

CoR ARLEM
Nicosia Initiative to the support of Libyan Local Authorities

“Local Finance and Transparency, Study visit Libyan delegation to Flanders”

Date: 07-11 February 2017

Location: Brussels - Belgium

Objectives: Facilitating the exchange of good practices in local finance and transparency, as well as learning more about the experiences of Flanders Government and its municipalities in this sector;
Meeting with key decentralised actors, International organisations and EU institutions to explore ways to improve joint impact oriented cooperation.

Participants and Program: (see it enclosed)

In representation of Libya:

Ibrahim Taher AREBI	Tripoli	Local Council Member
Mohammed Yousef ABUGANAH	Tripoli	Local Council Member
Ali Hasan HASHIM	Sebha	Financial Manager
Aiman T ALSUNI	Gharyan	Member of the Integrity Commission
Mustafa ALBARONI	Zintan	Mayor
Ali EMSSIK	Zintan	Head of Finance Department
Milad Omer MOHAMMED	Zintan	Financial Office Manager
Fathi Mohamed SULEMAN	Sirte	Advisor and External Relations

The two representatives of Toubruk Municipality and one representative of Ghariyan Municipality were denied visas by the Belgian authorities.

The Mayor of Sabha, who should have attended as well, couldn't travel to Tunis to complete visa application due to extended blackouts and security problems in his municipality. He has sent a message briefly describing the awkward situation the South of the country is nowadays undergoing and the impossibility to travel under such circumstances.

The Mayor of Sirte was at the last minute retained in Libya to attend meetings convened by the Government on municipal budget distribution. He couldn't therefore participate in the mission.

Accompanying the delegation from Tunis, Ms Ameni Gassoumi and Ms Rania Chaabouni from Crown Agents, the International organisation implementing the EU Public Administration Facility for Libya in which framework the EU supports the Nicosia Initiative with logistic assistance and funding.

Main Outputs:

1. The Government of Flanders has given full availability to sustain the capacity building of Libyan local authorities in the field of local finance and transparency as well as in supporting Libyan municipalities' associative process. Furthermore cooperation could be also considered in the field of vocational training in cooperation with the European Training Foundation. Training courses, if implemented, would be held in Belgium until security conditions in Libyan won't allow otherwise. The Government of Flanders remains ready to receive concrete proposals coming from the Libyan partners, dispatch them to potential concerned institutions in Flanders and operate to find the most practical solutions;
2. Transparency International participating in the workshop as International expertise invited by Flanders Government has also declared full support in cooperating with Flanders to enhance Libyan local capacities in establishing local integrity systems;

3. The association of Flanders Municipalities have shared with the audience their organisation setting and their working experience, enhancing the importance of working together to better lobby for municipalities and local communities' interests;
4. The Mayor of Mechelen, just been awarded the prize of 2016 Best Mayor of the World for his local policy to improve foreign communities' integration, has also shared his experience as Mayor and the functioning mechanisms of his municipality, including annual budgeting system. Integrity and leading by example have been his main messages to the delegation in order to foster coexistence. He will be involved actively in the upcoming training program to form 200 young Libyan community leaders as ambassador of positive peace. Furthermore, he is open to all partnership proposals coming from the Libyan side, which he can help them with.
5. A side meeting between Commissioner for the Neighbouring Policy, Hahn and the Mayor of Zintan has taken place at the presence of representatives of the CoR. Both have agreed on the importance of the Nicosia Initiative and on the necessity to make these decentralised cooperation exchanges visible also on the ground trying to follow a holistic approach to maximise the impact of any action. Background documents will be provided to the Commissioner Cabinet to understand how better proceeding forward also through the implementation of strategic quick impact projects. It was stressed the need to focus the Initiative, avoiding overlapping and make the most of it with all levels of governance possibly involved in given projects.
6. Side meetings have taken place as well between the Libyan delegation and the GIZ representative to the EU, the Mayor of Oisterwijk (the Netherlands), a representative of the Municipality of Siglo (Ireland) and the representative of the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). Direct support to Libyan municipalities, local security and youth mind-set change have been the main subjects dealt with. The GIZ representative has been asked to provide assistance on developing the use of renewable energies. The idea of equipping schools with solar plants on the roofs would have a tremendous impact on avoiding disruption in electricity provision and on the promotion of environmental awareness among the local communities. The Mayor of Oisterwijk has made available its local police experience to train trainers of Libyan delocalised municipal police where present (i.e. Municipality of Tripoli). The IEP, in coordination with UNICEF, is already preparing the organisation of 200 young Libyan training as ambassadors for Positive Peace. Libyan involved municipalities have already started the selection of the best candidates throughout Libya. Siglo municipality will involve in this context to share with the targeted young Libyans, their experience of conflict resolution and new mind-set building after their 30 years of war.
7. The meeting of the Libyan delegation with EU representatives at the European External Action Service has allowed for information sharing about the difficult situation on the ground in Libya. To the questions relating to the migration crisis, the clear position of the Libyan representatives speaking was the need to stabilise the country and provide the Libyan citizens with those basic services that constantly lack in their everyday lives since too long. The necessity of being present concretely to increase territorial security, to provide the necessary infrastructure and training to secure borders and main entry points on the way towards the Mediterranean, to foster local development through the improvement of local governance efficiency, basic services provision and strategic job opportunities creation, are strictly linked to the ability of local authorities and communities to jointly implement plans to contain and manage the migration flow.
8. A side meeting has also taken place at the CoR between the Italian region of Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Municipalities of Tripoli and Sirte. Based on the interest of Libyan costal municipalities and Tripoli in particular to develop the fishery sector also in cooperation with the Libyan Authority for Fishing Stocks, the Friuli Venezia Giulia will make available its long rich experience in the sector, from training to technology transfer, from fishery cooperatives creation to joint business development. The European Training Foundation could be also fully involved in the project.

