

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Shadow Report 2014 on France



French Coordination for the European Women's Lobby

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NGOs in consultative status with the UN ECOSOC

**EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL WOMEN
IN FRANCE, EUROPE AND THE WORLD**

Summary

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction by Françoise Morvan, president of the CLEF | 3 |
| I. Answers to general recommendations of the Committee: | 5 |
| 1.1.The lifting of reservations: | 5 |
| 1.2. The adherence to international provisions: the ratification of the Convention of Istanbul . | 5 |
| 1.3. Raising awareness of CEDAW by the State members:..... | 5 |
| | |
| II. The implementation of the first part of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Articles 1 to 6)..... | 6 |
| 2.1.The effective protection of women against any act of discrimination (Articles 1 and 2): the role of the “Defenders of Rights”; the group actions..... | 6 |
| 2.2.1. The struggle against discrimination and violence towards immigrant women and women of immigrant origin..... | 7 |
| 2.2.2. The struggle against discrimination towards disabled women..... | 11 |
| 2.3.1. Political measures implemented to guarantee the application of women’s rights (article 3). | 14 |
| 2.3.2. The implementation of the principle of secularism (article 3): | 15 |
| 2.4. The struggle against stereotypes in the media, the collective memory, culture, and language (article 5)..... | 17 |
| 2.5. The struggle against violence towards women (Recommendation n°19 adopted in 1992 by the Committee) | 21 |
| | |
| III. The implementation of the second part of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination towards women (articles 7 and 8)..... | 27 |
| 3.1. Equality between women and men in political and public life (article 7) | 27 |
| 3.2. Equality between women and men in the representation of the government at the international level (article 8) | 31 |
| | |
| IV. The implementation of the third part of the CEDAW (Articles 10-16)..... | 34 |
| 4.1.1. Education (Article 10)..... | 34 |
| 4.1.2. Women and sport (article 10) | 39 |
| 4.2. Equality between women and men in economic spheres (Article 11)..... | 40 |
| 4.3. Equality between women and men in health (Article 12)..... | 43 |
| 4.4. Equal access for women and men to social and economic benefits (Article 13)..... | 48 |
| | |
| Annexes: the associations of the CLEF that participated in the alternative report. | 52 |
| • The presentation of the alternative report approximates the report of the government, which wished to follow closely and answer the observations of the committee of experts. | |
| • Rather than to establish the state of the current situation of women’s rights in France, the associations of the CLEF wishes to emphasize their concrete demands. | |

Introduction

In 2013 we celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the ratification by France of the UN **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women** (CEDAW / CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by 188 member countries of the United Nations. The objective was to mark the importance of the Convention as a universal reference for women's rights, for states, feminist associations, women and men worldwide.

Augmented by recommendations, the convention exhaustively defines the discriminations against women and sets legal obligations to the State members to end discrimination. The agreement requires them to present - in principle every four years, to the committee of experts - periodic reports on the measures taken to implement the Convention. On the basis of these reports the committee establishes the general recommendations to be taken into account by governments.

It is to meet this demand that France sent in early 2014 **its seventh governmental report** to the CEDAW Committee's.

As in 2003 and 2008, the French Coordination for the European Women's Lobby (CLEF) is currently responsible for establishing **an alternative report** to the seventh report, on the basis of the independent and militant observations of its member associations. These contributions, which analyze the government policy in recent years, also carry the demands of associations to improve women's rights.

Result of collective work, the alternative report is useful to the committee of experts because it draws on fieldwork information on the situation of women's rights in France. Many of the proposals made in the previous report remain entirely valid.

The previous period marked a turning point with the political changes in 2012 and the desire expressed by the President of the Republic to effectively fight against discrimination towards women. Highly symbolic actions were undertaken with the appointment of a **government based on gender parity and a minister for women's rights**, which during three years achieved a lot. However, we regret in particular the recent transformation of the ministry into a simple state secretariat.

The implementation of a cross-cutting and integrated policy of equality in all government ministries and public bodies, the inception of a number of Acts and the **Law for real equality between women and men** adopted 4th August 2014 are accompanied by a concern for efficiency to ensure the application of the measures taken.

The fact remains that discrimination against women remain wide spread and recurring, and inequality is still striking. And the recent news about the draft law on social dialogue continues to testify to the risk of backtracking on women's rights. Equality between women and men is conquered every day. In this alternative report, **the CLEF identifies four main areas of action in which the expectations of its associations remain strong:**

- **Violence against women, all inclusive violence (violence in marriage, gender violence, rape, prostitution...) (recommendation No. 19 of the Convention);**
- **Equality in economic spheres, including professional and wage equality, stagnant a long time and relaunched with penalties established against the companies in 2012 and the Law for real equality between women and men of August 4th, 2014**

(Article 11 of the Convention);

- **The fight against gender stereotypes in education (Article 10), the media, culture, language (Article 5 of the Convention);**
- **The discrimination that severely impacts some women: migrant and Roma women, disabled women, and lesbian.**

Before outlining the details regarding these four areas, it seems crucial to affirm that **the rights of women cannot progress without secularism**. Already in 2005, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in its Resolution 1464, noted that: “Religion continues to play an important role in the lives of many European women (...). This influence is seldom benign: women's rights are often restricted or violated in the name of religion (...)”, and urged Member States to “fully protect all women living in their country against violations of their rights based on or attributed to religion (...)”. Secularism is thus an essential tool for the emancipation and liberty of women. In France it is guaranteed by the Constitution.

Secularism, emancipation and freedom for women needs to include the **right to abortion as a human right** at the national level in the Constitutions, and at the European level in the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

-It also seems important to accentuate the urgency to achieve **real parity in politics and in Parliament, firstly**, so that women participate equally with men in decision-making. The Constitution recognizes the principle of parity, but does not guarantee it.

In recent elections the financial penalties for political parties that do not respect gender parity have been revealed as being ineffective. The CLEF requests the possibility of a revision of the Constitution, so that the principle of equal access of women and men to electoral mandates and elective offices becomes a standard.

Françoise Morvan, president de la CLEF.

I. Answers to general recommendations of the Committee:

1.1. The lifting of reservations:

We welcome **the lifting of the remaining reservation to the Convention**, submitted by France to the United Nations on October 13, 2013. The Act of 17 May 2013, opening marriage to couples of the same sex, marks the end of the patriarchal rule that assigns the father's name to the child in case of disagreement or lack of parental choice, and establishes **equality of parents in the choice of last name** (name of birth, or name of the spouse, or both names together).

We rely on the exemplary value of France, with the support of associations involved internationally, to call on the member States to abandon the **many reservations to the Convention that endanger its implementation**. Tunisia and Morocco have shown the way.

1.2. The adherence to international provisions: the ratification of the Convention of Istanbul:

France ratified on 4 July 2014 the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women against domestic violence, the so-called Convention of Istanbul. France is the thirteenth country to ratify the Convention, coming into force on August 1, 2014. (*See 3.2. (Article 8) §1Diplomatie p. 31*).

The States members must now follow the requirements of the Convention concerning violence prevention, protection of victims, prosecution of perpetrators of violence and the implementation of global policies. A group of experts - including a French expert GREVIO - is charged with the following-up and the evaluation of measures taken.

France, which broadly follows the requirements of the Istanbul Convention, must continue to strengthen the protection measures for victims, especially in terms of accommodation. France must also adjust its legislation concerning the qualification of rape to the broader definition that is proposed by the Convention (*see 2.5. § 4. The rape p 22*).

1.3. Raising awareness of CEDAW by the State members:

The Convention remains virtually unknown in the governmental, parliamentary and judiciary sectors in France. We agree with the observations of the Committee of Experts that recommends to highlight to the judges, prosecutors and lawyers the scope and importance of the Convention. CEDAW should, through its optional protocol, be included in the legal training programs and law schools. The National School of Magistrates and the political science institutes should also be involved.

We ask:

- **That the Convention, the Government Report, the alternative report and the comments of the Experts Committee, become better known and widely available to elected officials and governmental bodies;**
- **That the Parliament, which ratified the Convention in 1983, through its delegations to Women's Rights, and the High Council for Equality between Women and Men (HCE/fh), get involved in monitoring the implementation of the Convention by the member state.**

II. The implementation of the first part of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Articles 1 to 6):

2.1. The effective protection of women against any act of discrimination (Articles 1 and 2): the role of the “Defenders of Rights” (Défenseurs des droits); the group actions

The French Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination Commission (Haute Autorité de lutte contre les discriminations et pour l'égalité - HALDE) established in 2004, is today integrated in the independent constitutional authority of the Defenders of Rights (Défenseurs des droits -DDD) created in 2008 and installed in 2011.

The protection of women's rights is included in the duties of the defenders of rights to enforce the respect of rights and freedom, to fight against all discrimination prohibited by law, and to promote equality. As recommended by the committee of experts, gender parity is ensured in the bodies of the Defenders of Rights.

The CLEF welcomes the new strategy of the Defenders of rights on combating discrimination against women, by a transverse approach to discrimination against women. The number of women's claims has increased from 2% in 2005 to 12.4% in 2012, in particular those relating to pregnancy.

We ask:

- **To maximize the availability of information, to the public and more importantly to all women at risk of discrimination, to simplify access to the Defender of rights and its delegates.**
- **That the associations further use the opportunity offered to them to have recourse to the Defender of Rights, together with the victim, with or without their consent.**

The CLEF values the collaboration between the Defenders of rights and the associations within the Consultative committee on equality between women and men, and requests that the proposals made at that time (for example, a fair quota of disabled women among the employees of companies and the public service, the management of voluntary termination of pregnancy for women migrants awaiting Medical assistance from the state...) are taken into account;

At the same time, **the possibility of group actions against discrimination**, which is currently the subject of a bill, will allow the victims to bring together their cases to the courts, through a union or association. This measure, which already exists in consumer law, will encourage victims to take actions against perpetrators (one in two victims does not take any action) by breaking their isolation.

2.2.1. The struggle against discrimination and violence towards immigrant women and women of immigrant origin.

1. Difficulties in gaining access to employment

Immigrant women are particularly disadvantaged and discriminated against in access to the labor market, in relation to the employment rate of women aged 15-64 years (39.2% against 47.6% for women non-immigrants), the unemployment rate (17.5% compared to 8.9% for non-immigrant women in 2013, according to INSEE), part-time work (36% of immigrants from countries outside the European Union, according to a government report in March 2013) and low-skilled jobs.

We ask:

- **The recognition of the right to training in the language of the host country and access to language training, as part of the Reception and Integration Contract (Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration - CAI). The obstacles to regular studies for women newly arrived in France should be removed, in particular the cost of transportation and childcare. Unpaid training courses, often considered unimportant by families, requires individual support in order to elevate and integrate them in their individual projects into the longer term;**
- **The diversification of career guidance and job offers for migrant women, exploring the possibilities of employment in other trades (building, crafts, gardening, computer/information technology...);**
- **The recognition of degrees obtained abroad, outside the European Union. In fact, 26% of these women have a university degree (17% for men). Due to lack of equivalence, immigrant women graduates are often forced to take jobs not matching their skills/qualifications.**
- **The promotion of the entrepreneurship of migrant women and the valorization of their projects, particularly among African women, whose dynamism is the best guarantee of integration.**

2. Violence against foreign women and the right to residence:

Legal protection to foreign women victims of violence is now recognized with regard to their rights of residence:

- For women arrived for family reunification, victims of domestic violence, who can renew their residence permit, in case of separation from their spouse due to violence.
- For women victims of domestic violence, married or not, having a protection order, including when they are undocumented, who have to renew their residence permit.

