



Strasbourg, 3 February 2022

CDL-UD-PV(2022)001

Or. Fr.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

UNIDEM SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN PROJECT

7th MEETING OF NATIONAL COORDINATORS

Videoconference

27 January 2022

3pm-6pm (GMT +1 - French time)

MEETING REPORT

Funded
by the European Union
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by the Council of Europe

The UniDem Med project is implemented in the framework of the European Union/Council of Europe joint programme "Regional support to reinforce Human Rights, Rule of law and Democracy in the Southern Mediterranean" (South Programme IV)

The 7th coordination meeting of the UniDem Med project (University for Democracy for the Southern Mediterranean) took place by videoconference on 27 January 2022 in the presence of the national coordinators of the Southern Mediterranean or their representatives (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine* and Tunisia).

The objective of this annual meeting was to take stock of the two UniDem Med seminars held in hybrid or videoconference format and 2021¹ to decide on the themes and host countries of the UniDem Med seminars in 2022.

Welcoming words

Ms Caroline Martin, Head of Unit in the Division for Cooperation with Neighbouring Countries of the Venice Commission, opened the meeting and welcomed all participants, especially the new coordinators from Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon.

The representative of Jordan, Ms. Shorouq Al-Hashem, Director of the Centre for Governmental Leadership at the Institute of Public Administration, took the floor to introduce herself and to apologise for Ms. Siham Al-Khawaldeh, the new UniDem Med Coordinator for Jordan, who unfortunately was unable to attend at the last minute.

Ms Caroline Martin recalled the mission of the UniDem Med project, which is to accompany partner countries in the process of reforming their public administration for greater efficiency and good governance in compliance with international standards in terms of human rights, rule of law and democracy. The UniDem Med project is a platform for exchange between senior officials on good practices observed and applied in the South Mediterranean region and beyond.

This coordination meeting is an opportunity to take stock of the year's activities 2021, but also to exchange on the respective priorities of the partners in order to determine the themes of the seminars planned for 2022.

Ms Caroline Martin then informed the co-ordinators about the activities of the Venice Commission in 2021 and recalled that its primary mission is to provide legal advice to its member states and, in particular, to assist those who wish to bring their legal and institutional structures into line with international standards and experience in the field of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Venice Commission remains at the disposal of states wishing to submit such requests in 2022. She mentions the jubilee volume entitled "[Thirty Years quest for Democracy through Law](#)" published on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Venice Commission and the "[Venice Principles](#)" on the institution of Ombudsman. Finally, the Venice Commission has just elected its new President: Ms Claire Bazy-Malaurie, member of the Constitutional Council of France, replacing Mr Gianni Buquicchio who has just been appointed Special Representative of the Venice Commission.

She also mentions two cooperation projects implemented by the Venice Commission in the southern Mediterranean region: the project to support independent bodies in Tunisia (PAII-T) and the AP-JUST project, which aims to improve the functioning, performance and access to justice in Tunisia. Both projects are co-financed by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the latter.

¹ [Public administration facing the Covid-19 pandemic: modernisation and digital innovations](#), 13th UniDem Med, 5-6 October 2021, Palestine*.

[Good governance and quality of public administration](#)

14^e UniDem Med, 1-2 December 2021, Morocco.

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Finally, Ms Martin informed the participants that UniDem Med activities continue to be co-financed by the European Union and the Council of Europe in the framework of the South Programme IV entitled "Regional support for the consolidation of human rights, the rule of law and democracy in the Southern Mediterranean" which has been extended until the end of August 2022. A South Programme V is currently being negotiated and is expected to start in September 2022.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda CDL-UD(2022)001prog was adopted unanimously.

UniDem Med 2021: What results and impact of the seminars?

On behalf of the Venice Commission, Ms Caroline Martin thanks all the national coordinators for their involvement in the organisation of the UniDem Med seminars in 2021, and in particular Ms Nisreen Zghaiar (Palestine*) and Mr Samir Bouggar (Morocco) who co-organised the 13^e and 14^e UniDem Med seminars.

Since its launch in 2015 in the framework of a partnership between the Venice Commission and the Ministry of Administrative Reform and Civil Service of the Kingdom of Morocco, 14 UniDem Med seminars have been organised on topics as diverse as human rights and public service, women in the labour market or innovation in the civil service.

As a reminder, the first seminar of 2021 was held in a hybrid format in close cooperation with the General Staff Council of Palestine* and the second fully online with the Ministry of Digital Transition and Administration Reform of Morocco. They covered the following topics:

- 13^e Seminar on "[Public administration in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic: modernisation and digital innovations](#)", 5-6 October 2021
- 14^e Seminar on "[Good governance and quality of public administration](#)", 1-2 December 2021

The advantage of the online or hybrid formats used since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic is that they broaden the profile and origin of stakeholders, but also allow for a much higher level of participation by senior officials in the region.

