MEDITERRANEAN YOUTH COUNCIL

POLITICAL DECLARATION:

2022-2023

Supporting entities:
Most authors agree that the "Mediterranean" is characterized by both unity and diversity, by periods of cooperation and conflict, of tolerance and violence by intensive cultural exchange, cultural clashes, of close economic cooperation, interdependence but also by exploitation, unequal exchange, and dependence. These contradictions challenge any uncritical application of social science concepts and approaches.

The Mediterranean Youth Council shares common values such as the bottom-up approach, the intergenerational ethics and multilateral debate to empower the youth voice; the connection between action and advocacy; the aim of being an intermediary between decision-making bodies and the youth. The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow, but we are also and even more importantly, the agents of change of today. The future has already started, and because of that, we are taking up the reins, determined to shape it into a brighter, kinder and more inclusive Mediterranean for all. And for this we need to be prepared.

This first Political Declaration is oriented on the Mediterranean Youth Council’s transversal issue of the year "Building tomorrow: youth preparation for the future". Indeed, the active participation of the youth is decisive in guaranteeing the legitimacy, credibility, and operation of democratic systems. Youth preparation for the future relates to a continuous process of learning aimed at better understanding the micro, meso, and macro environment.

Under this lens, this declaration therefore addresses the issues dealt with within the Mediterranean Youth Council’s thematic working groups, notably digitalization; economy, education and entrepreneurship; environment and climate change; society and interculturalism; and gender and discriminations. We are knowledgeable enough to assert our opinions on those issues that will affect us directly in the near future and the long term, such as climate change, inequalities, violence, and discrimination, especially in the context of this fast-changing, globalized world.

The Mediterranean Youth Council, addressing both European and Mediterranean regions, as well as Mediterranean national, sub-national entities and stakeholders, hereby.
Digitalization to empower Mediterranean youth

Digitalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution are one of the most disruptive global challenges of the twenty-first century. As young people, we are particularly concerned about how the direction of policies related to the use of digital technology will impact our lifestyles, development perspectives and rights. New technologies are changing our lives, from how we communicate and interact to our lifestyle. These transformations have the potential to provide solutions for many of the challenges Mediterraneans are facing, notably the access to digital tools, the democratization of digital knowledge, the sustainability dimension of digitalization, and the anticipation of digital risks. Taking into account these challenges, the Mediterranean Youth Council:

**Art. 1. Advises** on the need for an enhanced incorporation of digital tools in education and a better access for low income communities. Indeed, in average less than 40% of educators across the EU felt ready to use digital technologies in teaching, while the proficiency level in digital skills is not yet optimal for young people. Likewise, the improvement of internet and digital equipment access globally should be strongly encouraged.

**Democratization of digital knowledge**

**Art. 2. Acknowledges**, in this sense, that the Internet can be an extraordinary free source of knowledge for those who can effectively use and receive it, bridging territorial, class and gender divides. The democratization of digital knowledge contributes therefore to substantial equality. The digital transformation of society and the economy is having an ever-increasing impact on everyday life, which was still embryonary in education and training until the COVID-19 epidemic changed the game. Having knowledge of these 21st century's "new" skills is fundamental for the future of employment, the interaction with public administration and enterprises. In a nutshell, those are the abilities required for tomorrow, meaning that no access to them would mean more inequality.

**The sustainability dimension of digitalization**

**Art. 3. Warns** that the sustainability dimension of digitalization is a crucial challenge due to its socio-economic and environmental lens. Digitalization can be both a smart tool and an issue for biodiversity conservation. In particular, high tech (electric cars, computers) that are supposed to reduce greenhouse gas, require the extraction and processing of non-regenerative raw materials. The ecological consequences of exhaustible resource use have an impact across the entire supply chain as it generates soil degradation, water shortages, biodiversity loss, damage to ecosystem

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2 OECD, TALIS 2018 Results, “Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners”.
3 More than one-third of 13-14-year-olds who participated in the International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS) in 2018 did not possess it.
4 According to the United Nations, there are 3.5 billion people in the world who do not have Internet access with 750M people having no mobile network (MBB) coverage, a problem that especially impacts rural areas. A quarter of low-income households have no access to computers and broadband, with divergences across the EU affected by household income (Eurostat, 2019).
5 While COVID-19 demonstrated the need for higher levels of digital capacity in education and training, it also led to the amplification of a number of existing challenges and inequalities between those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not, including individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and categories. There are also disparities across educational and training institutions, as well as teachers’ competencies we should consider and work on.
functions and global warming exacerbation. Besides, socio-economic consequences are also reported such as human rights violations, health related issues, migration and poverty increase\textsuperscript{7}, especially in the context of the pandemic.

