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Jordan
Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities
Interim implementation report

Document prepared by the Council of Europe Secretariat

Table of contents

I. INTRODUCTION3

II. SHORT TERM PRIORITIES4

 1. Constitutional Justice4

 2. Electoral legislation and practice5

 3. Independence and efficiency of the judiciary5

 4. Seminar on CoE conventions.....6

III. MID-TERM PRIORITIES.....6

Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities for Jordan 2012-2014 - Financial table - situation as at 15/06/2013 10

I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the state of progress made in implementing the “Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities for Jordan 2012-2014”, a document endorsed by the Ministers’ Deputies at their 1143rd meeting on 16 May 2012, and which is part of the Council of Europe (CoE) policy towards its neighbouring regions¹.

These priorities in CoE fields of expertise envisage a short and mid-term assistance in specific priority sectors. They have been identified in co-operation with the Jordanian authorities, so as to accompany and support Jordan in the on-going reform process. They have also been formulated following close consultations with the EU, in the framework of the EU-CoE privileged partnership based on common values and aimed at supporting the transitions in the southern neighbouring countries.

The beginning of the implementation of the co-operation priorities was the formal approval of the document “Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities for Jordan 2012-2014” by the Secretary General of the CoE and the Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs at their meeting of 27 May 2012 in Amman.

Partnerships / funding

A significant part of the co-operation priorities is implemented with the support of the EU. The projects aimed at supporting justice reform will be funded through the EU “SPRING” Programme. At the same time, the Programme “Strengthening democratic reform in the southern neighbourhood” (South Programme) allows Jordan to be involved in regional activities in priority fields identified in the co-operation document.

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.

Annex I presents a summary of the budgetary situation with regards to the implementation of these co-operation priorities.

The Office of the DG Programmes has been actively pursuing efforts to raise funds which would allow for the implementation of all the priorities identified.

Follow-up to the implementation

At its meeting on 5 February 2013, the Steering Committee set up under the South Programme² -in which a representative of Jordan took part- discussed and validated the progress in various projects implemented under the South Programme.

Both the needs assessment and the implementation of the activities are carried out in close co-operation with other partners working in targeted fields. In this context, regular consultations are held with the EU, including its Delegation in Amman, as well as with other international organisations and bilateral donors.

¹ Doc. SG/Inf(2011)7rev2. “Council of Europe Neighbourhood Policy” of 19 April 2011.

² This Committee comprises representatives of the countries and territories benefitting from the Programme, as well as the EU and the CoE.

General assessment

The beginning of the effective implementation of the co-operation priorities has been delayed by the developments in the country. On the one hand, this is due to a number of legislative changes initiated by the King in the course of last year 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 of Jordanian authorities on the internal situation, the dialogue between the CoE and Jordan within the framework of the neighbourhood policy has been pursued through regular and very constructive contacts.

Besides, Jordan's interest in developing the co-operation with the CoE has been reaffirmed by its active participation in follow-up meetings and regional activities organised within the framework of the South Programme and by the recent agreement of principle on the EU-CoE joint programme to support the justice reform. Furthermore, Jordan has continued taking part in activities already initiated in the past, such as the ones of the Pompidou Group's MedNET network. In addition, following the visit by the Sub-Committee on the Middle East of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE (PACE) Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy to the Syrian refugees camp Za'atri in Jordan in April 2013 and following exchanges of views with the King, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the President of the House of Representatives of the Jordanian Parliament, the latter has expressed interest in being granted the PACE's Partner for Democracy status.

II. SHORT TERM PRIORITIES

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;
4. the capacities of members and staff of the Constitutional Court are strengthened.

Progress

The Venice Commission organised a seminar on the Constitutional Court on 28 May 2012, in Amman, with the aim of presenting to members of Parliament and judges several relevant models of European constitutional courts.

Following the establishment of the Constitutional Court on 6 October 2012, the Venice Commission will provide assistance to the effective functioning of this new body, within the framework of the EU-CoE joint programme “Support to the Jordanian authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Jordanian justice system”, which should be signed soon. The project includes a component on constitutional justice. The specific objective of this component is to assist Jordanian authorities in the implementation of the revised Constitution, by providing a specific support to the Constitutional Court.

Over the period under consideration, Jordan has been invited to take part in Venice Commission’s meetings and regional activities. In this respect the participation by a representative of Jordan to a conference on constitutional drafters, held in Marrakech on 14-15 May 2013, is to be highlighted.

Prospects/ planned activities

Within the framework of the EU/CoE joint programme “Support to the Jordanian authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Jordanian justice system”:

- seminar on the internal rules of the Constitutional Court;
- conference on constitutional courts and the protection of human rights, addressed to judges- including constitutional judges;
- conference on the techniques of constitutional interpretation;
- participation of Constitutional Court’s members to the Venice Commission meetings.

Funding status: South Programme, EU/CoE joint programme “Support to the Jordanian authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Jordanian justice system”.

2. Electoral legislation and practice

The Venice Commission has not yet received any concrete requests from the Jordanian authorities.

