2013, the Cyrenaica Council proclaimed the autonomy of this region. As a reference, the promoters of federalism use the 1951 Constitution, which divided the country into three administrative regions before the federal system was removed in 1963. Institutional issues as regards decentralisation focus on setting the budgetary powers, establishing municipal structures, training staff and agreeing on the role of minorities (Imazighen and Toubou). Sectors such as port management, health and education, among others, will probably be decentralized¹⁶.

Women took an active part in the revolution. 600 women were able to run for the 2012 elections. 33 of them were elected, which represents 16% of the present members of Parliament¹⁷. 60 members of the Commission in charge of drafting the Constitution are to be elected during the poll on 24 December 2013 (if the date is not postponed). This will be a crucial step to assess the evolution of women's rights in Libya.

¹³ Algérie News Info (consulted on 2 December 2013) <http://www.algerienews.info/la-representativite-des-femmes-recule/>

¹⁴ *Assessing the institutional environment of local governments in Africa*, Cities Alliance, UCLGA, 2013.

¹⁵ Jeune Afrique (consulted on 2 December 2013),

<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/JA2740p052.xml0/tunisie-islamisme-discriminations-femmes-tunisienntunisie-tout-feu-tout-femmes.html>

¹⁶ Civil Initiatives Libya (consulted on 2 December 2013), <http://cil.org.ly/en/>

¹⁷ Opinion Internationale (consulted on 5 December 2013),

http://www.opinion-internationale.com/2013/06/09/en-libye-les-femmes-font-la-guerre-et-perdent-leurs-droits_18044.html



On 4 December 2013, the General National Council voted in favour of the implementation of the Shariah, which is a first warning signal. "Islamic law is the source of legislation in Libya. All institutions in the country must comply", says the Parliament in its statement¹⁸.

Regional illustrations

Social cohesion at the heart of local action in Tevragh Zeina, Mauritania

* The municipality

Tevragh Zeina is one of the nine municipalities of Nouakchott. In 2003, the town had 53,000 inhabitants (around 69,000 according to the current estimation). Dubbed "capital of the capital" by its Mayor, Fatimetou Mint Abdel Malik, Tevragh Zeina concentrates the majority of the socio-economic infrastructure of the city as well as the political headquarters, diplomatic missions and international organisations. Its social fabric is however contrasted. Residential neighbourhoods stand alongside pockets of poverty, in particular in the slum environments in the medina.

* In 2001, Fatimetou Mint Abdel Malik was the only woman Mayor in Mauritania. She is now running for her third mandate

Fatimetou Mint Abdel Malik was first elected in 2001. She was the only woman Mayor in the country. She was re-elected in 2006. Following the first round of the municipal elections on 23 November 2013 (which were originally planned in 2011), Fatimetou Mint Abdel Malik was in a strong position for the second round. She has been involved in civil society organisations for a long time. In 1997, she was elected President of the national coordination of the women's associative movement in Mauritania, then President of the Sahelian women network (REFESA). Between 2007 and 2008, she was appointed Secretary General of the Ministry of urban development before taking over the municipality in April 2008.

* Primary social needs in the municipality

- Access to care
- Access to education
- The economic inclusion of the youth and women in particular
- Waste management
- Safety in public space

* Projects implemented

The Mayor has made social service a priority. Operating this service represents the first budget heading of the municipality following this of staff, which comprises of support to the disabled and orphans among other. The level of service offered is unmatched in the other municipalities of the country. The poorest patients can get free medical care for example. This service is well known and probably one of the most visited of the capital city. «People come from afar to be received in our centre» indicates Mrs Abdel Malik.

Sports and cultural activities have been implemented on behalf of the youth. Three green spaces have been constructed with playgrounds for children and a self-lighting system with solar energy. The creation of a local radio station is underway. Such actions aimed at strengthening social cohesion at the local level, as well as the dynamics guiding them, have already allowed a net decline of local crime.



¹⁸ Jeune Afrique (consulted on 5 December 2013) <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAWEB20131204190720/>

Socio-cultural support provided by the municipality

| Grants | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Grants to mosques | 1 400 000 | 1 400 000 | 1 400 000 | 1 400 000 | 1 400 000 |
| Grants to mahadras | 1 300 000 | 1 300 000 | 1 300 000 | 1 300 000 | 1 300 000 |
| Cultural et sports grants | 1 300 000 | 1 300 000 | 13 000 000 | 34 600 000 | 28 100 000 |
| Grants to school works | 1 700 000 | 1 700 000 | 3 000 000 | 1 500 000 | 1 500 000 |
| Other grants | 1 600 000 | 1 630 000 | 1 600 000 | 2 000 000 | 2 000 000 |
| Relief to the needy | 4 000 000 | 3 500 000 | 6 500 000 | 6 500 000 | 9 500 000 |
| Grants to social associations | 1 500 000 | 1 500 000 | 2 000 000 | 4 000 000 | 4 000 000 |
| TOTAL (*UM Unit) | 12 802 008 | 12 332 009 | 28 802 010 | 51 302 011 | 47 802 012 |

Source: Municipality of Tevragh Zeina

The municipality has implemented the following actions for women's social inclusion:

- Financial and technical support to women's cooperatives;
- Financing training courses for girls in school drop-out and mentoring workshops on economic inclusion;
- Holding training sessions for district leaders, who mostly are women, which has allowed organising the waste collection and management since 2001 (now devolved to the urban community);
- Supporting "productive families" through assistance in the creation of income-generating activities for mothers (goat-rearing, vegetable selling among others) and funding part of their working capital or purchase of carts;
- Funding workshops on economic opportunities for young boys in order to increase the family incomes in cases where women are heads of the family.

* Involvement in the REFELA

Fatimetou Mint Abdel Malik has been President of the Network of locally elected women in Africa (REFELA) since December 2012. This is a body of UCLG Africa representing locally elected women from the five African sub regions. Its objective is to strengthen women's representation within municipalities as well as in all political or administrative executive positions.

Mrs Abdel Malik is also President of the Mauritanian network of local elected women. She got strongly involved in the creation of this association in 2012. Throughout 2013, a caravan bringing together REFELA members from all political parties did a road tour in Mauritania to meet women, either elected or from the civil society. Whereas the political representation of women has recently declined in the country, the goal was to publicize the network, share ideas in order to better diagnosis continuous obstacles and consider new solutions.