But some **dysfunctions are observed in the implementation of these measures.**

We ask:

- **That the delivery or renewal of residence permits in cases of violence would not be left to the discretion of prefectures, but becomes a right, even in the case of Algerian nationals (whose status is governed by bilateral agreements between France and Algeria);**
- **That court members and prefectures are kept up to date and trained in the application of existing legal provisions related to the protection of the rights of foreign women victims of violence;**
- **That the prefectural services implement these provisions in order to eliminate the inequality existing in the practices of the different prefectures.**

3. Gender and the right of asylum:

In 2014 women represented 37% of 65 000 asylum seekers in France, about 18 000 people. Only a little over of 40% of them obtained refugee status. Their number has increased dramatically in recent years. These figures, cited in the parliamentary reports on the reform of the asylum law, reflect the fact that they suffer much gender-based violence (sexual mutilation, forced marriages, honor killings, sexual exploitation, rape, persecutions relating to sexual orientation).

Because the Geneva Convention of 1951 on refugee issues did not refer to either sex or gender, the competent organizations charged with recognizing refugee status, the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (Office française de protection des réfugiés et apatrides - OFPRA) and the National Court Asylum (Cour nationale du droit d'asile) were brought in, in recent years, to recognize the persecution of women, according to the criteria of "*membership of a particular social group.*"

As the result of recent changes new steps have been taken to improve their situation: a "referent violence against women" was designated within OFPRA and an important initiative of training personnel was undertaken. However, the Office still has a narrow interpretation of the concept of gender, and does not sufficiently take into account the particularities of the social, ethnic and political situation of these women. OFPRA has not so far given guidelines on gender, as in other countries.

The reception of women asylum seekers has been the subject of numerous critiques and does not sufficiently take into account the peculiarities of their social and political situation. In November 2013, the High Council for equality between women and men considered that “*the current asylum procedure in France is not appropriate for women and not sufficiently disposed towards adopting a gender perspective*”.

We ask:

- **A better consideration of the demands of women facing gender-based persecutions; that the interpretation of the Geneva Convention broadly integrates gender as a social and political fact, and that the recommendations of the UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) become implemented in this regard.**
- **That in the context of protection offered to women in danger of genital mutilation, the request by the OFPRA of a medical certificate against excision of the minor, would not be renewed unnecessarily, because it is a source of stigma and trauma for both child and family;**
- **That the personnel, including the judges and rapporteurs of the CNDA, are better trained in the context of countries of origin, and that information is disseminated to women asylum seekers.**

Concerning the lesbian victims of lesbophobic violence in their countries, the Geneva Convention does not consider the sexual orientation as a criteria to recognize refugee status. The sexual orientation may however be taken into account by the criteria of “*membership of a particular social group.*” The European Court of Human Rights ruled in this sense, acknowledging that homosexuals, within the meaning of the Geneva Convention, can be considered as a “particular social group” and that homosexuals can obtain asylum in case of serious and credible persecution.

In practice, the specific nature of violence experienced by lesbians is still insufficiently identified and seldom considered:

- either because of prejudice according to which a lesbian can not be married or have children;
- or because the pattern of discrimination against homosexuals is still prevalent. The girl’s attempts to resist social formatting to heterosexuality are at an early age repressed by the family in various forms: pressure, blackmail, death threats founded in a code of honor, harassment, verbal and physical violence, forced marriages...

We ask:

- **That the training of professionals involved in the asylum proceedings integrates the issue of lesbians, in collaboration with feminist and lesbians organizations.**

4. Roma Women

The CLEF wants to draw attention to the situation of Roma women and the responsibility of public authorities with regards to discrimination, exclusion and all kinds of violence that they undergo, in particular the frequent evacuations on unsanitary camps. Their health is particularly alarming, according to a survey conducted in 2012 by the Regional Health Observatory in Île-de-France (chronic diseases, infectious diseases such as tuberculosis). The young women are those more exposed to a lack

of monitoring regarding contraception and motherhood, teenage pregnancy and also a high rate of voluntary interruption of pregnancy.

Concerning the Roma children living in slums, according to a recent survey of a European NGO, half are not in school, despite of compulsory schooling obligations and in part because of the denials to schooling imposed on the families.

We ask:

- **Whenever unhealthy camps are dismantled (...) and in accordance with the inter-ministerial circular of 26 August 2012 alternative accommodation must, as an imperative, be offered to families;**
- **Support must be given to families with regard to school enrollment, access to healthcare, to social protection, and access to the labor market.**
- **That the outstanding work of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) on the situation of Roma women and travelling people, and also the recommendations proposed to the member states of the EU, especially France, become better known, disseminated and implemented in what concerns the fundamental rights, the struggle against discrimination and the national Roma integration strategies.**

5. Combating Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

Prohibited in France, excision (the practice of FGM) is a crime that falls under the Criminal Court since 1983. Although this practice is becoming scarce and the risk of being excised is very low on the French territory, there is still a risk for girls on travelling to their countries of origin, as pointed out by the National Observatory on Violence against Women. According to the Convention of the Council of Europe (Istanbul Convention), FGM constitutes a “*serious violation of human rights of women and girls.*”

New provisions have been established to prevent excision: the Law on the elimination of violence against women of 9 July 2010; the decision of the State Council of 21 December 2012 allowing young girls threatened by female genital mutilation to obtain international protection in the event of returning to her country; the law of 5 August 2013 which introduces two new offences to strength the protection of minors: the incitement of a minor to undergo MSF and incitement of others to commit an MSF. According to the National institute for demographic studies (INED), some 53,000 adult women in France have suffered sexual mutilation.

We ask:

- **That the recognition of international protection for the parents of refugee minors, becomes more flexible, due to the incurred risk of excision;**
- **Medical and psychological support for the excised women, the access to surgical repair, the intervention of multidisciplinary units of healthcare;**
- **A better training of healthcare professionals, on the medical, sociological and legal aspects of FGM and better understanding and management of post-traumatic syndrome;**
- **An improvement in prevention:**

- by raising-awareness and training the employees of teaching establishments, head teachers, and social medical staff about the issues of FGM;
- by reporting to social protective services the incidence of FGM which involves girls who do not return to college at the beginning of the school year or disappear during the school year.
- by raising the awareness of maternity staff concerning the pregnancies of excised women and minors.

6. Forced marriages

The act of July 5th 2013 transposes into French law certain measures of the Convention of the Council of Europe of May 11th 2011, on the prevention and the struggle against the violence towards women. It is an important step, because the act takes into account the violence of forced marriages. It criminalizes *“the act of misleading an adult woman or a child of taking her to a territory or a State different from where she lives, with the intention of forcing her into a marriage contract”*.

Furthermore, the law of August 4th 2014 allows for the repatriation to France, under certain conditions: foreign women who are victims of forced marriages, or of violence used to force them into one.

We ask:

- The creation of a new offence of hindering the return to France of a person in danger of sexist violence abroad;
- The repression of femicide with aggravating circumstances, when the perpetrators are ascendants, descendants or relatives of the victims;
- A reinforced protection of victims of domestic violence related to forced marriage, in particular of minors and young adults in danger of violence abroad;
- Better identification of persons at risk of forced marriage, of those already against their will abroad (school drop-outs, and pupils absent the following school year); the guarantee of separate hearings in the consulates of France; the extension of the judicial duties in relation to justice for children/minors;
- The development and supply of appropriate accommodation.

2.2.2. The struggle against discrimination towards disabled women

1. Access to responsibilities:

Disabled women are citizens before being “disabled”. However, its currently difficult for them to become integrated into public life; isolated by their disability, they are made virtually invisible and

excluded from social, cultural, political, associative life and decision making. They do not occupy responsible jobs in companies, labor unions, public services and the political sector. At present, we can find no deputies or senators who are disabled women and also no administrators in the disabled people associations.

We ask:

- **That political parties, labor unions and associations are encouraged to submit candidate lists including disabled women in eligible positions;**
- **That disabled women are present in the new authorities created in 2012 to promote the equality between women and men, as the High Council for Equality between women and men.**

2. Professional equality for disabled women:

The measures regarding accessibility, so necessary for access of disabled women to employment, are overlooked, which contributes to the preservation of existing inequalities that disabled women with regard to employment. Given the delay taken by the actors, the Prime Minister has just deferred the compliance date of the standards of accessibility for disabled people; businesses, transport, public places, city halls, schools, hotel chains and business and trade get an additional term of compliancy of 6 years, indeed 9 years for the SNCF (French national railway company), who will benefit from a delay until 2024.

We ask:

- **Specific support for child minding;**
- **To integrate a clause of parity into the obligation imposed on companies to employ 6 % of disabled persons, and to abolish the tax deductions and assistance to companies which do not respect this quota;**
- **Gender-based statistics on disability, at present non-existent, and the integration of disability into the action plans for professional equality in companies;**
- **To raise awareness on the gender dimension among the job-search assistance structures, as well as the recruitment structures.**
- **To reinforce the obligation of accessibility to commercial premises.**

3. The culture of equality: access to healthcare and to reproductive rights of disabled women:

The government announced in February, 2014 additional time of 3 years for compliance to the standards of accessibility for disabled persons, in particular medical offices and public places, resulting in an aggravation of disparities of access to healthcare for these women.

We ask:

- **To improve the accessibility to doctor's offices, care centers, hospital and to adapt all care equipment accordingly without further delay;**

- **To make all necessary information available to all disabled women related to healthcare/prevention, contraception options, pregnancy, maternity, voluntary termination of pregnancy.**
- **To enhance the training of healthcare staff on the specific needs of disabled women and mothers.**

4. Political steering

Today, the disabled elected representatives can be counted on the fingers of one hand. They are not represented in the democratic institutions.

We ask:

- **The necessary development and adjustment of a cross-cutting policy to promote equality regarding disabled women, by the Inter-ministerial committee on women's rights (Comité interministériel aux droits des femmes et à l'égalité entre les femmes et les homes - CIDF) boosted by the ministry in charge of women's rights;**
- **That the funding of associations working on equality for women with disabilities is guaranteed and becomes the objective of long-lasting conventions with the responsible ministries**

5. The struggle against the violence towards disabled women

Disability is an aggravating factor for domestic, institutional and social violence. 80 % of women with disabilities undergo violence, daily mistreatment and abuses.

We congratulate the government for the implementation of a 4th plan in combating violence. The Inter-ministerial Mission for the Protection of Women (MIPROF) asks that violence against disabled women is included in trainings.

Let us note that, in the article 16 of the law against the prostitution system, adopted by the National Assembly on December 4th 2013, the term disability replaces the term deficiency as the definition of vulnerability.

The Law for real equality between women and men makes provisions for, in the article 13, paragraph k: *“awareness-raising activities and prevention concerning violence against women with disabilities”*.

We ask:

- **That current and future surveys on violence against women integrate the dimension of disability, including quantified data and statistics;**
- **Awareness-raising- activities and training of medical and social professionals on the problems of violence that undergo disabled women;**

- **Accessibility to shelters.**

The CLEF takes notes with satisfaction the creation of “**Ecoute Violences Femmes Handicapées**” by the association Women speak, Women act (Femmes pour le dire, femmes pour agir - FDFA) on March 6th 2015.

