

Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2015-2017

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Introduction

Council of Europe policy towards neighbouring regions

At its 121st Session on 11 May 2011 in Istanbul, the Committee of Ministers endorsed the proposals made by the Secretary General regarding a Council of Europe (CoE) policy towards its immediate neighbourhood, aimed at promoting dialogue and co-operation with the countries and regions in the vicinity of Europe which express the will to co-operate with the CoE, based on the common values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Committee of Ministers further invited the Secretary General to draw up action plans for the implementation of this policy.

The CoE policy towards neighbouring regions, which is demand-driven and country-specific, is designed for partners in North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, and pursues the following three objectives:

- ▶ to facilitate democratic political transition in the countries concerned;
- ▶ to help promote good governance through the protection of human rights and the rule of law;
- ▶ to reinforce and enlarge CoE regional action in combating transborder and global threats.

The policy has been implemented in close partnership with the European Union (EU), on the basis of the modalities endorsed by the CoE Committee of Ministers, in particular its two key components:

- ▶ the *Neighbourhood Co-operation Dialogue*, carried out at political level;
- ▶ the *Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities (NCP)*, setting out specific co-operation activities to be carried out in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The document “Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2015-2017” was endorsed by the Committee of Ministers of the CoE on 4 February 2015. The Neighbourhood Partnership document is therefore divided into two parts:

- ▶ Part I – Enhanced Political Dialogue
- ▶ Part II – Co-operation

The first part, on Enhanced Political Dialogue, offers wide opportunities for dialogue between the CoE and the Tunisian authorities, ranging from High-level strategic dialogue with the Secretary General of the CoE and the Committee of Ministers, on topics on the bilateral agenda and political issues of common

interest to more technical consultations relevant to the implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership.

The second part focuses specifically on co-operation priorities identified during discussions between the CoE and the Tunisian national authorities concerned.

Co-operation objectives

The main objective of the co-operation between Tunisia and the CoE, in line with the CoE’s policy towards its neighbouring regions, is to assist Tunisia in the process of democratic changes underway by helping the country to tackle challenges related to human rights, the rule of law and democracy and in particular:

- ▶ to consolidate the achievements of the co-operation implemented since 2012 through the “Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities with Tunisia 2012-2014” and to initiate new areas of co-operation in line with national reform priorities, based on the demand-driven approach, in the fields of expertise of the CoE;
- ▶ to continue the efforts made to facilitate the creation of a common legal area between Europe and Tunisia, encouraging the authorities to bring Tunisian legislation into line with European and international standards and to ratify the CoE conventions open to non-member States, with due regard for the procedures set out in the relevant conventions;
- ▶ to provide support to the development and to the effective implementation of new legislation in accordance with European and other international standards according to needs;
- ▶ to provide support to the setting-up and to the effective functioning of human rights institutions and new governance structures;
- ▶ to consolidate Tunisia’s presence in CoE’s instances of which it is already a member or observer (Venice Commission, the European Pharmacopoeia, the Pompidou Group’s MedNet network) and to encourage it to participate in other CoE structures, according to needs.

The present framework of co-operation is a flexible, dynamic strategic tool setting out priorities for co-operation between Tunisia and the CoE for the period 2015-2017. The main areas of co-operation presented have been identified on the basis of high-level consultations as well as of detailed technical consultations between the Tunisian authorities concerned and the CoE.

Consultations have also been carried out with other international organisations – the European Union (EU) in particular, as the main partner of the CoE’s action in Tunisia – and with bilateral actors, so as to ensure a coordinated approach. Hence, the priority areas of co-operation aim to foster synergies between all the relevant actors in order to avoid duplication.

The implementation of activities foreseen in the Neighbourhood Partnership document has already started, in particular in the framework of the EU-CoE joint Programme “Towards strengthened democratic governance in the Southern Mediterranean” (South Programme II, 2015-2017).

The Council of Europe and Tunisia

The relationship between the CoE and Tunisia has been enhanced in the context of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Policy established by the CoE in 2011, making Tunisia a privileged partner in the region.

Further to the fruitful Neighbourhood Co-operation Dialogue held between the CoE and Tunisian authorities and the successful implementation of the Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities for Tunisia in 2012-2014, the Committee of Ministers considered it necessary to give a new momentum to the relationship with this country, which shares with the CoE the values

of human rights, rule of law and democracy, through a Neighbourhood Partnership combining and strengthening the two pillars of the policy – political dialogue and co-operation – along the lines fixed in Istanbul in 2011. The Neighbourhood Partnership is therefore offering a framework for an “Enhanced Political Dialogue” the intensity of which could reflect the quality of the co-operation between Tunisia and the CoE.