In the name of equal access to property and inheritance, The struggle of the Soulaliyates women in Morocco

* Discrimination inherited from the past

Collective land represents the greatest concentration of land and natural resources in Morocco. They historically belonged to certain ethnic groups. The royal decree (Dahir) of 1919 regulated the practices of customary groups and thus placed collective land under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior. Such pieces of land can be passed down only to men when they reach the age of 16. Still deprived of the right to possess land, the Soulaliyates women have therefore remained away from the reform of the *Moudawana* (Family Code) in 2004. There are more than 40 000 Soulaliyate tribes in Morocco, spread in 48 *wilayas* (provinces).



*** This illegal situation was going worse with time**

For these women, the situation became even worse with the financial transfer of land to public and private real estate agencies, in particular in the province of Kenitra, which has been allowed since the 1990s. Financial or real estate compensation have benefited only to men, causing the expropriation of divorced or widowed women, but also of women married to “foreigners” – i.e. Moroccan men outside the tribe – or without male descendant.

This situation did not comply with the international Convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), which requires that States “take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women » (Article 2).

*** Time for mobilising the public**

Since 2007, a core of Soulaliyate women has got together to campaign for equal rights to inheritance and property on the collective lands. They have been supported by the Democratic Association of Moroccan women (ADFM), which set up a partnership with the competent Ministry, at the central, regional and local levels.

In addition, with the support of UN women, the ADFM provided training on economic empowerment and leadership skills, community engagement and public speaking. This has enabled women to better structure their community groups and give greater echo to their campaign.

*** Crucial legal progress was made**

Campaigns and high-profile press conferences organised by Soulaliyate women contributed to mobilising the public, and resulted in significant legal progress.

In 2010, a first circular of the Ministry of the Interior ordered the provincial authorities to ensure that the principle of sex equality was respected during transfers of lands, whether by sale or inheritance. Based on this decision, women's rights to sell and inherit from the communal lands was then acknowledged throughout the kingdom. In the spring of 2012, a new circular from the Ministry of the Interior gave men and women equal rights to benefit from revenues and profits earned with their lands.

The Ministry of the Interior now strives to disseminate information on this decision, in particular through a website (www.terrescollectives.ma).

However, such progress has its limitations given that these ministerial directives do not have the status of law. The Soulaliyate women now fight for a law establishing equal rights for women and men in terms of property of collective land as well as incomes and compensations deriving from the land. The ADFM is still supporting Soulaliyate women, in particular through the training of a few leaders and spokespersons for the movement.

*** Further information:** www.adfm.ma (see file on « terres collectives »)

Developing income generating activities,

A shared concern for Algerian, Egyptian, Moroccan and Tunisian women

*** At the source of the action**

Five associations committed to women's access to employment in different Mediterranean countries joined forces in a South-South partnership in 2010. This followed previous common experiences. Some associations were specialised in economic activities, such as microcredit, while others conducted social activities. Together, they made these two approaches complementary towards a unique goal: the women's access to and control of their resources and their empowerment.

So started the GEPE project (*Genre et Économie Pluri'Elles*, in French) in February 2011, during the Tunisian revolution, which could only confirm the objectives of the action.



* Partners

The action is managed by the information centre on children and women rights (CIDDEF) in Algeria, with the support of the French association BATIK International. It also gathers the Moroccan association Attadamoune, the Egyptian association for comprehensive development (EACD) and the Tunisian union of social solidarity – development assistance committee (UTSS CAD). The action is supported by the European Commission, the Ile de France Region, the French committee for international solidarity and the French development agency.

* Objectives and activities

The final objective is the reduction of inequalities between women and men through free and equal access to employment and the creation of income-generating activities for women. The project aims to raise the economic stakeholders' awareness while providing women with the means to change their lives and to be empowered socially and economically.

The project is based on a local and therefore differentiated approach in each of the four partner countries. First, a study was conducted to identify traditionally masculinised sectors in which women could get employed in each country.

Based on this diagnosis, each association implemented support services for female volunteers to be included in such activity sectors. Various services were proposed according to the countries. They revolved mainly around training, individual monitoring and coaching and auditing of activities once launched.

The second pillar of the action was awareness raising. Changing mentalities of economic stakeholders turned out to be a crucial component for the success of this project. Partners therefore targeted enterprises, employment agencies, trade unions and consular chambers, regional and/or national departments of the Ministry of Labour and vocational training centres through various media: information meetings, distribution of brochures, interviews with policy makers.

* Challenges faced

Throughout the countries, raising the awareness of economic stakeholders has been a real challenge. This was probably a result of both the partners' lack of experience in working with these actors and the low level of priority given to this issue in a transition context. Unequal roles and attributions of women are still parts of the mindsets, and have represented barriers that partners had to overcome.

So far, the challenge has lied more at the level of recognition for women's work than at the level of equal opportunities. An important work of anticipation and close contacts with community structures and heads of families had to be conducted to bypass obstacles. At the institutional level, the mobilisation of public authorities remained low, particularly in countries in political transition, and will be a priority for future action.

* The assets of South-South cooperation

During the project, each partner independently developed its activities according to the country needs. In parallel, sharing expertise between partners was also a strong component of the project because of similar socio-economic and gender backgrounds. Seminars for sharing experiences were organised in turn by the partners on topics of common interest, with field visits. Their objectives were to put the activities in perspective and encourage the transfer of efficient and innovative practices between countries. Experts' visits were also organised in the various countries. On this ground, drawing from the Egyptian experience, the Moroccan association Attadamoune has for example worked on diversifying its services (training and support/coaching in addition to traditional microcredit).

* First results

7500 final beneficiaries have been identified since 2011. In total, more than 600 women underwent training. In 2012, 300 women were accompanied in their job search. 140 representatives of enterprises, public institutions, professional federations participated in awareness raising activities.

* Perspectives

Given the magnitude of the needs identified, partners have joined forces to continue their action in 2014 and 2015, with the support of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Priority will be given to raising the awareness of economic and institutional stakeholders including local governments.