The 13th seminar had an average online participation of 120 people, with an additional 80 people attending in Palestine*. The total number of senior officials from the region who participated in all or part of the seminar was 237. Of particular note were the very large delegations from Palestine*, Algeria and Tunisia.

During the 14th seminar, an average of 100 people were connected to the Zoom platform for a total of 128 registered participants, mostly from Morocco and Tunisia, but also from Lebanon, which had not participated in the UniDem Med seminars for several years.

The last two UniDem Med seminars thus allowed the capacity building and exchange of good practices between a record number of 365 senior officials from all over the Southern Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine* and Tunisia). For the record, the 2020 seminars had 227 participants and the 2019 seminars had only 58 participants. The results in terms of participation are excellent and should encourage us to perpetuate, as far as possible, the hybrid format of future seminars in order to reach as many senior officials as possible who are interested in the themes developed in the framework of the UniDem Med project.

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The figures for the participation of international experts in 2021 are roughly equivalent to those of 2019 (10 experts), and 2020 (11 experts) with a total of 9 experts from a wide range of backgrounds: a Portuguese, an Albanian, an Italian, a French, a Hungarian working in Belgium, a British resident in Spain, a German professor teaching in Finland, a German and a Belgian working for the OECD in Paris. The aim was to provide geographical as well as linguistic diversity in terms of expertise. The balance between men (5) and women (4) was also respected, with a wide variety of professional profiles: civil servants from centralised or decentralised national public administrations, university professors, members of NGOs, private consultants, or advisors to the OECD/SIGMA. It is also worth noting that the two general rapporteurs were women: Ms Safa Nassereldin and Ms Nadia Bernoussi.

For the first time, evaluation questionnaires were sent to participants to give their opinion on the content and organisation of the seminars. The results, which are available in full in Annex I, show that 92% of respondents found the 13th seminar useful or very useful and 90% for the 14th seminar. 88.5% of respondents for the 13th seminar said that the content was relevant to their daily work, and 80% for the 14th seminar. The most appreciated sessions for the 13th seminar were those on telework and on the digitalisation of public services, while for the 14th seminar, respondents favoured the sessions on flexible, ethical and inclusive human resources management and on the right of access to information. Regarding the type of speakers' profiles, respondents to the questionnaire on the 14th seminar reaffirmed their wish to hear and exchange with other senior officials but also with representatives of civil society and NGOs, in front of representatives of the private sector or the academic sector. The suggestions of the respondents were mainly based on the following themes: to increase the participation of directors general or policy makers in the seminars; to encourage interaction between participants; to provide practical recommendations and present more success stories; to resume the face-to-face format; to present experiences of technical administrations such as the tax administration; to address the issue of migration of senior officials and how to solve this problem; to address the issue of digitisation of public administration and modernisation of the evaluation system; and to address the issues of mobility and leadership of change

The lessons to be learned from these evaluations and the holding of the seminars in 2021 are as follows:

- Participants are very satisfied with the content of the seminars;
- The emphasis should be on sharing experiences and success stories;
- A great diversity in the profiles of the speakers is encouraged;
- In order to guarantee a better dissemination of good practices and to reinforce the exchanges between participants, the face-to-face and/or hybrid format is to be preferred;
- Recommendations on the topics discussed at each seminar should be more systematically identified and disseminated after each event.

Ms Caroline Martin invited the coordinators to take the floor in turn to give their views on the above lessons, the results and the impact of the UniDem Med seminars in 2021.

Ms Nisreen Zghaiar, Coordinator of Palestine*, thanked the Venice Commission and supported the proposal to include recommendations in the final reports prepared by the general rapporteurs.

The national coordinator for Tunisia, Mr. Sami Ben Romdhane, took the floor in his turn to support this proposal and confirmed the importance of identifying recommendations after each seminar as well as food-for-thought for future themes or the format of future seminars.

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Mr. Moncef Bedairia, coordinator of Algeria, is also very much in favour of putting forward recommendations in the final report of the seminars. These recommendations would be very useful at national level and for the preparation of future seminars. He added that the hybrid format was very much appreciated and allowed the participation of a very large number of Algerian senior officials in the 13th seminar, who were extremely positive about the content and organisation.

Mr. Samir Bouggar, coordinator for Morocco, started by thanking the Venice Commission for the work and the sustained efforts in implementing and sustaining the UniDem Med seminars. The seminar that took place on 1-2 December 2021 was very relevant and allowed to discuss and converge views on how to build and ensure a transparent, accountable and citizen-oriented public administration. He also supports the proposal to highlight recommendations in the final reports and recalls the proposal in 2018 to prepare a brochure on the recommendations of the 7th UniDem Med seminar of April 2018 on [Improving the relationship between the administration and the citizens: a democratic imperative](#).

Ms Caroline Martin noted the support of the coordinators for the proposal to identify recommendations more systematically after each seminar and to add them to the final reports or even to compile them in the form of a brochure.