6. Sexual assistance:

The CLEF opposed the creation of the status “sexual assistant” which is more related to prostitution than to the desire, by disabled people, for an fulfilled and sexual life. The use of formed and paid “sexual helping” poses the fundamental question of prostitution as a response to supposed “needs”. We know that this demand is essentially masculine and that the offer is essentially feminine. But even in cases of male caregivers the same problem remains: the commodification of the women or men’s body. This term cannot justify an “adjustment” of the laws of procuring, while France is committed to fighting violence towards women and the trafficking of human beings.

What is lacking, is a deeper reflection about the meaning of human sexuality, about the particular expressions of sexuality of seriously disabled people as well as intelligent research related to the access to a fulfilling sex life for heavily disable people.

2.3.1. Political measures implemented to guarantee the application of women’s rights (article 3).

1. Parity within institutions.

A. The Government

The first government appointed by the President of the Republic on May 16th 2012, is based on gender parity, according to the commitments of the election campaign, with **17 women for 34 ministerial posts**. The CLEF applauded the importance attached to this, in respect of the equality between women and men in the highest level of government (We note however that the senior ministerial positions are all occupied by men, with the exception of the Ministry of Justice entrusted to a woman).

The high point has been the appointment of a **full time Minister of women’s rights**, a longstanding demand of feminists associations, for more than 30 years, since Yvette Roudy's appointment, as first Minister of Women’s rights in France.

In two years (2012-2014), numerous initiatives were taken to make progress on equality: the creation of an inter-ministerial committee of women’s rights, a cross-sectoral gender equality policy in all ministries and public sectors, the promotion of fundamental legislative texts, as the outline law of August 4th 2014 for real equality between women and men.

We regret all the more the *downgrading in August 2014 of the ministry to a simple State Secretariat* under the supervision of the Ministry of Health, Social Affairs and Women’s rights.

B. The Constitutional Council

Since the appointments of March 2013, of the 9 members who sit on the Constitutional Council 3 were women.

We ask:

- **That the next appointments to the Constitutional Council in 2016, will be able to establish an effective parity between women and men;**
- **That the promotion of parity planned in the 1st article of the Constitution becomes an obligation.**

C. The High Council for Equality between women and men (Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes – HCE/fh).

In spite of limited resources, the High Council for Equality between women and men (40 women and 32 men) has accomplished, since 2013, a remarkable body of work by its pertinent opinions on numerous bills and its attentive follow-up of current events concerning women's rights.

HCE publishes regularly reports and notices about: stereotypes and social roles (sexual, social and territorial disparities), the evaluation of gender parity in the context of the recent elections, the access to Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy, the violence against women, or about emerging topics such as sexist harassment and sexual violence in particular in public places and on public transport; and they do not hesitate to intervene publicly, as soon as the rights of women are endangered.

The CLEF never fails to take into account the recommendations of the High Council for equality.

2.3.2. The implementation of the principle of secularism (article 3):

1. Preliminary considerations on the observations made by the CEDAW Committee to France:

The CLEF considers that a voluntary policy based on women's rights has to be founded on secularism. This principle, while allowing the development of critical thinking towards dogma, in particular religious – which is often associated to a traditional vision of women's roles - guarantees the individual freedom of religion or convictions, considered as belonging to the private sphere.

It should be noted that freedom of conscience and free practice of worship is not confused with an intrinsic right to show religious symbols in an ostensible way, outside places dedicated to worship.

That is why the CLEF is surprised that the Committee demands that France, on the one hand deepens the fight against sexist stereotypes and on the other hand expresses its concerns about laws “forbidding the wearing of symbols or dresses indicating a religious affiliation in schools, colleges and public high schools” and will doubtless highlight the same concerns regarding the law of 2010 against the wearing

of the complete veil in public places.

The wearing of the veil highlights a patriarchal custom that precedes religion and that seeks the control of the women's body by men. Fortified now a day by religion, the wearing of the veil creates discrimination against women, by imposing a specific representation of women to the public.

How can schools promote on the one hand respect for the principle of equality between women and men, registered in the French Constitution, and on the other hand accept symbols of inferiority of girls and women?

- **More generally, by virtue of the principle of secularism and the necessary neutrality of public places (shared space for everybody), the CLEF considers that a particular attention should be devoted to the ostentatious expressions of religious beliefs when they do not originate from representatives of the religion. They symbolize a restriction in the freedom of women's bodies and a rejection of gender-based and diversity mixing.**

2. The "Observatory of secularism"

The CLEF praises the implementation of an "Observatory of secularism" and the elaboration by the Ministry of Education of a "Charter of secularism", posted in all public primary and secondary schools in France. In particular, this charter informs pupils of the penalties related to the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols or clothing and their right to oppose any teaching based on religious beliefs.

We ask:

- **That the Government extends the implementation of the "charter of secularism" to include universities and privates institutions under contract to the State.**

3. The principle of secularism:

The CLEF shares the concerns expressed by the "Defender of the rights", based on complaints received, *"that many uncertainties remain concerning the scope of the principle of secularism. These uncertainties multiply the risks of misunderstandings, instrumentalization or conflict"*. This can impact in particular on *"the volunteers and part-time workers in the public service"* or *"the employees of the private sector acting in collaboration with public authorities"*.

We ask:

- **That public authorities attest to the principle of secularism by completing, if necessary the, legal regulations, so that public places become places of co-habitation, in respect of equality between women and men and in respect of complete freedom of consciousness.**

4. Secularism and sport:

Sport, as one of the most popular social activities and because it concerns the body, it is a domain where it is essential to ensure the respect of the rules of neutrality, which are similar to those of secularism,

We ask:

- **The elaboration of a French Charter of secularism in sports and the promotion of this charter at the international level.**

5. Secularism at the international level:

As a poorly understood concept within Europe, French secularism is a principle derived from the Enlightenment, which corresponds to the notion of “living together”. It remains nevertheless the emancipating principle of women’s rights.

It is also a great value to allow the application of the CEDEF/CEDAW Convention. A “*new diplomacy for women’s rights*” cannot take shortcuts regarding this lever of action. Due to the regressions of women’s rights in numerous countries of the world, resulting from the influence of religions in politics, France has the duty to make its voice heard at the international level.

2.4. The struggle against stereotypes in the media, the collective memory, culture, and language (article 5).

It is through culture (in its various forms, including most popular games and sports) that patriarchal archaic model manifests itself. In this context, it is a priority to give women back their place, unfortunately undervalued and involved in a daily struggle, in education (see: article 10, p. 45) in the media, the collective memory, and the language.

1. Enhancing the visibility of women in the media:

According to recent studies of the workgroup “Women’s rights” of the French Audiovisual Authority (Conseil supérieur de l’audiovisuel - CSA), the representation of women on television remains a matter of concern: taking into account all programs combined, the number of women in broadcasting is only 35 % and 14 % in sport, while they represent 56 % of the TV audience. The women panelists presented as experts on television programmes is only 20 % and their access to a position of responsibility is minor: 70 % of chief editors are men and there are only two women heads of audiovisual media.

We support the associations, which denounce the sexist attitudes, the invisibility of women and the serious professional disparities existing in the various medias.

The law of August 4th 2014 for the real equality between women and men asks the CSA to ensure respect for women's rights in the media: ensure a fairer representation of women, a promotion of gender equality and a better image of women by fighting stereotypes, sexist remarks/innuendo and representations of violence towards women.

We ask:

- **That the implementation of the new missions of the CSA with regard to women's rights are diligently followed by the HCE/fh, in particular within the Parliament, and regularly re-evaluated;**
- **That media training is offered to women, either in-house or via associations, in order to make women experts more visible on the screen and on television emissions;**
- **That the press, where women are under-represented and their outputs poorly valued, adopts a code of ethics for the respect of women's rights, for professional equality and combating the sexism;**
- **That the equality between women and men is integrated into the training of students in the schools of journalism.**

2. Enhancing the visibility of women in history and collective memory:

The CLEF applauds both the transfer and induction in 2015 of the ashes of Germaine Tillion and Geneviève De Gaulle-Anthonioz in the Pantheon, a monument that both celebrates and honors the illustrious figures of French history. However, we do not consider this advancement as enough. Only 4 women and 71 men rest in the Pantheon in 2015. This situation reflects an existing archaic and deliberate refusal to include and recognize the pioneering women of French history.

We ask:

- **The modification of the inscription which appears on the front of the Pantheon "To the great men, the grateful homeland";**
- **The transfer and induction in the Pantheon of women's ashes, for example, Olympe De Gouges, Simone De Beauvoir or Lucie Aubrac, whose exceptional life trajectories are etched in our collective memory.**

3. Enhancing the visibility of women in culture:

The stark disparities that remain in such highly symbolic sectors as the arts and culture highlight a real problem in democracy today. Which sorts of representation of women are offered to our society by the arts and culture sectors? Do they respect the principles of sharing and free access to expression established by the institutions? How can existing artwork speak about the world, if women, who constitute more than half of the French population, take only a small part in it?

According to the Ministry of Culture and Communication, on January 1st 2015 the proportion of

women in managerial positions of the 100 biggest cultural institutions in France was 8 %. The gender gap remains striking, in particular concerning salaries and media recognition. For example, in 2012 there was a gap of 20 % in the hourly wage between women and men in cultural institutions. Also women have not often been rewarded: indeed, only 4 women have won the Victoire de la Musique for the category of best album, out of 45 prize-winners between 1985 and 2015.

We ask:

- **The sustainability of the Observatory for equality within the Ministry of Culture and Communication, the extension of its responsibilities in all domains of the arts and culture (plastic arts, literature etc.) and a broader dissemination of its reports;**
- **The sustainability of the requirements on gender parity in the shortlists and appointments to executive positions of cultural institutions, with an obligation related to performance;**
- **The integration, into the specifications of cultural structures, of quotas allowing a better balance between women and men in the programming and the production resources that are granted to them;**
- **The integration of a specific number of women's contributions in the programs of the National Department of Education and in artistic training, as well as the recognition of the value of our matrimony (the work of women artists, erased from a male written history);**
- **The urgent revision of the reform of the code of Unédic of June 26th 2014 concerning the system of the intermittent artists, which is particularly damaging for the most vulnerable people, but mainly for women artists.**

4. The struggle against discriminations related to the titles of individuals, the language and the vocabulary:

A. Women's titles:

The circular of February 12th 2012, instructed French administrations to eliminate, in their correspondence and documentation, the terms of “maiden name, patronymic family name, husband's name, wife's name” which will be replaced by “madam, family name, username”.

We ask

- **To extend this practice, which should be applied as a priority in some specific public institutions such as the Social Security, tax authorities, as well as all companies and the private sector.**

B. Against the preeminence of masculinity in grammar and vocabulary:

Feminist associations have mobilized themselves, in collaboration with the League of education, to abolish a grammatical rule dating of 17th century according to which in a sentence that contains several masculine and feminine subjects, the masculine prevails over the feminine, making the adjective agree to the past participle.