* Further information: <http://www.pluri-elles.org>





II. THE EUROPEAN UNION'S SUPPORT TO SOCIAL AND GENDER INCLUSION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN THE MAGHREB

a. The European gender strategy in the Maghreb region

The European strategy for gender equality in development cooperation

When it comes to gender equality in development cooperation, the European Union primarily seeks to promote the value throughout the world in the name of Human Rights and fundamental freedoms. It's also a matter of social justice. But even aside from those principles and the related political dialogue, the question of equality between women and men is also for the EU one of the backbone of growth and poverty reduction throughout the world¹⁹, more particularly in the Maghreb region. Therefore, it is also a question of efficiency.

Women represent 52% of the population of Africa, take part in 75% of agricultural work, and market 60 to 80% of the foodstuff produced. They are without a doubt at the core of sustainable social and economical development. However, whether in the field of the economy, of employment or access to capital, of social and political emancipation, of education or healthcare, or even of basic respect for human rights and physical integrity, great inequalities between women and men subsist all over the world, slowing down the process of reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)²⁰. This is why, despite the complexity of gender inequalities and the many forms they can take, any consistent development policy must incorporate the issue in its general approach.

The Lisbon Treaty signed in December 2007 must give Europe a clear voice in relations with its global partners and put the EU's economical, political, diplomatic and humanitarian power at the service of its interests and values throughout the world. The European Union's external action therefore seeks to promote the fundamental values that supported the construction of Europe, to preserve peace, to support sustainable development in developing countries, and to come to the aid of vulnerable populations. The Lisbon Treaty also allowed to incorporate into European law the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, which establishes gender equality as an intrinsic value of the European Union and of its external action.

Development cooperation is probably one of the most important levers²¹ amongst the various aspects of the EU's external action regarding the advancement of equality between women and men. Indeed, it allows the European Union to establish choice relations with partner countries thanks to a regular sustained political dialogue fostering joint development strategies, all funded with proper financial tools.

Since 2005, European development cooperation has been supported by the European Consensus on Development²². This document guarantees that gender equality is a core value of the European Union's external action and sets out a double approach to equality: actions targeted towards women in a number of priority areas of European development cooperation (conflict prevention, human development, social cohesion and employment) coupled with making all the EU's actions gender sensitive (mainstreaming approach). Finally, the document expressly refers to international texts about gender equality²³, thereby fully announcing its intention to help attain their goals.

¹⁹ European Consensus on Development, 2005

²⁰ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

²¹ The EU and its member states account for more than half of the world's official development assistance.

²² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:046:0001:0019:EN:PDF>

²³ See above, p. 6.

The European strategy for support on gender issues was defined in 2007 in the Communication on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development Cooperation²⁴ by the European Commission. This document set out two goals: firstly, to increase the efficiency of the mainstreaming approach to gender, and secondly to reinforce actions targeted at women. In order to implement the first point, the European Commission proposed to reshape its political actions, cooperation instruments and services, with the aim to better reflect gender. This requires to put accountability and impact assessment mechanisms into place. The institutional capacity of the EU's partners and services should be reinforced with the issue in mind. The communication also defined specific areas of priority EU intervention: governance, employment and access to economical capital, education, health and violence towards women.

The strategy was taken up and adopted by the EU in 2010 in a plan of action²⁵ allowing to follow the EU's progress in that domain and documenting the strategy's impact on the situation of women throughout the world. Lastly, the European Commission created a toolkit²⁶ to implement gender equality policies in country programming and at every stage of delivering external aid. These framework documents define the European strategy on gender equality. They are supplemented by all regional strategic documents, and particularly the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The European strategy for gender equality in the Maghreb region

The European Union's foreign policy towards the Maghreb countries is framed by two distinct regional strategies: the European Neighbourhood Policy, which concerns all four countries bordering on the Mediterranean sea, and the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership for Mauritania. Both consider gender equality as a priority.

The European Neighbourhood Policy allows the EU to reinforce its relations with the Maghreb countries. It is supported by a commitment of the EU and its partners to common values such as democracy, respect for human rights, rule of law, good governance, the principles of market economy, and sustainable development. Its goal, amongst others, is to support "*policies that promote gender equality*"²⁷, particularly in terms of access to education and health care or protection of human rights. In 2011, following the Arab spring²⁸, the European Union reviewed its neighbourhood policy and reinforced its commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms. Thus the EU is "*fully in support of gender equality*".

In the case of Mauritania, the revised Cotonou Agreement (2010), which rules the relations between the European Union and the African-Caribbean-Pacific group, fully includes the theme of gender equality whether in the principles and goals supporting the partnership or in the approach chosen. The matter of gender is acknowledged as a mainstreaming issue and must be fully integrated to the agreements signed by partner countries in all their components.

The commitments established in those documents translate into bilateral relations between the EU and its partners, particularly in the preparation or review of Country Strategy Papers and in cross-border or regional cooperation programmes. At a regional level, the Union for the Mediterranean gathers all European and Mediterranean countries (including Mauritania) and promotes economical integration along with democratic advancement. In this context was created a social, cultural and human partnership, especially regarding the promotion of gender equality.

As a consequence, the fourth Ministerial Conference on strengthening the role of women in Euro-Mediterranean society was held in Paris in September 2013. The ministries of all EU and Mediterranean countries reasserted their support to equal participation to political, economical, civil and social life for both women and men. They also committed to fight all forms of discrimination against women and young girls. Last but not least, they asked for a change in attitude and behaviour in order to help the emancipation of women not only in the law but in actual practice. A Euro-Mediterranean forum on strengthening the role of women in society is due to open in order to foster a real dialogue about the policies and legislation affecting women, and about their implementation²⁹.

²⁴ COM(2007)100, http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/gender/index_en.htm

²⁵ To consult here: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st11/st11080.en10.pdf>

²⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sp/gender-toolkit/index.htm>

²⁷ The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

²⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com_11_303_en.pdf

²⁹ <http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/34-13-REV4-Draft-Ministerial-Conclusions-Women.pdf>



The Union for the Mediterranean also supports various regional projects working for the advancement of gender equality (access to employment, to higher studies, to autonomy).

