



Strengthening and protecting human rights

The Programme will strengthen the protection of human rights by promoting European and international human rights standards as well as the ratification of certain key Council of Europe Conventions open to non-member States.

Given its expertise, the Council of Europe could, in particular, assist countries in the region to **prevent trafficking in human beings**, in line with the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. A number of regional activities will be carried out to strengthen the authorities' actions against this global threat and to increase protection of the victims of trafficking.

Promotion of democracy

The activities to be carried out under this component will **promote democratic values** in countries of the region, using mainly existing networks of the Council of Europe. The Venice Commission, the North-South Centre, the Pompidou Group (through its MedNet initiative in particular), the Schools of Political Studies, the Youth Department and the Parliamentary Assembly have been developing networks and co-operation since 2006.

Through such networks, the Council of Europe will continue promoting **exchanges at the regional level** to widen the impact and influence of the Programme. In particular, these networks aim to support constitutional reform and parliamentary democracy, establish schools of political studies and support youth policies in the countries of the region.

Visibility

The Programme's website provides updated information on activities and achievements of the South Programme, as well as available documents and publications. This site is a source for all the relevant partners, stakeholders and the public in general to find out more about the Programme's activities and accomplishments.

This programme has been funded with support from the European Commission. This material reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

South Programme website

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

Contacts

Council of Europe
Office of the Directorate General of Programmes
F- 67075 Strasbourg
France
south-programme@coe.int

Contact for Media

Directorate of Communication
Panos Kakaviatos
Tel. +33 (0)3 90 21 50 27
panos.kakaviatos@coe.int



Strengthening democratic reform in the Southern Mediterranean

Press dossier - Graphic design: stephanie-bentz.com

Funded by the European Union



Implemented by the Council of Europe

Funded by the European Union



Implemented by the Council of Europe



Strengthening democratic reform in the Southern Mediterranean

Synopsis

Programme	Strengthening democratic reform in the Southern Neighbourhood
Budget	€ 4.8 Million
Funding	European Union (EU)
Duration	2012- 2014 (36 months)
Beneficiary countries	Southern Mediterranean region
Implementing Organisation	Council of Europe (CoE)

In a time of ground-breaking changes for the countries of North Africa and the Middle East, the “Arab Spring” has made co-operation with the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Southern Mediterranean more important than ever. Developments in Tunisia and other countries have raised the profile of **human rights**, the **rule of law** and **democracy**, which lie at the heart of the Council of Europe’s mandate. These changes reinforce the need to review existing Council of Europe co-operation with its neighbours – and for the definition of strategic priorities about how this co-operation should develop in the future.

The European Union fully supports the request for political participation, dignity and freedom from the people in the Southern Mediterranean and is strongly committed to supporting the democratic changes in these countries.

In view of longstanding relationships with this region, a programme entitled “**Strengthening democratic reform in the Southern Neighbourhood**” (South Programme) was launched in January 2012.

Overview

The Programme aims to **enhance political and democratic reform** in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean, following a **demand driven and targeted approach**.

This **3-year Programme** – to last until the end of 2014 – focuses on **four specific objectives**:

- enhancing the independence and the efficiency of the judiciary
- promoting good governance, through increased prevention of corruption and money laundering
- strengthening and protecting human rights
- promoting democratic values

The Programme is **flexible** and **dynamic**, tailored for specific national situations and easily adaptable to new emerging priorities. It aims to develop **synergies** with other EU programmes and international organisations and civil society. It also seeks to strengthen the capacity of national stakeholders to initiate and implement similar projects.

The Programme will ensure that **ownership** of the reform process stays with national authorities, that actions carried out are **sustainable**, and that “**South/South**” **co-operation** is further developed.

The Programme involves the participation of the government at all levels, electoral commissions and other public bodies with specific responsibilities such as anti-corruption and anti-money laundering, parliaments and representatives at regional and local levels, ombudsmen, judiciary, media and civil society, including youth organisations. The ultimate beneficiaries of the Programme will be the populations of the partner countries.

A **Steering Committee**, composed of Council of Europe and European Union representatives as well as the national co-ordinators for each partner country, will assess and guide the Programme’s implementation.

Geographical Coverage

The activities will be carried out in **Morocco** and **Tunisia**. Some of the activities will also include, where appropriate, a regional dimension which will boost co-operation among the countries of the Southern Mediterranean and allow the region, as a whole, to benefit from the Programme.

Reform of the judiciary

The Council of Europe has **long-standing expertise** in the field of judicial reform. Through the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), the activities carried out will support the countries of the region in their reform efforts, in order to **enhance the independence and efficiency of the judiciary**. The activities will improve the institutional set-up of the judiciary, better implement legislation and facilitate public access to justice.

A preliminary **evaluation of the efficiency** of the judiciary will provide the basis for which to design a **working plan** to reform the judiciary. The Programme will also carry out capacity-building activities, including specialised training courses on European and international standards and provide legal expertise on the legal framework of the judiciary. Finally, it is expected to facilitate participation in CEPEJ’s activities and networks.



Fight against corruption and money laundering

The Programme **promotes good governance** by fighting corruption and money laundering, using **relevant Council of Europe standards, mechanisms and instruments**, such as GRECO and MONEYVAL. The legislative framework and relevant capacities of the judiciary and law-enforcement agencies will be improved and will serve as a basis for strengthened regional co-operation.

The Programme will carry out an **evaluation** of the institutional, legal and policy framework for fighting corruption and money laundering. Based on this evaluation, further activities will include action plans setting out clear priorities, recommendations and governance indicators that can measure corruption trends. The Programme will facilitate participation in anti-corruption networks and implement **tools and networks** to reinforce co-operation with the Financial Intelligence Units (FIU), thus increasing the exchange of financial information.