Tunisia, which has always expressed an interest in consolidating dialogue and co-operation with the CoE institutions, welcomed the Committee of Ministers initiative to open up promising prospects for the enrichment of this mutually-beneficial bilateral Partnership.



Co-operation priorities

Human rights

Gender equality

The dialogue between the Venice Commission and the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) since 2012 on the subject of the preparation of the draft Constitution, *inter alia*, dealt with the provisions relating to gender equality and contributed to the adoption of a fundamental text comprising the constitutional guarantees necessary to ensure that equality. The principle of equality between citizens of both sexes enshrined in Article 21 of the Tunisian Constitution, adopted in January 2014, as well as equality of opportunities for women and men and parity in elected assemblies (Article 46) must henceforth be effectively reflected in the legislative framework which will derive from the constitution and in public policies.

In the context of the elaboration of the national strategy for gender equality (PANIG), the emphasis was placed on exchanges of experience and information and on capacity building. Furthermore, all the activities carried out by the CoE in Tunisia focused particularly on the gender mainstreaming dimension.

Overall objective	To promote and consolidate women's rights through adaptation of the legislative framework and the increasing of their participation in public and political life, particularly in decision-making spheres.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The national authorities of Tunisia, members of the Assembly of Representatives of the People and civil society familiarise themselves with the CoE's standards and the relevant good practices through awareness-raising activities and exchanges of experience and good practices;2. Whenever possible, the legislation on gender equality is drafted in accordance with the relevant CoE standards;3. The capacities of the authorities and the professionals working in this field are enhanced, particularly through the drawing up of a training plan;4. The setting up of a platform of activities relating to the enhancement of women's participation in public and political life and in local governance is supported by the CoE;5. The media are made aware of the equality issue with a view in particular to combating gender stereotypes and enhancing women's image and place in the media.
Partners	<i>Ministry of Youth, Sport, Women and Families, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Assembly of the Representatives of the People, civil society, Ministry of Social Affairs, Independent Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HAICA).</i>

Combating violence against women

The CoE provided tangible support to the Tunisian authorities in this field, with the help of a voluntary contribution by Norway for combating of violence against women and children in the framework of a regional programme for 2012-2014 covering Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan. The programme started with a conference in Rabat, on 24 and 25 September 2012, on the specific subject of violence against women, at which Tunisia was represented at high level. The conference, and other events, provided an opportunity, *inter alia*, to present the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. A first visit by CoE experts, enabled Tunisia's needs in respect of the problem of violence against women to assess, and the stakeholders' capacities to be reinforced. Continuing this task, the CoE has participated since October 2013 in the steering committee which is preparing the draft legislation.

Overall objective	To combat violence against women by adapting the legislative framework and enhancing preventive and awareness-raising activities.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The national authorities of Tunisia, members of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People and civil society have a good understanding of the relevant CoE standards, and particularly the CoE Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence; 2. The legislative framework, particularly in terms of prevention, assistance and victim protection measures, the prosecution of perpetrators and the training of the stakeholders concerned, is finalised and the measures are put in place in accordance with the relevant CoE standards and good practices; 3. The capacities and co-ordination of institutional and other stakeholders active in the field, including shelters for women victims of violence, are enhanced; 4. The setting up of a network of "focal points" responsible for gender and violence issues is supported by the CoE; 5. Greater public awareness is raised on combating of violence against women, inter alia, through the preparation of a communication plan on the national strategy for combating violence against women; 6. A system is put in place to monitor violence against women, taking account of the CoE's tools and experience and of other countries' experience in this sphere.
Partners	<i>Ministry of Youth, Sport, Women and Families, Assembly of the Representatives of the People, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Public Health, civil society.</i>

Promotion of children's rights and protecting children against violence

2015 has been declared the year of child protection in Tunisia. Child protection remains one of the Tunisian authorities' priorities. The objectives include the strengthening of the legal framework relating to child protection, the strengthening of action to prevent violence against children and the incorporation of child protection into public policies and programmes.

The Tunisian authorities are particularly interested in the CoE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, in training on the prevention of violence against children and in an awareness-raising campaign on children's rights. An initial visit enabled a start to be made on evaluating Tunisia's needs in this area, future CoE action to be decided and a dialogue to start with the other international organisations working in the child protection sphere (including UNICEF and UNFPA).