The EU's actions to improve the social inclusion of women in the Maghreb region takes the form of a political dialogue – both regional and bilateral –, the integration of the general theme to the national and regional Strategy Papers, and the implementation of action plans. This leaves room for an evolution of the legal framework (family law, civil liberties, labour law, actual protection against violence) and for the implementation of actions for the emancipation of women. The multi-annual Strategy Papers of all five Maghreb countries also reflect the double-sided European approach: identifying sectors where specific intervention could be put in place and considering the gender dimension in all actions taken. For example, any action taking gender into account is identified as a priority regarding employment in Algeria, education in Morocco, decentralisation in Mauritania. In the same way, actions are being put into place to tackle the specific issues of women's rights and social and political emancipation, most notably in Tunisia.

However, the scope of European actions is still difficult to assess. Indeed, actions such as these are still rare in the Maghreb countries' Strategy Papers and are therefore the result of a thematic rather than mainstreaming approach. Impact assessment indicators and criteria are not yet developed enough. Finally, there is also a lack of incentive – or even coercive, if necessary – mechanisms to push the partner countries to speed up their gender equality action.

Building links between the European action and the local authorities' initiatives

The third Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on strengthening the role of women in society (held in September 2013) acknowledged how important local authorities were in this fight and supported their action towards better social inclusion for women. That was a first step towards a deeper collaboration between the European Union and local authorities on that particular issue.

Acknowledging the role of local authorities as actors of development cooperation was a relatively new feat for the EU and arose mostly from the European Commission's communications of 2007 and 2013³⁰ as well as from the European Charter on Development cooperation in support of local governance³¹. Local authorities are as close as we can get to the populations, and as such, often serve as the first gate not only to basic public services (healthcare, education, civil status) but also to security, compliance with the law or social cohesion. They serve a crucial purpose by adopting (after a diagnosis of territory) policies aiming to improve general social inclusion and to fight inequalities. However, the question remains of whether local authorities in the Maghreb countries are able, on a legal, administrative and financial level, to implement those policies when the decentralisation processes haven't yet been fully carried out to give them the means to do so. We must also consider the issue of their autonomy from central power.

It seems therefore unavoidable to link European gender policies with the Maghreb local authorities' initiatives, and their institutional capacities. The EU's approach has so far been focused on political reforms and support to civil society organisations. But local authorities, the first bodies responsible for defining and implementing public policies on a territorial level, must also be considered preferred partners of the EU, just like other key actors. The EU's Committee of the Regions along with European and global local authorities associations – such as the European Platform of Local and Regional Authorities for Development³² – are working together with the European Commission to ensure that the role of local authorities receives better consideration in the different EU strategies of development cooperation.

³⁰ Local Authorities: Actors for Development, COM (2008)626, Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes, COM(2013)280.

³¹ <http://www.cncd.fr/frontoffice/article.asp?aid=340&menuid=304&lv=3>

³² Platforma – <http://www.platforma-dev.eu>



Regarding the Maghreb countries, the regional and local Euro-Mediterranean assembly (ARLEM), which includes members of the Committee of the Regions and representatives of the Mediterranean countries, is fully accredited to take on this issue and offer propositions to the European Commission. Besides, a number of local authorities networks on the European or global level already support gender equality. For instance, in February 2013, UCLG, which represents and defends the interests of local governments on the world stage, adopted a global programme for gender equality in local life³³. Local governments all over the world committed to work for women to be more actively included to the decision making processes, to make gender equality one of the top priority in local public policies, to reinforce public services that aim at empowering women and to fight any form of gender based violence. They also committed to reinforce international cooperation with all the actors (local authorities, civil society, central government) to reduce inequalities. The Council of European Municipalities and Regions also promoted the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life³⁴, which could be extended to countries neighbouring the EU. This charter also encourages local authorities to integrate gender approach in their international action.

In this perspective, the future Euro-Mediterranean forum on strengthening the role of women in society should include representatives of local authorities. In the same way, the future European Neighbourhood Instrument (2014-2020) should support local authorities in their actions for gender equality, more particularly by reinforcing their capacity to develop and sustain local public social inclusion policies.

b. European and French financial instruments regarding gender equality on a local level

European funding sources

In 2013, the European strategy for development cooperation, the financial instruments and the various programmes were being “renovated” in preparation for the implementation of the European development cooperation instruments and of a budgetary framework for the 2014-2020 period. The latter was recently fixed to a global 58,704 billion Euros for development cooperation. A further 34.276 billion Euros from the European Development Fund will complete this allocation of funds for the same period. In December 2011, the European Commission published common rules for the various geographical and thematic instruments as well as propositions for each of them. Their final adoption is in process, following the agreement on the future multiannual financial 2014-2020 during the Council meeting of the 2nd of December 2013.

From January 2014, the EU will be implementing its development cooperation policy on the basis provided by these instruments. As far as the Maghreb region is concerned, the European Neighbourhood Instrument will supply most of its aid to the countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Lybia) through bilateral, regional and cross-border cooperation programmes.

Bilateral cooperation

The new European Neighbourhood Instrument gives greater weight to the idea that “equal treatment for men and women and the fight against discrimination should be a cross-cutting objective of all actions undertaken within the frame of this regulation.”³⁵ No particular gender-targeted measures have been planned beyond this mainstreaming approach. The responsibility to integrate the issue as best they can and to implement specific actions under the new Country Strategy Papers for 2014-2020 will fall to the EU and its partner countries. The same goes for the support to decentralisation processes and to local democracy. Some programmes specifically developed around those themes could allow gender equality actions to be funded: such was the case in Mauritania for the previous period with the EU institution-building programme for local authorities and their services (Programme Européen de Renforcement des Institutions des Collectivités Locales et de leurs Services, PERICLES)³⁶.

³³ <http://women.uclg.org/p/uclg-standing-committee-2012-work-plan.html>

³⁴ <http://www.charter-equality.eu/the-charter/observatoire-europeen-en.html>

³⁵ European Commission proposal for a new European Neighbourhood Instrument

³⁶ <http://www.dgct.mr/PERICLES.pdf>



It seems crucial for territorial authorities and their network to take part in the preliminary talks to the development of new Country Strategy Papers so as to have an incidence on future orientations, whether that concerns decentralisation and local governance, or, in a more cross-cutting manner, to ensure that the significant role they play in implementing public gender-sensitive proximity policies is fully recognized.

