



Strengthening democratic reform in the Southern Neighbourhood

2012-2014

From assistance to partnership:
overview of the European Union-Council of Europe
Joint Programme's achievements and impact

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

APLCD	Authority for Gender Equality and Combating all Forms of Discrimination
CCFE	Advisory Council for Family and Childhood Affairs
CCJE	Consultative Council of European Judges
CEPEJ	European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
CFI	Court of First Instance
CoE	Council of Europe
EIUC	European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation
ESPAD	European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs
EU	European Union
GRECO	Group of States Against Corruption
HAICA	Independent Audiovisual Communication Authority
IBOGOLUCC	Instance de bonne gouvernance et de lutte contre la corruption
ICPC	Central Anti-corruption Authority
INLUCC	National Anti-corruption Authority
IOM	International Organisation for Migrations
ISIE	Superior Independent Electoral Authority
LAS	League of Arab States
MedNET	Mediterranean network for co-operation on drugs and addictions
MedSPAD	Mediterranean School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs
MONEYVAL	Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism
NCA	National Constituent Assembly
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
North-South Centre	European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
Pompidou Group	Co operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs
ToT	Training of trainers
Venice Commission	European Commission for Democracy through Law
VIU	Venice International University



Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle and Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjørn Jagland

The South Programme: a strategic tool for supporting democratic reforms in the Southern Mediterranean

The Joint Programme “Strengthening democratic reform in the Southern Neighbourhood” (South Programme) was launched in January 2012, as a joint Council of Europe (CoE) and European Union (EU) response to the unprecedented events that took place in the Southern Mediterranean in 2011, which demonstrated the need to support democratic transition processes through a long term partnership with countries from the region who are willing to co-operate in the sphere of democratic governance reforms. Three years later, the South Programme- **the first-ever Joint Programme between the CoE and the EU in the Southern Mediterranean**- has proven to be an effective tool to consolidate the reforms undertaken by partner countries from the region through strengthened co-operation in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy.

The CoE Deputy Secretary General Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni explains the reasons which led the EU and the CoE to join efforts to promote democratic security in the Southern Mediterranean in an interview to the EU Neighbourhood Info Centre: http://www.enpi-info.eu/files/features/interview_CoE_EN.pdf

Underpinned by the **EU Neighbourhood policy**¹ and the **CoE Policy towards neighbouring regions**², the programme initially rolled out in Morocco and Tunisia, where it has achieved **concrete and sustainable results** for the benefit of all citizens as regards independence of the judiciary, the promotion of good governance through prevention of corruption and money laundering, strengthened human rights protection, in particular through the prevention of trafficking in human beings and promotion of democratic values in the Southern Mediterranean. The programme has in particular supported the **adoption of new legislation, in line with CoE and other international standards**, notably in Morocco and Tunisia. Furthermore, it has contributed to the **setting-up or strengthening of democratic instances** in partner countries as well as to the implementation of legislative provisions included in newly adopted Constitutions in some partner countries. CoE support delivered through tailor made training programmes has not only strengthened the capacities of relevant counterparts, but also favoured the ownership of the reform process by national institutions, which were involved on an equal footing in the design and implementation of co-operation activities. Pilot experiences, such as the co-operation with selected Moroccan and Tunisian courts or pilot exercises to detect corruption-related risks, allowed the actors involved to acquire new skills and further replicate them on the basis of new methodologies in line with European and other international standards.

Moreover, the **CoE expanded its external presence in the Southern Mediterranean with the opening of two offices respectively in Morocco and Tunisia**, to ensure that the Programme's co-operation activities are developed according to the needs and requests of partner countries.

A clear sign of the Programme's relevance has been the number of partner countries across the region participating in South Programme's regional events. Besides, by promoting the accession of Southern Mediterranean countries to CoE Conventions, the programme contributed to **boosting**

1. For further information, see http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/index_en.htm
2. For further information, see <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1767825&Site=CM>

compliance with CoE and other international standards and creating a common legal space between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean region.

The Programme has also contributed to increase the level of **South-South co-operation**. It has namely developed **regional activities**, which resulted, among others, in the creation of **formal and informal networks**, be it in the framework of the Schools of Political Studies activities or in the youth field. Regional and bilateral initiatives contributed to increase the level of intergovernmental dialogue between the CoE member states and partner countries from the region, thus “anchoring” those countries to shared democratic values and principles.

Finally, it is also worth recalling that **the South Programme gave impetus to the development of other joint EU/CoE bilateral initiatives** in the region, such as a Joint Programme to support the Jordanian authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Jordanian justice system (launched in July 2013).

Building on the achievements of the South Programme I, a **new EU/CoE Joint Programme for 2015-2017 “Towards strengthened democratic governance in the Southern Mediterranean” (South Programme II) will permit to deepen co-operation with Southern Mediterranean countries**, and consolidate the results achieved so far in promoting human rights, the rule of law and democracy across the region.