CoE support in this field was made possible largely thanks to the voluntary contribution by Norway intended to combat violence against women and children in the context of a regional programme for 2012-2014 covering Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan.

Overall objective	To strengthen children's rights and protection against all forms of violence by adapting the legislative framework and enhancing awareness of European standards in this field.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The national authorities of Tunisia, members of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People and civil society have a good understanding of the relevant CoE standards, and particularly of the CoE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse; 2. The legislative framework relating to children's rights is brought into line with the relevant CoE standards; 3. Measures to protect children against all forms of violence are worked out and implemented by the Tunisian authorities with CoE support, including, if need be, the creation of a free hotline for reporting suspected cases of violence against children; 4. The creation of a network of professionals to combat violence against children is supported, the capacities of voluntary-sector bodies are strengthened; 5. Greater public awareness is raised on the prevention of violence against children.
Partners	<i>Ministry of Youth, Sport, Women and Families, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Assembly of the Representatives of the People, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Public Health, child protection officers, civil society.</i>

Prevention of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Tunisia ratified the Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and subsequently adopted the Institutional Act on the National Agency for Torture Prevention.

Experts from Tunisia had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment at the seminar on procedures for accession to CoE conventions and partial agreements. Subsequently, at the request of the authorities, a specific seminar on that convention and its monitoring mechanism was held, making it possible both to give a detailed presentation about the relevant CoE standards to a larger number of Tunisian experts and to decide with the Tunisian authorities the assistance that the CoE could provide with effect from 2015.

Overall objective	To enhance national capacities for preventing and combating torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in accordance with European standards in this field.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The national authorities of Tunisia, members of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People and civil society have a good understanding of the relevant CoE standards; 2. The independent national agency for torture prevention is set up with CPT support, and the capacities of its members and staff are strengthened; 3. The capacities of the members of police and prison services and institutions in this field are strengthened..
Partners	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Assembly of the Representatives of the People, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Ministry of Public Health, prisons authority, Ministry of Social Affairs, civil society.</i>

The fight against human trafficking

A draft law on the prevention and punishment of human trafficking was prepared by the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, in co-operation with international experts, as part of a project co-ordinated by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) bringing together national and international stakeholders. This attaches particular importance to the prevention of human trafficking, *inter alia*, through the setting up of a national authority to combat the trafficking of human beings, which has as its main task the preparation of a national strategy to prevent and combat human trafficking.

Following contacts with the Tunisian authorities, the CoE began co-operation on this subject, as it is an issue which affects Tunisia and its region and other regions of the world. By organising, in the context of the South Programme financed by the EU and implemented by the CoE, the International Conference on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings “Diverse responses to a multifaceted phenomenon”, Tunisia demonstrated its wish to play a leading role within the region on this issue. The CoE’s work on this subject was done in close co-operation with all the relevant partners at national level and with the international organisations involved in the issue, particularly the IOM. The international conference enabled the CoE’s position in the field to be consolidated, exchanges to be initiated (participation in events, presentation of the CoE standards) and to define jointly with the authorities the programme of work for 2015 onwards.

Overall objective	To enhance national capacities to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings in accordance with relevant European and international standards.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The national authorities of Tunisia, members of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People and civil society have a good understanding of the CoE standards relating to the combating of human trafficking, particularly with a view to possible accession by Tunisia to the CoE Convention; 2. The legislative framework against the trafficking of human beings, particularly the draft law on the prevention and punishment of human trafficking, is drawn up in accordance with the relevant CoE standards; 3. The national anti-trafficking agency is set up with CoE support, as well as a national referral mechanism for human trafficking; 4. The capacities of institutional stakeholders (members of the judiciary, police) and other relevant stakeholders (civil society) are strengthened, particularly in terms of co-ordination between the governmental and non-governmental institutions concerned, <i>inter alia</i>, through exchanges of good practice based on CoE member States’ relevant experience.
Partners	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Assembly of the Representatives of the People, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Youth, Sport, Women and Families, Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, civil society.</i>



Data protection

Tunisia has over recent years shown a great willingness to strengthen its legislation on personal data protection and to draw closer to European standards in this field.

The seminar on data protection, freedom of expression and access to information organised by the CoE in co-operation with Tunisia's national data protection agency provided an opportunity to raise participants' awareness of this issue, to give a detailed presentation of the CoE Convention and its Additional Protocol and to have exchanges with the authorities on those parts of the current legislation which should be revised with a view to full conformity with the Convention.

