



Project funded by the
European Union

EUROMED JUSTICE II PROJECT



WORKING GROUP I ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL AID

4th meeting on:

**“Access to justice through the efficiency of justice: special
reference to practical ways of combating delays in the justice
system”.**

Sofia (BG), 22-23 June 2009

AGENDA

Sunday 21 June 2009

19.30–21.00 Welcome dinner for the representatives of the MEDA countries

Monday 22 June 2009

08.45–09.00 Registration of participants

09.00–09.30 Welcome speech.

Stefan FIKOV, Deputy Minister of Justice of the Republic of Bulgaria

Presentation of the Working Group and of the EuroMed Justice II Project

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 of the
EuroMed Justice II Project, Barcelona (ES)

- 09.45–10:00 Self-presentation by the participants.**
- 10:00-10:45 1st Presentation on “Parameters and instruments to evaluate the efficiency of justice: special reference to the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice”.**
- 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).
- 10.45-11.00 Coffee break**
- 11.00- 11.45 2nd Presentation on “Practical skills to improve the efficiency of justice”**
- Antonio MONSERRAT*, Judge, Member of the Spanish General Council of the Judiciary, Madrid (ES)
- 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*
- 18.30-20.30 Guided tourist tour of the city of Sofia in English and French**
- 20.30 Folklore dinner offered by the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice**

Tuesday 23 June 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 though the efficiency of justice.

José María FERNÁNDEZ VILLALOBOS

12.00–13.00 Debate. Discussion on the recommendations and training activities to be adopted on this topic. Proposed topics for the training sessions of the 2nd phase of the Project.

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: a 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

José María FERNÁNDEZ VILLALOBOS

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 fourth and last working group meeting devoted to “Access to justice through the efficiency of justice: special reference to practical ways of combating delays in the justice system”, 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 delays in the judicial system, the excessive workload and case backlogs in courts, the relationship between administration of justice, executive power and judicial power, independence and impartiality of justice as cornerstone for the efficiency of justice, how to improve the management of the justice system, 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 scheduled in October 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 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.

Practical and specific results expected from the 4th meeting of this Working Group

1. To gain better knowledge of the international framework in order to promote and improve access to justice through the efficiency of justice.
2. To identify the main obstacles to be faced from the perspective of the participants in combating delays in judicial systems.
3. To discuss about the possibility of working out a code of good practices from a practical point of view with a view to improving the efficiency of justice.
4. To share the different experiences related to the daily work that contribute to fight excessive workload and reduce case backlogs in courts.
5. To examine the possibility of finding out a practical and common proposal to evaluate the efficiency of the judicial systems in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
6. To be aware of the importance of training. In this respect, to discuss about the training activities to be developed on the topics dealt with during this Working Group meeting.

Documentation

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

- 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 accomodation



The Meeting will be held
at the:

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1, Gurko Str.

1000 Sofia

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where the MEDA
participants will also be
staying during the meeting