



UNIDEM CAMPUS FOR THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

Venice Commission
of Council of Europe



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

STRENGTHENING THE LEGAL CAPACITIES OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

A administrations and the civil service are of key importance in ensuring the stability of any given region. It is important therefore that citizens and users of public services have confidence in state institutions and in particular in public policies and public administration.

It is crucial firstly that administrations operate according to clear rules and transparent procedures based on the rule of law, and secondly that officials be properly trained and have the appropriate legal status and working conditions. Officials must be aware of their rights, but also of their duties and responsibilities to the public they serve.

UNIDEM CAMPUS PROGRAMME

The primary aim of the UniDem Campus (University for Democracy) programme is to contribute to ever more effective administration and to good governance based on respect for human rights, in institution building and ensuring effective application of the law.

The programme also brings together senior officials from countries in the same region for the purpose of pooling experience and forging closer ties between the relevant national authorities.

It likewise provides an opportunity to compare and contrast the experiences of countries on both sides of the Mediterranean, so that they can learn from one another in areas of mutual concern.

For the period 2015-2017, the Venice Commission, in co-operation with the Ministry of Public Service and Modernisation of the Administration of Morocco, has instituted a series of regional "legal capacity-building" seminars, starting in 2015. With the focus on good governance and human rights, the plan is to hold two week-long seminars a year for senior officials in countries in the MENA region: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian National Authority and Tunisia.

This programme is part of the Council of Europe's wider activities for 2015-2017 in the field of training in human rights, the rule of law and democracy – the PATHS¹ programme – for high-potential target groups working in public administration or the legal field, elected representatives or members of civil society in the southern Mediterranean countries. The PATHS programme draws on the UniDem Campus programme but also on HELP, the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals, and other relevant tools developed by the Council of Europe (CoE conventions, training courses in democratic citizenship, etc.) to provide a structured, comprehensive framework for training, based on demand and tailored to the needs of the partner countries.

1. "Programme on Advanced Training on Human rights for the Council of Europe's Southern neighbourhood".



SEMINARS

The UniDem Campus seminars are about providing legal capacity-building sessions for senior public officials in areas related to good governance, the rule of law and fundamental rights.

■ The team of trainers is made up of experts with practical experience in the relevant fields as well as academics from various countries on both sides of the Mediterranean.

■ The working languages are English or French, and Arabic, as required.

■ The seminars are free of charge for the selected officials, who receive a certificate to confirm they have attended. The seminars are run by the Council of Europe's Venice Commission under the PATHS programme which is financed through the South Programme 2015-2017 "Towards strengthened democratic governance in the Southern Mediterranean", funded by the European Union and implemented by the Council of Europe.

WORKING METHODS

Participating countries are invited to appoint "focal points" which will select the participants and decide on the programme for the seminars. Between 25 and 30 officials attend the seminars, after which they are encouraged to pass on what they have learnt to their colleagues.

■ The seminars are based on a participatory method that includes:

- ▶ Classes to introduce the topic;
- ▶ Presentations by the teacher, with specific examples designed to help officials from the various countries to identify common principles that can be applied in their own countries;
- ▶ Ample time is left for discussion and exchanging information on experience. Participants are invited to take an active part overall. At each seminar, two or three national delegations are asked to report on the specific situation in their respective countries, in relation to the theme of the seminar. The aim of this exercise is to generate discussion and pool experience.

2015-2017 PROGRAMME “TOWARDS STRENGTHENED DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN”

L launched in 2012, and stepped up for 2015-2017, the South Programme is a strategic European Union-Council of Europe initiative to support democratic reforms in the southern Mediterranean in response to demand from the partners in the region. From legislative expertise to strengthening institutions' capacities through peer-to-peer exchanges and networks, the South Programme aims inter alia to support the development of new constitutional and legislative frameworks and democratic governance bodies in countries in the region and to contribute to the establishment of a common legal area between Europe and the southern Mediterranean.

■ The support provided by the Council of Europe within its areas of expertise, through tailored training programmes such as the PATHS Programme, further provides an opportunity to develop and strengthen the capacities of the target groups – public administrations, legal professions, civil society – and to foster a culture of respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the southern Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian National Authority, Tunisia), which is one of the goals of the South Programme.

■ Through various networks, the South Programme also aims to encourage better regional co-operation between Europe and its partners in the southern Mediterranean, and among the partner countries, in areas related to human rights, the rule of law and democracy. The Programme is funded by the European Union and implemented by the Council of Europe.

THE VENICE COMMISSION

The Venice Commission is an advisory body of the Council of Europe in constitutional matters. Initially conceived as an instrument of emergency constitutional engineering against a background of transition towards democracy, the Commission has gradually evolved into an internationally recognised independent legal think-tank. Although the Commission is mainly known for its legal opinions and transnational studies, it also helps to disseminate a common legal heritage based on the fundamental legal principles of Europe and beyond, including through conferences. It successfully conducted a training programme for officials in the Balkans for over ten years, thus helping to improve the legal capacities of several thousand officials in a region in the throes of democratic transition.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Members – 60

Albania (1996), Algeria (2007), Andorra (2000), Armenia (2001), Austria (1990), Azerbaijan (2001), Belgium (1990), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2002), Brazil (2009), Bulgaria (1992), Chile (2005), Croatia (1997), Cyprus (1990), Czech Republic (1994), Denmark (1990), Estonia (1995), Finland (1990), France (1990), Georgia (1999), Germany (1990), Greece (1990), Hungary (1990), Iceland (1993), Ireland (1990), Israel (2008), Italy (1990), Kazakhstan (2011), Republic of Korea (2006), Kosovo (2014), Kyrgyzstan (2004), Latvia (1995), Liechtenstein (1991), Lithuania (1994), Luxembourg (1990), Malta (1990), Mexico (2010), Moldova (1996), Monaco (2004), Montenegro (2006), Morocco (2007), Netherlands (1992), Norway (1990), Peru (2009), Poland (1992), Portugal (1990), Romania (1994), Russian Federation (2002), San Marino (1990), Serbia (2003), Slovakia (1993), Slovenia (1994), Spain (1990), Sweden (1990), Switzerland (1990), “The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (1996), Tunisia (2010), Turkey (1990), Ukraine (1997), United Kingdom (1999), United States (2013)

Associate member: Belarus (1994)

Observers: Argentina (1995), Canada (1991), Holy See (1992), Japan (1993), Uruguay (1995)

Participants: European Union, Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE (OSCE/ODIHR)

Special co-operation status: Palestinian National Authority, South Africa

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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