



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ODGProg/Inf(2014)17

14 November 2014

**Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities (2012-2014)
Final Implementation Report**

Document prepared by the Council of Europe Secretariat

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
1. SHORT TERM PRIORITIES	5
1.1 Constitutional justice	5
1.2 Electoral legislation and practice.....	6
1.3 Independence and efficiency of the judiciary.....	6
1.4 Seminars on CoE conventions	7
2. MID-TERM PRIORITIES	8
2.1 Freedom of Expression / Media Freedom	8
2.2 Promotion of human rights for staff of law enforcement services	8
2.3 Social Media / Youth.....	8
2.4 Women Empowerment / Women’s rights	8
2.5 Women Participation	8
2.6 Violence against Women.....	9
Appendix I – Financial table - Estimation until end of 2014	10

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the progress made in implementing the “Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities for Jordan 2012-2014”. These priorities in Council of Europe (CoE)’s fields of expertise envisaged a short and mid-term support in specific priority sectors. They were identified in co-operation with the Jordanian authorities, so as to accompany the process of democratic reform in Jordan, and to support the country in taking up challenges relating to human rights, rule of law, and democracy.

Partnerships/Funding

A very significant part of the co-operation priorities was implemented with the support of the European Union (EU). The Joint Programme “Strengthening democratic reform in the southern neighbourhood” (South Programme), entirely funded by the European Union (UE) and implemented by the CoE¹, allowed Jordan to be involved in regional activities in priority fields identified in the co-operation document.

Also, the Joint Programme “Support to the Jordanian authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Jordanian Justice System”, funded by the EU and implemented by the CoE (CEPEJ and Venice Commission), allowed the CoE to implement the priorities in the field of the strengthening of the efficiency of the Jordanian judiciary and in the field of constitutional justice.

Furthermore, the regional programme to combat violence against women, funded through a voluntary contribution by Norway, has allowed Jordan to be involved in the work initiated in this respect in several countries from the Southern neighbourhood.

Some co-operation projects are still being implemented, including projects covering several countries in the region. The financial table enclosed in Appendix I presents the estimate of project cost by theme established in 2012 and an estimate of expenditure by theme until end of 2014. Detailed financial reports will be presented to donors in 2015, after finalizing project implementation, in accordance with the conditions agreed with donors.

Follow-up to implementation

Steps forward in implementing the co-operation priorities have been regularly discussed between the CoE Secretariat and the Jordanian authorities.

Moreover, as pointed out in the document “Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities for Jordan 2012-2014”, follow-up to the implementation of co-operation with Jordan is under the responsibility of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE, and notably its Rapporteur Group on External Relations (GR-EXT). The GR-EXT is informed by the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes on the progress of the programmes and projects, through a mid-term stocktaking report and a final implementation report. The interim implementation report was submitted to the GR-EXT in July 2013². This is the final implementation report.

¹ Apart from co-operation with Morocco and Tunisia, the South Programme comprises regional interest projects in countries and territories covered by the EU’s European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya and the Palestinian National Authority).

² [ODGProg/Inf\(2013\)11E – Neighbourhood co-operation priorities – Interim implementation report.](#)

Both the identification of needs and the implementation of the actions have been conducted in close co-operation with the CoE's partners, primarily the EU, including its Delegation in Amman, and also other international organisations and bilateral donors.

The Steering Committee set up under the South Programme³ has discussed and validated the progress made in various projects. Furthermore, an independent evaluation of the South Programme was carried out by IBF International Consulting at the request of the European Commission. The [evaluation report](#), published in April 2014, underlines in particular the value added and the relevance of the CoE's work in the southern Mediterranean region, which is based on the real needs of partner countries and has quickly produced results and a practical impact in those countries.

Overall assessment

The beginning of the effective implementation of the co-operation priorities has been delayed by developments in the country. On the one hand, this is due to a number of legislative changes initiated by the King and to the gradual setting-up of new governing bodies; on the other hand, the political situation in Jordan has been considerably influenced by the Syrian conflict. Despite these difficult circumstances, which have required an increased focus by the Jordanian authorities on the internal situation, the dialogue between the CoE and Jordan in the framework of the neighbourhood policy has been pursued through regular and very constructive contacts.

The implementation of activities concerning the Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities 2012-2014 can be regarded as successful. In particular, much has been achieved regarding short-term priorities: in the field of constitutional justice, the assistance provided by the Venice Commission was invaluable for the setting-up and the support of the recently established Constitutional Court. Similarly, the work of the CEPEJ was fundamental in raising awareness of European standards in the Jordanian judiciary, which greatly benefited from the exchange of views with European experts. Moreover, awareness was raised of the added value that accession to certain CoE conventions would have for the Jordanian legal system. Although not all the priorities identified for possible medium-term implementation during the period under review were brought into effect due to lack of funding, Jordan participated in regional events in the field of combatting violence against women.

