

Editorial

Lisbon Forum 2014 discusses the role of the electoral process in the consolidation of democracy



More than 200 participants, coming from around 50 countries, attended the 2014 edition of the Lisbon Forum, which was devoted to the key issue of “Electoral process and democratic consolidation in the countries of the southern Mediterranean” (Ismaili Centre, Lisbon, 15-16 September 2014).

Organised by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe in the framework of the South Programme, and in co-operation with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), the Aga Khan Development Network and the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Forum gathered together international experts on elections, representatives of international organisations including, among others, the CoE, the EU, the League of Arab States and the Organisation of American States, and members of Governments, Parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society from European, Southern Mediterranean and other countries.

The Forum was opened by Mr Fayçal Gouiaa, Tunisian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and President of the Lisbon Forum 2014, and by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Thorbjørn Jagland.

The round-tables, workshops and debates which took place allowed the participants to exchange on key issues related to the electoral process, such as the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns, the issue of ethics in the electoral process, the electoral law and electoral bodies/administration, the role of candidates and parties in the electoral campaign, the observation of elections by civil society organisations, the participation of women in the electoral process and the role played by media during elections.

Conclusions and recommendations addressed to all stakeholders were formulated. They highlighted, in particular, the need for a stable and inclusive electoral law, whose funding principles are included in the Constitution, and for a regulatory framework which ensures the integrity, independence and transparency of the electoral administration.

Furthermore, international standards on the principles of equity and transparency, on the financing of parties and electoral campaigns and on the participation of minorities as well as fundamental rights such as the access to vote and to information and the equality of chances should be reflected in an appropriate legislative framework, which also includes sanctioning measures.

Political parties should ensure internal democracy and equality of chances to all its members. The discussions underlined also the importance of new and traditional media to ensure an objective and impartial information.

The recommendations addressed also the need for an inclusive electoral process: in this respect, citizens and, in particular, women's participation should be encouraged. The observation of elections by civil society was recognised as another important tool to strengthen democracy. More generally, the Forum recalled the need for a responsible and independent civil society, in order to support the reforms and transitions' processes in southern Mediterranean countries.

In order to ensure a concrete implementation of the recommendations formulated during the Forum, Moroccan and Tunisian authorities expressed their availability to host follow-up meetings.

The Conclusions of the Lisbon Forum 2014 are available in French on the North-South Centre website:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/hscentre/LF/LisbonForum/LF2014/LF2014_Conclusions_Fr.pdf

FOCUS ON ACTIVITIES OF THE PROGRAMME

Prevention of torture: seminars on the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Tunisia (4-5 September) and Morocco (8-9 September)



Two information seminars on the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) of the Council of Europe (CoE) took place in Tunis (4-5 September), in co-operation with the Ministry of Justice,

Human Rights and Transitional Justice, and Rabat (8-9 September), in co-operation with the National Human Rights Council (CNDH). The seminars – organised within the framework of the South Programme – provided the opportunity to present the work of the CPT, and to discuss core issues relating to the prevention of torture in Tunisia and Morocco.

The two CPT seminars were attended by representatives of public institutions, international organisations, members of parliament, civil society associations, media, as well as prominent experts of the CPT. The conferences presented the standards of work of the CPT and focused on the specificities of the Tunisian and Moroccan cases. More specifically, the seminars dealt with issues concerning the current situation of torture prevention in both countries such as the quality of prisons, the medical treatment of prisoners, the police stations, and the issue of forced psychiatric treatments.

The debates which stemmed from the discussion paved the way for the formulation of recommendations, which will be of precious value for the thorough implementation of Article 23 of the new Tunisian Constitution – which prohibits the use of torture – and of the law establishing the *Instance nationale pour la prévention de la torture*, and for the setting-up of a national preventive mechanism against torture in Morocco.

Visit to Strasbourg of the President of the Tunisian Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HAICA) (11-12 September 2014)



On 11-12 September 2014, the President of the Tunisian High Independent Authority for the Audiovisual Communication (HAICA, *Haute Autorité Indépendante de la Communication Audiovisuelle*) paid a working visit to the CoE. This visit allowed for a better understanding

of the work and activities of the European Audiovisual Observatory as well as of several CoE bodies and institutions working in fields related to HAICA mandate.

