



Member of the European Parliament

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Baroness Catherine Ashton of Upholland  
Vice-President/High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1049 Bruxelles

Brussels, 1 March 2011

Dear High Representative,

In light of the developments in the Southern Mediterranean, you have begun to review the European Union's policy towards this region and in particular the allocation of EU funds. The aim of this review is of course to ensure that EU action effectively supports the democratic transformation processes in the Arab world. Women have already been playing and must increasingly play an important role in this transformation and the larger development of the region. It is therefore imperative that gender aspects are fully taken into account when reviewing the EU's policy toward the Southern Mediterranean. We appreciate it that you are aware of this necessity and encourage you to take, in particular, three steps to effectively putting your general commitment into practice:

First, when reviewing the allocation and use of EU funds, their impact on women and men should be assessed and it should be ensured that they benefit equally both genders (gender budgeting).

Second, the European Commission and the External Action Service should ensure that the participants of EU-funded measures, such as training programmes or workshops, are equally men and women.

Third, when EU delegations travel to the region, they should ensure that their choice of interlocutors includes a sufficient number of women – not only when it comes to discussing gender issues, but across the board.

We would appreciate it if these concrete steps were reflected in the review you are currently carrying out and remain at your and your services' disposal to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,



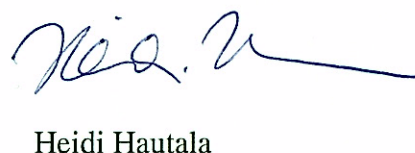
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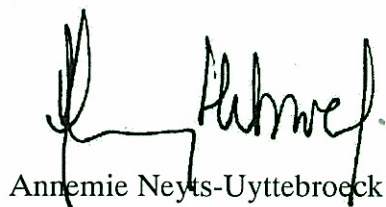
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