**Anticipating digital risks**

**Art. 4.** Insists on the urgency to direct efforts to improve the digital literacy level of young people to better anticipate digital risks\textsuperscript{8} such as cybersecurity threats, and support the improvement of youth’s skills in the detection of fake news\textsuperscript{9}. Being a digital native does not automatically imply being fully aware of the risks of the internet, hence the necessity to raise awareness on cybersecurity threats and the potential weaponization of information, while letting the necessary space for the Youth to freely express themselves.\textsuperscript{9}

**Boosting education, employment and entrepreneurship**

The whole world has recently been facing drastic changes, and particularly during the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of our future prospects and opportunities. Furthermore, the ongoing global changes have exceptionally been testing our resilience in a context of uncertainty, ambiguity and difficulty. Globalization has also deepened our increasing interdependence and interconnection. As a result, the educational system as well as the labor market have been strongly impacted, and a long-term response is now needed more than ever, especially to tackle youth unemployment, the improvement of Mediterranean cooperation, a renewed education and the boosting of entrepreneurship. Considering these challenges, the Mediterranean Youth Council:

**Promotion of youth and inclusive employability**

**Art. 5.** Is worried by the extremely high young unemployment rate, which reached 30% in the Mediterranean area in 2020\textsuperscript{10}, and by the existing inequalities between North and South\textsuperscript{11} shores that still affect young people’s future, as well as the gap between those receiving proper education and those being unfortunate enough not to. Some young people are deprived of the opportunity to study due to economic, cultural or social reasons, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. Moreover, we acknowledge that there are gender inequalities in employment. In several Mediterranean countries, women and LGBTQI+ communities are persecuted and/or underpaid\textsuperscript{12}. In consequence, we urge public institutions to create or reinforce gender inclusive legislation. We recommend to get inspired by the SOGIESC\textsuperscript{13} equality action plan, accompanied by a specific mechanism to measure implementation progress.

\textsuperscript{7} UNCTAD Digital Economy Report 2021, “Cross-border data flows and development: For whom the data flow” especially Chapter III “Back to basics: issues at stake”.


\textsuperscript{9} Cybersecurity is not just something that concerns private companies and public administrations but should interest any individual. It is fundamental not only to be informed about the looming cybersecurity threats and how to prevent them but first of all to promote awareness on which aspects of our digital life and identity need to be protected.

\textsuperscript{10} “The NEET rate reached 30% in some Southern Mediterranean countries in 2020, and 40% for young women. Furthermore, young people often find themselves in precarious employment situations.” 5th UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour, 2022.

\textsuperscript{11} Youth in transition in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, European Training Foundation.

\textsuperscript{12} Within the Euro-Mediterranean region, gender parity in Western Europe is estimated at 76.7% (54 years to achieve gender parity) and in the MENA region at 61.2% (140 years), according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020.

\textsuperscript{13} Inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.
New approach to skills and learning processes with a transdisciplinary and inclusive mindset

**Art. 6.** Underlines that it is necessary to **adapt our current education systems** to the needs of the 21st-century job market, such as vocational training, soft skills workshops and informal educational paths (NGOs, FabLabs, ...). Considering the rate of youth unemployment across the Mediterranean, and particularly in North Africa, this adaptation could help young people gain skills that would really be useful for them to face the constantly changing realities of our times and the present technological and green revolution.

**Art. 7.** Recommends that young people should receive and enjoy a clear and **early guidance** as to what their future prospects and jobs could be in the last phases of the education system. Besides, we encourage promoting the opportunities of setting up businesses and providing the youth with the necessary training, as well as personal and economic support to ensure their success.