Overall objective	To enhance national capacities in the data protection field in accordance with relevant European standards.
Expected results for 2015-2017	1. The legislative framework is revised in accordance with the relevant CoE standards, particularly the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data and its Additional Protocol, <i>inter alia</i> , with a view to possible accession by Tunisia to this instrument.
Partners	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Public Health, Assembly of the Representatives of the People, National Data Protection Agency, National Anti-corruption Agency (INLUCC).</i>

Drug abuse and drug trafficking

Tunisia has since 2009 taken part in the Pompidou Group's Mediterranean network (MedNET). The CoE supported Tunisia with a view to the introduction of a national drug prevention strategy. Since 2012, the Pompidou Group has trained medical staff involved in the treatment of drug users by supporting addictology courses provided at the universities of Tunis. The CoE also supported the setting up of the National Observatory of Drugs and Drug Addiction and, thanks to MedNET, the conduct of a survey (MedSPAD) concerning the consumption of alcohol and other drugs in Tunisian schools.

Overall objective	To improve the quality and implementation of coherent drug policies in Tunisia, particularly the national strategy, with due regard for human rights and from a public health perspective.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalisation of a national drugs strategy to which the CoE contributes by making available appropriate expertise and preventive material, particularly at schools with enhanced support and counselling arrangements; 2. Finalisation of the draft law on drugs, in accordance with the relevant CoE standards and with CoE support; 3. The capacities of the relevant professionals are strengthened through addictology courses, and the capacities of staff working at treatment centres to look after and rehabilitate drug users are strengthened; the training of trainers and multipliers is supported; 4. The National Observatory for the prevention of drug use and addiction is set up; 5. A national "therapeutic community" and regional centres are set up; 6. Strategies are drawn up to prevent drug abuse and to provide psychosocial care for children and young people who wish to stop using drugs and toxic substances, as is a strategy for the introduction of substitution treatment.
Partners	<i>Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Information and Communication Technology, Ministry of Youth, Sport, Women and Families, Ministry of Social Affairs, MedNET in Tunis, faculties of medicine, drug addict treatment centres, civil society (European Observatory of Drugs and Drug Addiction).</i>

Promotion of public health and the fight against the counterfeiting of medical products

Tunisia has held observer status with the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines and HealthCare (Pharmacopoeia) since 1997. The Tunisian authorities' knowledge of the MEDICRIME Convention was improved during the event promoting CoE conventions.

Overall objective	To prepare for Tunisia's accession to the Convention on the counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health (MEDICRIME Convention, CETS No. 211).
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The provisions of the Convention on the Counterfeiting of Medical Products and Similar Crimes Involving Threats to Public Health are better known by the stakeholders concerned, particularly through exchanges of experience on these issues;2. Tunisia requests an invitation from the Committee of Ministers of the CoE to accede to the CoE Convention on the Counterfeiting of Medical Products and Similar Crimes Involving Threats to Public Health.
Partners	<i>Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining, Ministry of Commerce and Craft Trades.</i>

Rule of law

Independence and efficiency of justice

The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) has been working actively since 2012 to improve the functioning of the courts, in an effort to make justice more effective and accessible to the public, involving as pilot courts the Court of Cassation, the Courts of First Instance of Tunis and Zaghouan and the District Court of Zaghouan. This co-operation is based on a report evaluating the functioning of the justice system in Tunisia written by CEPEJ experts, which sets out a number of recommendations. In addition, experts from the Venice Commission, CEPEJ, CCJE and CCPE took part in some events enabling progress to be made in terms of discussions and mechanisms with a view to the creation of an independent justice system, as well as discussions and mechanisms relating to professional ethics and to supervision of the judiciary.