Regional and cross-border cooperation

Similarly to the last one, the new European Neighbourhood Instrument will also support regional and cross-border cooperation.

On a regional level, the Barcelona process has been updated in the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008. The Euro-Mediterranean partnership allows for easier mutual understanding and political dialogue between the partner countries, with a view, for example, to promote gender equality. The third aspect of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership includes actions of a social, cultural and human nature, with several programmes, some of them regarding gender equality. That is how the fight for more equality between women and men was led between 2008 and 2011³⁷ in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Following the Arab spring, a new programme named “SPRING forward” was launched with the support of the EU and UNO-Women in order to reinforce the political and economical role played by women in the south of the Mediterranean. A recent ministerial meeting on the role of women in society allowed this work to be carried on to the regional level for an improved legal and factual recognition of their place in Mediterranean societies.

In parallel, from 2007 to 2013, the EU funded the CIUDAD programme, which aimed to answer the issues of sustainable urban development in the Mediterranean. Projects financed under the CIUDAD programme had to fall under the themes of environmental sustainability, economical development, or good governance. A common project between Lebanon and Morocco was thus financed with the support of the city of Rome to promote the participation of women and young people in local development processes³⁸. The CIUDAD programme should be reimplemented between 2014 and 2020 under the name of SUDeP (Sustainable Urban Demonstration Projects).

Cross-border cooperation remains one of the highest priorities of the European Neighbourhood Instrument for 2014-2020. It aims to reinforce cooperation between member states and partner countries on a territorial level, along the EU's exterior border. The European neighbourhood policy gives a prominent role to territorial cooperation based on the active participation of local authorities along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. For the 2007-2013 period, two programmes open to territorial authorities were targeted to the Maghreb region: “Italy-Tunisia” and “Mediterranean Sea”. There were no specifically gender-oriented guidelines. They followed a mainstreaming approach where the gender aspect remained to be integrated within the different actions. The Spanish NGO, Assembly of Cooperation for Peace, thus conducted a socio-economical development project for women in rural areas in Lebanon and Palestine³⁹ under the cross-border cooperation programme “Mediterranean Sea”. However, no gender-oriented projects have been launched in the Maghreb region.

The regional and cross-border cooperation programmes are due to be maintained throughout the next budgetary period. The contracting authorities will be responsible for giving maximum value to the gender approach in the future guidelines of those programmes, for instance the “Mediterranean Sea” programme, and to include specific actions for the advancement of equality between women and men.

³⁷ <http://www.euromedgenderequality.org>


³⁸ <http://www.ciudad-programme.eu/grant.php?lang=1>

³⁹ <http://www.enpicbmed.eu/sites/default/files/ruwomed.pdf>

Thematic cooperation

The Development Cooperation Instrument supports thematic programmes, which benefit all developing countries (including those covered by the ENI and EDF). During the 2007-2013 period, it supported actions in the following fields: investing in human resources, the environment and sustainable management of natural resources, non-governmental actors and local authorities in development, food supply, and asylum and migration. For the 2014-2020 period, the thematic programmes are limited to two instruments open to all developing countries: “Global Public Goods and Challenges” and “Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities”.

Between 2007 and 2013, the support offered to actions in favour of equality was covered under the “human and social development” programme, which aims at supporting actions in favour of human and social development (education, health care, social cohesion, employment, youth and children, culture) and more particularly gender equality. From 2014 onwards, the thematic programme “Global Public Goods” will integrate gender equality and women's emancipation to the different fields of human development cooperation. The European Commission⁴⁰ will therefore regularly call for specific proposals for which European and Maghreb countries' local authorities will be eligible. Between 2007 and 2013, a budget of 57 million Euros was devoted specifically to gender equality actions. The amount for the 2014-2020 period has not yet been established. On another level, the other dimensions of the “human development” programme will focus more particularly on equality between women and men, especially regarding education, health care or employment. Europe and Maghreb countries' local authorities and their associations will also be eligible for those.



Between 2007 and 2013, the non-state Actors and Local Authorities programme provided support to the local authorities in their development cooperation, more particularly through decentralised cooperation. This programme will be reconducted between 2014 and 2020 under the name “Civil society organisations and local authorities”. This financial instrument will be open to all the Maghreb countries and may therefore be used by local authorities, from Europe as well as from the Maghreb region, in the frame of decentralised cooperation, notably when it comes to implementing projects specifically targeted at improving social inclusion and gender equality. The national side of the programme is managed directly by the delegations of the European Union in target countries. Calls of proposals can be found on the website of Development and Cooperation General-Directorate of the European Commission, EuropeAid⁴¹.

Lastly, the EU implements a thematic instrument aiming at reinforcing democracy and the defence of human rights (European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, EIDHR). This instrument will allow bringing aid to third party countries with a view to support democracy, the rule of law, the respect of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this context, the EIDHR supports actions in favour of the equal participation of women in social, economical and political life, and against all kinds of discrimination or violence. For instance, the EIDHR's last call of proposals in Tunisia was targeted towards promoting women's rights. The EIDHR is open to all Maghreb countries and local authorities are therefore eligible. Calls of proposals are handled directly by the EU's delegations in target countries, however, they are free to access on the EuropeAid website.

Aside from those actions specifically targeted towards gender equality on a local level, we must highlight that all instruments include the issue of gender as a mainstreaming priority, which must therefore be considered in all EU funded projects.

The French funding sources

This study pertains first to the European dimension of women' social inclusion in the Maghreb countries and to the support offered by a decentralised cooperation process between the local authorities of the member States and their partner Maghreb countries. However, besides supporting those initiatives through European policies and programmes, the French strategy and provisions also deserve a mention when it comes to reinforcing considerations of gender in development cooperation. When taking gender equality into account in development strategies, and more particularly in decentralised cooperation partnerships for development, the French example should indeed be studied more thoroughly.

⁴⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/funding/index_fr.htm

⁴¹ See above



Early in 2014, a new orientation and programming law regarding the French development and international solidarity policy will be submitted to a parliamentary debate. Its provisions give more room both to the international action of territorial authorities and to the issue of equality between women and men. Thanks to the integration, for 2013-2017, of the principles of the July 2013 “Gender and development” strategy⁴², the gender dimension will from now on represent a mainstreaming objective of all the tools and instruments of French cooperation. According to OECD statistics⁴³, France is also the leading provider of official development assistance to the Maghreb region. In the current search for stronger consistency between the European development policy and that of its member States, it seems relevant to mention the French cooperation to this geographical zone on the theme of “gender and development” and on a local level.