**Support sustainable and green initiatives and knowledge**

**Art. 8.** Encourages sustainable and green initiatives through **awareness actions and campaigns** on green economy and by creating and developing specialized training programs and integrating sustainability and environmental topics **in school programs** to build consciousness from young ages. Raising awareness will allow young people to exchange thoughts and ideas on how to block **greenwashing trends**. Moreover, we recommend creating and/or increasing funds to support green entrepreneurship and sustainable projects

**To foster Mediterranean cooperation**

**Art. 9.** Proposes to increase **Mobility Exchange Programs, Mediterranean-oriented**, for young people from high schools, college, and universities, researchers and young workers so that they could access different opportunities, trainings, internships and work positions all across the Mediterranean. This would foster Inter-Mediterranean cooperation, understanding and know-how sharing by broadening the already existing initiatives.

**Art. 10.** Advises, in this sense, that VISA procedures are simplified so that young people’s exchanges and mobilities, regardless of their educational level, take place on an equal footing between the North and South of the Mediterranean. This would attract committed and talented youngsters who would contribute to the well-being of the InterMediterranean societies.

**Art. 11.** Insists on the importance of providing high quality and immersive **education in other Mediterranean languages**, both to foster employment and to build bridges between our different societies. A program of exchanging professors could be created so that children could receive education in these languages by high-skilled, native-speaker teachers at an early age, taking advantage of the benefits of early linguistic immersions.

**Support for young professionals and interns**

**Art. 12.** Asks for the **reduction of administrative and legal obstacles** to make young entrepreneurs and the overall Mediterranean marketplace fairer and more accessible for young professionals. Differences between European, North Africa and Western Asia laws, taxes and regulations make it difficult for young professionals to work both in their country and with mobility across the Mediterranean, disfavoring internationalization. The economic consequences of such issues are problematic and can lead to further youth impoverishment.

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14 Such as circular economy based projects.
Art. 13. Encourages to broaden public institutions support to foster innovation and growth in the field of youth entrepreneurship. It is necessary to raise awareness on the already existing opportunities and tools to avoid the brain drain phenomenon. We advise to create specific mechanisms for youth entrepreneurship, such as second opportunity laws and non-profit incubators that could support start-ups and projects lead by young mediterranean entrepreneurs at the regional and national level.¹⁵

Art. 14. Recommends improving legislation internships to allow all internships to be well protected and remunerated. Unpaid internships are unfortunately very common as well as internships with an important workload due to thrifty strategies to save money instead of hiring an employee.

Running out of time: the youth facing environmental issues

When it comes to the environment, youth surely is a significant change maker. We are motivated to engage in new types of actions aiming to be successful responses to environmental concerns. As reported by institutions such as the European Institute for the Mediterranean, the European Environment Agency, and the UN Environment Programme, the Mediterranean is the most sensitive region to climate change. Indeed, there are temperature increases, precipitation loss, sea-level rise, an increase in extreme weather events causing water and food scarcity and compromising the region’s comparatively fragile stability all with accelerating anthropological activities. This is why we aim to adopt important actions regarding ‘the endorsement of impactful and sustainable actions’, ‘the promotion of youth climate advocates’, and ‘the psychological approach to the climate crisis’. Taking in account these challenges, the Mediterranean Youth Council:

The psychological approach to the climate crisis

Art. 15 Acknowledges how the climate issue has many psychological factors and effects. To get ready for the future already requires an important mental load and the added pressure of having to manage environmental degradation and the depletion of natural resources can be overwhelming. Moreover, the responsibility to reverse the cycle can be quite hard to claim. Hence, it is essential to support young people to live the climate crisis in the healthiest way possible, by seeking professional advice and encouraging the sharing of experiences. In addition, the creation of links between youth communities around the world can strengthen the sense of solidarity needed to promote collective actions. And finally, nurturing a mindset of environmental positivity all around bringing the issue closer to the self and away from ‘the world is ending’ rhetorics.

The promotion of youth climate advocates

Art. 16 Pledges to work indiscriminately on guiding those we represent to be leaders of the climate cause by not only raising awareness on the issue itself but also on whom and how to address. Besides, pushing for a transparent discussion between youthful voices and stakeholders and decision makers is very important thanks to an effective dialogue taking place only where political willingness and acknowledgement of a shared responsibility exist. Finally, we

¹⁵ For instance, in Lebanon, there is a non-profit incubator called Enonitia that funds selected Green business projects after a rigorous selection process and it provides the youth with the necessary skills and technical knowledge to develop their own business idea.