Overview of the Programme

PROGRAMME	Strengthening democratic reform in the Southern Neighbourhood
BUDGET	€ 4,8 million
FUNDING	European Union
DURATION	January 2012- December 2014
GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE	Southern Mediterranean partner countries
IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATION	Council of Europe

The Programme's components

The South Programme was structured around four components, contributing respectively to:

- ▶ Enhance the efficiency and independence of the judiciary;
- ▶ Promote good governance through increased prevention of corruption and money-laundering;
- ▶ Strengthen and protect human rights, in particular through the prevention of trafficking in human beings;
- ▶ Promote democratic values in the region, building on Council of Europe existing networks.



The independence and effective functioning of the judiciary: top priority on the reform agenda in the Southern Mediterranean

Co-operation activities carried out by the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)³ in **Morocco** and **Tunisia** within the framework of the South Programme targeted the need to **ensure a better functioning of the judicial systems and to improve courts performance** in partner countries. Assessments of the Moroccan and Tunisian judicial systems prepared by CEPEJ allowed to identify key issues and shortcomings which needed to be addressed in order to promote a more efficient justice delivery in both countries, and contributed to tailoring the Programme's intervention to the countries' needs. On the basis of the standards and instruments of the CoE, support to national authorities in their efforts to **reform legislation on the judicial systems in line with international standards** was also provided. By developing additional projects with pilot courts based outside the capitals, the programme contributed to broaden the scope and impact of co-operation activities in both countries.

3. www.coe.int/cepej

Supporting the creation of new legal frameworks for the judiciary

Upon request from the Moroccan Ministry of Justice and Freedoms, a joint informal **opinion on the draft organic laws on the High Council of Judicial Power and on the Status of judges** was prepared by the experts from CEPEJ, Venice Commission⁴ and Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE)⁵. The CoE has supported the Moroccan authorities with regard to the preparation of other legislative texts such as draft laws on criminal and civil procedural codes as well as the Tunisian authorities in the process of the development of a new legal framework for the judiciary, in particular by sharing expertise and knowledge of relevant European standards and contributing to different fora of discussion.

Strengthened capacities of Moroccan and Tunisian legal servants to apply new techniques aiming to improve the quality and efficiency of justice

Regular **training sessions, study visits and peer events organised throughout the Programme** allowed Moroccan and Tunisian judges,



4. <http://venice.coe.int>

5. http://www.coe.int/t/DGHL/cooperation/ccje/default_en.asp

lawyers, representatives of the Ministries of Justice and staff from the pilot Courts⁶ to develop a specific knowledge on CEPEJ indicators on judicial statistics, reasonable timeframes and quality of justice and on European good practices on case and court management.

A **training kit** for Moroccan courts was disseminated and is available online. Through the use of training of trainers (ToT) methodology, **the Programme fostered the ownership** of the co-operation activities by national counterparts.

A training kit on CEPEJ methodology is available under:

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation/cepej/cooperation/South_prog/Morocco/kit_formation_fr.asp

Improved Court performances through co-operation programmes with seven pilot courts in Morocco and Tunisia

The Presidents of the Moroccan pilot courts express their views on the

co-operation activities, on the occasion of a video-interview of June 2013:

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation/cepej/cooperation/South_prog/Morocco/videos_19_06_2013_bis.asp

Targeted court programmes aimed to improve the quality of the daily functioning of the courts and decrease judicial timeframes, in particular through



6. Morocco: the Court of First Instance –CFI- of Casablanca, the CFI of Sidi Kacem and the Administrative Court of Agadir; Tunisia: the Court of Cassation, the CFI of Tunis, the CFI of Zaghuan, and the Zaghuan Cantonal Court.

the improvement of the notification of judicial acts in Morocco; in Tunisia, co-operation focused on the application of modern methods of “case-flow management”, the collection of judicial statistics with a view to improving court management, as well as the preparation of templates of judgments to facilitate the day-to-day work of judges and improve court efficiency.

A reportage from the EU Neighbourhood Info Centre followed a CEPEJ visit to Morocco and the pilot project on the notification of judicial acts at Casablanca Court. The reportage is available under:
http://www.enpi-info.eu/files/features/MOROCCO%20-%20Council%20of%20Europe_EN_s2.pdf

From the dissemination of best practices and networking to the institutionalisation of dialogue

The regular participation of Moroccan and Tunisian delegations in CEPEJ plenary sessions, working groups, pilot courts network allowed them to become familiar with CEPEJ methodologies and benefit from good practices and exchanges with experts and peers from CoE member States. **In May 2013, Morocco was granted observer status to CEPEJ**, institutionalising the co-operation initiated in the framework of the South Programme.



