



*Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale*



Presidenza Italiana
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

in co-operation with
**THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF ITALY**

FOURTH INTERCULTURAL WORKSHOP ON DEMOCRACY

**“TRANSPARENCY AND THE RULE OF LAW
AS PRE-CONDITIONS OF EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT”**

ROME, ITALY

**LA FARNESINA, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Sala delle Conferenze Internazionali**

Thursday 9 October 2014

SYNOPSIS

The Venice Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy jointly organised the Fourth Intercultural Workshop on Democracy: “Transparency and the Rule of Law as Pre-conditions of Equitable and Sustainable Development”, on 9 October 2014, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, Italy.

The conference was funded by a voluntary contribution from the Italian government, to encourage co-operation with Arab countries.

The cycle of intercultural workshops were initiated by the Commission only two years ago. The first three workshops, in 2012 and 2013, provided an opportunity for lawyers, politicians and academics from different Arab countries, alongside their European counterparts, to hold fruitful exchanges on various topics, ranging from constitutional reforms and their implementation, to the freedom of association and political parties.

The purpose of these events is to offer an opportunity for meetings, for an exchange of experiences and for dialogue, between various actors and experts from Europe and the Mediterranean basin, aimed at the consolidation and implementation of functioning democracies.

The fourth workshop brought together around to 80 participants, including the Secretary General and the Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, representatives from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian National Authority, Tunisia, as well as representatives from Mexico, alongside the members of the Venice Commission.

The workshop centered around two main themes: transparency, followed by reflections on the rule of law and its equitable and sustainable development.

Transparency was addressed, generally, in terms of democratic accountability and as a means of incorporating public scrutiny as an aspect of governmental regulation. Beyond these common points, the perception and the implementation of these concepts and democratic requirements, on different continents, were particularly enriching.

Several rapporteurs focused particularly on the general, as well as the more specific issues relating to corruption. It was especially interesting to compare the use of anti-corruption measures across different countries and to reflect on the economic aspects of corruption – as an instrument to distort competition, hamper economic development and endanger social justice.

The report of the Vice-President of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, on the rule of law and sustainable development, provided not only an economic, but also an essentially human perspective on the notion of the rule of law. The effectiveness of the protection of economic and social rights in Southern Mediterranean countries and the protection of civil and political rights on both sides of the Mediterranean concluded the exchange of views. The discussions also revealed the convergence of democratic principles and values, such as the importance of the cultural dimension when dealing with these issues.

The reports presented at the Intercultural Workshop will be available on the Venice Commission’s website (www.venice.coe.int), from 30 November 2014.