Furthermore, the meetings held on this occasion allowed for an exchange of views on the main challenges that the HAICA will face in the months to come – in particular, the media coverage and regulation of Tunisian electoral campaign and elections – and of the support that the CoE can provide in this respect.

This event was organised in the framework of South Programme's activities aimed at supporting the setting-up and effective functioning of new bodies and independent authorities in Southern Mediterranean countries, as well as at promoting the creation of a common legal space with Europe, through the accession to relevant CoE Conventions and partial agreements.

► FOCUS ON ACTIVITIES OF THE PROGRAMME

5th Training session of collaborators of the AOM's Mediator members (Rabat, 22-25 September 2014)



In the framework of the South Programme, the Venice Commission has contributed to the 5th training session of collaborators of Mediator members of the Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen (AOM), organised by the AOM and the Mediator Institute of the Kingdom of Morocco, which took place in Rabat from 22 to 25 September 2014.

The general theme of the session was “The means of action of Mediators and Ombudsmen”.

The results of MedSPAD Tunisia's survey are now available



The MedNET network of the Pompidou Group (Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs) has published the results of the first MedSPAD (Mediterranean School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs) survey in Tunisia. This survey has been conducted with the financial support of the South Programme.

The survey consisted of a cross-national study conducted over the first two weeks of November 2013 with a sample of at least 5,000 teenagers. This study follows a preliminary survey conducted in Tunis in February 2013 and responds to the Tunisian government's wish to establish an information system allowing for a regular assessment of the real dimension of drugs use and addiction, as well as of the efficiency of preventive measures.

This survey permitted to shed light on the tendencies of drug use (alcohol, tobacco and other substances) among educated teenagers between the age of 15 and 17, and to study some related factors (level of knowledge and attitudes towards the use of drugs, socio-economic context of families, educational profile, level of mental, social and behavioural health). The results of the survey will allow a better fine-tuning of the Tunisian strategy of prevention and contrast of addictions.

Moreover, the South Programme has also supported the realisation of a MedSPAD survey in Morocco, whose results will be available soon.

Pompidou Group website: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/pompidou/>

Trainings against corruption in Tunisia (Tunis, 23-25 September)



Two trainings were organised in Tunis in September, within the framework of the South Programme's activities intended to promote good governance and the fight against corruption.

A first training aimed at detecting the risks of corruption in the phase of preparation and improvement of legislative acts was held on 23 and 24 September. Among other themes, the discussion dealt with the phrasing, the competences and the procedures to be developed in order to minimise the risks of corruption in the preparation of laws. Furthermore, the training presented a comparison between remarkable approaches used in some countries to better detect the risks of corruption. Some practical cases were also discussed in working groups.

A second training focusing on the basic concepts of corruption followed on 24 and 25 September. This training – addressed to lawyers and officials of the judiciary – tackled issues regarding the detection of corruption and conflicts of interest. During the training, the definitions, causes and consequences of corruption – as well as the definitions and the mechanisms for prevention of corruption – were presented. Moreover, some specific anti-corruption tools developed in other countries – and namely in Belgium, where the Code of Ethics for lawyers has been recently updated – were discussed.

Finally, the training touched upon the issue of the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns.

► FOCUS ON ACTIVITIES OF THE PROGRAMME

Participation of a Tunisian delegation in the meeting of the CEPEJ working group on quality of justice (25-26 September)

A Tunisian delegation attended the 16th meeting of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) working group on quality of justice (GT-QUAL) (Strasbourg, 25 and 26 September 2014). The meeting focused on a number of issues, stretching from the organisation and the accessibility of court premises to the role of experts in the quality of judicial systems.

Under the South Programme, the CEPEJ continues its work with Morocco and Tunisia. The working programme for the months to come foresees, among other things, a mission of CEPEJ experts to Tunisia and Morocco, training activities in both countries and the participation of Moroccan and Tunisian delegations in CEPEJ's plenary session and working groups.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE EFFICIENCY OF JUSTICE (CEPEJ)



The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) was established on 18 September 2002 with the ultimate goal of improving the functioning and the efficiency of justice in the CoE member states. The creation of the CEPEJ resulted also from the Council of Europe's intention to stimulate and spread a precise knowledge of judicial systems among its member states and beyond.