The French cooperation supports local initiatives on gender equality, mostly through various programmes: a programme of support for decentralised cooperation, the Social Development Fund or the French Development Agency’s programmes.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports decentralised cooperation between French and foreign local authorities based on geographical and thematic orientations of the State’s cooperation policy, in the context of annual and triennial calls for projects, of specific funds, or even of calls for joint projects between States (as is the case for Morocco and Tunisia). Gender equality is one of the priority themes. Calls for “decentralised cooperation” projects can support projects mainly aiming at empowering women and fighting gender related violence, like for instance the access of women and young girls to education, training, healthcare and particularly sexual and reproductive, employment, economic resources and digital technology. Projects aiming to improve women’s participation in decision-making processes, to fight violence and promote access to rights are also eligible⁴⁴.

The Social Development Fund is an instrument of French cooperation managed within the embassies in the countries of the priority solidarity zone, which include Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania. It is a multi-annual fund with the goal to support development micro projects that work towards improving the population’s living conditions. The projects funded within the framework of the FSD are supported and implemented by civil society organisations or local authorities. The improvement of women’s social and economic situation (particularly regarding income generating activities) is one of the FSD’s priorities. Up to now, it has been implemented in Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania. The FSD can therefore be engaged in decentralised cooperation programmes.

Moreover, the French Development Agency (AFD), main operator of French bilateral cooperation, has begun the process of developing an operational strategic framework on gender to better integrate the issues of equality between men and women in its operations, particularly when supporting operations linked to a project of decentralised cooperation or in the framework of its Sectorial Innovation Facility for NGOs (FISONG⁴⁵). The AFD along with the PS-Eau programme has established a methodological guide to taking gender into consideration in safe water adduction projects in rural and semi-urban environments⁴⁶.

⁴² <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/photos-videos-et-publications/publications/enjeux-planetaires-cooperation/documents-de-strategie-sectorielle/article/la-strategie-genre-et>

⁴³ <http://www.oecd.org/countries/algeria/recipientcharts.htm>

⁴⁴ <http://www.cncd.fr/home.asp>

⁴⁵ <http://www.afd.fr/home/AFD/nospartenaires/ONG/collaborations/FISONG>

⁴⁶ <http://www.afd.fr/Jahia/site/afd/pid/1256>

Good practices

1. Decentralised cooperation between the New Town Association of Sénart Ville Nouvelle and Eight Mauritanian municipalities

Project: Programme to inform and raise awareness about female genital mutilation in the municipalities of Rosso and R’Kiz (Trarza region in the south of Mauritania).

Project lead: New Town Association of Sénart Ville Nouvelle (San Sénart). The project is supervised by the Mauritanian NGO “Naître et Grandir” which organises the follow-up and monitoring of all activities.

Objectives: The main goal of this project is to trigger a long lasting change in the socio-cultural behaviour of the concerned municipalities regarding the practice of genital mutilation, with a significant decrease of the number of excised girls.

Beneficiaries: The main beneficiaries are the populations of both municipalities, which amounts to about 70,000 inhabitants. This project is also going to benefit the community organisations in those municipalities (female cooperatives, women’s associations), the reference persons, teachers, workers of the dispensaries and health centres of both target municipalities, the secondary school pupils, local representatives and parliamentarians, the NGOs and local organisations.

Technical and financial partners: The partner municipalities ensure joint management of the project and help the NGO “Naître et Grandir” to put activities into place. The San Sénart funds 90% of this project. The remaining 10% are funded by the General Council of Seine-et-Marne. The total cost of the project is of 80,000 € over 2 years. Lenders such as the EU or the French Foreign Affairs Ministry do not support this project.

Project implementation: It is a large information and awareness campaign targeted towards the populations and directly involving all the actors concerned. The various stakeholders are all integrated to the project: elected representatives, managers, health workers, imams, community leaders. The cutters are identified and trained in order to convince them to abandon their trade and take part in the awareness raising campaigns. Training courses take place in associations, cooperatives and schools. Finally, awareness is raised amongst the population by meeting people in person through door-to-door campaigns. The aim is to target the whole population, both male and female, with the support of formal or informal leaders.

Role of the gender dimension: This project is directly aimed at one aspect of gender inequality, i.e. physical violence against women and girls. It’s also a matter of maternal health. However, this project is not exclusively oriented to women because its aim is to alter the whole population’s behaviour and because the awareness-raising actions are targeted both towards women and men. In the same way, the project uses men (opinion leader, imam) to raise the population’s awareness.

Project analysis: This project is about a very sensitive subject and it couldn’t have been developed without the help of local partners. The awareness campaigns are generally well received by the population and produce significant results.

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2. VNG International – International Centre for Innovative local Governance (CILG) and twelve Tunisian municipalities

Project: Urban democratic governance and local economical development assistance programme (Programme d'Appui à la Gouvernance Urbaine Démocratique et au Développement Economique Local, PAGUDEL)

Project lead: This project is led by the International Centre for innovative local governance, which is the regional office of VNG International for the Middle East and North Africa. VNG International is the international cooperation agency of the Association of the Netherlands Municipalities (*Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten*).

Objectives: The PAGUDEL project supports local authorities by working in close cooperation with national institutions and civil society associations in order to improve democratic urban governance, to stimulate local economic development, to reinforce civil participation into the local affairs, to promote the participation of women and youth, to support the process of decentralisation in Tunisia and to help cross-border cooperation between Tunisia and Libya.

Beneficiaries: This programme will benefit 12 Tunisian municipalities (technicians and elected representatives) and their populations: *Béja, Jendouba, Le Kef, Sers, Siliana, Thala, Kasserine, Sidi Bouzid, Regueb, Médenine, Ben Guerdane and Dhehiba*. Local associations, local political party representatives and delegates of the State also benefit from this programme.