Targeting prevention of corruption and money-laundering: a key strategy to promote good governance

Co-operation through the South Programme allowed to put forward **recommendations and policy guidelines** for strengthening good governance, preventing and fighting **corruption and money-laundering**, on the basis of **GRECO** (Group of States Against Corruption)⁷ and **MONEYVAL** (Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism)⁸ methodologies. Training courses strengthened the capacities of relevant institutions to better prevent corruption and money-laundering. European good practices and experiences were widely disseminated, thanks to the participation in the different activities of experts coming from 15 CoE member States.

Assessment report of the Moroccan anti-corruption framework completed and recommendations for future action identified

CoE and Moroccan experts worked together to **assess the Moroccan legislative and institutional anti-corruption framework**. The assessment process, coordinated by the Central Anti-corruption Authority⁹ (ICPC), resulted in the **identification of 66 recommendations to improve the anti-corruption system**, targeting, among others, the judiciary, law enforcement, public administration, political parties and public procurement.

The assessment report of the Moroccan anti-corruption framework is available under http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation/economiccrime/corruption/projects/snac/pdf/tp/SNACMor_diagnostic_Report_final_fr.pdf (French version)

7. www.coe.int/greco
8. www.coe.int/moneyval
9. Instance Centrale de Prévention de la Corruption.

Increased capacities of Moroccan and Tunisian anti corruption and public administration bodies in countering corruption and money-laundering

In Tunisia, CoE experts accompanied the whole process of **development and approval of the National Anti-corruption Authority¹⁰ (INLUCC) internal regulatory framework** (internal rules, code of ethics and codes of procedures). Study visits to present European good practices, working seminars and networking among professionals took place and allowed to further exchange on good practices for internal guidelines.

Furthermore, **technical assistance with a view to the establishment of the *Instance de bonne gouvernance et de lutte contre la corruption* (IBOGOLUCC)** foreseen by the Tunisian Constitution was made available, on the occasion of working seminars organised also in co-operation with the Venice Commission.

In Morocco, **legal advice and analysis** were provided to the ICPC, in the context of the **drafting of the law on the future *Instance nationale de probité, de prévention et de lutte contre la corruption***, foreseen by the Constitution of 2011 and the provision of the related **internal regulatory framework**.

A **comprehensive training programme** allowed national institutions, public administration and law enforcement agencies involved in anti-corruption activities to get acquainted with European good practices and CoE methodologies to fight corruption and money-laundering, both in Morocco and Tunisia. Their capacities were strengthened through training activities on basic anti-corruption concepts, targeted seminars on criminal law



10. Instance Nationale de Prévention de la Corruption.

investigations and administrative inquiries, conflict of interest, political party financing and seminars to present GRECO and MONEYVAL methodologies. In Tunisia, training activities also dealt with the financing of non-profit organisations and the application of deontology practices for lawyers and accountants.

A compilation of resources to act against economic crime in the Southern Mediterranean is available under: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation/economiccrime/corruption/projects/snac/SNAC_TP_default_fr.asp

The Programme has also made significant steps in setting up a risk-based anti-corruption framework in Tunisia and Morocco through the dissemination of European good practice examples and the promotion of CoE methodologies on the assessment of corruption risk. For this purpose a number of trainings to enhance the capacities of local authorities in undertaking sectoral risk assessments were held, as well as a full-scale pilot risk-assessment exercise in the external trade sector of Morocco and the sector of public properties in Tunisia. Similar risk-assessment practices have been introduced at the level of legislative drafting (so-called corruption proofing of legislation).

The demand-driven approach in motion: supporting democratic reforms in Jordan

As a result of the interest expressed by Jordanian authorities towards South Programme activities to promote good governance in Morocco and Tunisia, in October 2014 the CoE initiated discussions with Jordanian public instances involved in the promotion of good governance. Initial exchanges focused on relevant CoE tools to fight corruption, money-laundering and financing of terrorism and could be translated, in the future, into **a concrete work-plan for bilateral and regional co-operation activities.**





A focus on Human Rights: the fight against trafficking in human beings

The South Programme raised awareness on CoE and other international standards in the field of trafficking in human beings in Southern Mediterranean countries on this complex and trans-border threat to human rights which calls for a stronger and more effective regional action.

From awareness to action against trafficking in human beings on the basis of CoE and other international standards

South Programme activities aimed inter alia at raising awareness and strengthening capacities on the issue of trafficking in human beings in light of the CoE Convention against trafficking in human beings in the countries of the region. In Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan, seminars, conferences and study visits allowed to spread information on CoE and other international standards, as well as help the participants acquire new skills on existing tools and best practices to counter trafficking in human beings, with a view to bringing concrete solutions to partner countries in line with international standards. Presentations and awareness raising activities were organised in Strasbourg, Rabat, Tunis, Amman and Marrakech. Additionally, training seminars in Vienna, Paris, Brussels, Tunis, Venice and Marrakech aimed to

strengthen capacities and knowledge of professionals, exchange good practices and experiences. Available documents were translated into Arabic and widely disseminated throughout the programme.