UniDem Med 2022 seminars

Ms Martin thanked the national coordinators for sending in the proposals for the themes for the 2022 seminars in advance. In the following discussion, the coordinators presented their respective priorities².

Mr Moncef Bedairia presented the Algerian priorities reflected in the government's action plan: ethics in the public administration and the evaluation of civil servants' performance. A reflection on the reform of the general status of the civil service has recently been launched and a new instruction on the evaluation of civil servants is being prepared. The exchange of good practices and expertise on the two proposed themes would be highly relevant in this national reform process.

Ms Laura Dospinescu spoke on behalf of Ms Ghada Labib, the coordinator for Egypt, who apologised for not being able to attend the coordination meeting. She presented Egypt's priorities for 2022, which mainly revolve around the issues of inclusion in the public service (people with disabilities), capacity building of civil servants and digital transformation for the benefit of citizens.

Ms Shorouq Alhashem, in turn, presented Jordan's national priorities, which focus on capacity building for civil servants, directors, managers and service providers. Emphasis is placed on strengthening the leadership of women and youth to improve services to citizens. Jordan would also like to exchange on new training techniques for civil servants, in particular in the context of the digital transformation of the administration.

Ms. Nisrine Machmouchi, then took the floor for Lebanon to present the national priorities and in particular the challenges around the digital transformation of the administration and the issue of teleworking, but also the importance of investing in human capital and the means of retaining and attracting talent in the public administration. She also addresses the essential question of management and good governance in times of crisis, without forgetting the themes of future functions in the administration; choices in terms of privatisation of public services; access to information and codes of conduct in the public service.

² See details of the proposals received in Annex II.

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Mr Samir Bouggar briefly summarised the Moroccan priorities transmitted before the meeting, which are part of the process of digital transformation of the national public administration and more specifically the management of change and the success of digital projects, digital inclusion and user-oriented digital public services.

Palestine*, represented by its coordinator, Ms. Nisreen Zghaiar, identified the following priorities: crisis management, in particular health crisis management, and the implementation of telework and digital technology in the administration (training, competitions, calls for tender, etc.); networking and exchange of successful experiences in public policies; the well-being of civil servants and the attractiveness of the civil service; and finally, the inclusion of people with disabilities.

Mr Sami Ben Romdhane in turn presented the priority themes for Tunisia, details of which can be found in Annex II. He mentioned in particular the issue of controlling the wage bill in the public service and the importance of social dialogue in this type of process; the challenges of decentralisation and the role of local authorities in human resources management; the establishment of a hospital civil service; the digital transformation of the administration and organisational structures; and finally, the new methods of human resources management and the importance of investing in human capital.

Following the presentation of the national priorities, two main axes for the 2022 UniDem Med seminars in as well as the dates and co-organisers emerged:

- **Public Service Policy: Paradigms for Change**

15th UniDem Med seminar, in hybrid format or by videoconference, Palestine*, 17-19 May 2022

The seminar will mainly deal with human resources management issues: new methods of training, individual and collective performance assessment; new management tools; new management policies focusing on the issue of well-being, investment in human capital, attractiveness or inclusion of people with disabilities in the public service. Other aspects of public service policies will also be discussed, such as new methods of governance, approaches and tools for good management in times of crisis, the use of privatisation of public services, cost control in the public service and ways of establishing a good social dialogue. The importance of networking and the sharing of successful experiences will be illustrated by concrete examples in order to broaden the knowledge and strengthen the skills of the senior officials participating in the seminar.

- **The digital transformation of public administration**

16th UniDem Med seminar, in hybrid format or by videoconference, Morocco, 22-24 November 2022

The seminar will address issues related to the digital transformation of public administrations: change management and success factors of digital projects; digital inclusion; user-oriented digital services and in particular best practices in this field; future functions in the civil service and digital training of civil servants. Telework, how to implement it effectively and its regulatory framework will also be discussed. As in the previous seminar, the importance of networking and the sharing of successful experiences will be illustrated by concrete examples in order to broaden the knowledge and strengthen the skills of the senior civil servants participating in the seminar.

Finally, Ms Caroline Martin proposed to the coordinators to dedicate a session in the programme of each new seminar to the follow-up of themes discussed during previous

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seminars (gender equality, access to information, the fight against corruption, ethics and code of conduct, etc.). This short session would allow the coordinators who wish or their representative to present the progress and reforms that have been undertaken at national level on the themes discussed at previous seminars. The coordinators support this proposal and agree to work with the secretariat for its implementation during the next UniDem Med seminars.

Communication and extension of the UniDem Med network

Ms. Frédérique Privat de Fortunié, in charge of the UniDem Med project at the Venice Commission, presented the progress in terms of communication and extension of the UniDem Med network.

