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## Equality between women and men: a condition for the success of the Arab Spring

**Reply<sup>1</sup>** to Recommendation 1996 (2012)  
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has taken note of Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1996 \(2012\)](#) on “Equality between women and men: a condition for the success of the Arab Spring”. It has brought it to the attention of the member States’ governments and transmitted it to the relevant steering committees,<sup>2</sup> as well as to the Executive Committee of the North-South Centre for information and comments. It also transmitted the recommendation to the Conference of INGOs for information.
2. The Committee of Ministers is determined to pursue the development of the Council of Europe policy towards neighbouring regions on the basis of the Organisation’s values. Equality between women and men is an integral part of human rights and constitutes a fundamental criterion of democracy. Advancement of women’s rights, of their participation in public and political life, combating inequalities and combating violence against women consequently feature among the priorities of the co-operation programmes agreed on, in particular with Morocco and Tunisia, for the period 2012-2014. In this context, a regional conference on the prevention and combat of violence against women was held in Rabat (Morocco) on 24 and 25 September 2012, which was very successful. The objectives set also concern the independence and effectiveness of justice, for example by disseminating the international standards applicable in this field and by building the capacity of members of the justice professions.
3. In the fields mentioned by the Assembly, the Committee of Ministers relies on the expertise and the competences of the Council of Europe bodies active in those fields. Accordingly, the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH), through the Gender Equality Committee (GEC), assists in removing institutional and legal obstacles to equal participation by women in all spheres of life and in promoting the signature and ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in the member States and beyond (ETCS no. 210).
4. Co-operation with the neighbourhood is specified in the terms of reference of the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI). In this context, the focus of its action is to develop information to the media, and their awareness, regarding gender equality and to exchange good practices concerning ways to avoid the stereotyping of women. The CDMSI will draw up a recommendation on the media and gender equality and will examine the place assigned to women in the media coverage of election campaigns.
5. The Programme of Activities of the North-South Centre for 2012 emphasises the continuation of the activities coming under the “North-South Process for the Empowerment of Women”. In this context, the North-South Centre has developed the “Euro-Med Women Network” and its website, bringing together over 400 participants from governmental and parliamentary dimensions as well as local government and civil society.

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1. Adopted at the 1153rd meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (24 October 2012).

2. Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) (GEC), European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC), Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI), Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE)

Several events have been organised, particularly in Morocco, on the theme of equality between women and men in the Southern Mediterranean, and the annual high-level conference of the “North-South Process for the Empowerment of Women” will be held in Istanbul (Turkey) from 3 to 6 November 2012.

6. In the field of equality between women and men, as in other Council of Europe areas of excellence, the Committee of Ministers recognises the importance of placing at the service of the countries in the neighbourhood the assistance and expertise required to help build a zone of democratic stability beyond Europe’s boundaries.