

# Congress South-Med Partnership

Euro-Mediterranean co-operation  
at local and regional levels



Congress of Local and Regional Authorities  
of the Council of Europe

The Congress



Le Congrès

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## SOUTH-MED PARTNERSHIP

**The South-Med Partnership of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities** is part of the Council of Europe's policy towards neighbouring regions (North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia) and of the Neighbourhood Partnerships with the countries concerned. Its aim is to achieve the objectives of the "local and regional democracy" component by supporting local and regional reforms and strengthening decentralised governance in the partner countries. The South-Med Partnership is overseen politically by two spokespersons within the Congress.

**The co-operation activities** carried out in this context receive financial support from Council of Europe member States.

**Morocco and Tunisia** are the first two countries to benefit from this co-operation under the Partnership.

**The four key components of the South-Med Partnership** are based on the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the Congress's seminal text :

- **POLITICAL DIALOGUE** between European elected representatives and their Southern Mediterranean counterparts
- **LEGISLATIVE AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE** and, where relevant, observation of local and regional elections
- **CO-OPERATION WITH ASSOCIATIONS** of local and regional elected representatives
- **PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY**, with special emphasis on youth, women and civil society

OCTOBER 2012

Resolution 342 and Recommendation 325 on the changes underway in the Arab countries

FEBRUARY 2017

Creation of the South-Med Partnership

OCTOBER 2014


Creation of the Partner for Local Democracy status

## PARTNER FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY STATUS

The **Partner for Local Democracy status** offers elected representatives of local authorities from Council of Europe neighbouring countries the opportunity, within the Congress, to help strengthen local and regional democracy in the Euro-Mediterranean region.


**Delegations from partner countries** may attend Congress sessions and the meetings of its Committees (Monitoring, Current Affairs and Governance). They may take part in the debates by expressing their point of view and tabling proposals, but they do not have the right to vote.

**An application for this status** must be made in accordance with a procedure laid down in the Congress Rules and Procedures; it is submitted to the Bureau for a decision and adopted in session.




**MOROCCO**


Status granted on 2 April 2019



6 representatives




6 substitutes




**TUNISIA**

Status granted on 29 October 2019



4 representatives



4 substitutes

APRIL 2019

Granting of the Partner for Local Democracy status to Morocco

MARCH 2017

Moroccan and Tunisian delegations attend the 32nd Congress Session

OCTOBER 2019

Granting of the Partner for Local Democracy status to Tunisia



## POLITICAL DIALOGUE

**Regular exchanges**, both at governmental level and between local and regional elected representatives from the Southern Mediterranean and their European counterparts, are a key feature of the South-Med Partnership. Morocco and Tunisia outlined their own advanced regionalisation and decentralisation policies at the Congress's session in March 2017.

**The Partner for Local Democracy status** offered by the Congress is a means of involving a delegation of elected representatives from the partner country in the work of the Congress, at its sessions and at the meetings of its working Committees.



### MOROCCO

Numerous meetings have been held between Congress representatives and the Moroccan authorities, particularly during the First National Colloquy on advanced regionalisation in December 2019. In addition, in October 2019 the Congress Bureau approved the Memorandum on the avenues for co-operation proposed by the Moroccan delegation.



### TUNISIA

Regular dialogue has taken place between Congress representatives and the Tunisian authorities, in particular with the Ministry of Local Affairs and the Environment, in order to define co-operation priorities.



## LEGISLATIVE AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

**Significant legislative developments** have taken place in the field of local and regional self-government in Morocco and Tunisia, with the reform of, respectively, advanced regionalisation and decentralisation.

**The Congress provides its expertise** and support for these changes through the members of its Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which brings together experts from the 47 Council of Europe member States specialising in local and regional democracy issues.



### MOROCCO

The Congress helped with the drafting of the law on advanced regionalisation which enabled local and regional elections to be held in 2015. A “Colloquy on regionalisation and the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government” was held in the Moroccan Parliament in 2017.



### TUNISIA

The Congress provided input to Chapter 7 of the Tunisian Constitution of 2014 on local democracy, to the drafting of the Code of Local Authorities and its implementing decrees, as well as to the draft law on local elections. In 2018, the Congress observed the first local elections in Tunisia.



## CO-OPERATION WITH NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

**National associations of local and regional authorities** are key players in the local governance system as they work with both local authorities and the government. As the Congress's primary speaking partners, they are the best points of contact for accessing all local authorities and ensuring that the Charter is properly applied.

**The Congress's task** is to strengthen the organisational capacities of these associations and to assist them in their lobbying and consultation activities with the government, but also in their role as service providers for the benefit of their members.



### MOROCCO

The Congress co-operates with the Moroccan Association of Chairs of Municipal Councils (AMPCC), the Association of Moroccan Regions (ARM) and the Moroccan Association of Chairs of Provincial and Prefectural Councils (AMP CPP), whose respective Chairs are members of the Moroccan delegation to the Congress.



### TUNISIE

The Congress co-operates closely with the National Federation of Tunisian Towns (FNVT). In this way, the Congress has helped revise the statutes of the association and to enhance the capacities of its Secretariat, and will provide its assistance in the work of the thematic Committees.



## PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

The consolidation of a participatory, open, transparent and inclusive local democratic system, building up the citizens' trust in their elected representatives, is one of the objectives of the co-operation with Southern Mediterranean countries.

The activities also seek to promote the European Local Democracy Week (ELDW), a pan-European initiative co-ordinated by the Congress, which strives to promote citizen participation through a series of initiatives organised by municipalities and their national associations.



### MOROCCO

An international conference entitled "Building inclusive societies: integrating migrants, fighting violent extremism, involving citizens" was jointly organised by the Congress and the Rabat City Council in 2017.



### TUNISIA

A conference on "Women and Local Government" was organised in 2017 to promote exchanges of experience between European and Tunisian female local elected representatives, followed by two other events in 2018 and 2019. The Kairouan City Council and a Tunisian civil society association organised the Arab Local Democracy Week.

The South-Med Partnership of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is part of the Council of Europe's policy towards neighbouring regions and seeks to achieve the objectives of the local and regional democracy component of this policy.

Within the Congress, the aim is to assist with local and regional reforms and to strengthen decentralised governance in the beneficiary neighbouring countries. Morocco and Tunisia are the first two countries to benefit from co-operation under this Partnership.

The Partnership has four main objectives: strengthening political dialogue between European elected representatives and their Southern Mediterranean counterparts; legislative and electoral assistance; strengthening of the capacities of national associations of local and regional authorities; support for the development of participatory democracy, with particular emphasis on the role of young people, women and civil society.

The Congress's co-operation activities are based on the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, ratified by the 47 Council of Europe member States, which sets common standards for protecting and developing the rights and freedoms of local authorities.

This publication has been produced in the framework of the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnerships with Morocco and Tunisia 2018-2021, with the support of Liechtenstein, Norway and Spain.

[www.coe.int/congress-south-med/](http://www.coe.int/congress-south-med/)

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member States, including all the members of the European Union. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an institution of the Council of Europe, responsible for strengthening local and regional democracy in its 47 member states. Composed of two chambers – the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions – and three committees, it brings together 648 elected officials representing more than 150 000 local and regional authorities.

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