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International seminar on «Gender-based violence: similar facts, multiple legal answers»

[EIUC](#), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit ([GIZ](#)) GmbH - [Régional Programme Good Governance Maghreb](#), and the Center of Arab Woman for Training and Research ([CAWTAR](#)) jointly organised the international seminar on « Gender based violence : similar facts, multiple legal answers » (original title: “Violence fondée sur le genre: des faits semblables, des réponses juridiques multiples”) in cooperation with Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc ([ADFM](#)) – Office of Casablanca. The seminar took place in Casablanca from 4 to 6 June 2012.

The seminar, financed by the (German) Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-financed by EIUC, gathered legal professionals and experts - judges, lawyers, academics, human rights activists - focusing on women's rights in the Maghreb region (mainly in Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania). Among the participants were also European experts on legislation aiming at protecting women and girls against all forms of gender-based violence.

The seminar also aimed at encouraging networking among Maghreb actors promoting gender issues and at analysing the forms and causes of violence against women and girls.

The opening address by Ms Ingrid Barth, Advisor on Cooperation at the German Embassy in Morocco, was followed by welcome messages by representatives of the different organising institutions. Prof. Benoit-Rohmer outlined some of the innovative activities organised by EIUC to contribute to policy formation and assistance to democracy and good governance, promotion of the rule of law, and overseas development cooperation. These aims are reflected in the Regional Programme - Good Governance Maghreb but also in other research studies and projects tackling gender equality and women's rights in democratic transitions.

The screening of the film « *Les femmes dans un monde d'insécurité* » generated a vibrant debate during the round table that gave the opportunity to set the scene for the following two days.

Several interventions on the theme “How to measure the invisible” took place on the second day of the seminar and presented the results of national surveys on violence against women. One of the major conclusions highlighted was that mapping violence against women (on the basis of both quantitative and qualitative elements) facilitates the assessment of the violent behaviour occurred, and the identification of its criminal nature, according to the legal norms applied in the specific country.

Three case studies on violence (sexual harassment on the work place, domestic violence, and violence directed against juvenile domestic helpers) were analysed and discussed by national working groups who then compared them during the plenary session, thus presenting the relevant legal framework, the challenges addressed, and the answers of the legislator for each country.

The last day of the seminar focused on the identification of similarities and differences in the legal standards and jurisprudence in the Maghreb region, as well as on the challenges and mechanisms available to strengthening the legal framework in a gender equality perspective. Also tackled was the crucial issue of access to justice for women victim of gender-based violence.

The numerous exchanges of ideas and experiences lived in the Maghreb region as well as in Europe enriched the seminar and demonstrated the universality of the issue beyond cultures and political systems. Recommendations were adopted and mainly focused on the need to work together advocating for a Maghreb convention for the fight against all forms of gender-based violence and its criminalisation.