



Project funded by the
European Union

EUROMED JUSTICE II PROJECT



WORKING GROUP 1 ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL AID

3rd meeting on:

**“Access to justice for the most vulnerable groups: a priority that
needs to be improved”**

Brussels, 25-26 May 2009

AGENDA

Sunday 24th May 2009

20.30–22.00 Welcome dinner for the representatives of the MEDA countries

Monday 25th May 2009

08.45–09.00 Registration of participants

09.00–09.30 Welcome speeches

Alain BOURLET, Chairman of the Management Committee of the Belgian
Ministry of Justice (BE)

Anna ABARIOTOU, acting Head of Unit, EuropeAid Co-operation Office,
European Commission, Brussels (BE)

Andrés SALCEDO VELASCO, Judge, Team Leader, EuroMed Justice II Project,
Barcelona (ES)

09.30–9.45 Presentation of the general framework of this component, the main topics
suggested for discussion, the working programme and the methodology to
be followed during the meeting.

José María FERNÁNDEZ VILLALOBOS, Judge, Course Manager, EuroMed
Justice II Project, Barcelona (ES)

- 09.45–10.00 Self-presentation by the participants.
- 10.00-10.45 1st Presentation on “Access to justice of minors, women, mentally disabled people, victims, immigrants, low income groups, etc. International approach.”
- Timothy LEMAY*, Chief Governance, Human Security and Rule of law, Division for Operations, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
- 10.45-11.00 Coffee break
- 11.00- 11.45 2nd Presentation on “Legal and practical international instruments to improve access to justice for the most vulnerable groups.”
- Julien LHUILLIER*, Scientific expert of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), Council of Europe, Strasbourg (FR). Institute of criminology and criminal law (ICDP), Lausanne (CH).
- 11.45-13.00 Presentation of the current situation in this field in each country by the respective representatives of the MEDA countries.
- 13.00-14.00 Lunch
- 14.00–15.30 Debate on the presentations made by the MP representatives and the international experts. International comparative approach and discussion on the questions sent in advance to the participants.
- José María FERNÁNDEZ VILLALOBOS*
- 15.30-16.00 Coffee break
- 16.00- 17.30 Debate on the presentations made by the MP representatives and the international experts. International comparative approach and discussion on the questions sent in advance to the participants. (*continued*)
- José María FERNÁNDEZ VILLALOBOS*
- End of the 1st day

Tuesday 26th May 2009

09.00–10.30 Debate. Main shortages identified under this topic that need to be improved in the Euro-Mediterranean region covered by this project.

José María FERNÁNDEZ VILLALOBOS

Andrés SALCEDO VELASCO

10.30–10.45 Coffee break

10.45–12.00 Debate. Specific proposals to improve access to justice for the most vulnerable groups in the MEDA region.

José María FERNÁNDEZ VILLALOBOS

12.00–13.00 Debate. Discussion on the recommendations and training activities to be adopted.

José María FERNÁNDEZ VILLALOBOS

13.00–14.00 Lunch

14.00–15.30 Presentation to the participants of the conclusions, recommendations and contributions related to the activities. The policy paper to be developed: first approach.

José María FERNÁNDEZ VILLALOBOS

15.30–16.00 Coffee break

16.00–17.30 Adoption of the conclusions, recommendations and contributions related to the activities.

17.30–17.45 Closure

End of the meeting.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Presentation

This meeting takes place under the first main component of the project: Access to Justice and Legal Aid. During this 3rd meeting devoted to “Access to justice for the most vulnerable groups: a priority that needs to be improved”, we are going to share the international experts’ opinion and the participants’ approach on this topic from their own perspective and respective competences. Through an in-depth and detailed discussion, we will know the current situation related to the topics under discussion, among others: the internal regulation of this topic in the respective MEDA countries with special reference to the Constitutional Law, the current situation in this field in the MEDA countries, the most frequent shortcomings observed in the day-to-day work in this field, the civil society and NGOs perception of this topic, legislative tendencies, etc. In this way, we will know what are the priorities and needs to be addressed through training activities and study visits. We will also define how to better focus the seminars on this component and what are the major issues and elements to be taken into account in order to reach the objectives of this project. We will also discuss the expected results related to this topic as well as the dates and venues of the activities. In addition, some recommendations on this topic will be adopted and we will start a debate on the final document to be delivered by the working group: the text of the Conclusions.

The recommendations formulated during the 4 meetings of this Working Group will be presented during the regional Conference in 2009.

Working Method

The starting point is that all the participants should be aware that they are the main players of the Working Group in order to provide the information required and to cooperate in defining the strategy and objectives to be achieved through this project.

