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Political transition in Tunisia

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2103 (2017)

Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2103 \(2017\)](#) on “The political transition in Tunisia”.
2. It welcomes the progress made by Tunisia in the area of democracy, human rights and the rule of law since the 2011 revolution and the Council of Europe’s contribution to the democratic transition process in the country.
3. A delegation from its Rapporteur Group on External Relations (GR-EXT) visited Tunisia in June 2017 to exchange views with the relevant authorities and civil society representatives on the implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia (2015-2017) and to determine their expectations concerning future relations with the Council of Europe.
4. Following the visit, contacts continued at technical level with a view to preparing, in close co-operation with the Tunisian authorities, a new Neighbourhood Partnership for the post-2017 period. This document will draw on the achievements in terms of co-operation and political dialogue with Tunisia, in particular in the areas covered by the Assembly’s recommendation:
 - with regard to the promotion of women’s rights and combating discrimination against women; Tunisia has confirmed its willingness to harmonise its legislation with the standards of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). The Council of Europe provided the authorities with assistance with drafting the law against violence against women passed in July 2017;
 - with regard to the defence of children’s rights; the partnership implemented with Tunisia has paved the way for Tunisia’s future accession to the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), on the basis of the decision by the Committee of Ministers adopted in May 2017 to grant Tunisia’s request to be invited to accede to the convention;
 - with regard to freedom of expression and media freedom; a partnership has been established with the High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HAICA) and Tunisia takes part actively as an observer in the work of the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI); the co-operation aimed at Tunisia’s participation in the European Audiovisual Observatory is also set to continue;
 - with regard to decentralisation; co-operation should be stepped up following the Tunisian municipal elections scheduled for early 2018. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe has already been invited to provide expert input on the drafting of the Local Government Code due to be examined shortly by the Assembly of the Representatives of the People (ARP).
5. The post-2017 Neighbourhood Partnership will also involve continuation of the assistance provided to the independent constitutional bodies and the national bodies established by law with a view to strengthening protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

1. Adopted at the 1297th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (17 October 2017).



6. The Committee of Ministers shares the Assembly's assessment of the importance of the relations between Tunisia and Europe and the need to continue helping Tunisia to tackle the many challenges, primarily in economic and security terms, facing the country. In the light of these considerations, it will shortly consider the draft Neighbourhood Partnership for the post-2017 period with a view to its adoption. The intensive efforts being made to identify funding through voluntary contributions will be continued with a view to ensuring that the new partnership is implemented in full.