

**Voices of Change: A Student Conference on Women's Political and Social Roles in the Middle East
– Perspectives on Women Participation in Constitution-Making.**

Sciences Po Law School, Paris
3 December 2024, 17:00-19:00
Salle du Conseil, 5th floor, 13 rue de l'Université, 75007

This student-led conference, inspired by the course "[Women's Participation in Constitution-Making: Case Studies from the Middle East](#)" at Sciences Po Law School, seeks to promote a robust exchange of ideas on the political and social roles of women across the MENA region. Participants will present detailed case studies from selected countries in the region, highlighting the diverse challenges and achievements women face in constitutional design, political activism, and societal transformation.

The conference provides a unique opportunity for students to engage with professors and experts, creating a valuable learning experience for both presenters and discussants. It aims to highlight the active agency of women in the Arab world, emphasizing their crucial roles in shaping legal and political landscapes. Discussions will focus on their resilience, leadership, and contributions, showcasing how women advance gender-sensitive policies, drive constitutional reforms, and champion equality and empowerment in their societies.

Agenda:

Time	Opening Session
17:00-17:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Dana Fidawy, on behalf of the student organizers</i> - <i>Severine Dusollier, Director of Sciences Po Law School Research Centre</i> - <i>Sanaa Alsarghali, Visiting Professor at Sciences Po Law School, Director of the Constitutional Studies Center, An-Najah University, Palestine</i>
	Moderator: <i>Romane Bompard, first year Master's student in Economic Law</i>
<p>Panel 1: Do Arab Women Need 'Saving' in Constitution-Making Processes?</p> <p>This panel will examine how Western perceptions and narratives often reduce Arab women to passive and oppressed participants in constitution-making processes, framing them as subjects rather than agents. In contrast, it will illuminate their active roles and agency in shaping constitutional frameworks across their own constitutional experiences, showcasing their leadership and influence.</p>	
17:15-17:25	Student Presentation by <i>Romane Bompard, Mélina Garnier, Emilie Pinterova, Seryne Amiche</i>
17:25-17:35	Discussant: <i>Tamara El Khoury, Executive Director of the Arab Association for Constitutional Law.</i>
	Moderator: <i>Andréa Baldovi, first year Master's student in Economic Law</i>

Panel 2: *Setting the Framework for Achieving Gender Equality: Tools and Best Practices in Constitution-Writing.*

This panel will examine tools and practices for promoting gender equality in constitution-making, focusing on both substantive provisions and structural frameworks. It will first explore how international instruments like CEDAW recommend clauses such as gender-specific provisions, including quotas, and assess their cultural appropriateness, feasibility and adaptability in the MENA region.

17:35-17:45	Student Presentation by Charlotte Biocchi, Wissal El Mahmoudi, Chloé Rodriguez Gomes.
17:45-17:55	Discussant: Helena Alviar García , <i>Full professor at Sciences Po Law School</i>
	Moderator: Tatiana Van den Haute, <i>first year Master's student in Economic Law</i>

Panel 3: Women's Role in the Constitution's Cultural and Social Authenticity.

This panel will examine how diverse groups interpret, advocate and negotiate the inclusion of women's rights within constitutional frameworks, focusing on the balance between international human rights standards and local cultural values. It will notably address the tension between feminist and Islamist perspectives on constitutional rights, the emergence of Feminist Islamism as a potential (and controversial) bridge between these viewpoints, and the broader question of constitutional authenticity in the Arab world.

17:55-18:05	Student Presentation by Rayan Toufiq, Sama Nabulsi, Madeline Halteh.
18:05-18:15	Discussant: Nathalie Bernard-Maugiron , <i>Director of research at the Institute of Research for Development (IRD), Lecturer at Sorbonne University and Sciences Po Paris</i>
18:15-18:35	Overall Comments Sharon Pia Hickey , <i>Associate Programme Officer in the Constitution-building Programme at International IDEA</i> Moderator: Clémence Roy, <i>first year Master's student in Economic Law</i>
18:35-19:00	Q&A and Wrap-Up