



Project funded by  
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**EUROMED JUSTICE III PROJECT**

**Access to Justice and Legal Aid**

**WG 1.1.3**

**PREPARATION OF A HANDBOOK**

**Handbook which identifies and describes possible approaches and best practices to improve access to justice and legal aid**

**"Simplification of the procedures, oral proceedings, alternative dispute resolution methods"**

Sofia (BG), 6-8 November 2012

**AGENDA**

**Monday 5 November 2012**

Arrival of the participants at the hotel and contact with the Project Team

**Tuesday 6 November 2012**

09.00-09.15      **Registration of participants**

09.15-09.30      **Welcome speech**

*Elena CHERNEVA*, Head of Legal Aid Department, Ministry of Justice, Bulgaria.

*Andrés SALCEDO VELASCO*, Team Leader of the EuroMed Justice III Project

09.30-09.45      Presentation of the participants

09.45-10.00 **Summary of the work carried out during the previous meetings related to this component "Access to Justice and Legal Aid". Work programme, timing and methodology.**

*Andrés SALCEDO VELASCO*

*José María FERNÁNDEZ VILLALOBOS, Course Manager of the EuroMed Justice III Project*

Debate

10.00-10.30 **Scope and general contents of the debates during this Working Group meeting.**

*Georges ASSAF, Main short-term Expert*

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-13.00 **Current situation related to access to justice and legal aid in the ENPI South partner countries: special reference to simplification of the procedures, oral proceedings and alternative dispute resolution methods (I)**

*ENPI South partner countries (3 delegations)*

*Project Team*

Debate

13.00-14.30 Lunch

14.30-15.30 **Alternative Dispute Resolution Methods: present and future. How to improve ADR methods in order to facilitate access to justice for citizens.**

*Carmen PARRA, Lecturer Professor, Abat Oliba University CEU, Faculty of Law, Barcelona (ES)*

Debate

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

16.00-17.00 **Approaches and best practices on length of procedures, delays and timeframe for judicial proceedings - Continuation of the discussion started during the second meeting of this working group. Analysis, comments and agreement on the working document prepared by the Main short-term expert related to the second meeting.**

*Georges ASSAF*

*Project Team*

Debate

**End of the first day**

**Wednesday 7 November 2012**

08.30-09.30 **Current situation related to access to justice and legal aid in the ENPI South partner countries: special reference to simplification of the procedures, oral proceedings and alternative dispute resolution methods (II)**

*ENPI South partner countries (3 delegations)*

*Project Team*

Debate

09.30-11.00 **Approaches and best practices on length of procedures, delays and timeframe for judicial proceedings. Analysis, comments and agreement on the working document prepared by the Main short-term expert related to the first meeting.**

*Georges ASSAF*

*Project Team*

11.00-11.30 Coffee break

11.30-13.00 **Best practices on time management of judicial proceedings, with special reference to the importance of simplifying procedures**

*François PAYCHÈRE*, Judge at the Court of Justice of the Republic and Canton of Geneva.  
Council of Europe expert (chairman of the working group on quality of justice) (CH)

Debate

13.00-14.30 Lunch

14.30-16.30 **Approaches and best practices on simplification of the procedures, oral proceedings and alternative dispute resolution methods. Discussion (I)**

*Georges ASSAF*

*Project Team*

**End of the second day**

**Thursday 8 November 2012**

08.30-10.00 **Approaches and best practices on simplification of the procedures, oral proceedings and alternative dispute resolution methods. Discussion (II)**

*Georges ASSAF*

*Project Team*

10.00-10.30 Coffee break

10.30-12.00 **The Bulgarian experience of simplification of the procedures, oral proceedings and alternative dispute resolution methods: ADR strategies in Bulgaria.**

*Sevdalina ALEKSANDROVA*, International expert, Mediator and Vice-President of the Professional Association of Mediators in Bulgaria.