A training kit in Arabic on CoE Convention and principles in fighting trafficking in human beings is available under http://south-programme-eu.coe.int/trafficking_en.asp

Improved coordination between international partners

The Programme fostered coordination with the Delegations of the European Union in the Southern Mediterranean region as well as with other international actors (UN agencies, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), embassies, etc.) involved in fight against trafficking in human beings, thus **enhancing the impact of anti-trafficking initiatives.**

A regional response to a trans-border threat: encouraging the exchange of experiences and best practices among Southern Mediterranean countries

The South Programme played also a part in fostering a South-South regional dialogue and exchange of experiences between countries from the Southern Mediterranean, some of which are already working on the reinforcement of their juridical and legal framework to fight against trafficking in human beings. The International Conference on Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings “Diverse responses to a multifaceted phenomenon”, organised in co-operation with the Tunisian Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice and IOM, allowed to initiate regional dialogue leading to common solutions to this transborder



phenomenon. Representatives of line Ministries of Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco and international experts from the two shores of the Mediterranean, international organisations, Parliamentarians, media, civil society organisations, representatives from the academic world and private sector identified concrete needs to improve the effectiveness in fighting trafficking in human beings, as well as to ensure a better protection of the victims. These needs include a better definition of trafficking in human beings, in line with international standards and the importance of ensuring a better coordination among different stakeholders (police, judiciary, civil society) as well as among the countries of the region.

Initiated intergovernmental dialogue supporting the drafting and implementation of anti-trafficking legislation in the Southern Mediterranean

On the basis of the regular dialogue established in the framework of the South Programme with Tunisian and Moroccan counterparts, notably the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Transitional Justice in Tunisia and the Inter-ministerial Delegation on Human Rights in Morocco, technical assistance on drafting and implementation of anti-trafficking legislation was initiated, including exchanges on specific provisions of the CoE Convention.



Crossing the bridge: promotion of democratic values throughout the Southern Mediterranean region

The South Programme pulled together the action of CoE's various bodies and networks, such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)¹¹, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the Cooperation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (Pompidou Group)¹²- notably through its MedNET initiative-, the CoE Schools of Political Studies¹³, the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre)¹⁴ and the Youth Department¹⁵, in order to **promote democratic values in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean and to ensure the sustainability of democratic reforms.**

The activities carried out in this respect can be regrouped in three complementary strands:

1. Supporting constitutional processes, development of new legislation in line with CoE standards and setting-up of governance instances deriving from the new constitutions;
2. Towards a common legal space between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean: promoting legal compliance with CoE's Conventions and standards;
3. Strengthening the role of civil society in public life and in the decision-making process.

11. www.assembly.coe.int

12. www.coe.int/pompidou

13. www.coe.int/t/dgap/sps/default_en.asp

14. www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre

15. www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth

1. Supporting constitutional processes, development of new legislation in line with CoE standards and setting-up of governance instances deriving from the new constitutions

The South Programme's action in this respect contributed to the sustainability of the democratic processes by ensuring that human rights and democracy are protected by fundamental laws and democratic instances and new legislations are created in line with CoE and other international standards. The relevance of the South Programme assistance has been validated by the new requests for co-operation received in the course of the Programme.

Accompanying transitional democracies in Constitutional and electoral matters

A concrete support was provided by the CoE Venice Commission to Tunisian authorities throughout the process of adoption of the country's new constitution. **Technical assistance** took the form of **legislative advice**, study visits and exchanges of views on issues related to different models of Constitutional systems, contributing to strengthen the capacities of the National Constituent Assembly (NCA). The Venice Commission also accompanied the **electoral process** which led to the Parliamentary and Presidential elections of autumn 2014. CoE experts and members of the NCA examined and discussed together the provisions of the draft electoral law. Through the South Programme, the CoE Venice Commission developed a



close co-operation with the Superior Independent Electoral Authority¹⁶ (ISIE), on the basis of an agreed work-plan encompassing the Tunisian electoral process. A number of activities were carried out including, among others, the participation of the President of ISIE in a conference of electoral management bodies on the misuse of administrative resources during electoral processes and in the Lisbon Forum 2014 devoted to the electoral process (see further). This strengthened co-operation contributed to **reinforce ISIE capacities** and fostered **networking** with similar European Institutions and relevant international experts.

The South Programme also favoured the **launching of co-operation with Jordan on Constitutional matters**, which was then pursued through a new country-specific EU-CoE Joint Programme on justice reform and constitutional justice¹⁷.

Regional workshops promoted by the Venice Commission fostered **an exchange of experiences among Southern Mediterranean countries as well as with European experts** on “Constitutional procedures and democratic procedures, experiences and perspectives” and “The new constitutionalism in the Arab world: the process of constitution making in a changing environment”.