While the overall assessment of the programme is positive, certain challenges remain concerning future co-operation, in particular regarding needs and areas of collaboration that gradually emerged in the light of exchanges between the CoE and Jordanian authorities. The Jordanian authorities expressed their wish to establish closer co-operation in the field of electoral legislation, and initiatives are currently underway in order to identify needs and action priorities in the field of fight against corruption.

A "Neighbourhood Partnership with Jordan" covering the period from 2015 to 2017 is currently being discussed with Jordanian authorities. It will be based on Enhanced Political Dialogue and will seek to consolidate the outcomes of the co-operation carried out since 2012, and also to initiate new areas of co-operation in line with domestic priorities.

³ This committee comprises representatives of partners of the Programme, as well as the EU and the CoE.

1. SHORT TERM PRIORITIES

1.1 Constitutional justice

Expected results:

1. good practice relating to the setting-up of Constitutional Courts is discussed with relevant stakeholders and taken into consideration in the final draft law;
 2. good practice relating to the relevant Rules of Procedure and other by-laws is discussed with relevant stakeholders and taken into consideration in the final texts;
 3. the future Constitutional Court of Jordan takes part in regional and international networks. Jordan becomes a member of the Venice Commission;
- The capacities of members and staff of the Constitutional Court are strengthened.

Results achieved:

In accordance with Expected Result 1, in the lead-up to the establishment of the Constitutional Court in Jordan, the assistance provided by the Venice Commission proved to be of invaluable importance. At the eve of the creation of the new governance instance, judges and other members of the Jordanian judiciary benefited from the expertise provided by the Venice Commission. Representatives of the Jordanian judiciary had the chance to get to know the basis of several models of European constitutional courts, which resulted in greater awareness of the Jordanian Court of European and international standards. However, the assistance provided by the Venice Commission was not limited to the period prior to the establishment of the Court, but continued in its wake. Venice Commission training activities and meetings represented a chance for the Jordanian judiciary to discuss and exchange views with experts and legal professionals of constitutional justice about key issues regarding the setting-up of the Constitutional Court at national and regional level.

In accordance with Expected Results 2 and 4, a number of initiatives aimed at consolidating the Rules of Procedure and the capacities of members of the Constitutional Court have been successfully undertaken. Also in this case, the assistance provided by the Venice Commission proved to be essential. Thanks to the specialised training days and capacity-building workshops organised by the Venice Commission, prominent members of the Jordanian judiciary –among them the President of the Constitutional Court – had the opportunity to share opinions and ideas with European experts of constitutional justice about the role of the Constitutional Court in protecting human rights, and to receive ad hoc advice dealing with practical and theoretical aspects of rules of procedure of the Constitutional Court. As a result of these activities, the Constitutional Court decided to appoint a liaison officer with the Venice Commission in order to strengthen and consolidate future collaborations between the two institutions.

Concerning Expected Result 3, although Jordan has not actually officially requested to be invited to become a member of the Venice Commission, the implementation of programmes aimed at increasing Jordan's participation in regional and international networks can be regarded as successful.

A number of regional meetings were regularly attended by Jordanian representatives with the support of the Venice Commission. Moreover, in October 2013, Jordan participated for the first time in a meeting of the Joint Council on Constitutional Justice which offers an ideal environment for an exchange of competent views on constitutional justice between long-standing and more recent courts. The participation of Jordan in regional and international networks of constitutional justice professionals has allowed the country to benefit from the exchange of experiences and opinions expressed by experts from numerous countries, resulting in a greater awareness of – and consequently adaptation to – European and international standards of constitutional justice.

Funding: South Programme.

1.2 Electoral legislation and practice

Expected results:

1. sharing of experience and good practice on electoral management bodies;
2. awareness of international electoral standards is raised among relevant actors;
3. capacities of members of the Independent Electoral Commission and staff of electoral administration are strengthened;
4. capacities of members of the Independent Electoral Commission and of the judiciary to deal with electoral complaints and appeals are strengthened;
5. capacities of journalists relating to good practice for a fair and balanced coverage of the elections are strengthened.

Results achieved:

The Independent Election Commission of Jordan (IEC) – which was established in 2012 – delivered a formal request of assistance to the CoE only in September 2014. The IEC, by recognising the CoE's expertise in matters of electoral legislation and practice, explicitly required the support of the Venice Commission in a number of election-related aspects. Following consultations, a number of possible fields of co-operation have been identified: technical assistance to the electoral administration, electoral complaints and appeals procedures, regional co-operation, and a strengthened co-operation between the Parliament and the Venice Commission on issues like electoral legislation and political parties. In the light of this request, the Venice Commission, in co-operation with the IEC, is currently drafting a work plan.

Funding: N/A.

1.3 Independence and efficiency of the judiciary

Expected result:

1. The efficiency of the judiciary is improved through review of the revised legal framework and capacity-building of the Judicial Council based on a needs assessment study and the formulation of recommendations to improve the court performance and targeted follow-up assistance.

