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EuroMed Justice III Project

**COMPONENT I: ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL AID
WORKING GROUP 1.2.1: JUSTICE AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES
First 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.

Athens (EL), 10-12 July 2012

Final Conclusions

The 1st 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 10, 11 and 12 July 2012 in Athens.

The participants were members of the delegations of the following Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. Moreover the meeting was attended by one expert from Greece and one representative of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union.

Furthermore, the meeting was also attended by one representative of the European Commission Representation in Athens, Ms Panayota Tsiliyanni, and by Ms Konstantina Vlachogiorgou from the Office of the Secretary General of Transparency and Human Rights of the Greek Ministry of Justice.

The meeting was opened by Mr Ioannis Ioannidis, Secretary General of Transparency and Human Rights and National Focal Point of the EuroMed Justice III project in Greece, and by Mr Andrés Salcedo Velasco, Team Leader of the EuroMed Justice III Project, who welcomed the participants. The meeting was closed by Andrés Salcedo Velasco.

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.

Two presentations were made during the meeting, the first one “E-justice and e-law: present and future” by Fernando Paulino Pereira, Chair of the Working Party on e-Law (on the two formations: e-Justice and e-Law) of the Council of the European Union. During this presentation the speaker focused on topics such as e-justice and e-law. On the e-justice, he introduced the European Action Plan, the e-Justice portal, the roadmap or the future of e-justice. Under the second topic, e-law, Mr Pereira introduced EUR-Lex (European Union Law), N-Lex (National Law) and ELI (European Legislation Identifier).

An open debate followed this presentation.

The second presentation on “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: e-justice in Greece” was delivered by the representative of the Greek administration, Mr Dimitris Askounis, Associate Professor at the “School of Electrical and Computer Engineering” of the “National Technical University” of Athens. During his presentation, the speaker presented, among others, the current general context, the organisation of justice in Greece, the current status concerning justice ICT, the strategic framework, the strategic targets for the e-justice projects, the mid-long term projects of e-justice with special reference to the strategic plan or a more practical approach through two cases studies. This presentation was also followed by an open debate.

The representatives of the Mediterranean countries took then the floor to make a presentation on the current situation in this field in their respective countries. These presentations were 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 discuss on the use of new technologies in the field of justice in order to identify the current situation in the different ENPI South partner countries. More concretely, participants had the opportunity to discuss 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, justice administration registers, procedural schemes (workflows), use of video and technology, exploitation/data processing and decision by the judicial authority (e-justice), justice ICT and mass media, standardisation of software systems, data bases, time management, judicial statistics, satisfaction level and quality control, performance assessment, computer hardware or interconnection with other networks
- b) To discuss on the above-mentioned topics in order to identify the main necessities/problems to be faced in this field in the ENPI South partners attending the meeting.
- c) To start the debate and the overall approach to the “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”.
- d) To listen to a presentation by the different delegations on the most relevant portals, websites and ICT tools available in their respective countries.
- e) 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.
- f) 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.

- g) To further strengthen cooperation among the Euro-Mediterranean Partners in the field of justice.
- h) To reach some initial 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 working 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 in view of taking 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 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 second meeting of this Working Group is planned to take place on 27, 28 and 29 November 2012.

Participants agree with the conclusions of this meeting.

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

Athens, 12 July 2012