Debate

12.00-12.45 **Approaches and best practices on simplification of the procedures, oral proceedings and alternative dispute resolution methods. Discussion (III)**

*Georges ASSAF and Project Team*

12.45-13.00 **Project Website Support: an update**

*Dania SAMOUL*, Coordinator, Euromed Justice III Project.

13.00-14.15 Lunch

14.15-15.30 **Approaches and best practices on simplification of the procedures, oral proceedings and alternative dispute resolution methods. Discussion (IV)**

*Georges ASSAF*

*Project Team*

15.30-15.45 **Conclusions, recommendations and contributions related to the Handbook. Preparing the intermediate work and next meeting.**

*Project Team*

15.45-16.00 **Closure of the meeting**

*Nadya PARPULOVA-ASHWORTH*, Director of Directorate - Management of International Programmes and Projects, Ministry of Justice, Bulgaria, and National Focal Point for the Euromed Justice III Project in Bulgaria.

*Andrés SALCEDO VELASCO*

**End of the meeting**

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

This meeting takes place under the first component of the EuroMed Justice III project: Access to Justice and Legal Aid. The objective of this activity will be to prepare a handbook which identifies and describes possible approaches and best practices to improve access to justice and legal aid. This is the third of 5 meetings related to this issue.

Methodology for the preparation and delivery of the handbook: the Working Groups (WGs) will function as real think-tanks in the field covered and will be an opportunity to exchange information and debate on various topics. The results of the work of the WGs will be of paramount importance to obtain a real knowledge of the legal systems and have in-depth discussions on the topics concerned. In addition, the handbook will also be able to be used as a practical guide. The handbook will be prepared in time to be presented to the Intermediate Regional Conference in the course of the second year of the project.

During this third meeting we will continue the work started on the occasion of the first and second meetings and will have a new opportunity to share the international experts' opinion and the participants' approach on the main topics under discussion from their own perspective and respective competences. Through an in-depth and detailed discussion, we will have a profound exchange on the main topics addressed during this third meeting: simplification of the procedures, oral proceedings and alternative dispute resolution methods.

### Profiles of the Beneficiaries countries' experts

Three representatives from each ENPI South partner country: senior, high level officials from the Ministry of Justice or other relevant public authority, members of the judiciary and other legal professionals, academics and representatives of civil society with a solid experience of the topics covered by the WG (Timeframe for judicial proceedings, Cooperation between judges and Bars to cope with the length of the procedure, facilitation of the accessibility of justice for citizens, in particular with regards to mechanisms such as "one-stop-shop" offices, access to justice for underprivileged groups, legal aid, alternative dispute resolution methods, etc); prior participation in relevant EuroMed Justice I or EuroMed Justice II project activities will be an advantage; availability for and readiness to the intensive work schedule involved, both with respect to the WG activity and with researching, preparing for WG meetings and contributing to finding documentation and to the drafting of the handbook; ability to understand and express her-/himself and writing in English and/or French (at least the written communications/contributions should be in French or English); due attention will be paid to ensuring that persons taking part in activities related to exchanges of experience and good practices hold strategic positions in their national institutions and that, in this capacity, they will be likely to share with their colleagues and staff lessons learned from such activities.

The experts (3) should have the appropriate profile, a comprehensive knowledge and vision, 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 five

meetings planned for this activity but more specifically, that in between each meeting they have enough time to keep on working together and with the main short-term expert in charge of the handbook and the Project Team, virtually through the Project website and/or other means (email, etc.), so as to allow for continuity of the work and an exchange of information, documentation and ideas with each other. For this reason, it would be highly desirable that the same persons attend all the WGs meetings or at least that the head of delegation be the same for each meeting.

### **Documentation**

A list of suggested reading documents related to the topics that will be discussed on this occasion will be provided to the participants ahead of the meeting by the Project Team.

### **Working languages**

The meeting will take place in English, French and Arabic, with simultaneous interpretation.

### **Venue and accommodation**



The meeting will take place at the:

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