



Strasbourg, 16 December 2015

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Or. fr.

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW**  
**(VENICE COMMISSION)**

**UNIDEM-SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN PROGRAMME**  
**FIRST MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COORDINATORS**  
**PARIS, 12 NOVEMBER 2015**

**MEETING REPORT**

The national coordinators discussed the success of the UniDem Campus (University for Democracy) for the Southern Mediterranean Countries first seminar focusing on: "Human rights and public service", held in Rabat on 14-17 September 2015. They thanked Morocco and the Venice Commission, and stated that they wish to build the programme on that basis.

### **Item 1: Adoption of the agenda**

The draft agenda as it appears in document CDL-UD (2015)002 prog-e was adopted.

### **Item 2: Presentation of the PATHS PROGRAMME**

#### *a. PATHS Programme*

The PATHS (Programme on Advanced Training on Human Rights for Council of Europe's Southern Neighbourhood) for 2015-2017 was presented. The Venice Commission will be contributing to the topics of constitutional justice and the legislative process in the context of the first Module of training of the PATHS Programme ("Constitutional justice, transitional justice and legislative process", Venice, 30 November 2015 - 3 December 2015), which is being organised by another service of the Council of Europe. The UniDem national coordinators are in the process of designating participants for this training seminar.

In order to help the national coordinators designate participants, a presentation of the PATHS programme was made, and the differences between the PATHS Programme and the UniDem programme were highlighted. In particular, the PATHS programme has already fixed the topics for the modules of training. In the UniDem programme, the topics for the next year are chosen at the annual meeting of the national coordinators on the basis of which topics they find most useful for their country. The intended participants may differ between the two programmes.

#### *b. PATHS Module 1*

In order to help the national coordinators designate participants, a presentation was made of the draft programme of first Module of the PATHS programme, including the Venice Commission's contribution, that is to say, on the topics of constitutional justice and the legislative process. It was explained that this is rather atypical for UniDem, as the topics, as well as the participants for whom the Module is intended, have already been defined. However, the Venice Commission will still use the participative method during the seminar.

The deadline for designating participants was recalled, and the national coordinators were invited to designate participants as soon as they could for the PATHS Module 1 training seminar.

### **Item 3: Selecting the topics of the 2016-2017 UniDem seminars**

Three seminars, instead of the usual two, are planned for 2016, which is an important year for the UniDem South Mediterranean programme.

The national coordinators engaged in a long exchange of views on the basis of the list of topics attached to the draft agenda of the meeting and on the basis of written comments and proposals of topics by the national coordinators who could not come to the meeting.

The national coordinators indicated that they prefer specific topics that can be covered in depth to general topics.

A decision was taken on the following topics and venues for 2016:

- “La réforme du statut de la fonction publique” (“The reform of legal framework and rules governing the civil service”) (Tunisia, the week of 4-6 April 2016)
- “Gouvernement ouvert” (“Open Government”) (Morocco, mid-September 2016)
- “Relations administration et usagers” (“Relationship between the public administration and the users of public services”) (Morocco, end-November 2016)

The dates and venues still need to be confirmed.

As the Ministry of Public Service and Modernisation of the Administration of Morocco and the Venice Commission put the UniDem South Mediterranean programme into place together, Morocco remains the key partner of the Venice Commission for the UniDem seminars. Morocco does not, in principle, object to a situation where one seminar per year is held outside of Morocco. Countries can forward their candidatures for a seminar, and these candidatures will be considered, but the Venice Commission’s privileged partnership with Morocco will be maintained.

#### **Item 4: Methodology of the UniDem seminars**

After various formats that UniDem Southern Mediterranean seminars might take were presented, a choice was made to continue using the format that was used in Rabat in September 2015 and to continue using the participative method currently used by UniDem, namely a balance between the north and south of the Mediterranean.

With respect to working methods, the following points were discussed.

##### *(i) Mission of national coordinators*

In order to help the national coordinators to properly fulfil their mission of and carry out their tasks as national coordinators, the Secretariat will:

- send a “*lettre de mission des coordinateurs*”, setting out the mandate, mission and responsibilities of the national coordinators.

##### *(ii) Participants*

In order to help the national coordinators choose participants for the seminars, the Secretariat will:

- in its letters inviting the national coordinators to designate participants, be as precise as possible with respect to: (i) the civil servants for whom the seminar in question is intended; and (ii) the subjects covered by the seminar;
- send a detailed draft programme, when available; and
- set a deadline for designations.

There is a general consensus that UniDem seminars should be intended for high-level civil servants.

At the request of the national coordinators, the Secretariat will assess—in cases where a country cannot send two participants to a seminar— whether it is possible to allocate the spots of these two participants to another country. The host country is entitled to send more than two participants.

##### *(iii) Speakers*

The national coordinators appreciated the balance between interventions from both sides of the Mediterranean in the first UniDem seminar in Rabat. They will help the Secretariat find

speakers and moderators from their countries for future seminars, and provide names of speakers/experts that can be added to the database.

*(iv) Seminars*

The observance of a certain formality in the conduct of the seminars is expected and appreciated.

Certificates of attendance should, if possible, be awarded at the end of the seminar.

It is not possible to have a day free in the middle of a seminar. As per diems can be paid out only after trips, the Venice Commission tries to ensure that as little as possible needs to be paid by the participants themselves during their stays. It is important for the Venice Commission to know if reimbursements arrive late.

The reports of the seminars will be made available on the website.

The national coordinators asked if it is possible to publish recommendations and conclusions of the seminars. Since only bodies of the Council Europe (the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers) can adopt recommendations, the term "recommendation" should not be used. However, it is possible to prepare and disseminate conclusions of the seminars. Conclusions of the seminars will be published on the website after the seminars.

**Item 5: Follow-up to the UniDem Seminars**

*a. Ensuring follow-up to the UniDem Seminars*

It was explained that UniDem's task is to make as many people as possible benefit from the seminars. Participants, once they return to their administrations, are therefore invited to share with their colleagues what they remember from and the experiences shared during the seminar. Examples of follow-up activities include seminars, presentations followed by discussions, publications on websites, and round tables. The example was presented of a round table organised in Tunisia by the Tunisian civil servants who had participated in a UniDem Trieste seminar in 2011.

The Secretariat will make materials available, especially on the website, to help the participants to carry out follow-up activities.

*b. Presentation and use of the web page dedicated to the Campus UniDem Med seminars*

The new webpage, "Campus UniDem Med", is found on the left-hand side of Venice Commission's website under the heading of "Non-European Partners".

The Campus UniDem Med webpage explains (i) the aims, working methods, and the participative method of the seminars, as well as (ii) the role of the national coordinators, participants and the trainers.

The Campus UniDem Med webpage contains a list of seminars, planned seminars and national coordinators meetings. It is planned for each seminar and meeting to be linked to a dedicated webpage.

The documents from the first seminar will be published on the dedicated webpage. Further documents, in particular, the reports, and all documents distributed during the seminar, will be added.

The documents from national coordinators meetings will also be added.

As requested by the national coordinators, conclusions of the seminars will be published on the website after the seminars.

Finally the webpage contains useful links, including to all Venice Commission documents that have been translated into Arabic.

**Item 6: Other business**

The next coordinators meeting will be held in Strasbourg in early December 2016; the date is to be confirmed later.