The visibility of the project is mainly achieved through the [website](#) of the Venice Commission and the [Facebook](#) page of the UniDem Med project, both of which have seen a very strong increase in traffic since last year: +188% of visits for the website and +32% of subscribers to the Facebook page. This increase is mainly due to the exponential number of participants in the seminars (+61% between 2020 and 2021), but also to a better communication on the events, the systematic invitation of the participants to subscribe to the Facebook page and the multiplication of interactions between the two communication supports. Ms Privat de Fortunié thanked the coordinators who had actively participated in this success and in improving the visibility of the project.

The main axis of communication development in 2022 will be to review the content and organisation of the pages dedicated to the UniDem Med project on the Venice Commission website. Ms Privat de Fortunié will ask the national coordinators during the year to update and develop new content. She also recalled several avenues to reinforce the visibility of the project and the results of the seminars, such as the appointment of a communication referent, the publication of the results in the newsletters or the websites of the internal and external partners of the project or the creation of a twitter or Instagram account.

Coordinators are invited to comment on these proposals or make other suggestions in writing after the meeting. The power point presentation will be sent to the coordinators after the meeting for information.

The Tunisia coordinator was pleased with the good results, the increase in traffic to the website and Facebook page and encouraged the other coordinators to disseminate the information widely to colleagues and participants in their administration.

The Algerian coordinator is committed to implementing this recommendation and encourages the Venice Commission to continue its work on communication aspects.

The coordinator for Palestine* thanked the Venice Commission and confirmed that she systematically invited Palestinian participants to visit the project's website and Facebook page. She added that the 13th seminar had been broadcast on the General Personal Council's webpage, and several communication actions had taken place on this occasion.

Conclusions of the meeting

Ms Caroline Martin thanked the coordinators again for their participation in the 7th annual meeting and their involvement in the implementation of the project. She summarised the points decided at the meeting:

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- The national coordinators decide to hold two UniDem Med seminars in 2022 on the following two axes
 - **Public Service Policies: Paradigms of Change**
15th UniDem Med seminar, in hybrid format or by videoconference, Palestine*,
17-19 May 2022
 - **The digital transformation of public administration**
16th UniDem Med seminar, in hybrid format or by videoconference, Morocco,
22-24 November 2022
- Recommendations will be identified systematically after each seminar and included in the final reports, or even compiled in the form of a brochure. This will be added to the terms of reference of future general rapporteurs.
- A short session on the progress of the reforms at national level on the themes discussed above will be added to the programme of the next UniDem Med seminars. The coordinators or their representatives will be invited to present their progress to all participants.
- The coordinators take note of the proposals concerning the communication of the project and will make proposals, if necessary, after the meeting directly to Ms. Frédérique Privat de Fortunié.

Ms Caroline Martin concluded the meeting by thanking the coordinators once again and reminded them that the Venice Commission is available for any request for legal advice in the preparation of draft legislation, which is the core of its activity.

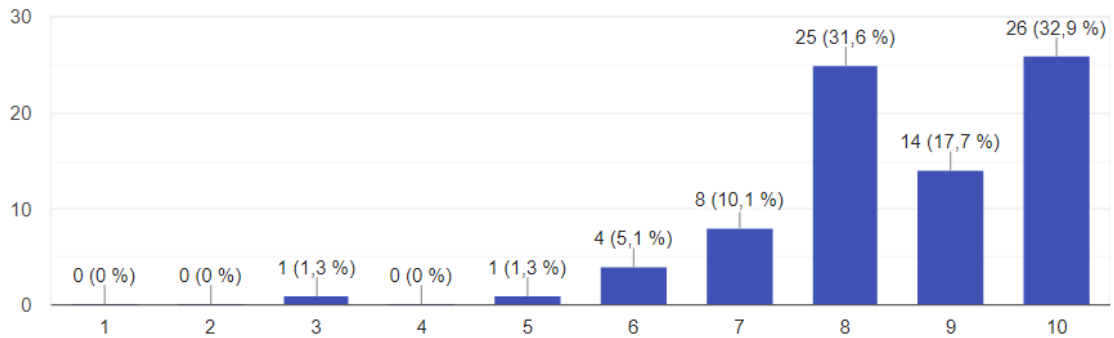
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ANNEXE I

