

EU pledges continued support to rights of women in Egypt

To celebrate International Women's Day last week, the head of the EU Delegation to Egypt Ambassador James Moran visited on 8 March the Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women (ADEW), a beneficiary of the "Investing in People - Gender" thematic programme.

The Head of Delegation recognised the importance of the work carried out by ADEW and commended the beneficiaries for speaking out about their needs and rights in challenging circumstances. He also acknowledged the leading role played by women in the Arab Spring and expressed the European Union's hope that women would maintain a central role in Egypt's political transition. He reiterated that the EU would continue to provide support to women's groups and civil society organisations in Egypt, as it does across the world.

ADEW was founded in 1987 as a micro-credit organisation working in Cairo's poorest areas. Since then, it has extended both its field work and its services. In addition to credit programmes, ADEW today offers literacy programmes, health services, and legal awareness seminars in five different areas. Over the past 25 years, ADEW has emerged as both an influential grassroots organisation and a leading advocate for women's rights.

The EU-funded action "Women's Empowerment and Participation in Egyptian Squatter Areas" seeks to encourage women's participation in public life in poor areas around Cairo. The action delivers courses to 1,000 women to raise their awareness about their rights, enhance their self confidence and self esteem, and provide them with basic life skills. The action also targets community leaders, local government officials and the media to change attitudes and practices towards women's rights at the community level. Six female beneficiaries of ADEW's work explained how they had been empowered by the action and how their experience and learning had helped them improve their daily lives.

In Egypt, the EU is currently supporting 12 ongoing actions with civil society organizations worth €3.2 million, whose main purpose is to uphold and defend women's rights. These projects cover a wide range of issues such as promoting women's involvement in public life, monitoring women's participation in elections, facilitating women's access to micro-credits, supporting women victims of violence, or strengthening women's participation at the local level.

To mark International Women's Day, the ENPI Info Centre has put together a [package of materials and resources](#) to highlight cooperation between the EU and its southern neighbours in the field of gender equality, including a brand new feature story, a specially produced video, and a press pack. ([ENPI Info Centre](#))

Read more

[Press release](#)

EU Delegation - [Egypt](#)

ADEW [website](#)

ENPI Info Centre resources - [women's day 2012](#)

EuropeAid fact sheet - [International Women's Day 2012](#)

ENPI Info Centre webpage - [gender issues](#)

13-03-2012

(http://www.enpi-info.eu/mainmed.php?id=28294&id_type=1)