Broadening the scope of the South Programme: new requests for technical assistance from Southern Mediterranean countries

Thanks to its **flexible and demand-driven approach**, the South Programme was able to **reply favourably to new requests for technical advice**, coming from Egypt and Libya. In Egypt, the Venice Commission provided its expertise on the draft NGO law, while in Libya, in close coordination with the Delegation of the EU, a preliminary dialogue on constitutional matters was launched

Technical support in the elaboration of new legislation and governance structures

Besides accompanying national authorities in their reform process of the judicial systems, the CoE provided technical assistance with the preparation of draft laws and new governance structures in the partner countries. As

16. Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Elections.

17. EU-CoE Joint Programme “Support to the Jordanian authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Jordanian justice system”.

a way of example, in Morocco the South Programme provided support to establish a new **Authority for Gender Equality and combating all Forms of Discrimination** (APLCD)¹⁸ and an **Advisory Council for Family and Childhood Affairs** (CCFE)¹⁹, as provided for by the Constitution. It also made its expertise available through study seminars on important organic laws foreseen by the Constitution, such as a round table on the advanced regionalisation bill, the implementation of the constitutional provisions concerning the use of Amazigh as an official language and on the new organic law on the Constitutional Court.

Strengthened institutional capacities of national bodies and institutions

The CoE Venice Commission co-operated closely with the institution of the **Ombudsman of Morocco**, thus enhancing the capacities of the staff through training activities. The training events involved also representatives from Mediators of other Southern Mediterranean countries, and touched upon, among others, the role of the Ombudsman institutions in simplifying administrative procedures and access to public services, the methods and impact of self-referral and the means of action of Mediators and Ombudsmen and on the importance of strategic planning as regards the performance of Ombudsman/mediators Institutions in the French speaking area.

In the framework of the Partnership for Democracy with the Parliament of Morocco, the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE (PACE), in close co-operation with the Venice Commission, contributed to **strengthening the role of the Parliament as a cornerstone democratic institution** by enhancing the capacities of its members and staff through seminars on matters agreed upon together. These included the parliamentary supervision of government action, the structure and functioning of the CoE, the popular legislative initiative, the functioning of European institutions, the role of the parliamentary opposition, the Moroccan new migration policy. The seminars allowed to disseminate European best practices, through exchanges with PACE Parliamentarians from CoE member States, as well as with international experts.

From a regional perspective, **inter-parliamentary co-operation with Southern Mediterranean countries** was developed through PACE Conferences on key issues for the consolidation of democracy and the

18. *Autorité pour la parité et la lutte contre toutes les formes de discrimination.*

19. *Conseil consultatif de la famille et de l'enfance.*

enjoyment of human rights for all. Representatives from Parliaments of Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, from the National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia, the Palestinian National Council as well as representatives from Egypt discussed key issues regarding the role of parliamentary institutions in democratic transition and freedom of religion or belief in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East. PACE regional activities organised under the South Programme played a role in reinforcing the ongoing dialogue under the Partner for Democracy status, contributing to a **better understanding of the general co-operation framework provided by the CoE** for Parliaments of the region. Moreover, these activities offered a platform for inter-regional exchanges on the core values of democracy and human rights.

As of December 2014, the “Partner for Democracy Status” was granted to the Parliament of Morocco, the Palestinian National Council, in accordance with PACE Resolution 1680(2009). A request for Partner for Democracy Status from the Jordanian Parliament is currently being examined by the PACE; PACE Resolution 1818(2011) on the Request for Partner for Democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Parliament of Morocco. Resolution 1942(2013) Evaluation of the partnership for democracy in respect of the Parliament of Morocco; PACE Resolution 1830(2011) on the request for Partner for Democracy Status from the Palestinian National Council are available on the PACE website: <http://assembly.coe.int>

2. Towards a common legal space between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean: promoting legal compliance with CoE’s Conventions and standards

CoE Conventions are recognised as **international landmarks for the protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law**. Throughout the Programme, presentations and awareness-raising activities on CoE legal instruments have been organised, with a view to spread CoE standards and principles among partner countries as well as to promote the **creation and the consolidation of a common legal space between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean**. With the same aim, the programme’s activities allowed to consolidate the partnership with the Southern Mediterranean countries through their accession and participation to CoE partial agreements²⁰ open to non-member States.

The programme played a role in the promotion of other European legal standards related to new legislation and policies, such as in the drug prevention field.