¹⁶ Acknowledging that access to awareness and educational sources is unfortunately not equally distributed, we intend to take in great consideration under-privileged communities who are ill-equipped to confront the climate crisis but are often more exposed to it.
believe that as youth climate advocates, we should never shy away from sharing valuable information with our peers. As such, we plan to raise awareness about environmental science, environmental law and various sustainable impact solutions to increase the knowledge and voice of the youth.\textsuperscript{17}

The endorsement of impactful and sustainable actions

Art. 17 \textbf{Are adamant} to endorse \textbf{impactful actions}, thanks to a common ‘Mediterranean spirit’ with youths from within and outside the Mediterranean Youth Council. We aim to connect young people to concrete actions: raising awareness on the root causes of environmental issues, getting involved in circular economies, exploring innovative techniques, and finally working to demystify the misconceptions that can stand in the way of sustainable action. Finally, we strongly believe that while it is the role of the political sphere to enable change, it is the role of young people to provide the impetus for that change, and we, therefore, have confidence in the results of such collaborations.

A new perspective on Mediterranean societies and interculturality

We, the Mediterranean youth, are bound by strong historical, geographic, cultural and demographic ties that shape our identity. We are aware that even if mobility and migration has always been a driver of interculturality across the Mediterranean, discriminations, marginalization, segregation, acculturation, stereotypes and violence are still too widespread, leading to more vulnerable societies and harmful socio-economic consequences. Thus, \textbf{welcoming and inclusion processes} remain one of the key tasks we have as Mediterranean society. Taking in account these challenges, the Mediterranean Youth Council:

\textit{Inclusion in the Mediterranean}

Art. 18 \textbf{Is concerned} about the varying levels of \textbf{inclusion in the Mediterranean} and puts the emphasis on the alarming management of diversity. That is why we acknowledge the need of recognizing the value of cultural diversity in the Mediterranean, and thus we advocate for the dismantling of structural racism\textsuperscript{19} and all kinds of discriminations.\textsuperscript{20} The complexity and depth of intersectionalities among Southern, Northern, Eastern and Western shores demand a mindset of inclusion and interculturalism in order to achieve greater resilience and preparedness for our societies. We encourage the promotion of the principles of living together and \textbf{interculturality based on the understanding of diversity as a positive value}. This means keeping in mind that countering stereotypes and stigma effectively requires constant evolution. Thus, leveraging the knowledge extracted from first-hand experiences gathered by NGOs and young activists can be relevant.

Art. 19 \textbf{Believes} that it is fundamental to \textbf{mainstream human-rights, gender-sensitive and age-sensitive action to tackle systemic discriminations}, focusing on root causes rather than only

\textsuperscript{17} A Comprehensive Study of Physical, Biophysical, Social, and Political Issues, 2021, Chapter 22 "Climate change and the law” Pages S03-S19, John F. McEldowney.

\textsuperscript{18} One idea is to work in collaboration with the scientific communities (e.g. The Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC), an open and independent international scientific expert network, providing information to decision-makers and the general public on the basis of available scientific information and on-going research.)

\textsuperscript{19} Index of Least Racist Countries 2022: France is ranked 11, Italy (19), Morocco (40), Tunisia (49), Lebanon (65). Sources: https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/least-racist-countries

\textsuperscript{20} It is important to ensure that \textbf{segregation} is explicitly considered as a form of discrimination, as recommended by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in its General Policy Recommendation No. 7 on national policies to combat racism and racial discrimination.
treating their effects. We are convinced that education is a central tool to fight against stereotypes from early ages, and throughout generations.\textsuperscript{21} Besides, more political participation of the civil society in decision-making processes and institutions is also needed to further penetrate such inclusive mindsets in public institutions.