The CEPEJ – which is composed by experts appointed by all the 47 member states – carries out analyses and assessments of judicial systems in order to identify solutions to improve the quality of justice, enable a better implementation of

CoE standards as well as to ameliorate Court performances and judicial time management.

In order to accomplish its numerous tasks, the CEPEJ prepares benchmarks, collects and analyses data, defines instruments of measure and means of evaluation, adopts documents (reports, advices, guidelines, action plans, etc), develops contacts with qualified personalities, non-governmental organisations, research institutes and information centres, organises hearings, and promotes networks of legal professionals.

Within the framework of the South Programme, the CEPEJ has provided Morocco and Tunisia with precious support in improving the efficiency and quality of their judicial systems. On the basis of the assessment of the Moroccan and Tunisian judicial systems, specific co-operation programmes were designed for selected Moroccan and Tunisian pilot Courts, in order to improve Court performance and the quality of justice. Through training for trainers' activities and the regular participation of Moroccan and Tunisian delegations in CEPEJ plenary sessions and in the meetings of CEPEJ working groups, Moroccan and Tunisian counterparts became familiar with CEPEJ methodologies and benefitted from exchanges of good practices with experts from CoE member States. In this respect, the granting of CEPEJ Observer Status to Morocco in May 2013 represented a major advance. Finally, CEPEJ is also putting its expertise at the disposal of the authorities with a view to adapting legislation on the judicial system.

Outside the South Programme, CEPEJ collaborates also with Jordan in the framework of a Programme entitled "Support to the Jordanian authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Jordanian justice system", funded by the European Union and implemented by the Council of Europe.

Reportage from EU Neighbourhood Info Centre on CEPEJ activities in Morocco

A journalist from the EU Neighbourhood Info Centre has followed a CEPEJ mission to Morocco: the report is available online.

► FOCUS ON ACTIVITIES OF THE PROGRAMME / TO COME UP

Fight against corruption: scoping mission to Jordan (Amman, 14-15 October 2014)

On 14-15 October 2014, a scoping mission to Jordan of CoE Secretariat and experts in the fight against corruption will take place. The visit will allow the CoE delegation to meet relevant interlocutors and discuss with the Jordanian authorities a possible future joint action in this field, to be backed by the South Programme. This visit follows the interest expressed by the authorities towards the activities to promote good governance carried out by the CoE in Morocco and Tunisia, in the framework of the South Programme.

During the visit, the delegation will also meet other national and international stakeholders, including the European Union Delegation.

Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood

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► FOCUS ON ACTIVITIES OF THE PROGRAMME / TO COME UP

Visit of the LAS Human Rights Charter Committee to the European Court of Human Rights (Strasbourg, 21-22 October 2014)

A delegation of the League of Arab States (LAS) Human Rights Charter Committee will visit the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on 21- 22 October 2014. The delegation will attend a Grand-Chamber hearing and will hold working meetings with the ECHR staff, in order to exchange on the functioning of the Court.

This visit takes place in a context of increasing co-operation with LAS, supported by the South Programme. In May 2014, a study visit to the Council of Europe of representatives of the LAS Human Rights Commission allowed for

an exchange of views on the system of the European Convention of Human Rights and on intergovernmental co-operation in the field of human rights and for a presentation of some key CoE Conventions. Following this first event, LAS delegations participated in the Lisbon Forum 2014 and in the International Conference “Safe from fear, safe from violence: celebrating the entry into force of the Istanbul Convention” (Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence), which took place in Rome on 19 September 2014.

Parliamentary seminar on the new migration policy of Morocco (Rabat, 23-24 October 2014)

A seminar entitled “The new migration policy of Morocco and the European experience: new challenges in the integration policies and practices” will take place in Rabat, on 23 and 24 October 2014.

The event, organised within the framework of the South Programme, is part of the initiatives for co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the Moroccan Parliament, which is related to the status of ‘Partner for Democracy’ which Morocco has enjoyed since 2011.

The event will include a presentation by Moroccan representatives of the draft laws related to migration policy, and also a discussion between European and Moroccan parliamentarians on migration policies and the challenges that have been faced.

Alongside the members of the Sub-Committee on Co-operation with non-European countries of origin and transit of the PACE, the Presidents of the parliamentary commissions on migration of Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, Malta, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey will also be invited.