20. A list of CoE partial agreements is available under <http://www.conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeTousAP.asp?CL=ENG>



Fostering legal co-operation through CoE Conventions and agreements

Systematic presentations of relevant CoE Conventions were also an integral part of the activities carried out under each component of the Programme and contributed to **establish an appropriate level of legal co-operation and exchange**. An introductory regional seminar on key CoE Conventions and partial agreements in the field of human rights and the rule of law²¹ allowed to generate a **concrete interest from partner countries on selected CoE legal instruments**. As a follow-up, national seminars on CoE Conventions took place in Morocco, Tunisia, Israel and Jordan, which set the basis for concrete long term legal cooperation. Furthermore, the South programme promoted the accession of partner countries to CoE partial agreements: a study visit to Strasbourg of the President of the Tunisian Independent Audiovisual Communication Authority²² (HAICA) resulted in a better understanding of the work and activities of the European Audiovisual Observatory²³ as well as of several CoE bodies and institutions working in fields related to HAICA mandate. It should also be noted that, in May 2014, **Morocco became the first member of the European Audiovisual Observatory from the Southern Mediterranean region**.

The South Programme supported the translation of key CoE Conventions in Arabic. A full list of CoE Conventions available in Arabic can be found at: http://www.conventions.coe.int/?pg=Treaty/Translations/Translations_arabic.htm

21. Conventions on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse; Action against Trafficking in Human Beings; Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence; Spectator Violence, Anti-Doping; Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data ; Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Counterfeiting of Medical Products and Similar Crimes Involving Threats to Public Health

22. Haute Autorité Indépendante de la Communication Audiovisuelle

23. <http://www.obs.coe.int/>

Finally, a training for young professionals from Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, selected among national counterparts involved in the implementation of the South Programme (relevant Ministries, Parliaments, human rights institutions, good governance instances and civil society), organised in co-operation with the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation (EIUC) and Venice International University (VIU), allowed to enhance their understanding on CoE Conventions and agreements.



A journalist from the EU Neighbourhood Info Centre followed the information seminar on CoE Conventions organised in Israel in the framework of the South Programme. To find out more:
http://www.enpi-info.eu/files/features/ISRAEL%20feature-A%20common%20legal%20space_EN.pdf

Between 2012 and 2014, there was a significant increase of interest from Southern Mediterranean countries in CoE legal instruments and partial agreements. Morocco has officially requested to be invited to accede to a significant number of these instruments and ratified already several CoE Conventions. Tunisian authorities expressed their interest in a number of CoE legal instruments and ratified the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters and its amending protocol. Interest in selected CoE Conventions was also expressed by other countries of the region. Although

this interest cannot be ascribed exclusively to the Programme, it is undeniable that the efforts deployed in the framework of the South Programme created an **institutionalised framework for co-operation with partner countries towards the creation of a common legal space**.

Strengthening the co-operation with regional organisations from the Southern Mediterranean on human rights matters including CoE Conventions

In close coordination with the EU, a **co-operation with the League of Arab States (LAS)** was launched in the framework of the South Programme. A first study visit of representatives of the LAS Human Rights Commission to the CoE allowed for an exchange of views on the system of the European Convention of Human Rights, on inter-governmental co-operation in the field of human rights and on some key CoE Conventions. On the basis of the interest expressed during the visit, LAS representatives took part in other South Programme's activities, notably in the 2014 edition of the Lisbon Forum.

Regular support to the development of drug prevention strategies in the Southern Mediterranean in line with CoE standards

Through the activities carried out by the CoE Pompidou Group, and in particular by its Mediterranean network for co-operation on drugs and addictions (MedNET), the South Programme has promoted a **human rights based**



approach regarding policies to combat drug addictions, in accordance with CoE standards. In Tunisia, seminars and study visits on drug policy and on the prevention of addictions allowed relevant stakeholders to become familiar with **European standards and good practices in the developing of drug policies**. The **first Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Addictions** was established in Morocco, and is now fully operational. With the South Programme support, courses in addictology at the medical Universities of Rabat, Casablanca and Tunis were organised for medical staff involved in the care and treatment of drug users.

The results of the MedSPAD Surveys in Tunisia (<http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/Pompidou/Source/Activities/MedNET/activities%202014/MedSPAD-TunisieFR-V5.pdf>) and Morocco (http://south-programme-eu.coe.int/Source/Pompidou_Group/Rapport-etude-MedSPAD-Maroc.pdf) are now available online.

Furthermore, MedSPAD (Mediterranean School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs) Surveys on the use of drug among young people in Morocco and Tunisia, allowed to **collect valid information on the use of drugs by young people to better develop a drug prevention strategy**. The South Programme fostered also **exchanges and mutual transfer of knowledge among MedNET countries**, through the launching of a new regional project in 2014: a MedSPAD regional Committee. The project allowed for experiences to be shared between the countries of the MedNET Network who have conducted the MedSPAD survey and those who wished to do so. The added value is also to share their experience with the countries in Europe which have conducted the ESPAD (European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs) which served as a basis for the whole MedSPAD project. A first preliminary report, providing a first glance of the situation in nine countries of the Mediterranean Region in relation to the prevalence of alcohol, tobacco and drug use among adolescents, has already been produced. This project provides a forum to discuss the relation between research and policy-making through the use of school survey results in prevention policy and in the monitoring of such prevention policy. It is expected to promote, in the long-term, the harmonisation of school survey methodologies to enable a better analysis to serve prevention policies among countries of the region. Both Moroccan and Tunisian counterparts highlighted the importance of South Programme's action in establishing a **sustainable and long-lasting dynamic of co-operation**: in this respect, the setting-up of the Monitoring Centre in Morocco, which has already produced its first report, but also the results of the MedSPAD surveys

will be crucial to pursue the efforts of the two countries in further developing effective drug-prevention strategies and policies.