We expect the experts participating in this working group to have an in-depth knowledge of the topics under discussion and to be able to provide us with a detailed vision of the current situation in their respective countries. We also expect them to have previously prepared themselves for the discussion in order to achieve the most fruitful results. In this context and to ensure a good preparation, the Project Team will provide the participants, at least two weeks before the meeting, with a Summary Note and the topics to be addressed. Nevertheless, the participants should feel free to propose any other topics of their interest.

As the Working Group meeting will only last 2 days, the preliminary preparation of the experts is more than welcome to reach the objectives at such short notice.

Experts

The experts should have the appropriate profile, a comprehensive knowledge and vision, and a sound experience in this field and should be willing to make an effective contribution to the working group. This will require not only that their country of origin allows them to have enough time available to attend the four meetings planned per component, but more specifically, that between each meeting they have enough time to continue to work together and with the Project Team, virtually through the Project website and/or other means (email, etc.) so as to allow for the continuity of the work and an exchange of information, documentation and ideas with each other.

The quality of the experts proposed is the main guarantee that our joint effort during the Working Groups meetings will result in a good analysis and diagnosis of the situation in each component, and in an exchange of useful, reliable and accurate information. This in turn will lead to a number of proposals for action being made by each WG.

Expected Results of Working Group 1

1. To define the overall approach of the topics to be discussed by the international and MEDA experts.
2. To keep abreast of the current situation of access to justice and legal aid in each MP.
3. To discuss more specifically how the work of the Working Group could contribute to reach the main goals of the project: a) help speed up access procedures, the handling of cases and processing of incoming requests; b) promote exchanges of experiences between the Mediterranean countries and the EU on methods for informing people involved in legal proceedings of their rights; c) support the use of alternative conflict-resolution methods such as mediation, other alternative dispute settlement methods and the appointment of a justice of the peace; d) help advance legislative reforms designed to ensure full respect for human rights, particularly the right to a defence; e) help to develop systems that will offer the possibility of free advice to people on low incomes; f) facilitate the exchange of views and experiences in respect to questions linked with the discrimination of women.
4. To define how to better focus the future activities to be developed under this component (and the major issues and elements to be taken into account in order to reach the objectives of this project).
5. To draw up a provisional list of possible recommendations that could be developed in the Euro-Mediterranean region related to this component.
6. To start a debate on the drafting of the Policy Paper.

Practical and specific results expected from the 3rd meeting of this Working Group

1. To improve the knowledge of the international legal framework in order to promote and improve access to justice for the most vulnerable groups.
2. To identify the main obstacles to be removed from the perspective of the participants in order to guarantee an effective access to justice for the most vulnerable groups.
3. To share the different experiences related to the day to day work that contribute to facilitate access to justice for the most vulnerable groups.
4. To explore the possibility of developing practical and common proposals to promote access to justice for the most vulnerable groups from a Euro-Mediterranean perspective.
5. To raise awareness of the importance of training. In this respect to discuss about the training activities to be developed on the topics addressed by this Working Group meeting.

Documentation

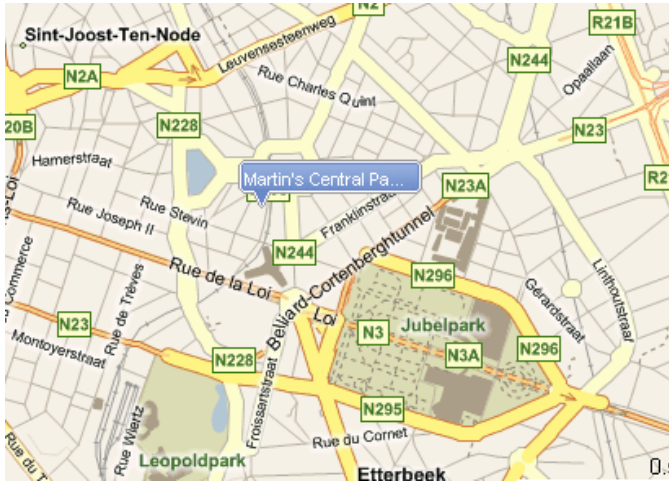
A list of the basic documentation will be discussed and provided by the Project Team at least two weeks before the Working Group meeting:

- Timetable of the Working Groups meetings.
- Relevant international documentation on the topic produced by the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations, etc.
- Other documents, possibly those provided by the participants of the MEDA countries.
- Reading documents

Working languages

English, French and Arabic. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided.

Venue and accommodation



**The Meeting will be held at
the:**

**Hôtel MARTIN'S
CENTRAL PARK
Boulevard Charlemagne, 80
BE-1000 Brussels
Phone: +32 2 230 85 55**

**where the MEDA participants
will also be staying during the
meeting**