Overall objective	To enhance the independence, efficiency and quality of justice by improving courts' performance and supporting the implementation of judicial reform and revision of the legal framework, on the basis of European standards.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The tools prepared by the CEPEJ with the pilot courts are applied and extended to other courts in the country, on the basis of the experience of co-operation with the pilot courts;2. The legislative framework relating to the judicial authority, particularly the Supreme Judicial Council and the status of the judiciary is brought into line with CoE standards, inter alia through exchanges of experience and legal opinions of the CEPEJ;3. The action plan for judicial reform is implemented with CoE support.
Partners	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, courts and members of the law profession, civil society.</i>

Supporting constitutional reform, the drafting of new legislation, the establishment and efficient functioning of new governance bodies

The 2014 Constitution is the starting point for the drafting of a whole series of organic laws vital to the consolidation of human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

Tunisia, a member of the Venice Commission since 2010, can benefit directly from its expertise; it had for instance formally requested the opinion of the Venice Commission on the draft Constitution, and was also associated with some major regional events, which fuelled discussion and exchanges of experience between specialists from countries of the region on the subject of constitutional drafting processes. The Venice Commission also had the opportunity to provide Tunisia with expertise in relation to the draft law on freedom of assembly, on constitutional guarantees of the independence of justice and on the draft electoral law, in the context of wider co-operation with the new election commission (ISIE).

Overall objective	To further develop the rule of law by drawing up a stable and democratic legal framework and practices in accordance with European standards.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft organic laws, including texts to set up or strengthen governance bodies for which the Constitution provides, are drawn up with the support of the Venice Commission, and particularly through an exchange of experience and the strengthening of capacities in terms of legislative drafting techniques; 2. Support is provided by the Venice Commission to new governance bodies in respect of their setting up and effective functioning, including the Human Rights Agency; 3. The effective functioning of the constitutional monitoring bodies is ensured with the support of the Venice Commission.
Partners	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Centre for Legal and Judicial Research, future Constitutional Court, Assembly of the Representatives of the People, election commission, future human rights agency, Ministry of Social Affairs.</i>

Creation of a common legal area

Tunisia has, since 2012, been a signatory to the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters and shown an interest in other conventions, such as those on the prevention of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, on action against trafficking in human beings, on preventing violence against women, on the counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health, on preventing corruption, and on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as the European Social Charter (revised). The CoE organised for the benefit of Tunisia (and also Algeria, Morocco and Jordan) a technical seminar to clarify procedural issues relating to the accession procedures under way and the outlook for accession to other instruments with convention status. Some specific activities were also organised with Tunisia in support of these procedures, promoting better understanding of the content of these texts and of the implications of possible future accession.



Overall objective	To promote Tunisia's accession to the CoE conventions open to non-member States and provide assistance for the effective implementation of those instruments.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better knowledge is ensured for the Tunisian authorities of the CoE conventions open to non-member States, particularly vis-à-vis accession procedures and the implications of accession; 2. Tunisia requests an invitation from the Committee of Ministers of the CoE to accede to some CoE conventions in priority fields; 3. CoE co-operation with Tunisia facilitates the domestic processes of ratification, the transposition of convention provisions into domestic law and the effective honouring of the commitments made by the country.
Partners	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, ministries concerned, Assembly of the Representatives of the People.</i>

Information society and Internet governance, freedom of expression, independence of the media

Tunisia's progress in this field was reflected in the incorporation into the Constitution of the principle of freedom of expression. The setting up of an Independent Audiovisual Communication Authority (HAICA) was a major step forward. A guarantee of freedom of expression and the effective functioning of the HAICA remain priorities for the CoE.

The CoE provided various kinds of support to the progress which enabled freedom of expression and information to be consolidated: through exchanges between the National Constituent Assembly and the Venice Commission about the draft Constitution, through the participation of Venice Commission experts in events on the subject, through the work started in the field of personal data protection and through the organisation of the April 2013 seminar on institutional and normative guarantees of freedom of expression, organised thanks to the contribution of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) and the Principality of Monaco.

Overall objective	To consolidate freedom of expression and media independence and plurality through the introduction of guarantees for press freedom; to promote convergence of Tunisian regulations in the audiovisual sector with the CoE instruments.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The legislative framework is brought into line with the relevant CoE standards; 2. The effective functioning of the HAICA (and subsequently of the future Audiovisual Communication Commission provided for in the Constitution) is ensured with CoE support; 3. The convergence of the regulations governing Tunisia's audiovisual sector with CoE standards is fostered by Tunisia's possible accession to the relevant CoE conventions (in particular the European Convention for the Protection of the Audiovisual Heritage and its Additional Protocol on the Protection of Television Productions), as well as by possible accession by Tunisia to the European Audiovisual Observatory; 4. The capacities of the national authorities, the relevant private sector Internet stakeholders and civil society are enhanced, enabling a legal environment to be created which is fully compliant with Internet freedom, including freedom of expression and online privacy, on the basis of the relevant CoE standards.
Partners	<i>Independent Audiovisual Communication Authority (HAICA) and subsequently the future Audiovisual Communication Commission provided for in the Constitution, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Tunisian Internet Agency, Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Information and Communication Technology, Assembly of the Representatives of the People, the professional associations concerned, civil society.</i>

