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EuroMed Justice III Project

**COMPONENT I: ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL AID
WORKING GROUP 1.2.2: JUSTICE AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES
Second Meeting**

PREPARATION OF A HANDBOOK

Handbook describing approaches and best practices with regards to the use of technologies for the case management, circulation of materials, data collection in the legal field and communication of case law to the public.

Paris (FR), 27-29 November 2012

Final Conclusions

The 2nd meeting of the Working Group 1.2 Justice and New Technologies: “Handbook describing approaches and best practices with regards to the use of technologies for the case management, circulation of materials, data collection in the legal field and communication of case law to the public”, under component “Access to Justice and Legal Aid” of the EuroMed Justice III Project of the European Commission, funded by the European Union, took place on 27, 28 and 29 November 2012 in Paris.

The participants were members of the delegations of the following Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia.

Moreover, the meeting was also attended by Mr Patrice Budry, Programme Manager, Human Rights, Civil Society and Governance Section, European Union Delegation to the Arab Republic of Egypt. A representative of SOFRECO attended parts of the meeting and one expert working for the CEPEJ of the Council of Europe intervened during the second day of the meeting.

The meeting was opened by Mr Andrés Salcedo Velasco, Team Leader of the EuroMed Justice III Project, and by Mr Patrice Budry, who welcomed the participants. The meeting was also closed by Andrés Salcedo Velasco and Patrice Budry.

The main topics suggested for discussion during this meeting were introduced by the Project Team experts and the main short-term expert, Mr Javier Monsó Briñardeli, in charge of this Working Group.

One presentation was made during the meeting: “Presentation on Access to Justice and the new technologies: the CEPEJ’s approach” by Christel SCHURRER, European Judicial Systems Expert for the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) of the Council of Europe. During this presentation, the expert gave a general introduction to the justice sector at the Council of Europe; she also presented the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE) and the main objectives pursued by the CEPEJ. Afterwards, she explained in more details the work

developed by the CEPEJ regarding access to justice and the use of new technologies. In this respect, she pointed out the CEPEJ evaluation reports analysing concrete aspects such as budgets allocated to new technologies, new technologies and users information or the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in courts (e-justice and e-courts).

This presentation was followed by an open debate.

Considering the objectives of this meeting and taking into account the recommendations made during the working sessions and the debate, the participants are of the opinion that this meeting gave them the opportunity:

- a) To validate the contents obtained during the first meeting and to make progress in identifying criteria that can be translated into best practices in the field of access to Justice and new technologies, and that were accepted by general consensus by the experts attending this second meeting. Furthermore, on that occasion advanced draft versions of the working papers developed as a result of the first meeting were presented.
- b) More concretely, participants had the opportunity to have an in-depth discussion on: ICT steering and strategic development, technological level, level of ICT use, level of training on ICT, legal framework for the use of ICT, citizens ICT literacy level, access level for citizens, access level for professionals, citizens information portals/websites, protocols, harmonisation of documents, electronic signature, common access centres, electronic file and justice administration registers.
- c) To discuss on the above-mentioned topics in order to identify the main necessities/problems in this field in the ENPI South partners attending the meeting.
- d) To be informed that the meetings and the work in between the meetings will be interconnected by means of a virtual platform (separate forum, document folder, etc.) specially developed for this working group, and accessible via the project website, thus allowing for a continued exchange of information and possible contributions.
- e) To promote mutual understanding and knowledge of the different judicial systems regarding the use of new technologies in the field of justice in the different countries taking part in the meeting.
- f) To further strengthen cooperation among the Euro-Mediterranean Partners in the field of justice.
- g) To reach some additional agreement on the contents, best practices, of the handbook that should be produced by this Working Group at the end of its three meetings.

Participants also expressed the intention:

- ❑ To further reinforce the dialogue and to continue to work together in between the three meetings devoted to this component in order to produce the handbook expected at the end of their work. To this end, they could use the virtual platform on the EuroMed Justice III project website.
- ❑ To inform the concerned authorities and institutions in their respective countries of the results of this WG meeting so that they can also take advantage of the experience gained during this meeting.

Finally and taking into account the main objective of this working group - the handbook - and considering that the work will be developed during 3 working group meetings, the last one being in March 2013, the participants agreed to continue and finalise the discussion on these topics during the next meeting without prejudice of the possibility for them of being in contact with the expert, project team and among themselves through the above-mentioned virtual platform on the project website.

The participants have also been informed that the third and last meeting of this Working Group is planned to take place on 12-14 March 2013.

Participants agree with the conclusions of this meeting.

Participants are grateful to the Directorate-General Development and Co-operation- EuropeAid, European Commission, to the French Ministry of Justice and to the Project Team for organising this meeting.

Paris, 29 November 2012