We ask:

- **That the French Academy eliminates this supremacy of masculine over feminine, and applies a proximity rule that grants an adjective or past participle with the name closest to it, allowing the language to be freed from sexist habits acquired during school;**
- **To use the term “inheritance” instead of “patrimony”, in accordance with the patronymic origins of the notary code;**
- **The effective application of the feminization of professional names, functions, ranks or titles;**
- **To ensure the proper use of no discriminational vocabulary towards women.**

C. For a better translation of the title of the CEDEF:

We ask:

- **To replace “à l’égard” by “à l’encontre” in the official translation in French of the title of the CEDAW, for a fairer definition of the purposes aimed by the convention.**

D. From the expression “droits de l’homme” (men’s rights) to “droits humains” (Human rights):

Originating from the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the Human rights, in spite of the universality attached to them, still preserve a certain ambiguity related to the different meanings of the women’s rights, in the context in which they were born and at present. Human rights of the French Revolution did not consider women’s rights; this designation still preserves a sexist or gender character that numerous international organizations and associations by using the term of “human rights” would like to see disappear. These human rights are explicitly those of every human being, man or woman.

However, this term corresponds better to its literal translation in English in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, or Romance languages.

We ask:

- That “human rights” (“droits humains”) replaces “rights of the men” (“droits de l’Homme”) in the national and international legal texts, laws and customs.

E. Naming discrimination against the lesbian women: the lesbophobia:

The CLEF asks that the denunciation of discrimination against homosexual people takes specifically into account discrimination towards lesbians, qualifying these acts as “lesbophobia”, in order to avoid that they remain invisible under the term universally used of “homophobia”.

2.5. Struggle against violence towards women (Recommendation n°19 adopted in 1992 by the Committee):

Violence is a kind of continuum which crosses all our society, from sexist insult in the street to the extreme violence of deathblows, making women the privileged victims of a criminal machismo which does not dare to say its name. (We continue to speak in the press and in the media of “passionate drama” relegated to the column of news items) ... So, we declare:

1. The legal recognition of femicide:

Figures are overwhelming: in France, in 2013, **146 people were killed as the result of domestic violence, 121 women** (25 men, often perpetrators themselves of violence), victims of their companion or ex-companion, according to the report of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of women’s rights of May 2014. These figures represent **20 % of all homicides in 2013** (not forgetting **13 children who were victims of lethal violence** at the same time as their mothers, and 23 children witnesses to these crimes. To improve the fight against these machismo crimes it is necessary, firstly, to name them and to recognize their specificity.

We ask

- **That the concept of femicide be integrated into the French criminal law, that is, the murder of a woman because of her sex, which must be recognized with aggravating circumstances.**

2. For the application of the Convention of Istanbul and the recognition of gender-based violence:

The Convention of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating the violence against women and domestic violence shows the way forward in recognizing the gender-based violence. The Convention gives a very wide definition of the gender-based violence, which includes precisely: the

physical and psychological violence including harassment; sexual violence including the sexual assault, rape and the sexual harassment; forced marriages; feminine genital mutilations; forced abortion or sterilization; “crimes of honor”...

We ask:

- **That the term gender-based violence, as defined by the Convention of Istanbul, be recognized and introduced in the whole legal system.**

3. The fight against domestic violence:

The law of July 9th, 2010, relating to violence perpetrated specifically towards women, and **the law of August 4th 2014** for the real equality between the women and the men, marked undeniable progress in this struggle, establishing a protection order that can be granted rapidly by the judge and that can be extended from 4 to 6 months; the creation of “Great Danger Telephone” (Téléphone Grand Danger - TDG), the priority eviction of a violent spouse from the place of residence and better protection of foreign women victims of violence.

The CLEF praises the awareness relating to the urgency of the fight against violence, at a political level and in society. From 2012 till 2013, the number of victims of lethal violence fell from 174 to 146.

While waiting for the global evaluation of the application of the law for the real equality and the 3rd and 4th Inter-ministerial plans on prevention and the fight against violence towards women some important questions still remain.

We ask:

- **That the recent dispositions to combating violence are applied to all territories;**
- **That the protection order be diligently implemented by jurisdictions and that the deadlines fixed for the decision-making of the family court, often too long, be reduced, in order to afford the victims emergency protection;**
- **That the protocol-frame concerning the processing of statement on record and complaints be applied in all departments;**
- **That “Great Danger Telephone” is effectively accessible throughout the entire territory.**
- **That the needs regarding shelter and access to social housing for women victims of violence are evaluated and fulfilled first and foremost;**
- **That the prevention of reoffending by violent men is effectively implemented, including in particular psychological follow-up, internships of accountability, the allocation of funds and personal resources;**
- **That initial works of the local observatories of violence are better known and disseminated.**

4. Rape, a social phenomenon, a widely unpunished crime:

Among the multiple forms that violence towards women takes, rape - a crime defined in the penal code but poorly addressed in governmental reports - remains underestimated and widely unpunished. This social phenomenon affected in 2013 approximately 83000 women between 18 and 59 years old, victims of rapes or attempted rape according to the figures from the national Observatory of violence against women, and 100.000 women victims according to certain associations.

The taboo regarding the most serious of sexual assaults remains strong. Only 11% of victims lodge complaints and only 1356 rapes convictions have been judged in Assizes courts (50% of all convictions for the crime!). Women and children victims of violence do not dare to speak out owing to guilt and/or humiliation, especially if the rapist is a relative (8 in 10 women know their abuser); the evidence is difficult to collect and the complaints are often catalogued without further action; or the public prosecutor's office redefines the crime as a misdemeanor, to the detriment of the victim.

In order to fight more effectively against rape, the Convention of Istanbul offers new legal resources, with new definitions of rape, broader than that of the French penal code, not related to the idea of "constraint", but with that of "acting without consent".

We ask:

- **To bring into compliance the French law with the standards of the Convention of the Council of Europe relating to the definition of rape;**
- **That the cases withdrawn of rape and sexual assaults are prompted by the Prosecutor and listed;**
- **That rape, which is a crime, cannot be trained in sexual assault, a misdemeanor, referred to the criminal court**
- **That the protection order brings total benefits to the victims of rape;**
- **That the time limit for proceedings in the requested State in cases of rape is reviewed, to take into account the trauma of the victims and the late revelation of the facts.**

5. The fight against the harassment in public place.

Sexual harassment can affect all the areas of women's life, particularly their daily lives, such as travel on public transports. The High Council for the Equality between women and men published a report in 2015 concerning harassment in public places. This report defines this phenomenon as a manifestation of sexism, which affects the right, the safety and the free activity of women in the public sphere. This kind of harassment is manifested in offensive words, inappropriate behavior against women and humiliating situations for the victims. It can also be related to the sexual orientation of the victims. According to the HCE/fh, this harassment in public places constitutes a human's rights violation.

Women constitute the majority of public transports users. 100 % of them claim to have been victims at least once in their life of sexist harassment or sexual assaults, affecting particularly girls and young women. 6 women in 10 are afraid of aggression or theft on transports, compared to 3 men in 10. This feeling of insecurity has an impact on women's behavior. For example, due to the fear of being attacked or of receiving insulting remarks, women can feel forced to change their appearance and dress. Street harassment is currently part of the public debate. Associations that denounce street

harassment such as Dare the feminism! launched recently the awareness-raising campaign: “TakeBackTheMetro”. We support the recommendations of the HCE/fh and of the associations.

We ask:

- **A preventive and combating action plan against harassment in public places, targeting transport operators and users;**
- **To define and evaluate sexual harassment in public places on the basis of surveys and citizen’s consultation;**
- **To engage transport operators in actions aimed at highlighting the alarm systems, in the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns or training for professionals, in the development of innovations in transport organizations, in reducing public exposure to sexist advertisements;**
- **The integration of the struggle against harassment into education on sexuality and gender equality policies;**
- **Improve compliance and enforcement of the penal law related to sexual harassment and sexual assaults.**

6. The fight against violence towards lesbian women.

The lesbian coordination of France contributed significantly to bring to the foreground the concept of « lesbophobia », which highlights the double discrimination of lesbians as women and as homosexuals (See 2.4 (article 5) § 4 d) p20).

We ask:

- **That this type of discrimination and violence be taken into account in the same way as discriminations and violence towards women;**
- **That all the following surveys related to violence against women integrates indicators of sexual orientation, in order to collect quantified data on it;**
- **That professionals be made aware of and trained on issues related to the problem of lesbophobic violence.**

2.6. Prevention and fight against the trafficking of human beings, the exploitation and prostitution of others (article 6)

We proclaim that prostitution is one of the most serious violence against women, because any unwanted sexual act constitutes an intimate violence and an offence against dignity, frequently coupled with multiple forms of psychological and physical violence.

Prostitution is a violence based on the long history of male domination and the exploitation of

inequalities. It is a violation of human's rights and a fundamental obstacle to the equality between women and men. By paying to obtain a sexual intercourse, the prostitution customer imposes his will in total disregard to the desire of the others. By his sexual request, the prostitution customer constitutes the pillar of all the prostitution system and perpetuates it.

It's high time that France substantiates its abolitionist position by implementing a more radical policy in combating human trafficking and procuring, the purchase of sexual services, and ceasing immediately proceedings against prostituted persons.

1. A big step forward: the vote by the National Assembly on the bill for combating the prostitution system.

Great progress has been made since 2010 on combating prostitution system, thanks to a strong commitment from the deputies of the National Assembly, the Delegations of women's rights, the associative sectors, including the Movement of the Nest (Mouvement du Nid) and more recently the collective "Abolition 2012" including 60 associations, one of which is the CLEF.

The National Assembly adopted on December 5th 2013 at first reading, with an absolute majority, the bill (PPL) "*Strengthening the struggle against the prostitution system*", which was strongly supported by the Women's Rights Secretary and by the government.

We totally approve the main measures of this bill:

- **The abrogation of the offence of soliciting for prostitution, even passive soliciting** (established by the law of 2003 on internal security), that treats victims of prostitution as delinquents and that, since its adoption, has even increased the violence, the insecurity and the precariousness of the prostituted people;
- **The banning of the purchase of sexual acts and the penalization of the customer by a fine** (1500 euros) sanctioning the recourse to prostitution, with an additional awareness-raising tuition;
- **The development of new means of fighting** the procuring and trafficking of human beings on the Internet;
- **Better protection and global support for victims** of trafficking and prostitution the organization and financing of programs aiding the withdrawal from forced prostitution;
- for foreign people (about 90 % of people prostituted in public places, according to the authors of the PPL) who want to quit forced prostitution; **to significantly improve the procedure of issuing residence permits**, with no obligation to lodge a complaint or testify against procuring networks.
- **Information and prevention on the recourse to prostitution**, for pupils of secondary education in general and particularly for girls.

2. Given the backtracking of the Senate, it is urgent to legislate.

Very active support to the bill PPL in 2014 came from a political and institutional level (Women's

rights Delegation of the Senate, Mayors and local councilors, HCE/fh), at associative level, at the international level (European Parliament, Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe, Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution and International Call of Parliamentary members of November, 2014).

In spite of this swell of support across different sectors of society, the Senate, examining on March 31st 2015 the PPL, restored the offence of passive soliciting and eliminated the penalization of the customer. Numerous objections were raised against the machismo and the reactionary vote of a mainly male assembly.

