

## **AFAEMME PARTICIPATES IN THE WORKSHOP ON “WOMEN ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND ICT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION: CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES”**

On Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2015 AFAEMME participated in the workshop organized by the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean at its headquarters in Barcelona.

The event gathered over 40 participants from international and regional organisations, development agencies, civil society organisations and the private sector. Donors and representatives from UN Women, the European Training Foundation, the Union of Arab ICT organisations and private companies such as Microsoft also participated in the discussions.

The workshop's roundtable had as panelists, among others, Delphine Borione, Deputy Secretary General for Social and Civil Affairs of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean; Nathalie Pilhes, Deputy to the Inter-ministerial Delegate to the Mediterranean French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development; Emanuela Pozzan, Senior Gender Specialist of the International Labour Organisation; Outi Kärkkäinen, Project Leader of European Training Foundation; Maryse Guimond, Programme Manager of UN Women; and Samir Benmakhlouf, Country General Manager of Microsoft Morocco.

Despite the fact that data on women's participation in the ICT sector is still poor, we know that nowadays women are less present in many high-growth fields like ICT, which are important to countries' innovation and competitiveness in global markets. A general trend that has been noticed shows that women's share in ICT tend to decline as they climb in their career path. In fact, women are almost as well represented as men in ICT studies (48% of graduates in Jordan and 50% in Tunisia, for example), but their share in employment gradually drops. For example, 29% of employees in the ICT sector in Jordan are women, and 41% in Tunisia (this percentage includes employees in call centers). The presence of women drops even more when we consider the high level managerial positions (12,6% and 24% for Jordan and Tunisia respectively).

Research reveals that full female employment in ICT would provide an annual economic boost of 9 billions of Euros in Europe. Only in the MENA Region there is a loss of 27% of income due to the lack of opportunities for women in ICT.

The participants to the roundtable agreed on the importance of tackling a set of problems such as stereotypes or the lack of women's self-confidence and idea of career. The necessity of strong female role models in the sector, especially through the publicity, has been discussed as well as a relevant tool for inspiring youth and raising awareness on ICT careers.



AFAEMME's staff participating in the roundtable together with other representatives



Panelists of the roundtable held at UfM headquarters in Barcelona