To disseminate Mediterranean Identity across imaginaries

\textbf{Art. 20 Recalls} that the social construction of the other is built through \textit{systemic mechanisms internalized since childhood}. Stereotypes can lead to simplification, misunderstandings and prejudices that have an effect on individual mental health and collective social cohesion within the society. Understanding the Mediterranean culture as a whole also implies tackling the current hierarchy and hegemony among its cultures and territories. That is why, to act on stereotypes, we encourage a deeper work on the sociological level to foster open-minded societies. It is imperative to fight against ethnocentrism, hate-speech, restrictions on languages and traditions by promoting the Mediterranean culture(s) (food, habits, traditions) as a way to disseminate a diverse but common knowledge based on shared experiences.

Transregional, cultural cooperation in the Mediterranean

\textbf{Art. 21 Pledges} to reinforce the intercultural dialogue within and across Mediterranean regions, generations and communities, sharing perceptions, experiences and understandings, as we consider it the most effective vector to promote prosperous, sustainable societies. For this, we will support and promote the development of new channels for cooperation, seeking cross-sectional engagement from society and institutions, whilst we strive for the creation of inclusive, safe spaces for intercultural dialogue. We seek to ensure the durability and sustained impact of cultural cooperation projects by boosting and joining efforts between institutions and civil society.

Mobility and migration across the Mediterranean

\textbf{Art. 22 Reminds} that migration needs to be addressed in a more humane way, in the sense that people are not defined by an administrative category and are equally worthy/valuable.

\textbf{Art. 23 Recognizes} mobility and migration as the natural expression of human existence, and one of the defining \textit{features} of Mediterranean societies. Nevertheless, we remind that the Mediterranean Sea is still one the deadliest regions for migrants in the world.\textsuperscript{22} According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) there were 281 million migrants in the world in 2020, which accounted for 3.6% of the total population\textsuperscript{23}. During the same period, nearly 90,000 persons crossed our sea, most of them along the Central Mediterranean route. Only in 2021, 1924 people died in their journey across our Sea\textsuperscript{24}. In this perspective, the Mediterranean context requires its own policy specificities.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{21} Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, (2016), Time for Europe to get migrant integration right, Issue Paper.
\textsuperscript{22} Mainwaring, C. At Europe’s Edge: Migration and Crisis in the Mediterranean. Available online: https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2019/10/europes-edge (accessed on 12 April 2021).
\textsuperscript{23} Around 169 million were labor migrants, 26.4 million were refugees and 4.1 million were asylum seekers (IOM, 2020)
\textsuperscript{24} https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1117292
\textsuperscript{25} Nilsson, B.; Ramadan, R. Migration and Inequalities around the Mediterranean Sea; LIS Working Paper Series, No.788; Luxembourg Income Study (LIS): Luxembourg, 2020.
\end{footnotesize}
Art. 24 Proposes to foster transnational cooperation on development opportunities and regular migration to entice the youth to find processes for their mobility project.\(^{26}\) Besides, we plan to support the youth by giving them information and encouraging them to participate in the improvement of their communities. In order to do so, we must foster active engagement alongside and between local, regional, national and international entities, with youth at the forefront.

### A new Mediterranean society for all genders

Gender equality means that all genders are provided with the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. Thus, the lack of equality must be addressed at all levels and in all spheres, including family, community, market and state where investments and legal safeguard ingender equality contribute to lifelong positive outcomes and yield considerable inter-generational payoffs.

Although gender equality is a significant topic in our societies, it remains a structural issue with a clear impact on physical and mental health, culture, as well as sustainable economic growth and good governance. Despite some progress many challenges remain pervasive and crippling regarding laws and social norms evolution. Thus, considering them, the Mediterranean Youth Council argues the following:

#### Overcoming a sexist culture

Art. 25 Puts in evidence that sexist culture is the root of gender inequality and produces feelings of worthlessness, self-censorship and leads to community pressure. Consequently, we recommend acting on this structural problem, by encouraging non-gendered oriented activities, working against the construction of stereotypes in a patriarchal system. As man’s storytelling is prominent such as their monopole on creativity, we propose to give more visibility to female referents in order to rebuild a more inclusive history and narrative.

#### Independence of women

Art. 26 Highlights that the independence of women is linked to their effective freedom, but gender discrimination is still affecting their daily life. For instance, despite legislation on minimum age for marriage in most of the countries in the Mediterranean, child and forced marriages are still prevalent. In consequence, we urge local, regional, national authorities and transnational organizations to help in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that include the elimination of child, early and forced marriage (SDG 5.3). We believe that a change of deeply rooted cultural perceptions and attitudes towards women and girls is vital.