Results of the evaluation questionnaire of the 13th UniDem Med seminar

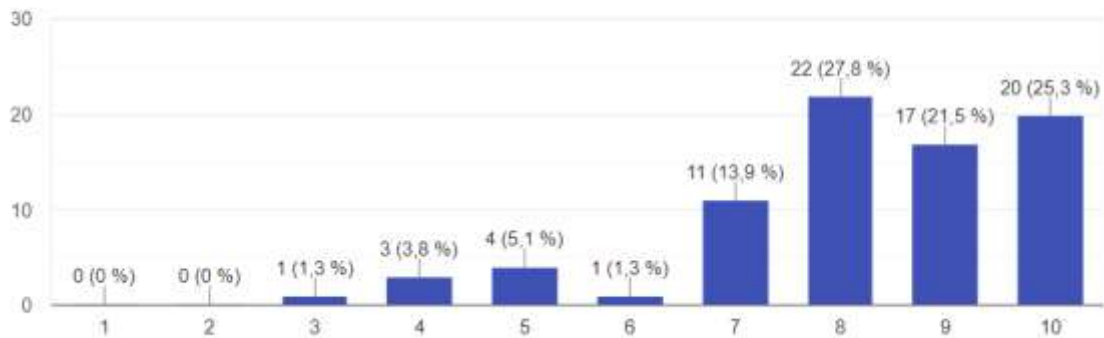
Dans quelle mesure le 13e séminaire UniDem Med vous a été utile ? / How useful was the 13th UniDem Med seminar to you?

79 réponses



Les contenus étaient-ils pertinents et utiles pour votre travail quotidien ? / Was the content relevant and useful for your daily work?

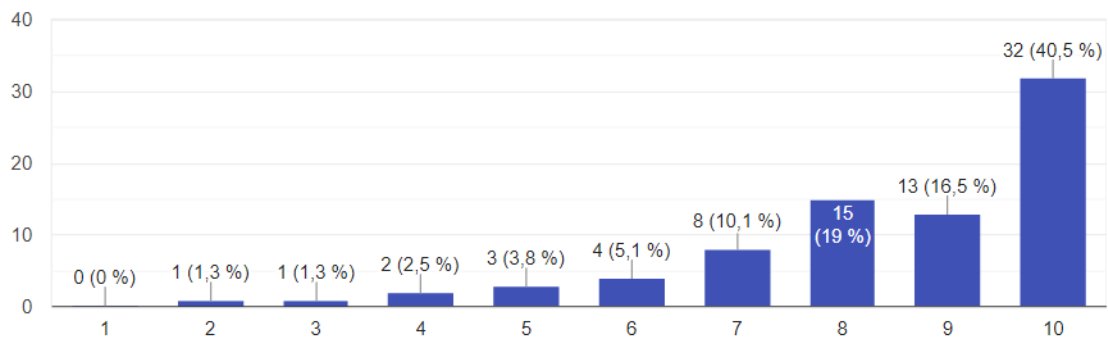
79 réponses



Avez-vous l'intention de partager le contenu du séminaire avec vos collègues ? / Do you intend to share the content of the seminar with your colleagues?



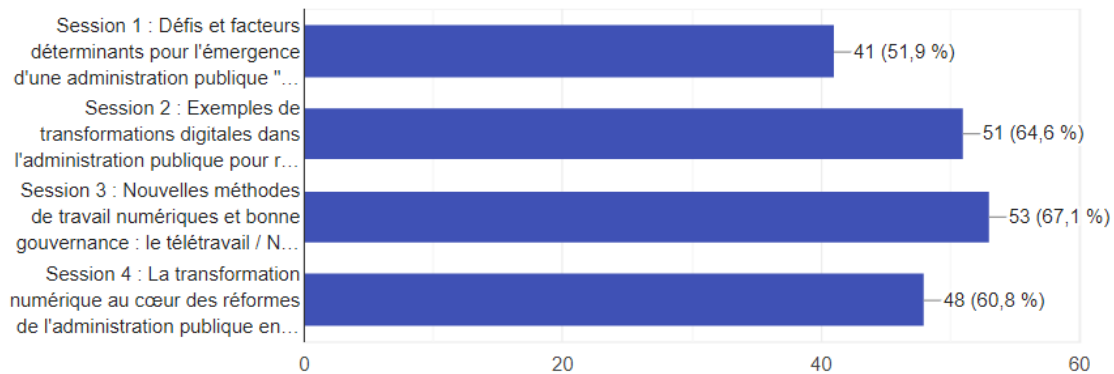
79 réponses



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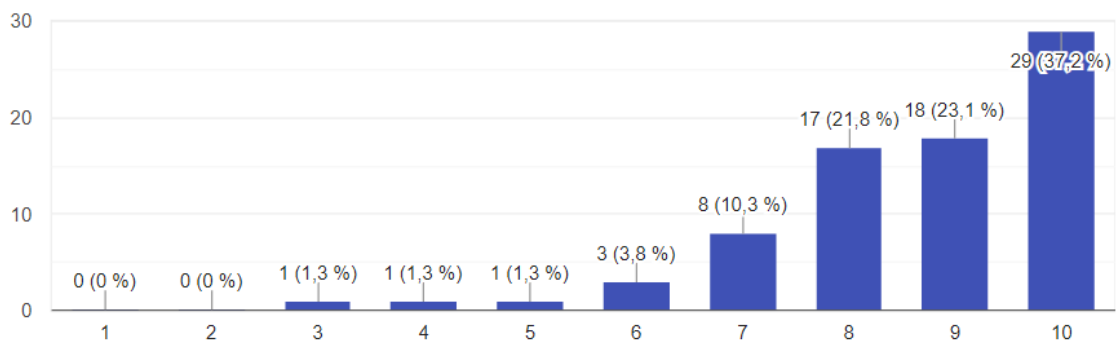
Quelle(s) session(s) vous ont/a le plus intéressé ? / Which session(s) were you most interested in?