Funding status: funding required.

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.

Progress

As indicated above, the EU-CoE joint programme “Support to the Jordanian authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Jordanian justice system” is foreseen to be signed soon. This programme aims at supporting Jordan in its efforts to reform the judiciary, by putting at disposal the unique tools developed by the CoE through the CEPEJ. The project foresees an assessment of the functioning of the judicial system, with a view to conceiving targeted tools to improve the efficiency and quality of the Jordanian courts. It also foresees actions aimed at strengthening the capacities for a better implementation of the sectorial justice strategy.

This project should also help Jordan to better fulfill the eligibility requirements in order to have access to EU supplementary funding resources in this field.

Prospects/ planned activities

Within the framework of the EU-CoE joint programme “Support to the Jordanian authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Jordanian justice system”:

- assessing the efficiency and quality of the judicial system, including from the institutional perspective;
- supporting the authorities in their efforts to improve and implement the strategic framework for the reform of the judiciary, through activities aimed at reinforcing the organisation of the judicial system, and putting at their disposal the relevant expertise.

Funding status: EU/CoE joint programme “Support to the Jordanian authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Jordanian justice system”.

4. Seminar on CoE conventions

Progress

- Several contacts between the Jordanian authorities and the EU have allowed to identify the interest of Jordan for certain CoE conventions. The same applies to some partial agreements, such as the Venice Commission.
- A first seminar on CoE conventions and partial agreements will be held on 1 and 2 July in Strasbourg. This event will gather participants from other countries of the region (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Israel). The aim of this seminar is to present the accession procedures to CoE non-member States. With regards to Jordan, this event will allow for an exchange of views on certain conventions and partial agreements. A follow-up action for Jordan in this field will be defined in the framework of coordination meetings with the Secretariat.

Funding status: South Programme.

Prospects/ planned activities

The seminar described above will be the first of several activities aimed at accompanying Jordan in the process of accession to certain key CoE Conventions and partial agreements, which might contribute to Jordan becoming a part of a common legal area with the European continent.

III. MID-TERM PRIORITIES

➤ Freedom of expression, media freedom

Progress

The Jordanian authorities have not yet formulated any concrete requests.

Funding status: funding required.

➤ Promotion of human rights for staff of law enforcement services

Progress

The Jordanian authorities have not yet formulated any concrete requests.

Funding status: funding required.

➤ **Social media, youth**

Progress

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.

➤ **Women empowerment, women's rights**

Progress

The Jordanian authorities have not yet formulated any concrete requests.

Funding status: funding required.

➤ **Women participation**

Progress

The North South Centre (NSC) has cooperated with Jordan in the framework of programmes on intercultural dialogue, human rights, the role of media, and youth. Jordan is an important partner for the NSC in the Mediterranean co-operation. Among others, the active participation of Jordanian representatives in the Centre's activities related to intercultural dialogue, return to peace and stability in the Middle East, the role of women in the Mediterranean society is to be noted.

Jordan was represented in the following events:

- The **international conference** of the North-South process to strengthen the role of women, "The political and socio-economical empowerment of women based on women's stories" in Istanbul, 4-6 November 2012.
- The **on-line debate on the preparation of the Euro-Med women network activities**.
- The **Lisbon Forum**, on the theme "The Arab Season: from change to challenges" (3-4 December 2012).

Funding status: South Programme (Lisbon Forum), NSC budget.

Prospects/ planned activities

- The NSC will continue to cooperate with Jordan, in accordance with the Committee of Ministers' decisions as part of the current discussion on refocusing the NSC role.
- Preparations are under way to define, in co-operation with other partners, the theme of the Lisbon Forum 2013, in which Jordan will be invited to participate together with other countries of the region.

➤ **Violence against women**

Progress

Jordan is covered by the regional programme on combating violence against women, of which several countries in the region (Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan) are beneficiaries. Jordan was represented at the inaugural Conference in September 2012 in Rabat. This country will continue to be invited to the regional activities which will be organised within the framework of this programme funded by Norway.

Further consultations could allow for a better definition of CoE targeted action in Jordan.

Funding status: voluntary contribution by Norway.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-OPERATION PRIORITIES FOR JORDAN 2012-2014 - FINANCIAL TABLE -
SITUATION AS AT 15/06/2013**

	Estimated cost	EU	Voluntary contributions	To be funded
Short-term				
Constitutional Justice	122 000	22000 100 000 *		0
Electoral legislation and practice	100 000			100 000
Independence and efficiency of the judiciary	400 000	400 000 *		0
Seminar on CoE conventions	40 000	40 000 ***		0
Mid-term				
Freedom of expression/Media freedom	300 000			300 000
Promotion of human rights for staff of law enforcement services	100 000			100 000
Social media/Youth	300 000			300 000
Violence against women	50 000		50 000 Norway ***	50 000
TOTAL	1 412 000	562 000	50 000	800 000

Notes

* Joint Programme EU/CoE under finalisation.

***Estimated budget for Jordan- regional programme.

■ Funding required

■ Funding secured