Combating corruption, money-laundering and terrorism

In Tunisia, the main focus of the programme has been the building of capacities for the Tunisian anti-corruption agency – the “Instance nationale de lutte contre la corruption” (INLUCC). This has resulted in the preparation and adoption of internal procedures, staffing structure and profiles, and code of ethics for the staff of INLUCC. With the assistance of the CoE, significant progress has also been made in the preparation of the law set to reform the anti-corruption agency function as required by the new Tunisian Constitution.

The programme has also made significant steps in setting up a risk-based anti-corruption framework in Tunisia through the promotion of CoE methodologies on the assessment of corruption risk.

The CoE also delivered a programme of training and capacity building in a number of key areas, including general awareness-raising on basic anti-corruption concepts, as well as targeted seminars on criminal law investigations, political party financing and the financing of non-profit organisations.

The CoE worked in coordination with other international organisations working on this issue. The recent adoption of a national anti-corruption strategy, drawn up by INLUCC with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), marked a significant step forward. The CoE now needs to assist INLUCC with implementation of the action plans which will derive from that strategy.

The combating of money laundering and terrorism are also priorities of the Tunisian State, which appear in the draft organic law on the combating of terrorism and money laundering.



Overall objective	To promote good governance and the prevention of corruption, money laundering and terrorism on the basis of the relevant CoE standards, mechanisms and instruments by enhancing the policy framework and the stakeholders’ capacities and co-ordination.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Tunisian national authorities, members of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People, relevant institutions and civil society have a good understanding of the CoE standards on the prevention and combating of corruption, money laundering and terrorism with a view to possible accession by Tunisia to those instruments and to GRECO; 2. The legislative and institutional anti-corruption framework is assessed on the basis of GRECO methodologies; 3. Technical assistance is provided to support Tunisia in its carrying out of the reforms envisaged in the national anti-corruption strategy; 4. Tunisia co-operates more with other countries of the region in order to share good practices and set up networks enabling the fight against corruption, money laundering and terrorism to be extended beyond the national framework; 5. The setting up of the economic and financial court is supported by the CoE, and the capacities of the different institutional stakeholders concerned are strengthened; 6. The setting up of the court specialising in the combating of terrorism is supported by the CoE and the capacities of the different institutional stakeholders are strengthened.
Partners	<i>National Anti-Corruption Agency (INLUCC) and subsequently the future Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Agency, Assembly of the Representatives of the People, Court of First Instance of Tunis, and particularly the future economic and financial court and the future court specialising in the combating of terrorism, the Ministry of Interior, State Secretariat for Governance and the Civil Service, civil society, the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, local authorities.</i>

Combating cybercrime

Tunisia expressed its wish to commit to combating cybercrime by both revising its legislative framework on the basis of European and international standards and setting-up or strengthening specialised structures in this field.

The CoE Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention) was presented to the Tunisian authorities at the seminar on conventions open to non-member States of the CoE.

Overall objective	To step up the co-ordinated fight against illegal activities in cyberspace, such as online fraud, counterfeiting, unauthorised access, child pornography and harassment.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The legislation on the fight against cybercrime is in conformity with the relevant CoE standards (Budapest Convention); 2. The capacities of the stakeholders concerned (particularly judicial professions, law enforcement agencies and specialist cybercrime units) are strengthened.
Partners	<i>Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Commerce and Craft Trades, Assembly of the Representatives of the People, Tunisian Internet Agency, civil society.</i>

Democracy

Interparliamentary co-operation

A delegation from the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly took part in the April 2012, April 2013 and April 2014 sessions of the PACE and in the meetings of certain PACE committees.