Technical and financial partners: The partners of this programme are the various ministries and public organisms concerned as well as the Association of Tunisian Urbanists, the Center of Training and Support for Decentralisation and the National Federation of Tunisian Cities. This project is funded by the Danish and Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

Project implementation: The project brings targeted technical support to the municipalities through accompanying, training and counselling actions, for temporary municipal structures and municipal services. Some work is also done with the local actors (municipalities, civil society, public and private operators) for the implementation of mechanisms of partnership and dialogue for sustainable participative local development. Finally, national institutions are also supported, especially for the conception, implementation and distribution of good practices in terms of decentralised local governance.

Role of the gender dimension: The PAGUDEL programme uses an elaborate gender-targeted approach in order to promote inclusive local governance and municipal management with gender-sensitive principles, operations and instruments. It also aims at reinforcing female leadership in preparation for the municipal elections, and at supporting local civil society initiatives for gender equality, all this in order to support the national efforts regarding the promotion of gender equality and women's rights.

Project analysis: The implementation of this gender strategy could encounter some difficulties, such as the municipalities' weakness where it comes to gender approach and the predominance of sectorial approach of the various actors (ministries, NGOs, etc.), which makes coordination and synergy difficult. Moreover, the actors are not familiar with a results based gender approach, with strategic planning and budgetary analysis. Finally, the disparities between regions and centralised operation traditions could slow down the project's implementation.

Contact: International Centre for Innovative local Governance (CILG), <http://www.cilg-international.org>

3. Decentralised cooperation between the General Council of Isère and the Region of Tadla-Azilal in Morocco

The decentralised cooperation actions supported by the General Council of Isère include the issue of gender equality in a mainstreaming fashion. This is to be linked to the theme of sustainable development, guideline to the actions of the Isère Department, particularly regarding decentralised cooperation. Under this strategy, the Isère Department is trying to promote and implement actions that have a long lasting social and environmental impact, amongst which gender equality or strengthening the role of women in society. The participative or coordinated approach that defines the international actions of the GC of Isère focuses on integrating the gender dimension (inviting all the project's stakeholders to the territory, male and female, recognising women's actions, creating social bonds).

Regarding the issue of gender, we will note that the GC of Isère supports two types of actions:

- Actions that play directly in favour of women, like for example supporting the female cooperatives of the Azilal Province (Morocco);
- Campaigns to raise awareness amongst the populations to the question of the role of women in society, like the Women's Caravan in the Douars of the Azilal Province.

Project: Women's Caravan in the Douars of the Azilal Province

Lead: The organisation Women against Fundamentalism applied to the GC of Isère for funding in the context of its decentralised cooperation with the Region of Tadla-Azilal.

Objectives: Raising the awareness of women and men about the importance of their social and political implication. On a local level, ensure the implementation of the new Family Code for greater respect for women and children's rights. Fighting against gender based violence.

Beneficiaries: The populations, and particularly women and young girls, will be the first to benefit. The elected representatives and local decision makers who understand the interest of social inclusion policies, especially regarding gender, will also benefit from this project.

Technical and financial partners: This project is financially supported by various lenders: UN-Women, the Global Fund for Women, the Mediterranean Women's Fund, and the General Council of Isère.

Project implementation: Organising every year in the Douars of the Tadla-Azilal Region an awareness-raising caravan composed of 120 volunteers specialised in law, medicine or the environment. To promote the reciprocity of actions, organising campaigns in Isère: women's days gathering Moroccan protesters, awareness-raising caravans targeted to the Moroccan women of Isère (about the Moroccan Family Code).

Project analysis: As far as the problems encountered are concerned, projects aiming at reducing gender inequalities are often long lasting projects the impacts of which are not always directly recognizable, but do come out on the very long term. Besides, it would entail looking more closely at the specific gender analysis assessment criteria.

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4. Catalan Development Agency – Catalan Generalitat

Project: Training programme for young women unionists in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia: FORMAGHREB 2009-2011

Lead: This project is led by the Josep Comaposada Foundation⁴⁷ and by the Catalan branch of the General Labour Union (GLU – Spanish union). It is funded by the Development Cooperation Agency of the Catalan Generalitat.

Objectives: The general goal of the project is to contribute to the democratisation of unions in North Africa in order for them to better represent the working population, most notably by encouraging women and youth to participate effectively in the union's decision making processes. The aim is also to promote integration on a regional level by creating bonds between the unions of three target countries.

Beneficiaries: This project concerns around one hundred young unionists of the following organisations: DLC Morocco, GLU Algeria, GLU Tunisia and GLU Catalonia. It will benefit unionist employees. It will also benefit the unions themselves.

Technical and financial partners: The project partners are the General Labour Union (GLU) in Algeria, the GLU in Tunisia and the Democratic Labour Confederation (DLC) in Morocco. The Catalan Development Cooperation Agency funds this action to an amount of 340,000€ over three years. The project was funded through a call for projects to strengthen women's productive capacity and empowerment. The Youth department of the Catalanian GLU also takes an active part in this project.

Project implementation: This project follows another one dating back to 2007, which had the same goal to strengthen women's defences regarding Labour Law in the Maghreb region. It mainly puts in place training and assimilation programmes on joint negotiation, the creation of women's union and the spreading of such unions throughout an entire Mediterranean network.

Project analysis: The goal of this project is to strengthen women's capacities within the unions in order to enable them to take on a more active role in the defence of workers' rights. At the same time, there are plans to make a network out of the various regional sections of the three countries in question. Initially, this project is targeted directly at women. However, considering this project aims at training union representatives to enable them to defend all the workers, and considering the project concerns youth as well as women, it could be seen as a social rights defence project with a gendered approach. The amount of women unionists is progressively increasing. The main obstacles encountered during the implementation of this project were the visa procedures, which caused the number of women who participated in the international training (networking) workshops to decrease.

Contact: Catalanian Generalitat, Catalan Development Cooperation Agency⁴⁸, Head of the Mediterranean Area, M^{me} Helena Vicente y Salazar, hvicente@gencat.cat

⁴⁷ <http://www.sindicalistessolidaris.org>

⁴⁸ <http://www20.gencat.cat/portal/site/cooperaciocatalana>

5. Decentralised cooperation between the General Council of Hérault and the Governorate of Medenine in Tunisia

Project: Social and economic development of coastal and artisanal fishing – Island of Djerba

Project lead: The project is supported by the General Council of Hérault and by the Governorate of Medenine within the framework of their decentralised cooperation agreement. It is managed by the French association Vers'Eau Développement.