79 réponses



Quelle importance attribuez-vous aux échanges régionaux entre pairs pour soutenir les efforts nationaux de réforme de la fonction publique? / How important do you consider regional peer exchanges to be in supporting national public service reform efforts?

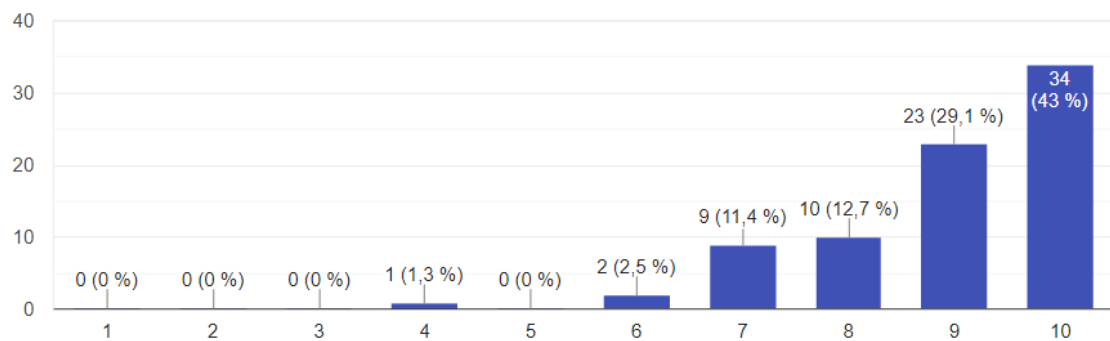
78 réponses



Comment estimez-vous l'importance des valeurs de l'Etat de droit dans le processus de modernisations de la fonction publique? / How do you assess the importance of the values of the rule of law in the process of public service modernisation?



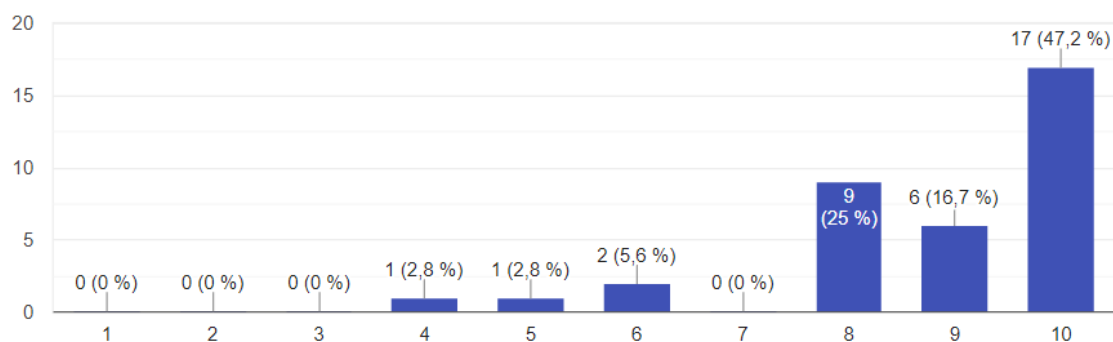
79 réponses



Results of the evaluation questionnaire of the 14th UniDem Med seminar

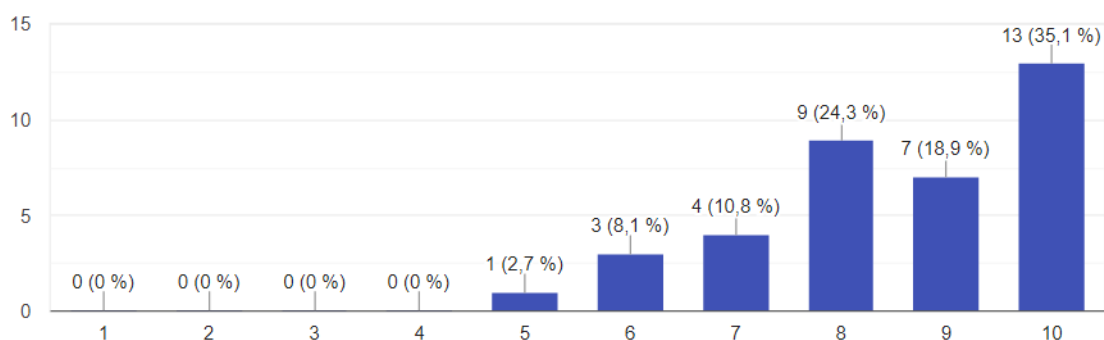
Dans quelle mesure le 14e séminaire UniDem Med vous a été utile ? / How useful was the 14th UniDem Med seminar to you?