3. Strengthening the role of civil society in public life and in the decision-making process

The participation of civil society to democratic life and decision-making processes is crucial to ensure the consolidation of democratic systems. Through activities addressed to young leaders, NGOs and youth organisations, the South Programme contributed to equip **civil society** representatives with the skills and expertise necessary to **play an effective role in public life** and to foster a **dialogue between civil society and national authorities**. Peer-to-peer exchange of experiences and best practices, organised by the South Programme I, contributed to reinforce the **South-South co-operation**. This was mainly achieved through regional fora such as the Lisbon Forum organised by the CoE North-South Centre and other programmes, regional initiatives and networks involving non institutional actors such as the Schools of Political Studies.

Preparing tomorrow's leaders: establishment of the first ever Schools of Political Studies in Morocco and Tunisia

The South Programme supported the **setting-up of the Moroccan Citizen School of Political Studies and the Tunisian School of Politics**, as well as their **full integration into the Network of the Schools of Political Studies**, which includes 19 other Schools across Europe. The capacities of the Schools' past and present participants - representatives of civil society organisations, civil servants, local politicians, young members of political parties - were enhanced not only through the annual cycle of seminars of the two Schools, but also through the participation of alumni delegations in the activities of the Network of the Schools of Political Studies. **International study sessions, peer-to-peer exchanges** of experiences with other Schools (notably an annual Summer Academy organised by the Bulgarian School of Politics), the participation of the two Schools in the annual World Forum for Democracy sessions in Strasbourg²⁴, helped the Schools' students acquiring new skills as regards the practice of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and their day-to-day work.

The two regional seminars organised by the Tunisian School of Politics in 2013 on "Understanding the Arab Spring and its impact" and by the

24. <http://www.coe.int/en/web/world-forum-democracy>



Moroccan Citizen School of Political Studies in 2014 on “Standards and tools to institutionalise policies of diversity in the Southern Mediterranean. For a negotiated transition towards democratic pluralism and human rights strengthening in the countries of the region”, turned into an annual **platform for exchanges** and debates between civil society activists, academics, and experts in the fields of political science and human rights from the whole Mediterranean region on **key challenges to the consolidation of democratic processes**. The South Programme’s action contributed to foster new demands: civil society actors from several Southern Mediterranean countries have already expressed their interest in such a “platform” and in the possibility to develop similar initiatives in their respective countries, once the conditions allow for this.

Promoting youth participation and a human rights culture across the Southern Mediterranean

The South Programme strengthened the capacities of youth organisations, young leaders and researchers coming from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia in developing successful projects to **promote youth participation** and a **human rights culture** in youth programmes and policies. With the guidance and support of the CoE, 45 **youth leaders and trainers** engaged in a long-term training process to develop and apply democratic youth participation in projects and programmes of youth organisations and local authorities. On the occasion of national seminars organised in Morocco and Tunisia, the projects were presented to governmental and non-governmental actors responsible for national youth policies and programmes so as to link with other youth policy strategies and programmes. A final evaluation and consolidation conference held in Marrakech in November 2014 reviewed the **relevance and effectiveness of the projects developed** and implemented and made connections with European counterparts. Projects implemented



by the participants covered various dimensions of democratic youth participation ranging from the development of a political school for young women in Algeria, the setting up of a local youth council in Assilah (Morocco) to a campaign for secondary students to vote for the first time, in Tunisia (*Jeune vote pas ! Jeune compte pas!*).

Promoting greater interactions between civil society and other actors of governance

On the basis of the **unique “quadrilogue” structure** of the CoE North-South Centre, gathering together and promoting the interactions between the four actors of governance (governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society) **the 2012, 2013 and 2014 editions of the “Lisbon Forum”²⁵** were devoted to **key themes for the transitional and reform processes in the Southern Mediterranean region**. Civil society representatives from Southern Mediterranean countries had the chance to exchange and debate with the other three actors of governance, as well as with European and international experts and representatives of international organisations on issues such as the promotion of the rule of law – in particular, through constitutional reforms and the reform of the judiciary – and the support to reforms, freedom of expression and women rights, the consolidation of inclusive democracy in Southern Mediterranean countries and free and fair elections as key condition for successful democracy.