The tens of thousand victims of violence related to prostitution cannot wait any more. So we ask as a matter of urgency:

- **The immediate adoption of the PPL by the Parliament, the National Assembly, giving the constitution the final word over the Senate. It is necessary to legislate following the example of Sweden: to establish the penalization of the purchasing of sexual services, to decrease drastically the demand of customers and make them responsible;**
- **To set up at the same time the basic social components related to the protection and support of prostituted people wishing to quit the prostitution system: financing programs to aid quitting forced prostitution, supporting reintegration, access to rights, emergency housing and to employment;**
- **That people who denounce their procurers receive a temporary resident's permit, and benefit from the Active Solidarity Revenue (Revenu de Solidarité Active - RSA);**
- **That competent and committed associations participate actively to the implementation of programs to quit prostitution, being financially supported by public authorities;**
- **That improvements are brought in granting residence permits to the foreign prostituted people as planned by the PPL, in particular;**
 - **the renewal, in its own right, of residence permits which have expired at the end of the criminal procedure, in particular when the foreign person agreed to lodge a complaint or to testify against procurers;**
 - **the renewal, in its own right, at the end of the path out of prostitution, of a temporary residence permit.**
 - **the delivery of these residence permits, in their own right, that must not be based upon discretionary whim of the prefects.**
 -

In February 2014, the European Parliament adopted with a unanimous majority a resolution calling the state members to reduce prostitution by sanctioning customers, without incriminating the prostitutes, and to help prostituted women to quit their networks. The resolution, underlining the failure of the liberal model of regulations of the “sexual trade” (Germany, Netherlands), pronounced in favor of the “Scandinavian model” (Sweden, Norway, Iceland).

We wish that France, by this new law, aligns itself with these countries and collaborates with the European Parliament, on the decisions of the European institutions and state members fighting against the prostitution system.

III. The implementation of the second part of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination towards women (articles 7 and 8)

3.1. Equality between women and men in political and public life (article 7)

In 2015, we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the recognition of the first vote for women in France, made possible after the end of the Second World War, a major victory after 150 years of feminist struggle, that hailed the arrival of women as citizens. However women's citizenship was acquired much later in France than other European countries (in 1906 for Finland, in 1918 for Germany), *due to the wild opposition of the Senate of the IIIth Republic*.

The following big step was the adoption of the principle of gender parity by constitutional revision of 1999. Fifteen years and nine acts later, the High Council for equality between women and men (HCE/fh) noticed in February 2015, in its "Report on the parity in politics: between progress and stagnation", that in the absence of obligations on gender equality that gender parity progressed very slowly and called all the political parties to make a commitment for power sharing between women and men.

As underlined by the CLEF, given "*the weak renewal of political staff and the proportion of white men 50 years old older in all the positions of power*", we shall need to pursue new solutions for a real gender parity. Our proposals, which have been discussed within our network of associations of elected women, will allow us to move forward.

1. Too few women in Parliament: for real gender parity

A. In the National Assembly:

Since the elections of 2012, the Assembly counts, 26, 9 % of delegated women (compared to 18,5 % after the elections of 2007). Which is still a long way from parity, for an institution which supposedly represents the entire French population.

Given the single-member constituency plurality voting system, the law has imposed on the political parties to respect the parity of candidates, by establishing increasingly high financial sanctions, but which until now have not been efficiently enough. The parties have preferred "to pay" rather than to respect the parity. The law of August 4th, 2014 on the real equality has increased these penalties for the next general election.

We ask

- **The implementation of new constraints to respect parity, other than financial sanctions:**
 - **by refusing the candidate lists if they do not respect parity;**
 - **by establishing a voting system automatically insuring the parity: a proportional voting, binominal majority electoral constituency based on district, or mixed;**
 - **The implementation of a short term holding of multiple offices, limited to two consecutive periods;**
 - **To study the possibility of a revision of the Constitution, in order to guarantee and apply as a binding legal rule the principle of parity, which is defined as “the equal access of women and men to the electoral positions and the elective offices”.**

B. In the Senate

After the elections of September 2014, **the Senate totaled 87 women - 25 % of seats -**, which constitutes a small improvement if we consider the results of 2011 (22 % of women senators). The progress should have been more striking as the law of August 2nd, 2013 has widened the proportional representation lists to departments having three vacant seats, applying now to equal obligations on parity to three quarters of seats.

The senatorial voting system is however hardly satisfactory. We denounce particularly the absence of parity in the appointing of delegates to the senatorial electoral college (which consists of 95 % of delegates of town councils); the inadequate presence of women at the head of the lists; and particularly, as highlighted by the HCE/fh, the strategies of bypassing the subject of parity of candidates presented on a dissident list, who are in fact connected with the party of origin.

We ask:

- **That a debate be launched on the complete revision of the senatorial voting system towards a proportional list of representation and within the framework of regional districts;**
- **That the political parties prioritize the promotion of women placed as head of list and on encouraging women candidates.**
- **That the phenomenon of multiplication of lists, which is detrimental to parity, be more denounced and the revision of the rules of attachment of a candidate within the Senate to a party that did not present them;**
- **To insure the parity in the designation, by the municipalities, of their delegates within the senatorial electoral college;**
- **The establishment of gender-based statistics concerning the electors;**
- **The adoption, globally, of the same rules of non-multiple office holding as with members of parliament.**

2. Parity in all municipal Councils

The lowering of the threshold to 1000 inhabitants, for the application of the voter parity lists system (set up by the law of May 17th 2013) have to allow for an increase in the number of women in the local councils: 16 000 more women; but the threshold of 500 inhabitants envisaged in 2010 would have allowed the election of 32 000 additional women.

After the elections of March, 2014 women's share on local councilors is 40,3 % and women's representation as mayors is **16 %**.

We ask:

- **The abolition of the threshold of numbers of inhabitants by municipality for the application of the proportional list voting system and the application of the parity obligations in all the municipalities, as recommend by the Association of rural mayors of France and the Assembly of the communities of France.**

3. Parity in the Councils of public inter-municipal cooperation institutes (EPCI)

EPCI are the new seats of power which decide 80 % of investments concerning the municipalities.

According to the law of May 17th 2013 and since the municipal elections of 2014, the voting system differs according to the size of the municipality:

- for municipalities of 1000 inhabitants and more (27 % of the municipalities), direct district elections with parity lists. The result is: 43,7 % of women community councilors;
- for the municipalities of less than 1000 inhabitants, the community councilors are the first members of municipal council in the order of the table. These municipalities often send only a single delegate, thus a mayor. The result is: only 20,2 % of women community councilors.

Women's share in the Councils of public inter-municipal cooperation institutes (EPCI) in 2014: 34,4 %,

Women vice-presidents' share: 20 %,

Women presidents' share: 7,8 %.

These levels of local government are largely ignored in relation to parity. Even if the new law resulted in a further feminization of the assemblies, there is no parity obligation at the level of the executive of EPCI, consisting primarily of mayors, and in particular of men. Inter-communal entities are managed by more than 92 % by men today.

We ask:

- **A direct election for community councils with parity lists representing all the member of the municipalities (and not lists by municipality), resulting in the integration of parity within the councils and within their executives;**
- **A broad dissemination of sexual statistics concerning EPCI.**

4. A commitment from the political parties to encourage parity in the head of lists

Women heading the lists, elected in the proportional list system (municipal and regional elections) are not nearly sufficient: 16 % of women mayors and only 10 women presidents of country councils in metropolitan France, that is approximately 10 %. While mixed binomials elected in the last departmental elections of March 2015 had a positive effect on the parity within the country councils, currently based on parity, the presidents remain almost exclusively male.

People heading the list of candidates, chosen by the political parties, are generally men and no effort is been made at the governmental level or by political parties to encourage women to be placed at the top of the lists.

We ask:

- **The financing of information and educational campaigns to promote women placed at the head of the lists during the parity list elections system;**
- **That political parties make a commitment to guarantee the parity at the head of all the lists, in all the municipal departmental, regional, senatorial and European elections...**

5. The elected status

The lack of representation of women in politics calls into question the compatibility of the practice of an electoral mandate and of professional and family life.

We ask:

- **The creation of a status for the elected representatives that does not penalize the locally elected officials concerning their income and of their retirement rights: the entitlement to cessation t benefits at the end of their mandates; the entitlement to training or retraining; the acknowledgement of skills acquired via Validation of Prior Experience (Validation des acquis de l'expérience - VAE);**
- **Training for all the elected representatives, particularly at the commencement of their mandate;**
- **The reimbursement of childcare fees during the period of the mandate, which must be as an obligation granted by the mayor when requested by the parents;**
- **The limitation of multiple offices holding of local executives and its limitation in duration to a maximum of only two mandates.**
- **That the elected representatives convicted of any violence against women, including moral and sexual harassment, are sentenced to penalties of ineligibility proportional to the gravity of the offences.**

3.2. Equality between women and men in the representation of the government at the international level (article 8)

The civil society organizations are concerned about the current instability, the inadequacies of human resources allocated by the administration and the lack of transversal action in the field of Official development assistance. The policy guidance document on gender, adopted for the period 2013-2017 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Development (Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International -MAEDI), defines important commitments. However, France remains backwards compared to other countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in terms of traceability of funds allocated to the programs for equality and the development of gender mainstreaming in all sectors of assistance.

Furthermore the parity has still not impacted on the decision-making positions and representational positions abroad: we can count in total **only 15 % of women ambassadors**.

1. Diplomacy:

In the framework of the negotiations related to the “post 2015”, climate processes, and the CSW (UN Commission on the Status of Women's (CSW) charged with the follow-up of “Beijing + 20”), the MAEDI must engage itself in a much more proactive way in international debate. This debate concerns violence in the context of the rise of fundamentalisms, questions related to women's political and economic empowerment and the resources allocated to the equality between women and men in the development policies, the cooperation policies and policies aiming at developing the energy transition.

France must express itself more firmly on the violations of the women and girls' rights, and the discriminations to which they are subjected in the countries where France is committed (Iraq, Center Africa, Mali). France must provide increased resources for the implementation of its National action plan and specifically those resources related to the five UN Security Council Resolutions for executing resolution 1325, such as the protection of women against violence and the participation of women in the management of conflicts and post-conflictual situations.

In particular, we ask for the implementation of adapted training for the military sent on operations to war torn countries, including awareness-raising activities against the sexist stereotypes and racist prejudices, as well as the dissemination of information about the penalties incurred in cases of infractions of the code of conduct by the armed forces engaged in armed conflicts.

We ask:

- **First of all that France respects its international commitments concerning the fight against the violence, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the so-called Convention of Istanbul, became effective August 1st 2014. Our country, however, which ratified the convention in July 2014, has yet to make a commitment:**
 - **To take increasingly into account from now the notion of gender-based violence, which covers all the forms of violence; to apply all the provisions of the convention as regards the prevention of the violence, the protection of victims and the pursuit of the perpetrators;**

- That French legislation be adapted accordingly, in particular in relation to the new definition of rape in the Convention, taking into account, not the notion of “constraint”, but that of the act “without consent” (See above 2. 5 The fight against violence towards women § 4 Rape p. 22);
- That France encourages the ratification of the Convention by all the state members of the Council of Europe and calls upon it to be universally ratified, as membership is open to States who are not members of the Council of Europe;
- That France concretizes its commitments regarding parity decision-making, by involving actively women in the international negotiations related to the sustainable development, in the elaboration, follow-up and evaluation of measures to fight against desertification, climate change and the erosion of the biodiversity; in the sustainable management of water policies and other environmental projects, and in general, in its initiatives regarding Global Public Goods (BPM);
- That France commits actively to integrate transversally the equality between women and men in the Objectives of sustainable development (ODD), at the level of targets and indicators, within the framework of the process post 2015.