Results achieved:

In accordance with the expected result, the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) has carried out an evaluation of the efficiency of the Jordanian judicial system. The report was presented to the Jordanian authorities – accompanied by recommendations – which allowed to identify possible areas of co-operation in the judiciary field.

On this basis, the CEPEJ has elaborated a framework of co-operation with three pilot courts (Amman's Court of First Instance, Madaba's Court of First Instance, and Sahab's Magistrate Court) with a view to implementing certain tools of the CEPEJ aiming at, in particular, improving files and work management, and at solving problems linked to the summons and notification systems.

In parallel with the activities carried out in Jordan, representatives of the Jordanian Ministry of Justice and of the pilot courts have participated since 2013 CEPEJ meetings in Strasbourg, as in well as in a study visit to Italy. During the latter, Jordanian representatives became more familiar with the CEPEJ's tools and methods and had fruitful exchanges of views with experts and legal professionals on good practices developed in CoE member states, to improve the efficiency and the quality of justice.

Funding: South Programme.

1.4 Seminars on CoE conventions**Expected results:**

1. The seminar results in an in-depth understanding of the process leading to and of the implications inherent in the accession to certain key CoE conventions;
2. Jordan officially requests to be invited to accede to certain CoE conventions.

Results achieved:

As a result of the seminars organised by the CoE open to non-member states (Strasbourg, July 2013 - Amman, April 2014), Jordanian representatives had the opportunity to get to know in detail the procedures of accession to CoE conventions and more specifically to some CoE instruments, while acquiring at the same time knowledge of several key CoE conventions, such as the Convention 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.

Thanks to these initiatives, Jordan has declared its interest to accede to a number of specific CoE conventions, such as conventions against corruption, organised crime and terrorism, violence against women and against children. Furthermore, as a result of an agreement reached with Jordanian authorities in June 2014, Working Groups composed of CoE and Jordanian experts will be set up to carry out an examination of various conventions in some priority areas regarding Rule of Law and Human Rights.

Funding: South Programme.

2. MID-TERM PRIORITIES

2.1 Freedom of Expression / Media Freedom

The Jordanian authorities have not yet formulated any concrete requests.

2.2 Promotion of human rights for staff of law enforcement services

The Jordanian authorities have not yet formulated any concrete requests.

2.3 Social Media / Youth

The Jordanian authorities have not yet formulated any concrete requests.

Jordan was invited to the interregional seminar for researchers in the youth field and to the training course for multipliers and trainers for youth democratic participation (with the participation of Moroccan, Tunisian, Algerian and European representatives). Unfortunately, Jordan could not be represented to these regional events, which were organised in Rabat in April 2013.

2.4 Women Empowerment / Women's rights

The Jordanian authorities have not yet formulated any concrete requests.

2.5 Women Participation

Jordanian delegations took active part in a number of regional meetings centred on the key issues of women participation in public and political life organised by the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North South Centre). These regional initiatives allowed Jordanian delegations to exchange opinions and experiences on current and future plans for the empowerment of women with other regional experts.

Funding: NSC budget; South Programme.

2.6 Violence against Women

The CoE relevant standards dealing with the fight against violence against women were presented to Jordanian representatives (Strasbourg, July 2013 and June 2014 – Amman, April 2014). Experts were also invited to related events organised by the CoE (Rabat, September 2012, Rome 2014).

A scoping mission to Jordan of CoE Secretariat and experts to be held in December 2014 and the participation of a Jordanian delegation to the Gender Equality Committee (November 2014) will allow discussions with the Jordanian authorities on future joint action in this field and possible assistance for accession of Jordan to the CoE Convention against violence against women.

Jordan benefited from the participation to regional meetings – in the framework of a regional programme sponsored by Norway – dealing specifically with the issue of violence against women. The participation of Jordanian delegates to such activities represented a chance to discuss the needs and share views on future actions to be undertaken in this regard.

Furthermore, efforts have been made to present to Jordanian representatives the CoE conventions dealing specifically with the fight against violence against women. These initiatives aimed primarily at raising awareness about the added value of CoE conventions in the protection of women from violence, and at providing legal and technical assistance for future accession of Jordan to such conventions.

Funding: voluntary contribution (Norway).

Appendix I – Financial table - Estimation until end of 2014

	Total estimated cost (in 2012)	Estimate of expenditure	
		EU	Voluntary contributions
Short-term			
Constitutional Justice	122 000	22 000 100 000	
Electoral legislation and practice	100 000		
Independence and efficiency of the judiciary	400 000	400 000**	
Seminar on CoE conventions	40 000	30 000	
Mid-term			
Freedom of expression/Media freedom	300 000		
Promotion of human rights for staff of law enforcement services	100 000		
Social media/Youth	300 000		
Violence against women	50 000		30 000 Norway***
TOTAL	1 412 000	552 000	30 000
	TOTAL FUNDED	582 000	

Notes

** No cost extension requested

*** Estimated budget for Jordan- regional programme