Overall objective	To help to strengthen the role and capacities of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People of Tunisia.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Assembly of the Representatives of the People of Tunisia is strengthened; the representatives of the Tunisian Parliament play an active part in PACE sessions and in the meetings of committees, as well as in specialised conferences and seminars; the members of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People familiarise themselves with the arrangements for the grant of, and the possibilities opened by, the status of Partner for Democracy with the PACE; 2. The members of the Tunisian Parliament develop their knowledge and acquire a good understanding of the CoE's main standards in the field of the rule of law, and more particularly the issues relating to the efficiency and independence of the judicial system, the combating of corruption, freedom of expression/ media regulation, the combating of discrimination, the protection of minorities and vulnerable groups within society and the strengthening of democracy and its institutions. At the same time, they develop their knowledge of the CoE conventions in the field of human rights (particularly the European Convention on Human Rights) and the conventions on action against trafficking in human beings, on preventing violence against women and on children's rights; 3. Where appropriate, Tunisia makes substantial progress in developing its policies, as requested in the resolution on Partnership for Democracy with the Tunisian Parliament (the granting of Partnership for Democracy status by the PACE could be discussed in 2015); 4. The skills of the managers and officials of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People, particularly in some of their thematic committees, are improved through targeted training.
Partners	<i>Assembly of the Representatives of the People of Tunisia, ministries concerned.</i>

Democratic governance at local and regional level

In the context of an official visit by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the CoE and the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform, an initial review had been made of local democracy in Tunisia and had enabled contact to be made with the main Tunisian stakeholders.

In the context of its co-operation with the Venice Commission, the Congress contributed to the exchanges with the National Constituent Assembly and to the options taken by that Assembly during the drafting of Chapter 7 of the draft Constitution.

Furthermore, the “partner for local democracy” status intended for countries of the CoE’s Southern and Eastern neighbourhood was adopted in October 2014.

Overall objective	To assist the local and regional reform currently taking place and help to strengthen local and regional democracy and associations of local and regional authorities.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tunisian legislation concerning local and regional government draws on the CoE’s relevant principles and standards, particularly in respect of the devolution and administrative and financial autonomy to which the European Charter of Local Self-Government refers; that legislation is implemented with Congress support; 2. The government’s partners are made aware of the principles of local self-government and of the development of dialogue between the national authorities and local elected representatives; 3. A delegation of Congress members will observe the local elections, and the recommendations of the Congress are subsequently followed by the Tunisian authorities; 4. Tunisia considers the possibility of becoming a “partner for local democracy”; 5. The capacities of local elected representatives and their associations are strengthened with CoE support.
Partners	<i>Assembly of the Representatives of the People, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Infrastructure, Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, local and regional authorities, civil society.</i>



Strengthening of participatory democracy and of civil society stakeholders

Overall objective	To strengthen the role of civil society in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the decisions and projects of elected institutions and the public authorities and in raising public awareness of the importance of citizen participation in the democratic transition.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevant civil society organisations and institutional stakeholders are shown how to use the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process and the Dialogue Toolkit produced by the Conference of INGOs; 2. The Conference of INGOs contributes to the setting up, if applicable in co-operation with other CoE bodies, of a network of civil society organisations in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean which may be involved in the CoE's work in the region.
Partners	<i>Civil society, government.</i>

Training in democratic governance and human rights education

The CoE supported the starting of a mixed class of political leaders and civil society representatives at the Tunis School of Politics, bringing together around 40 young leaders from political parties, associations, administrative authorities and local and regional authorities. The Tunis School of Politics also embarked on partnerships with the other 20 schools which are members of the CoE's Network of Schools of Political Studies, and it took part in the 2012 and 2013 sessions of the World Forum for Democracy held in Strasbourg by the CoE, enabling it to get more involved in similar experiences at international level.

The CoE, in partnership with the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation and the Venice International University, organised the first Academy on democratic governance for young professionals from the South Mediterranean.

Where activities are concerned which relate to democratic governance of youth policies and the strengthening of the capacities of youth organisations, the CoE jointly organised in Morocco an inter-regional seminar for youth research experts and a training course for multipliers and trainers on the democratic participation of young people, in which representatives of Tunisia and Algeria took part.

Furthermore, the Tunisian authorities, as long ago, expressed a wish to benefit from CoE expertise in the field of education for human rights and democratic citizenship.