2. Development aid and OMD / ODD:

To reach the Millennium Development Goals (OMD) (and the Objectives of the Sustainable development after 2015 - ODD) and to support the implementation of the CEDAW in the recipient countries of the French Official Development Assistance (APD), France has first of all to mainstream the gender equality perspective into all sectors of development cooperation relating to the CEDAW.

We ask:

- The implementation of gender budgeting to improve gender mainstreaming and gender accountability into all the undertakings of the French Official Development Assistance (multilateral, bilateral, assistance for the international solidarity organizations (Organisation de Solidarité Internationale - OSI) and solidarity organizations stemming from migrations (Organisations de Solidarité Issues des Migrations - OSIM), assistance for decentralized cooperation, etc.);
- The training of all agents involved in gender issues;
- The revision of all internal and external procedures in order to operationalize gender mainstreaming into all existing partnerships, in particular into budget support for countries;
- That France strengthens its support on the participation of civil society organizations fighting for the equality between women and men and women’s rights; that France also strengthens the support and the protection of the defenders of human rights in southern countries and encourages the welcoming of refugees and asylum seekers victims of gender-based persecution;
- That France increases its support of university education, research and action-research in relation to gender and development.

3. The ODD and the implementation of the CEDAW / CEDEF in countries where France is involved:

Today we lack gender indicators and gender studies on sustainable development. Relating to this,

We ask:

- **To assign a budget corresponding to gender-based indicators, in favor of the fight against women's poverty in rural and urban areas, in order to increase access by women to economic resources and facilitate their control of them;**
- **To express a strong political will to accelerate the investment in women's health rights, including sexual and reproductive health rights and access to Voluntary Pregnancy Interruption, by means of better sexual education, family planning as well as an improvement in the quality of services and training of midwives and qualified obstetricians;**
- **To encourage at the diplomatic level the improvement and the application of gender equality laws and policies, by paying particular attention to the harmful traditional practices regarding women's and girls health (early marriages, feminine sexual mutilations) and the violence related to sex, as well as the elimination of discrimination towards women in the area of access to healthcare.**
- **That public authorities monitor specific repercussions of public policies and activities of private French companies that impact women coming from the most disadvantaged countries, relating to their access to the biodiversity, to land, to the local energy and food resources.**
- **The French provisions on social and environmental responsibility of private companies and of their foreign subsidiaries must be strengthened by integrating the gender perspective.**

IV. The implementation of the third part of the CEDAW (Articles 10-16)

4.1.1. Education (Article 10)

Article 5 of the Government report is related to the fight against stereotypes in education, the promotion of equality between girls and boys, and the gender balance in school courses. The CLEF decided to harvest in Article 10 the observations and recommendations related to the fight against discrimination, sexual orientation of girls, the sexism in higher education but also sex education, the fight against sexual harassment in universities and student prostitution.

1. In preschool, elementary and secondary education:

A. To effectively promote gender equality between girls and boys:

The implementation of the Inter-ministerial Convention for equality between girls and boys, and between women and men in the educational system for the 2013-2018 period and the new “Action Plan for Equality” of June 2014 helping to promote equality between girls and boys. But we are convinced that we must continue these initiatives.

We ask

- **A dedicated training and continuing training in equality for all National Education employees;**
- **To upgrade the collaboration with women’s advocacy associations.**

According to the principles of the Convention, in 2013 the innovative program “ABCD for equality” was launched in about 250 schools. Due to the violent contestation against this pedagogy of equality led by conservative political movements and certain confused parents, the “ABCD” was replaced in 2014 by a “**Action plan for equality between girls and boys at the school**”, that is to be applied in all academies, putting the accent on training of the teachers, the distribution of tools and educational modules, and information for parents.

We ask

- **A regular evaluation of the new Action Plan for Equality;**
- **The effective implementation next September of obligatory training modules in all higher schools of teaching and education (Ecoles supérieures du professorat et de l’éducation - ESPE) developed by trained personnel (academic experts on gender, and competent certified associations);**
- **Ministerial vigilance in reviewing educational models on equality between girls and boys; monitoring and regular assessment of their implementation;**

- **The obligatory implementation of training on equality in student evaluation;**
- **The organization of continuous training for teaching and administrative staff;**
- **Information on equality between girls and boys for families, offered by councils and school boards.**

To fight against violence (verbal, physical or via social networks) in schools, targeted at girls, who are the main victims:

We ask

- **Specific training for National Education staff, in order to better identify violence (including cyber-sexism) and to find solutions.**

We hope that associative actions that promote equality between girls and boys in schools are continued, enhanced, linked to education and secularism, and based on the Charter of secularism displayed in all schools.

To develop and reinforce the collaboration with women's rights associations, following the application of the Code of Education (art. L312).

We ask

- **To continue this collaboration and to enhance its value;**
- **The recognition of this collaboration by the ministry and the education authorities; accelerating the approval procedures;**
- **Effective information for teachers and education staff and adequate funding.**

B. Rebalancing the educational and vocational guidance for Girls:

At present an important gender unbalance still remains in the composition of courses that is highlighted by the over-representation of boys in technical areas and girls in humanities and social sciences.

We ask

- **Objective information about the high school courses and professions, from college to high school, in order to avoid premature renunciation of girls to science careers;**
- **The feminization of career titles in information bulletins and oral presentations;**
- **Training and continuing training for staff giving guidance on these subjects;**
- **A local counseling service available to students and their parents;**
- **Strong support for the actions of relevant associations and civil societies that, by presenting strong female models, aim to improve and develop girls self-confidence (for example, the prize Irène Joliot-Curie);**
- **Information about the European Commission's actions and programs to promote women in science; to encourage exchanges and good practices with other countries of the European Union.**

- **To raise awareness among educational stakeholders, a sector that remains poorly feminized. The feminization of apprenticeships must be enhanced, in order to integrate girls without any discrimination or violence.**

C. Fighting against stereotypes:

Some barriers to equality are due to the persistence of gender stereotypes, often disseminated unconsciously, including by teachers that defend equality.

We ask:

- **To introduce topics on gender inequalities and stereotypes in the school curricula in all educational programs and at all levels of education;**
- **To take into account this subject in the programs of recent research related to gender;**
- **The presence of gender experts in working groups led by the High Council of Programs (CSP);**
- **Education and media awareness to expel gender stereotypes;**
- **Further studies on gender stereotypes in textbooks in all disciplines and taking them into account, in order to give a rightful place to women;**
- **The creation of a public resources bank containing non-stereotypical illustrations.**

D. To Promote sexuality education:

According to a circular from 2003 at least three annual sessions of sexuality education should be introduced in colleges and high schools. What is it in reality? The situation is very diverse and contrasting.

We ask:

- **The implementation of a survey and of a report of the state of affairs regarding the functionality of such annual sessions**
- **The implementation of the Circular;**
- **The accreditation of competent associations and the dissemination of the list of these organizations within the institutions.**

2. Post-graduate education and research:

Despite the progress of the last 20 years High Education and research in France remain as impregnated as society in general, by gender stereotypes and by gender inequality. Secularism, a founding principle that implicitly protects higher education and research and a basic condition for gender equality, is in fact under threat.

We ask:

- **Secularism in public universities and research institutions.**

A. The compliance by the State to its obligations:

In the current context of government disengagement from education and the encouragement of autonomy of the universities by the state, the discrimination and gender inequality issues that have been presented below are not managed by national steering of the State: the State does not monitor the strict application of laws, neither the rapid publication of implementing decrees or contractual texts signed by ministries and institutions (conventions, charters, action plan, etc.).

We ask:

- **An urgent gender sensitive evaluation of the ESR law of July 2013 and a national gender sensitive balance sheet/overview/data bank of the Charter for equality between women and men in higher education and research signed in 2013;**
- **The implementation of the Charter for equality in all the ESR institutions, including large schools;**
- **The officialization of the heads of gender equality missions (chargé-e-s de mission à l'égalité), (order appointing, teaching or research landfills change in working practices, mission statements, funding and sustainability of posts).**

B. Fighting against sexism:

By compulsory parity measures, the ESR law of July 2013 is supposed to rebalance gender inequalities observed in educational and research institutions.

Currently the glass ceiling remains: men accumulate scientific and administrative responsibilities at high level and prestigious positions. The share of women in these positions decreases as the hierarchical level increases. Furthermore, research and academic disciplines continue to promote sexism.

We ask

- **The complete implementation of the 2013 *Higher Education and Research Ministry Action Plan*, which was proposed in close collaboration with the Women's Rights Ministry;**
- **Interim measures for positive discrimination, because statistics prove that women teachers and women researchers are penalized in their professional careers;**
- **Funding on gender research, by new calls for tenders targeting prioritizing the targeting of disciplines that face gender inequalities (humanities and social sciences);**
- **To provide an annual compulsory module on gender equality in all Bachelor and Master streams;**

- **The end of machismo remarks in some oral exams of prestigious universities.**
- C. Combating discrimination and stereotyping in order to improve the professional guidance of students:

After graduating from high school, it finds that the disparities between girls and boys is widening in favor of boys, notably in streams of higher education (universities, colleges and schools) that leads to scientific and technical careers. In order to change girls careers choices, often based on gender stereotypes, **it is necessary to pay attention to and promote specific educational and vocational guidance for girls.**

We ask

- **To promote and to make all career paths more attractive for girls;**
- **To propose to students examples of women, with whom they can identify and hence galvanize their ambitions;**
- **To support students in fighting against the codes of masculine environments; the suffering of women in “male” contexts is an unacceptable violence;**
- **To ensure the training of persons charged with this guidance and continuing training of secondary teachers currently in positions.**

- D. Against sexual harassment at the university and student prostitution:

The pauperization of students leads increasingly to precarious situations. We have made a distressing finding on the increase in young people practicing prostitution in order to support themselves.

To face these two scourges the government must:

- **Develop a national information policy on prevention of sexual harassment in Higher Education and Research;**
- **Warn both girls and boys, from the beginning of school registration, of the threats of harassment and prostitution;**
- **Organize prevention and to support the creation of counseling centers; to aid scholarship and student housing policies, in order to eliminate some of the economic reasons for prostitution;**
- **Initiate legislative and regulatory reforms related to disciplinary procedures to effectively protect victims and punish perpetrators;**
- **Fund research on both subjects.**

4.1.2. Women and sport (article 10)

Feminine sports participation has steadily progressed since the 60s, going from 9% to 60% at present. However, despite the fact that 37% of high-level athletes registered in the Sports Ministry lists are sportswomen and the number of medals won by women in the Olympics Games of London is proportional to the number of women athletes in the French delegation, sportswomen have been excluded from the world of sports. Compared to male athletes, sportswomen are under paid and under-represented in management positions in sports. In addition, they have limited exposure compared to that of men.