Moreover, issues related to the theme of integration will be also addressed.

Participation of delegations of the Moroccan and Tunisian Schools of Political Studies in the World Forum for Democracy (Strasbourg, 3-5 November 2014)

The South Programme supports the participation of delegations of the Moroccan and Tunisian Schools of Political Studies in the World Forum for Democracy 2014, which will take place in Strasbourg from 3 to 5 November. The 2014 edition will deal with the following theme: « From participation to influence: can youth revitalise democracy ? ». This theme will engage youth, decision and opinion-makers in reflection on these patterns of exclusion and

involvement, and will examine new ways of mobilising youth in order to re-think today’s democratic spaces. On the fringe of the Forum, some side events addressed specifically to the participants of all the Schools of Political Studies will include visits to the European Court of Human Rights, regional and bilateral meetings as well as a diploma ceremony.

The World Forum for Democracy is an annual gathering organised in Strasbourg, where leaders, opinion-makers, civil society’s activists, and representatives of enterprises, universities, media and professional groups are invited to exchange their views on crucial issues concerning democracy in the world. The insights gathered in the various meetings organised during the Forum represent the basis for the activities of the Council of Europe and its numerous partners in the field of democracy and democratic governance.

► KEY UPCOMING EVENTS

❖ LEGAL CO-OPERATION

OCTOBER 2014

TUNISIA, MOROCCO

CEPEJ VISIT TO MOROCCO AND TUNISIA

- 7th CEPEJ visit to Tunisia
- 6th CEPEJ visit to Morocco

OCTOBER 2014

STRASBOURG, FRANCE

COORDINATION MEETINGS OF THE CEPEJ

- Participation by Moroccan and Tunisian delegations in the 16th SATURN meeting on judicial time management (15-17 October)
- Participation by Moroccan and Tunisian delegations in the 9th meeting of the CEPEJ's Network of Pilot Courts (16 October)

20-21 OCTOBER 2014

BELGIUM

STUDY VISIT OF JUDGES AND STAFF OF THE TPI AND THE ZAGHOUAN COURT TO BELGIUM

❖ GOOD GOVERNANCE AND FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

16-17 OCTOBER 2014

RABAT, MOROCCO

TRAINING ON ADMINISTRATIVE INQUIRIES TECHNIQS

11-12 NOVEMBER 2014

RABAT, MOROCCO

TRAINING ON BASIC ANTI-CORRUPTION CONCEPTS

❖ FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

7-8 OCTOBER 2014

STRASBOURG, FRANCE

Meeting between a Tunisian delegation and the Council of Europe to strengthen cooperation in the fight against human trafficking

❖ PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

23-24 OCTOBER 2014

RABAT, MOROCCO

SEMINAR ON THE NEW MIGRATION POLICY

❖ SCHOOLS OF POLITICAL STUDIES

3-5 NOVEMBER 2014

STRASBOURG, FRANCE

WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY

Participation by a delegation of the Schools in the World Forum for Democracy

NOVEMBER 2014

STRASBOURG, FRANCE

REGIONAL SEMINAR ON PLURALITY IN THE SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN TO STRENGTHEN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

❖ YOUTH

NOVEMBER 2014

EVALUATION SEMINAR OF THE TRAINING COURSES ON DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EURO-ARAB YOUTH COOPERATION

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About the EU-CoE joint programme “Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood” (South Programme)

The aim of the South Programme, launched in January 2012, is to support the political and democratic reform process in the countries of the CoE's Southern neighbourhood, in line with European and international standards and on the basis of a targeted, demand-driven approach. The main areas of the program are: judicial reform, fight against corruption, promoting human rights and democratic values. The programme's budget amounts to 4.8 million € over three years (2012-2014).

On-going activities are directed primarily to Morocco and Tunisia, but the program is open to other partner countries and territories under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)¹: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya and the Palestinian National Authority, and some of which are actively involved in the South Programme mainly through regional activities.

This joint program is part of the broader framework of initiatives undertaken by the two Organisations to promote democracy and human rights in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean, including the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) regarding the EU and the Policy of the CoE towards neighbouring regions.

For more information, please visit the South Programme's website: <http://south-programme-eu.coe.int>

1. The EU-Syria bilateral cooperation has been suspended since May 2012.