25. The Lisbon Forum 2012 had as a theme “The Arab Season: from change to challenges”; the 2013 edition was devoted to “Valuing civil society as actor of governance: Perspectives for the Southern Mediterranean” whereas the Lisbon Forum 2014 analysed the “Electoral processes and democratic consolidation in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean”.



Sitting around the same table: enhancing the impact of programme's activities through stronger coordination with Southern Mediterranean partner countries and the donor community

Regular donor coordination played a decisive role in the achievement of the South programme's results. **The coordination between the CoE and the EU** has been ensured at different levels, including in the framework of the regular high-level political dialogue **between the EU Commissioner Štefan Füle and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland.** On the ground, the regular exchange of information between the CoE and the Delegations of the European Union allowed to better address the needs of partner countries and ultimately contributed to raise the profile of the programme and enhance its impact.

The conclusions of the Steering Committee meetings organised in the framework of the Programme are available under:
http://south-programme-eu.coe.int/transversal_activities_en.asp

A **Steering Committee**, gathering representatives of the EU, the CoE and partner countries, regularly followed the implementation of the Programme, thus ensuring the necessary coordination and monitoring

of the Programme's activities and the progress in the achievements of the results. It also played a role in appropriating the programme's activities by the participating countries.

The opening of the CoE offices in Tunisia and Morocco played a decisive role in tailoring the programme's activities to the needs of partner countries and developing synergies with other development initiatives through regular contacts with national stakeholders and donor community present on the ground.

What others say about us: the results of an independent evaluation of the South Programme confirm its relevance, effectiveness and impact

A mid-term independent evaluation²⁶ of the South Programme – commissioned by the European Union in 2013 – acknowledged the CoE's **added value and the relevance** of the joint EU-CoE South Programme, as it responded to genuine needs from partner countries. It also welcomed the Programme's flexibility, which allowed it to address strategic challenges in the Southern neighbourhood and to respond to new emerging needs in partner countries. Furthermore, according to the evaluation, the Programme is likely to achieve a significant impact, by contributing to reinforcing democratic practices and building counterparts' capacities to follow CoE standards. Finally, it also put forward recommendations in view of the future EU-CoE joint action in the region, to be taken into account in the preparation of the follow-up to the South Programme I.

26. Midterm evaluation of the programme "Strengthening democratic reform in the Southern Neighbourhood", final report

A renewed commitment to democratic governance reform in the Southern Mediterranean: South programme II (2015-2017)

On the basis of the South Programme I achievements over the period 2012-2014, **the CoE and the EU intend to pursue their efforts to accompany democratic consolidation processes in the Southern Mediterranean.** The second edition of the EU-CoE Joint Programme “Towards strengthened democratic governance in the Southern Mediterranean” (South Programme II) aims to contribute to reinforcing human rights, rule of law and democracy in Southern Mediterranean partner countries over the period 2015-2017, in accordance with CoE’s and other international standards.

As it was the case for the South Programme I, the South Programme II is part of the broader CoE policy towards neighbouring regions and European Neighbourhood Policy of the EU. Through a **demand-driven approach the second edition of the South programme** aims more specifically to:

- ▶ Support **constitutional processes** in Southern Mediterranean countries, the development of **new legislation** and the setting-up and functioning of **human rights institutions** and **democratic governance structures**.
- ▶ Promote the creation and the consolidation of a **common legal space** between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean by raising awareness on key CoE Conventions and other European and international standards as well as to **strengthen human rights, good governance and democratic values** in the Southern Mediterranean region.
- ▶ Support on-going democratic reform processes and **foster regional co-operation in the field of human rights, rule of law and democracy**, through the creation of and the support to **formal and informal networks** between Europe and countries of the Southern Mediterranean region, as well as within the region.

From a thematic point of view, the South Programme II pursues the co-operation initiated in the framework of the South Programme I, and further broadens it, by addressing **new priority issues** in the human rights, democracy and the rule of law spheres.

South Programme II intends to expand its strong bilateral support, provided to Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan, to other countries from the Southern Mediterranean as well as to raise the profile of the Programme's regional dimension.

The bilateral **Neighbourhood Partnerships** 2015-2017 for Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan, will continue to underpin the South programme's objectives, contribute to **reinforce the political dialogue**, consolidate co-operation results, and establish institutional links between the authorities from those three countries and CoE bodies and instances at different levels.

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<http://south-programme-eu.coe.int>

South programme II (2015-2017)

<http://southprogramme2-eu.coe.int>

European Union

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid>

<http://eeas.europa.eu/mideast>

<http://eeas.europa.eu/enp>

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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The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 democratic European countries. Its aims are peace, prosperity and freedom for its 500 million citizens – in a fairer, safer world. To make things happen, EU countries set up bodies to run the EU and adopt its legislation. The main ones are the European Parliament (representing the people of Europe), the Council of the European Union (representing national governments) and the European Commission (representing the common EU interest).

<http://europa.eu>

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