We ask

- **The application of regulatory and financial constraints to ensure compliance of the 20% quota of less represented sex (and ultimately 50%) in management of sports bodies, regardless of the number of licenses of one sex or the other (by modifying the Decree of 7 January 2004);**
- **The launch of an dedicated program of feminization of management personnel appointed by the State, whatever the sport, in order to achieve in the long term real parity;**
- **The organization and the extension, as it is already in the case for sportsmen, of a professional status for sportswomen with similar wage levels to those of men;**
- **The effective use of performance contracts to ensure:**
 - **that equality between women and men action plans in sports are correctly implemented in the field;**
 - **in particular: (a) that a priority is given to the deconstruction of stereotypes and training in gender balance and diversity in the context of National Education, (b) at the level of sport participation, that access to sport excellence structures is created (c) in general, that a special attention be given to discrimination against disabled women;**
 - **that female sports events are broadcasted in the same manner as male events. In particular, to amend the Decree of 24 December 2004 which provides only 7 female events compared to 21 for men in the target contract with France TV; or that, both at national or international level, the respect and promotion of the universal values enshrined in the Olympic Charter and the regulations of the sports federations be assured. In particular, that France assumes its special place in international sports bodies, carrying this message to the United Nations.**

4.2. Equality between women and men in economic spheres (Article 11).

Before describing the various aspects of economic spheres, let us not forget that poverty is feminized. It is urgent that inclusive policies which fight against poverty develop real gender-based analysis to measure the impact on women and men of existing measures. These policies should develop specific approach to support women's employment, taking into account the specific obstacles they face. We are also concerned by the risks of increasing inequality between women themselves. The rise in the level of women's educational qualifications should not obscure unskilled, unemployed, poor or homeless women.

1. Professional equality between women and men.

Despite all the policies implemented in the last 30 years to reduce occupational and wage inequalities, the gender wage gap at all levels of employment and the hourly wage, remains high at 24 %. In 2014, a woman must work on average 3 additional months to earn the same annual salary as a man.

The Law for real equality between women and men ensures professional and wage equality, and aims to promote gender balance and diversity of trades. The CLEF strongly supports legal measures to improve wage negotiations and to review classification structures, generally unfavorable to female-dominated jobs.

Remember that in 2013 the government set up an effective mechanism for systematic monitoring professional equality measures with sanctions: 5000 agreements and gender action plans were filed; 700 companies had defaulted and 20 were sanctioned.

However, reporting on the bill on social dialogue is very worrying, because this text limits the resources of professional and wage equality in private companies, in particular the 'comparative situation report' and equality negotiations. Feminist associations struggling to defend professional equality have spoken out against this regression.

We ask:

- **To improve transparency of gender pay gap data:**
 - **or to make mandatory, under threat of financial sanctions, the publication of key indicators related to professional wage and equality - in particular the "comparative status report" - on private companies websites and to inform the Labor Inspection of the non-publication of such data;**
 - **or to take into account key indicators of professional and wage equality of private companies which have more than 50 employees and that are candidates to public procurement;**
- **To strengthen financial penalties on private companies that have not implemented equality agreements;**
- **That private companies can use part of these penalties to finance training and awareness actions related to professional equality for their employees;**

- **That labor inspection staff awareness on equality issues be enhanced, in order to ensure the effective monitoring of agreements and action plans contents, with sanctions for infringements;**
- **Following the recommendations of the “Guide for a non-discriminatory evaluation of employment in feminized sectors” prepared by the Defender of Rights, to raise the salaries of women employed in feminized sectors. This guide shows the discriminatory biases existing in the evaluation methods and in the job classification of industries and companies, and offers a non-discriminatory approach to upgrade the skills of feminized workforce.**
- **To promote the gender balance and diversity in jobs;**
- **To ensure equal professional careers and trajectories for women, especially when they change their status, to an executive position.**
- **To follow up the implementation of a threshold of 24 hours for part-time jobs, established by national inter-professional agreement of January 2013, particularly in occupations and industries with negotiated exceptions.**

2. The participation of women in decision-making

In 2014, it was decided to accelerate the delay to achieve 40% of women on administration boards. The share of women on administration boards of CAC 40 companies is now 30.3%.

We ask:

- **To widen the scope of the quota of women in company decision-making CODER and CODEX, staff representative structures and labor unions.**

3. The equality in economic spheres to involve a more equitable sharing of family responsibilities and the massive development of childcare for young children.

We praise the measures taken into law for real equality between women and men, which has reformed parental leave. The limitation of the duration of parental leave should increase female employment and encourage a more equal sharing of family responsibility; but if new childcare opportunities are not created quickly, these measures could be a trap for women employment.

We must bear in mind that motherhood impacts very strongly on employment and women’s careers (about one in two mothers either quits employment or finds her availability for work severely impacted on the birth of a child) and that discrimination in employment due to childbirth still remains very widespread.

We ask:

- **That women’s protection during and after pregnancy be increased:**
 - **by the extension of the duration of maternity leave to 20 weeks and by its 100% reimbursement by the Social Security, as established by the EU maternity directive draft which is currently blocked;**
 - **or by extending womens protection before and especially after maternity and parental leave;**
 - **or by guaranteeing support to social assistance along the path to employment of women who take care of their children (in the context of parental leave, but especially for women that have finished parental leave and that are the furthest from employment). For example, a specific right to training and improvement of their professional skills;**
- **That better information is given to parents about the consequences and risks of career interruptions and part-time jobs resulting from child care problems; better information about social rights, particularly concerning retirement;**
- **That childcare services are developed:**
 - **by the extension of paternity leave to one-month;**
 - **by creating an early childhood public service offering 500,000 new childcare places for children under three years old;**
 - **by encouraging the development of company and inter-company nurseries;**
 - **by encouraging private company councils to devote a minimum percentage of their budget to “social works” to finance childcare services for young children;**
 - **by encouraging and supporting new innovative solutions for childcare, such as the creation of intergenerational care facilities, connecting children and the elderly.**

4. Women’s economic empowerment requires the individualization of their social and fiscal rights

Wealth and poverty measurement is carried out in France at the household level; social and tax policies favor work specialization within the couple - men in full time paid work and women in part-time paid work and also charged with the care of the children.

In order to promote the economic autonomy of women, we demand the abolition of the joint taxation of spouses and individual-based social and tax entitlements.

4.3. Equality between women and men in health (Article 12)

Sexual and reproductive rights are fundamental rights. They concern public health, but also women's autonomy, freedom and independence, the respect of differences, for dignity and for individual choices. Simple access to contraception and to contraceptive choices, women's freedom to choose motherhood or not, regardless of where they live, constitute hard won rights, for which the law should be applied. Every woman who wishes it should have access to abortion without pressure or guilt, respecting her own decision.

1. Access to contraception

A. Universal access to contraception for young girls and minors

The implementation in 2009 of the "Contraception Pass" (Pass contraception) in Poitou-Charentes by Ségolène Royal, president of the region, had two aims: to fight against teenage pregnancy, voluntary interruption of pregnancy (IVG) and sexually transmitted diseases; to guarantee minors and girls free, anonymous and local access to contraception.

Distributed in schools and in centers of the French Movement for Family Planning (MFPF) the "Contraception Pass" provides free vouchers that entitle medical consultations, medical tests and contraception. Beneficiaries of the pass are middle and high school girls, female apprentices and girls who have dropped-out of the school system. The costs are borne by the region. The Pass can be renewed. Following the success of this first initiative, a dozen regions have adopted it.

The Social Security Financing Act for 2013 makes provision for the State to 100% sponsor contraception for teens between 15 and 18 years (65% previously). Simultaneously, Family Planning and education centers (Centres de planification et d'éducation familiale - CPEF) can issue anonymous and free contraceptive prescriptions to minors requesting anonymity. This service, as well as the 100% provision of contraceptives by the State and Contraception Pass, greatly facilitates access for all girls to contraception.

However, insufficiencies remain: the provision of free contraceptives excludes minors under 15 years; the state support does not cover the medical consultations or medical tests; minors under 16 years old have to use the health insurance card of their parents to obtain a medical consultation and do not have the guarantee of anonymity; girls living in regions where the Pass has not been implemented have fewer opportunities for local contraception; the CPEF centers are now widely accessible nationwide. Nevertheless, these family planning centers distribute contraceptives, perform for free and anonymously blood samples and gynecological examinations, even for minors under 15 years and for girls between 18 and 25 years old.

We ask:

- **That government immediately generalizes and harmonizes the Contraception Pass in all regions, distributing the Pass in all schools by health personnel;**
- **That information on contraception can be universally accessed by every young girl and minor on the government website being widely disseminated (www.choisirsacontraception.fr);**

- **That the principle of free access is extended to girls between 18 to 25 years old, without autonomous social security entitlement, at their request;**
- **That CPEF cells are implemented in remote areas or suburbs.**

B. Ensure universal access, without any discrimination, to both suitable and adequate contraception

Free access by minors to contraceptives relates only to certain methods (birth control pills, contraceptive implant, IUD, emergency pill) and does not include the patch or the vaginal ring (except in family planning centers, where they are issued for free). The 65% refund for contraceptives to girls over 18 years old results in a discrimination on their choices of contraception, forcing them to use the less expensive methods, such as the birth control pill. The best contraception is the one that can be chosen and that is best suited for each woman, according to age, personal circumstances, medical history and the available methods.

Advantages and disadvantages of different contraception methods must be thoroughly evaluated by the National Drug Safety Agency (l'Agence nationale de sécurité du médicament - ANSM). Some methods have side effects that can be extremely harmful: the 3rd and 4th generation pills expose women to the risk of pulmonary thrombosis and phlebitis ... After the warnings and recommendations of the ANSM, the Social Affairs and Health Minister decided in 2013 that these pills would not be refunded anymore by the state and that contraceptive choices should give priority to other methods. In a period of one year, the decline in sales of these pills has led to a decrease of more than 11% of pulmonary embolism.

We ask:

- **An equal access by women to ALL available contraception methods without discrimination;**
- **That the National Drug Safety Agency increases the supervision of contraceptive methods proposed by the pharmaceutical lobby, of side effects and risk assessments of existing methods, the information for healthcare professionals, and the withdrawal from the market of some methods if necessary;**
- **That practitioners, particularly medical doctors and midwives, are better trained (training and continuing training) in contraception, and that are objectively informed on new techniques;**
- **That family doctors (médecins traitants) inform women and couples about methods that best suit them, taking also into account social and psychological parameters;**
- **That information campaigns on contraception, particularly directed towards adolescents, are renewed every year, and that information centers are widely disseminated;**
- **That access to voluntary sterilization is made available.**

2. Access to voluntary interruption of pregnancy (IVG)

A. Improvements, but limited in scope throughout the national territory. Removing the remaining legal obstacles.

In January 2015, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Law “Veil”, which decriminalizes abortion, and marks a fundamental step in the victory of women’s freedom, women’s control over their bodies, their sexuality and their maternal choices. Access to abortion is completely legal in France, but still hampered by financial and organizational problems: inequality in access to abortion clinics across the country, insufficient numbers of practitioners, detrimental delays in medical appointments, difficulty in performing late abortion.

With regard to these points we denounce hospital amalgamations and restructurings to meet financial requirements, which led to the closure of 150 local abortion clinics in recent years.

Improvements have been made recently: 100% support for IVG for all women and girls in 2013; the removal, by the Law of 4 August 2014 on real equality, of the concept of “women in distress” as a condition of access to IVG; the setting up of a website dedicated to abortion for all women.