#### Gender and sexual violence

Art. 27 Warns that sexual harassment, violences and feminicides, is a tremendous issue in the Mediterranean\(^{27}\). Yet, there are differences concerning the legal conditions to report and register sexual violence, but also a lack of concern by the judicial systems. Giving victims a safe channel to report attacks could help them. In addition, transforming norms and values to promote gender equality and non-violent behaviors is also needed, notably through education. Besides, sexual violences lead to significant physical and mental health consequences, and hence we

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\(^{26}\) Such as the Project Shababuna between Catalunya (Spain) and Tunis (Tunisia) with BUSINESSMED and Generalitat de Catalunya: [https://businessmed-umce.org/](https://businessmed-umce.org/).

recommend to reinforce psychological support as well as medical and health care to victims in the frame of a coordinated strategy by institutions and all involved stakeholders on a higher Mediterranean level.

**Fighting political and economic discrimination**

**Art. 28** Recognizes the impact at international level of the **Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women** (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. Even though all Mediterranean countries have ratified CEDAW, more efforts should be made into the full implementation of its articles and recommendations. Transparency should therefore be increased, notably thanks to the States parties’ reports that should pay attention to more detailed information about legislative, judicial, and administrative measures undertaken to implement CEDAW. In this perspective, we would like to invite Mediterranean States and regions to consider a common convention on LGBTQI+ rights in the Mediterranean area.

**Art. 29** Observes a lack of gender parity and equality in political decision-making in the public and private sector. Consequently, we recommend making sure that the whole Mediterranean has implemented laws and regulations on equal access to employment, introducing family-friendly policies - beneficial to both male and female counterparts alike, taking into account single-mothers and single-fathers, as well as same-sex couples too - and balanced work-life practices such as quotas to access positions of responsibility. We also detected the need for more women - but not exclusive- training and coaching to enhance their leadership and upgrade their skills towards more equal opportunities in top managerial positions. Subsequently, we believe that the production of gender studies and statistics and their wide dissemination with decision-makers in all public administrations could be beneficial.

**Gender rights empowerment**

**Art. 30** Takes into account reproductive rights including abortion rights, birth control, freedom from coerced sterilization and contraception, reproductive healthcare, education about sexually transmitted infections, menstrual health and protection from female genital mutilation. We are worried about the fact that some Mediterranean countries allow abortion only if there is risk to woman’s life or her death. Indeed, we recommend considering also to allow abortion in cases of health’s reasons, rape and fetal impairment at least, but preferably to endorse legal abortion without restrictions. Besides, we encourage more awareness raising campaigns about sexually transmitted infections and contraception, that has to be more affordable in the whole Mediterranean, notably for young people.

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28 The Commission’s work brought to light all the areas in which women are denied equality with men. https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women

29 Moreover, we note that the South Shore of the Mediterranean punishes with prison, detention and arrests same-sex intercourses, union and expression. LGBTQI+ are illegal in most of the North Africa and Middle East whereas their recognition is accepted in the North Shore (same-sex marriage is legal except for the Holy See) and East Shore (with civil unions) of the Mediterranean.

30 Articles 10, 11 and 13 of CEDAW affirm women’s rights to non-discrimination in education, employment and economic and social activities. These demands are given special emphasis to the situation of rural women as noted in article 14. Article 15 asserts the full equality of women in civil and business matters, demanding that all instruments directed at restricting women’s legal capacity “shall be deemed null and void”.

31 “Gender and reproductive rights”, WHO, 2009: “Reproductive rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health.”
Art. 31 Recognizes the importance of maternity leave and its already existing legal endorsement in most of Mediterranean countries. Yet, we would like to ensure that women will not endanger their career during and after pregnancy. Moreover, we strongly hope that paternity leave will be adopted in the whole Mediterranean as a matter of parity. Besides, all Mediterranean countries could consider generalizing the menstrual leave for women suffering complications when having their menstruations\textsuperscript{32}.

\textsuperscript{32} As made in the Spanish parliament last April 2022: https://www.euronews.com/next/2022/05/17/spain-set-to-become-the-first-european-country-to-introduce-a-3-day-menstrual