

1 **Draft Resolution EPP Women Congress 19 October 2012, Berlin**

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3 **The Arab Spring: the role of Women**

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6 **The EPP WOMEN**, meeting in Berlin on 19 October 2012

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8 **Recognising** the major role of women in the context of the recent revolutions in the MENA
9 region¹ in acquiring liberty, justice, human rights and democracy, and the contribution they
10 could further make when fully included in the democratic processes;

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12 **Being aware of** the concern of many women (and men) in those countries for civil war, a
13 future of repression, violation of human rights and women's rights, economic deterioration
14 and social constraints;

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16 **Being aware of and referring** to the demands formulated by women and women's
17 organisations in the countries concerned;

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19 **Referring to** international human rights law, in particular to

- 20 - the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
21 - UN Resolution 1325 (October 2000) about women, peace and security, which calls for the
22 participation of women and civil society in all political decision-making that comes with a
23 conflict;
24 - the UN Millennium Development Goals, in particular MDGs on promoting the right of girls
25 to education and on the importance of the role of women in societal reconstruction;

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27 **Referring to**

- 28 -the Velvet Revolutions of 1989 that liberated Center and Eastern Europe from its repressive
29 regimes;
30 - the European Union's values and commitments as laid down in the Treaty of Lisbon (2007)
31 and the Charter of Fundamental Human Rights that is part of this Treaty;
32 - the EPP Political Assembly Resolution on 'Women in Conflict Zones and Situations',
33 adopted on 5 June 2012 in Brussels;

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35 **Noting,**

- 36 - that in several countries of transition in the MENA region women are being marginalized or
37 even excluded entirely from political bodies and that concessions on women's rights are
38 often used as bargaining chips by politicians to maintain power by appeasing the most
39 conservative forces;
40 - that the majority of the MENA countries that have ratified CEDAW, have expressed
41 reservations against the principle of non-discrimination, which principle is widely violated;
42 - the high illiteracy rates in most MENA countries in general and in particular of women (e.g.
43 in Egypt being 50%);
44 - that economic and social demands have been at the heart of the protests, women being

¹ MENA = Middle East and North African countries, in particular Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen, being all countries where since the beginning of 2011 revolutions and / or upheavals have taken place.

45 the first to be affected by financial insecurity and unemployment;
46 - that women have been used as targets for mutilation, harassment, rape and killings
47 committed by militia, soldiers, police and even demonstrators;

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49 **Calls upon the European Commission**

50 - to ensure that issues regarding women's political participation, eradicating illiteracy and
51 ensuring access for girls and women to education and to economic resources are an
52 integrated part of the EU's aid and policy towards the MENA countries;

53 - to reaffirm its already existing policy that all EU's political dialogues with third countries
54 include questions regarding women's participation, recognition of women's rights, and
55 cultural and religious tolerance;

56 - to stop supporting undemocratic regimes that do not respect human rights;

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58 **Urges the European Commission and the EU Member States**

59 - to listen to women and women's organisations in the MENA countries, promote hearings of
60 representatives of women and their organisations and take their points of view into
61 consideration;

62 -to actively support their aspirations, demands, and priorities and use these in their contacts
63 with the national authorities in the MENA region, notably that gender equality and women's
64 rights are fully guaranteed and included in all constitutional and legislative reforms in
65 conformity with international law and that women have equal representation and
66 participation in all democratic processes, such as in the committees organising elections and
67 drafting elections laws and in the constitutional reform committees drafting new
68 constitutions;

69 -to call upon these authorities to reform all laws that discriminate against women, including
70 in the area of the family, marriage, child custody and inheritance, to adopt laws prohibiting
71 all forms of violence against women, to improve the availability of education for girls and
72 women and to strengthen measures aimed at increasing access of women to the labour
73 market;

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75 **Urges the European Commission and the EU Member States**

76 -to present best practices by ensuring equal participation in their delegations and also in
77 their own institutions, like national assemblies and governments;

78 -to ensure that financial and other assistance benefit women and men equally by earmarking
79 such assistance;

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81 **Calls upon the EPP, all EPP Member Parties and their women's organisations**

82 -to build and actively take part in the dialogue with women and men in the MENA region to
83 better understand both sides perspectives on issues of women's rights and gender equality;

84 - to monitor their national governments on gender sensitivity in implementing their policies
85 towards the MENA countries.

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