The “National Action Program to improve access to IVG in France” of January 2015, presented by the Minister of Health and the State Secretary for Women’s Rights, should allow: quick and easy access to IVG, in order to compensate for the closure of abortion clinics, to remedy the disparity in supply in the territory and the lack of new doctors to replace those who retire.

The program proposes practical training for doctors in instrumental IVG, the recruitment of contractual doctors in public hospitals; midwives having the ability to perform medical abortions and the enabling of health centers equipped to practice instrumental abortion. Wider information should be disseminated through information campaigns, good practice guides, a web portal and a telephone platform.

Finally, the **removal of the 7-day cooling off period** between two medical consultations has just been adopted by the National Assembly (first reading) in April 2015. This period of one week was an unnecessary brake and a guilt factor for women who had already made their decision.

We ask

- **To remove the specific conscience clause allowing doctors to refuse to perform an IVG, establishing a separate act, even though the conscience clause existing in the Public Health Code already provides doctors the right of refusal to perform a medical procedure for professional or personal reasons;**
- **That the Order of doctors monitors the practice of IVG according to the strict adherence to the Hippocratic Oath assumed by all doctors.**

We also call:

- **To overcome the shortage of practitioners, by strongly upgrading the remuneration of medical and surgical IVG, in order to make it more attractive; that women have access to their method of choice where deadlines permit;**

- **The implementation of “health plans” by the Regional Health Agencies (Agences régionales de santé - ARS) to facilitate the access to abortion;**
- **That all necessary information about access to IVG is disseminated by telephone platform, targeted campaigns and web portals, including www.ivg.gouv.fr;**
- **The continuation of the activity of the Maternity of Lilas, in Seine-Saint-Denis, seriously threatened in recent years; that a permanent solution related to the reconstruction of the clinic in a structure close to Bagnolet, is rapidly implemented by the Minister of social Affairs, Health and women's Rights.**

Maternity of Lilas became an emblematic place with “a specific approach to childbirth”. The number of births taking place in its obstetrics units is 1650 per year. The maternity service also has an orthogenic section performing 1300 abortions per year. Its activity focuses on: childbirth preparation and childbirth support, the respecting of the methods chosen by the couple, post-natal follow up for the child, as alternatives in contrast to the increased medicalization elsewhere. Considered as part of a continuum in the life of a woman, the IVG is not neglected and the activities related to it are linked to the rest of activities of the clinic. Waiting lists attest to the success of this facility, whose continuance was possible thanks to a strong mobilization of doctors, medical staff, the collective of beneficiaries, feminist associations and the many women of the department.

B. At the European level

Finally, we ask that the right to abortion be recognized as a fundamental right registered at national level, in the Constitution, and at European level in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

3. Medically assisted procreation (MAP) for all women:

Unlike other countries of the European Union such as Belgium, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain and Italy, in France the MAP is currently allowed only for heterosexual couples who can prove two years of co-habitation and suffering from medically certified infertility. Requests for PMA by lesbians or single women cannot be fulfilled in France.

This discrimination is based on the belief that only traditional and heterosexual couples are able to give the unborn child the best chance of a fulfilled life in the future. However, according to the honorary president of the Association of parents and future gays and lesbian parents (Association des parents et future parents gays et lesbiens), there is no available scientific data to prove that these children would not flourish in a homo-parental household. Some of the existing studies conclude that these children do not show significant differences to other children.

At present, lesbian couples are forced to travel abroad to use the techniques of MAP, which is agreed upon depending on the seriousness of their parental project. Because only wealthier couples can benefit from this possibility, the use of MAP techniques abroad imposes a discrimination founded on wealth.

Some measures taken recently in France have intervened to promote the universal access to MAP for all women. The Act of 18 May 2013 legalizing marriage to same-sex couples recognizes their right to

adoption. Under this principle, the Court of Cassation recognized in 2014 the adoption, by lesbian couples, of children conceived by the techniques of PMA used abroad.

Accordingly, we ask

- **To ensure that all women in France - single women, couples or lesbian women who desire to become parents- have access to MAP**

4. Against Gestational Surrogacy (GS)

The CLEF considers that GS - banned in France since 1994 by the Law on the enforcement of the human body - led to a commodification of woman's body. For the poorest women who put their bodies at the service of the wealthiest women, the GS constitutes an exploitation that involves many health risks. Taking into account the suffering of some couples that cannot have children should not however justify the exploitation of women. We categorically denounce the shocking practices that have been developed in some countries, such as Belgium, India, Ukraine or the United States, where private agencies provide GS services leading to the delivery of a baby "as a product" violating international laws.

In France it is estimated that there would be 2000 children whose parents had *resorted to international surrogacy* in countries where GS is permitted, posing the problem of their legal recognition. Until now, French courts have almost always refused to register these children in the civil register, claiming a "fraudulent process that produces no outcome", while pending the decision of the Court of Cassation. However, a circular from the Minister of Justice in January 2013 simplified the delivery of nationality certificates for children born to French fathers by surrogacy abroad.

In two judgments in June 2014, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) condemned France for refusing the registration of civil status for children born by surrogacy abroad. The Court argued that the best interest of the child must prevail and that authorities should not undermine the child's identity by refusing to recognize it legally. Similarly, the Minister of Justice declared recently that government had to conform in accordance with the decisions of the ECHR and not to refuse to include in the French Civil Registry the birth of these children.

We ask:

- **Respect for the principle of non-commodification of the human body; maintaining a total ban on surrogacy and sale of children, in France, Europe and internationally;**

4.4. Equal access for women and men to social and economic benefits (Article 13)

1. Promoting entrepreneurship by encouraging and supporting businesses created by women:

The percentage share of women in entrepreneurship remains around 30% and it has not significantly changed over the past 30 years, because of specific difficulties that women face (reluctance to undertake a business; family situation; access to finance; vulnerability of less sustainable projects...). The goal of the “Women's Entrepreneurship Plan”, launched in August 2013 by Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Geneviève Fioraso and Fleur Pellerin, is to reach 40% of women entrepreneurs by 2017.

Taking into account the survival rate of enterprises during a of five year period (companies created in 1998), INSEE has shown that companies created by women fared less well. The five-year survival rate of women businesses is 46.5% compared to 52.5% for men.

We ask:

- **To improve access to information about the creation and development of women-owned businesses and the taking over by women of existing business /acquisition of existing business?**
- **To promote on the website of the Business Creation Agency (l'Agence pour la création d'entreprises - APCE) a platform gathering relevant stakeholders, resources, all necessary information organized by themes (administrative, financial aid, public and private assistance, tender for projects, awards and scholarships...)**
- **That the staff of the National Employment Agency (Pôle Emploi) are trained to guide women project carriers/developers;**
- **To encourage training for women entrepreneurs, according to their specific needs, particularly in finance, management, business development, export, Information and Communications Technologies (IT)...**
- **To support women entrepreneurs through specific actions such as mentoring/mentorship, tutoring, female or male sponsorship, the proliferation of business incubators and co-working spaces, the support for networks and associations.**

A. Simplify and guarantee access to financing:

The rate of rejection of bank credit -currently 2.3% for men compared to 4.3% for women- may serve as strong evidence of discrimination against women in terms of access to financial services. However, it should be noted that women often ask for less funds because they undertake activities requiring less investment capital, such as the personal services sector.

We ask

- To promote and support the Guarantee Fund for creation, takeover or development of businesses by Women (Fonds de garantie à l'initiative des femmes - FGIF); to adapt financial services to meet the new and emerging needs of women entrepreneurs; to make FGIF more attractive within key partner networks;
- To enlarge the scope of actions of the “Creation and takeover business Assistance” (Aide à la création et à la reprise d'une entreprise - ACRE) in order to include every unemployed person on the loss of their job.
- To raise awareness among banking staff about issues related to women entrepreneurship.

B. Upgrading the status of women entrepreneurs to achieve a better work/life balance:

Besides women entrepreneurs, spouses can also contribute to the business of their husbands. In this case, there are several statutes such as “collaborator spouse”, “associated partner-spouse”, “employee spouse” . It can be confusing for women to choose an appropriate status and a wrong choice may lead them to the deprivation of certain rights.

We ask:

- To improve the status of women entrepreneurs: by taking into account the patrimonial aspects of business; by increasing women's access to specialized assistance provided by lawyers and financial advisors; by drawing up personal and business balance sheets containing information related to social protection, retirement pension, unemployment;
- To systematically disseminate all necessary information about the status of “collaborator spouse” at the creation of the company;
- To acknowledge and to take into account the specificities of women farmers, and women entrepreneurs in both rural and urban zones;
- To promote entrepreneurship during parental leave;
- To facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life according to a shared management between women and men;
- To allow women entrepreneurs enjoy the same rights as women employees (day nursery, child-minding services, access to canteens, extracurricular time, more flexible and better suited childcare options for women entrepreneurs).

2. Pension security for Women:

Inequalities faced by women in the labor market are cumulative, in particular on arrival at retirement age, when women are more exposed to insecurity. The employment rate for women is still lower than that of men. Fixed term contracts, part-time and temporary work exposes primarily women to unemployment and precariousness. Long career interruptions as a result of care obligations still relate predominantly to women; existing inequalities in household task sharing hamper women's careers.

The consequence of all these inequalities, added to the wage gap between women and men, which still exceeds 20%, results in a disastrous impact on women's retirement pensions. According to INSEE in 2012 the average monthly amount of a women's retirement pension was 1,240 euros compared to 1,704 euros for men.

We ask

- **A significant increase of the minimum old-age pension and the authorization to augment it with a minimum additional income;**
- **To take better into account the impact of childcare and dependent elderly people on career paths;**
- **To improved validation of the periods of part-time employment or business interruption, the surcharges for part-time wages on the basis of a full-time salary with a strong employer participation;**
- **The extension of the principle of reversion to the c PACSs couples, not only to married couples;**
- **The introduction of parity within the Retirement Guidance Council and the improvement of systematical gender-based analysis, by the Administration board, to evaluate the impact of pension reforms.**

Annexes: the associations of the CLEF that participated in the alternative report.

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|---|---|
| <p>Association des Femmes Françaises Diplômées d'Universités</p>  | <p>Business and professional women</p>  |
| <p>Coordination Lesbienne en France</p>  | <p>Elles aussi</p>  |
| <p>Elues contre les violences faites aux femmes</p>  | <p>Femmes pour le Dire Femmes pour Agir</p>  |
| <p>Femmes au-delà des Mers</p>  | <p>Femmes Solidaires</p>  |

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|---|---|
| <p>FIT, une femme, un toit</p>  | <p>Forum femmes Méditerranée</p>  |
| <p>Groupe pour l'abolition des mutilations sexuelles</p>  | <p>HF île de France, égalité femme-homme dans l'art et la culture</p>  |
| <p>La ligue du Droit International des Femmes</p>  | <p>La Ligue des Femmes Iraniennes pour la Démocratie</p>  |
| <p>Le Planning familial (mouvement français pour le planning familial)</p>  | <p>Libres Mariannes</p>  |
| <p>Réseau pour l'autonomie juridique des femmes immigrées et réfugiées</p>  | <p>Réseau Féministes ruptures</p>  |

Réussir l'égalité femme-homme



Soroptimist International



Other feminist organizations who contributed to this report

Laboratoire de l'égalité

Laboratoire
de l'Égalité

Partager
une culture commune de l'égalité
entre les femmes et les hommes.