Objectives: The project aims to create the conditions required to preserve and develop employment related to coastal and artisanal fishing in the Governorate of Medenine. More particularly, it supports the shellfish activities of women clam gatherers on the island of Djerba.

Beneficiaries: The benefits of the project will be reaped by the groups of women fishers of the Governorate (Ajim, El Grin, Zarzis), female clam gatherers belonging to those groups and their families through the reinforcement of this local economic activity.

Technical and financial partners: The French Research Institute for Marine Exploitation (IFREMER) and the Tunisian Institute for Marine Science and Technologies (INSTM) are partners of this project, along with the Technical Services of the Governorate. The total cost of this project amounts to 496,781€. This project is financially supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) up to 450,000€ under the Solidarity Development Programme that followed the 2008 bilateral agreements between France and Tunisia. The General Council of Hérault also participates with co-financing of 30,000€.

Project implementation: Cooperation actions have developed around accompanying the organisation of shellfish gathering and selling, improving the sanitary conditions of production (especially regarding bio toxins) and valorising the economic and social benefits related to fishing in general. A crosscutting strand of the project has also been put into place, focusing on training and on diversifying economic activities.

Role of the gender dimension: This integrated project aims to create the conditions required to preserve and develop employment related to coastal and artisanal fishing in the Governorate of Medenine. It entails a multi-faceted approach: sanitary analysis, strengthening of the working groups, marketing activities. It is specifically targeted to groups of female clam gatherers in order to improve their working conditions and to valorise the social and economical benefits of the project. The economic and social development of artisanal fishing is not really identified as a gender-based issue; this project's approach is therefore wider.

Project analysis: The implementation of this project was done smoothly with no major difficulties apart from the fact that the creation of these fishing groups required a number of preliminary meetings and significant education work on the field, to explain the interest of working as a group.

Contact: Head of International Relations of the General Council of Hérault, M^{me} Marie Doutremepuich, mdoutremepuich@cg34.fr





FURTHER INFORMATION

STAKEHOLDERS

Institutional partners

UN Women: <http://www.unwomen.org>

European Union – Development Cooperation Directorate General, EuropeAid : <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid>

Delegations of the European Union in partner countries: <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations>

French Ministry of Foreign affairs: <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/action-exterieure-des/>

French Development Agency (AFD): <http://www.afd.fr/>

Local governments networks

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG): <http://www.uclg.org>

UCLG « Gender Equality » Commission: <http://women.uclg.org>

United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA): <http://www.afriquelocale.org/en/>

Network of locally elected women in Africa (REFELA): <http://www.afriquelocale.org/fr/component/minisite/minisite-8/Le-Ra-seau-des-Femmes-Elues-Locales-d-Afrique>

PLATFORMA, the European voice of local and regional authorities for development: <http://www.platforma-dev.eu>

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR): <http://www.ccre.org>

French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions: <http://www.afccre.org>

Civil society

Information and documentation centre on children and women rights (CIDDEF), Algeria: <http://www.ciddef-dz.com>

Association of defence and promotion of women rights, Algeria

Democratic association of Moroccan women (ADFM): www.adfm.ma

National union of the Tunisian woman (UNFT): <http://www.unft.org.tn/fr/>

Association of Tunisian women for research on development (AFTURD): <http://www.afturd-tunisie.org/acceuil/>

Centre of research, studies, documentation and information on women (CREDIF), Tunisia: <http://www.credif.org.tn>

Centre of Arab women for training and research (CAWTAR) : <http://www.cawtar.org>

Civil Initiatives Libya: <http://cil.org.ly/en/>

Mauritanian association for human rights: <http://www.amdhrim.org>

RESOURCES

UNDP Reports on human development: <http://hdr.undp.org>

Convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW): <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

OECD gender data portal: <http://www.oecd.org/gender/data/>

OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI): <http://genderindex.org>

World Bank gender data portal: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/>

Genre en action: <http://www.genreenaction.net>

Adéquations Association: <http://www.adequations.org/spip.php?rubrique220>

Hubertine Auclert Centre (on equality between women and men): <http://www.centre-hubertine-auclert.fr>

F3E, Fiches pédagogiques genre et développement: http://f3e.asso.fr/IMG/pdf/11_FICHES_WEB.pdf

PS Eau, Guide méthodologique sur la prise en compte du genre dans les projets d'adduction d'eau potable: <http://www.pseau.org/fr/recherche-developpement/production/genre>

European Commission, Toolkit on mainstreaming gender equality in EC development cooperation: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sp/gender-toolkit>

Observatory of the European Charter for equality of women and men in local life: <http://www.charter-equality.eu/?lang=en>

Anna Lindh Foundation – Euromed: <http://www.euromedalex.org>

EU Neighbourhood info centre: <http://www.enpi-info.eu>





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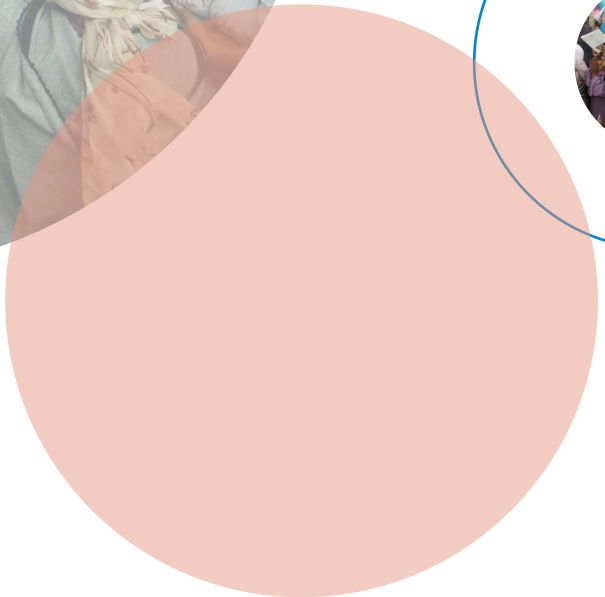
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