36 réponses



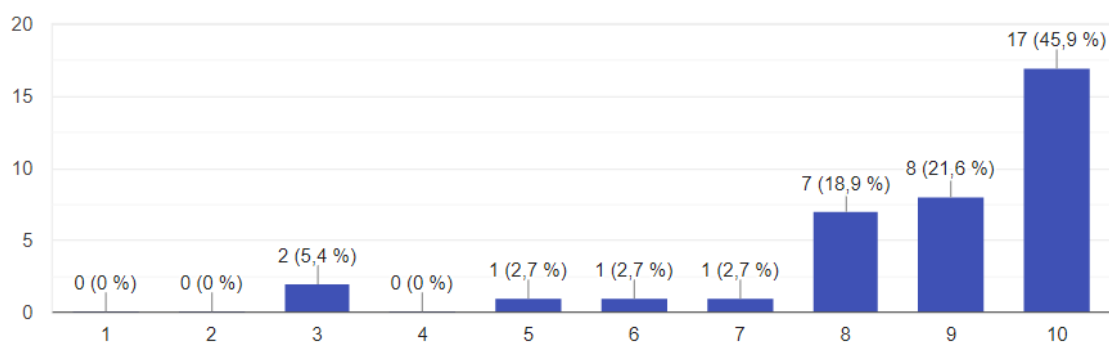
Le contenu était-il pertinent et utile pour votre travail quotidien ? / Was the content relevant and useful for your daily work?

37 réponses



Avez-vous l'intention de partager le contenu du séminaire avec vos collègues ? / Do you intend to share the content of the seminar with your colleagues?

37 réponses

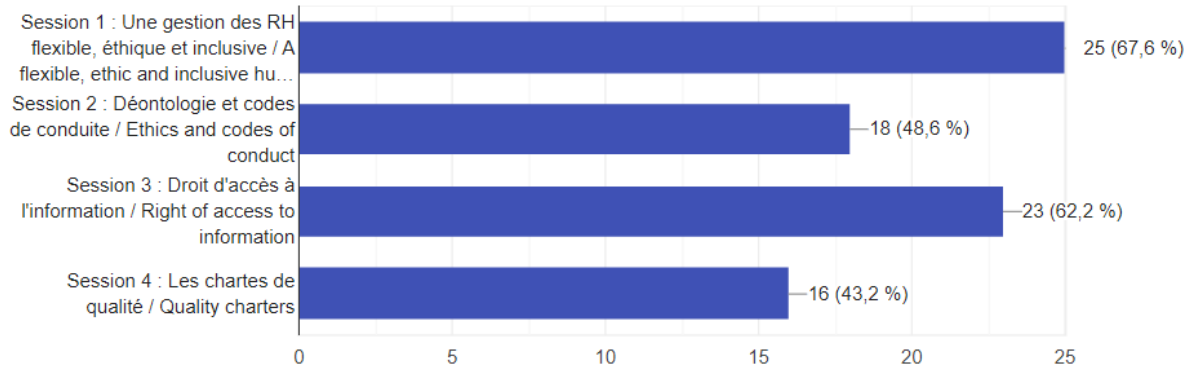


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Quelle(s) session(s) vous a/ont le plus intéressé ? / Which session(s) were you most interested in?



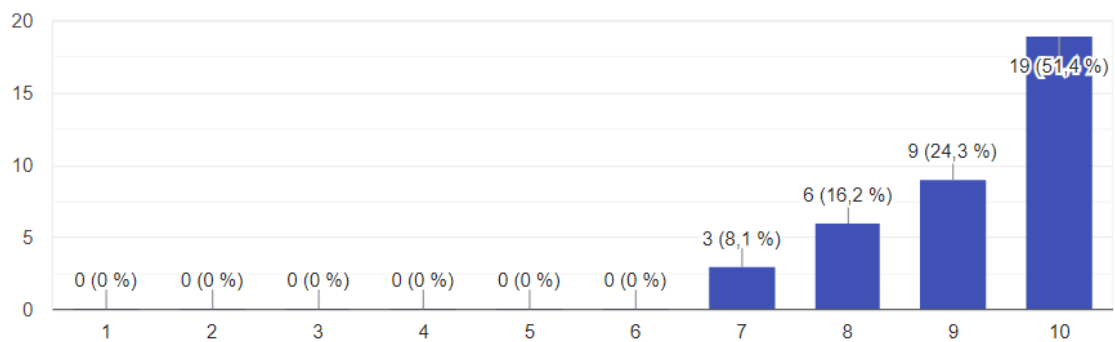
37 réponses



Quelle importance attribuez-vous aux échanges régionaux entre pairs pour soutenir les efforts nationaux de réforme de la fonction publique? / How important do you consider regional peer exchanges to be in supporting national public service reform efforts?



