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Technical Assistance Facility regional workshop

“Together for quality legal aid (LA) services for vulnerable populations”

Beirut (LB), 27 march 2019

PROGRAMME

Venue: The Smallville Hotel, Damascus Street, National Museum District, Beirut

Lead Firm / Chef de file





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PROGRAMME

TAF REGIONAL WORKSHOP on “Together for quality legal aid (LA) services for vulnerable populations”

BEIRUT (LEBANON), 27 MARCH 2019

VENUE: HOTEL SMALVILLE

Discussion of the draft Common Guidelines for the delivery of Legal Aid services
to Vulnerable Populations in the MENA Region

BACKGROUND

EuroMed Justice is a EU-funded project which aims to contribute to the development of a Euro-Mediterranean area of cooperation in the field of justice and to the development of effective, efficient and democratic justice systems which protect and promote human rights.

In this context, EuroMed Justice has worked on the access to justice, a fundamental right recognized at international¹, regional², and EU³ levels, with a special emphasis on legal aid (LA). Two seminars took place under this component in October 2017 and July 2018, with the participation of representatives of the ministries of Justice, bar associations, and Civil Society Organisations (CSO). These seminars aimed to develop the capacity-building for the relevant stakeholders in the implementation of legal aid and to align national legislation with international standards. In addition, a Regional Study updating the “Handbook, which identifies and describes possible approaches and best practices to improve access to justice and legal aid” developed during the Euro Med Justice III Project was undertaken and is currently being finalised. One of the conclusions of the seminars was that although the infrastructure and legislative basis may be in place at the national level in many countries of the MENA region, major gaps remain in the adequacy and the quality of the provided LA services.

¹ e.g. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, United Nations Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems.

² e.g. article 6(3)(c) of the European Convention on Human Rights; African Charter on Human and People’s Rights; Protocol to the Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa.

³ Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Against this background, the Lebanese CSO - Connecting Research to Development (CRD) – formulated a request for a Technical Assistance Facility (TAF)⁴ activity together with the Egyptian and Jordanian CSOs. Capitalizing on the activities on Legal Aid developed under EuroMed Justice, the overall objective of this TAF activity is to ensure the provision of quality of legal aid services to vulnerable populations in the MENA region. The approach adopted aims to develop a framework of principles in line with international and European standards and the rationale is to promote and protect the right to access to justice of the most marginalized, excluded or discriminated individuals in society.

To do so, ‘Regional Guiding Principles for Quality Legal Aid’ (Regional Guiding Principles) will be elaborated by EuroMed Justice experts. The Regional Guiding Principles will set out key values and common understanding of what quality Legal Aid for vulnerable populations encompasses as well as outline other minimum standards needed measures to ensure high quality service, assistance, and representation for the different groups. The targeted countries – Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt – will then translate and tailor the Regional Guiding Principles to their national context, thus resulting in the development of ‘National Codes of Conducts for the provision of Quality Legal Aid services’.

Following the good practice of the two EuroMed Justice seminars on LA, the regional workshop will gather representatives of relevant experts and stakeholders involved in legal aid in the targeted countries (Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, with the Libyan participation as observers): the Ministries of Justice, the Bar Associations, and Civil Societies Organisations.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of the Regional Workshop is to discuss and validate the draft Regional Guiding Principles. Prior to the workshop, the EuroMed Justice experts will prepare draft Regional Guiding Principles in collaboration with CRD, the lead CSO of this TAF activity. During the workshop, the representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Bar associations, and the CSO from Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon are invited to discuss the draft Regional Guiding Principles. The EuroMed Justice experts will then finalize the Regional Guiding Principles on the basis of the recommendations and conclusions resulting from the Regional Workshop.

The regional workshop will take place in English and Arabic, with simultaneous interpretation to Arabic and English.

EXPERTS

- Mrs. Rawan Husseini, Legal aid expert, Palestine
- Mr. Ahmed Bakry El Sayed, Judge, Ministry of Justice, Egypt

PARTICIPANTS

- Representatives of the Ministries of Justice from Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan;
- Representatives of the Bar Associations from Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan;

⁴ The TAF is an instrument created in the EuroMed Justice IV project with the aim of providing tailored capacity building in priority areas, based on the identification of needs and gaps by the Southern Partner Countries (SPC). It is a demand-driven instrument, which falls under the new flexibility and bottom-up approach of the EuroMed Justice IV project.

- Representatives of Civil Societies Organisations involved in legal aid from Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan;
- Representatives of Libya (as observers) (TBC);
- Representatives of the European Union Delegation to Lebanon and of the European Union Delegation to Jordan;
- EuroMed Justice Team.

Wednesday 27 March 2019

9.30 **Opening and Welcome**

- Mr. Rein Nieland, Head of Operations Section – Governance and Security, European Union Delegation to Lebanon
- Representative of the Ministry of Justice of Lebanon

09.45 **Presentation of the TAF activity “Together for quality LA services for vulnerable populations”**

- EuroMed Justice team leader
- Representatives of the Ministry of Justice of Lebanon, the Bar Associations of Beirut and Tripoli, and the CSO - Connecting Research to Development

10.15 **Presentation of the draft Regional Guiding Principles (methodology and preliminary results)**

- EuroMed Justice Experts: Mrs. Rawan Hussein and Mr. Ahmed Bakry El Sayed

11.15 Coffee Break

11.30 **Tour de table: Discussions on the draft Regional Guiding Principles (methodology and preliminary results)**

- Interventions of the representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Bar Associations, and CSO from Egypt

12.15 **Tour de table: Discussions on the draft Regional Guiding Principles (methodology and preliminary results)**

- Interventions of the representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Bar Associations, and CSO from Jordan

13.00 Lunch Break

14.15 **Tour de table: Discussions on the draft Regional Guiding Principles (methodology and preliminary results)**

- Interventions of the representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Bar Associations, and CSO from Lebanon

15.00 **Summary of the positions expressed**

- EuroMed Justice Experts: Mrs. Rawan Hussein and Mr. Ahmed Bakry El Sayed

15.45 Coffee Break

16.00 **Final discussions and conclusions of the regional workshop. Next steps.**

17.00 **End of the regional workshop**