Overall objective	To enable target audiences (young professionals, youth organisations) to further develop and/or acquire knowledge in the field of human rights, the rule of law and good governance.
Expected results for 2015-2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Tunisian School of Politics consolidates its fundamental role as a civil society stakeholder by strengthening the capacities of beneficiaries and providing them with certification of the skills acquired; 2. A targeted programme of education for democratic citizenship and human rights (EDC/EHR) is prepared and implemented with the national bodies concerned and civil society stakeholders, with the CoE making available and adapting the teaching material at its disposal and trainer training for educational managers, teachers and officials responsible for education for democratic citizenship, human rights and democratic governance; 3. The skills of the Tunisian young professionals involved in the implementation of European and international co-operation projects on human rights and democratic governance are enhanced through the Academy for young professionals (Venice); the skills of youth association leaders are enhanced and co-operation projects developed through training courses and exchanges with partners from CoE countries and Morocco; 4. The quality of youth centres' programmes and responses is improved through a seminar on the CoE Quality Label for Youth Centres and a pilot project at a Tunisian youth centre; 5. Support for the preparation and introduction of a national youth policy.
Partners	<i>Assembly of the Representatives of the People, youth associations, universities, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth, Sport, Women and Families, Ministry of Social Affairs, Diplomatic Training and Research Academy, civil society.</i>

Implementation and evaluation

A large variety of CoE tools will be employed to ensure successful co-operation according to needs, in particular:

- ▶ CoE Conventions open to non-member States and more generally CoE standards in priority areas;
- ▶ the long-standing expertise of several CoE instances (such as intergovernmental bodies, the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE (PACE), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Venice Commission, the Pompidou Group, the North-South Centre);
- ▶ the methodologies developed within the CoE to regularly assess and respond to “shared” challenges (such as the CoE’s Group of States against corruption (GRECO), the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)).

The working methods designed to make the CoE’s expertise available to Tunisia, include in particular:

- ▶ support for assessing the existing legal and institutional framework in selected areas and identifying needs and follow-up action;
- ▶ assistance with the drawing-up of new legislative texts, the revision of existing legislation, the setting-up of human rights institutions and new governance structures, based on European and other international standards, networks of CoE’s experts in key priority areas, CoE standards and reference documents;
- ▶ transferring knowledge and skills on specific subjects with a view to enhancing national capacities;
- ▶ facilitating the exchange of experience and good practices between Europe and partner countries of the Southern Mediterranean benefiting from CoE co-operation projects, as well as between the countries of the region, and creating relevant formal and informal networks.

Whenever appropriate, relevant Tunisian experts will be closely involved in the preparation of assessments, including through peer reviews. This will also ensure that the project-oriented co-operation proposed is adapted to the needs of the partner country.

All the actions which will be implemented as part of this document will strive to ensure sustainability. In this regard, particular attention will be paid to pilot projects which can subsequently be rolled out, to the training of trainers, to the creation of professional

networks of CoE experts and Tunisian beneficiaries and to the development of professional and institutional capacities.

Particular attention will also be paid to cross-cutting issues, in particular gender mainstreaming. As stated in the CoE Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, “the CoE will strive to achieve gender mainstreaming in the development and implementation of co-operation programmes, projects and activities”. In order to do so, a transversal approach which aims at systematically taking into consideration a gender perspective in the planning, organisation and implementation of co-operation activities regardless of the topic covered by the activity will be adopted.

The implementation of the activities corresponding to the co-operation priorities should also facilitate the involvement of civil society where appropriate. It will also aim at a decentralised implementation of the activities, so as to target a larger number of Tunisian regions in the co-operation activities, whenever feasible. This will also contribute to an increased visibility and ownership of the co-operation activities by national authorities. The CoE Office in Tunis will continue to co-ordinate efforts with other donors and to support the implementation of co-operation activities.

Monitoring implementation

Responsibility for monitoring implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia will lie, at the CoE level, with the Committee of Ministers of the CoE and in particular its Rapporteur Group on External Relations (GR-EXT). The Secretariat will regularly keep the latter up to date with the progress made in the programmes and projects. To this end, the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes will draft a mid-term follow-up report and a final evaluation report, taking due account of the joint assessment carried out by Tunisia and the CoE within the framework of the Steering Committee.

Moreover, a bilateral steering committee comprising the co-operation contact points in Tunisia and the CoE will be set up as part of the effort to strengthen the political dialogue with Tunisia to ensure the follow-up of the implementation of the Tunisia-CoE partnership.

Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia will be carried out jointly by the CoE and the Tunisian authorities and will comply with the requirements and conditions laid down by the various donors.

Funding

The partnership between the CoE and the EU, which remains to be a key partner, is pursued in the Southern Mediterranean region, in particular in the framework of the new EU-CoE joint Programme “Towards strengthened democratic governance in the Southern Mediterranean” (South II Programme, 2015-2017).

The priorities referred to in this paper will also be implemented through voluntary contributions from other national and international partners and donors. Further information on the projects described are available at the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes of the CoE.

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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