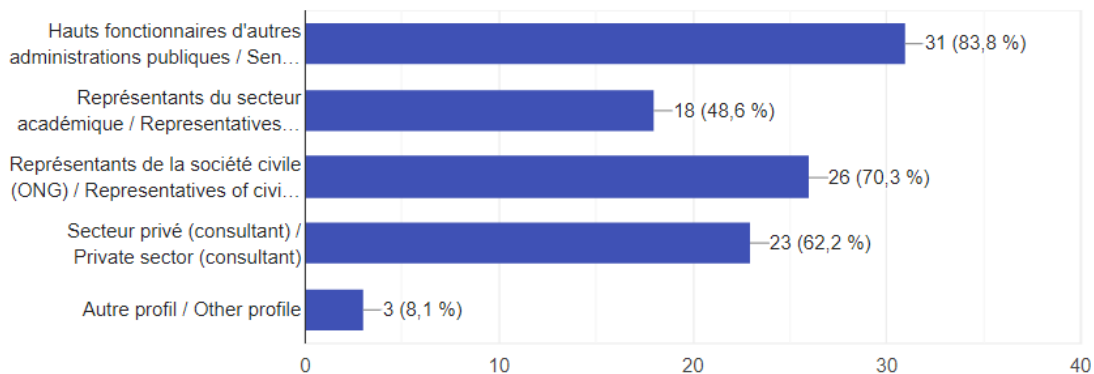
37 réponses



Quel profil d'intervenant souhaitez-vous entendre lors des prochains séminaires (plusieurs choix possibles) ? / Which speaker profile would you like to hear in future seminars (several choices possible)



37 réponses



ANNEXE II

National priorities and proposed themes for future seminars

Country / Pays	Themes (EN)	Thème (FR)
Algeria / Algérie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethics in public administration, deontology and codes of conduct for public officials - Evaluation of individual and collective performance of civil servants in the public administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - L'éthique dans l'administration publique, la déontologie et les codes de conduite des agents publics. - L'évaluation de la performance individuelle et collective des fonctionnaires de l'administration publique.
Jordan / Jordanie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of administrative reform in order to improve services provided to citizens - The importance of administrative training for public sector employees and focusing on the need for accurate replacement and succession plans - The importance of training directed to government leaders - International best practices for training government leaders - Keeping up with developments and rapid changes in training methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - L'importance de la réforme administrative afin d'améliorer les services fournis aux citoyens - L'importance de la formation administrative pour les employés du secteur public et l'accent mis sur la nécessité de plans de remplacement et de succession précis - L'importance de la formation destinée aux dirigeants du gouvernement - Les meilleures pratiques internationales en matière de formation des responsables gouvernementaux - Suivre l'évolution et les changements rapides des méthodes de formation
Morocco / Maroc	Digital transformation : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change management: success factors for digital projects - Digital inclusion - User-oriented digital service 	La transformation numérique : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - La conduite du changement : facteurs de réussite des projets digitaux, - L'inclusion Numérique, - Le service numérique orienté vers l'utilisateur.
Palestine*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New approaches and tools for tackling responsibilities during the spread of COVID 19 epidemic. - Networking, exchanging experiences and valuable initiatives for expanding knowledge and issuing new policies in public administration. - The importance of well-being for the career path of the civil servants and for the work environment. - Wide experiences of recruitment of people of disabilities in the civil service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nouvelles approches et outils pour faire face aux responsabilités lors de la propagation de l'épidémie de COVID 19. - La mise en réseau, l'échange d'expériences et d'initiatives précieuses pour élargir les connaissances et élaborer de nouvelles politiques dans l'administration publique. - L'importance du bien-être pour le parcours professionnel des fonctionnaires et pour l'environnement de travail. - De vastes expériences de recrutement de personnes handicapées dans la fonction publique.

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Tunisia / Tunisie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The cost of the civil service and the policy of controlling the wage bill - Social dialogue and remuneration in the civil service - The roles of local authorities and HRM: delegation/own competences/transfer of competences/decentralisation and deconcentration... - Is it time to set up the hospital civil service? - Transformation of the public administration: implementing the best organisational conditions, e-governance and administrative simplification - Developing the HR function: managing HR professionally and developing skills, strengthening investment in human capital... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Le cout de la Fonction Publique et politique de maitrise de la masse salariale ; - Dialogue social et rémunération dans la fonction publique ; - Les rôles des collectivités locales et GRH: délégation/compétences propres/ transfert des compétences/ décentralisation et déconcentration ... - Est-il le moment de mettre en place la fonction publique hospitalière ? - La transformation de l'Administration Publique : mettre en œuvre les meilleures conditions organisationnelles, la gouvernance électronique et la simplification administrative ; - Développer la fonction RH : gérer les RH de manière professionnelle et développer ses compétences, le renforcement de l'investissement dans le capital humain...
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