Possible Cooperation Outcomes coordinated by the Government of Flanders:

Government of Flanders

1. Supporting Libyan local finance departments at municipal level in setting up a Local Integrity System, in cooperation with the International Organisation, Transparency International;
2. Supporting Libyan municipalities association through specific training implemented in cooperation with the Union of Flanders Municipality;
3. Based on local strategic priorities and local job market needs, developing specific vocational training courses in cooperation with the European Training Foundation.

Municipality of Mechelen

1. Sharing experience in the framework of the Positive Peace training implemented by UNICEF and the Institute for Economic and Peace in the framework of the Nicosia Initiative, targeting 200 young Libyan community leaders;
2. Availability to support Libyan municipalities in all aspects related to municipal affairs and organisation as well as local community involvement and participation.

Projects proposals are expected from the Libyan side to examine the possible actions to be implemented.

Side Meetings - Possible Cooperation Outcomes:

1. *GIZ Representative to the EU:* To examine the proposal to equip schools with solar plants on the roofs to improve provision of electricity, contribute to fight pollution and increase environmental awareness among local communities;
2. *Municipality of Oisterwijk (The Netherlands):* Training of trainers of delocalised police at municipal level. Draft program with main subjects to be provided by the Mayor of Oisterwijk and customised by the Libyan partners before defining number of trainees and timeframe;
3. *Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy):* Fishery sector development in Libyan costal municipalities. Tripoli and Sirte municipalities should send from their side main strategic indications. Tripoli is already part of a technical committee that includes the Libyan Authority for Fishery Stocks, which is currently defining main axes of development. Information will be shared with Region FVG and on this basis a visit will be organised in Italy to jointly identify the key items to work on.
4. *Siglo Municipality (Ireland):* Available to involve in all projects related to conflict resolution and mind set shifting as the one on Positive Peace training implemented by UNICEF and the Institute for Economic and Peace in the framework of the Nicosia Initiative. To be checked availability also of other Irish and Northern Irish counties.

Local Finance and Transparency

Study visit Libyan delegation to Flanders

Wednesday 8 February 2017 - Friday 10 February 2017

Programme

Programme sponsored and organised by the European Committee of the Regions and the Government of Flanders



**European Committee
of the Regions**



Flanders
State of the Art

Introduction

Flanders Government receives Libyan local government representatives within the framework of the Nicosia initiative led by the Committee of the Regions.

The Government of Flanders wishes to contribute to the European external policy aiming at creating stability and (re)building democratic institutions at the external borders of Europe. To do so, delegations have been received from countries such as Ukraine and Syria and contributions have been granted to initiatives ranging from monitoring human rights violations, promoting freedom of press and capacity building within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.

Last year, the Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs was contacted by the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the EU's assembly for local and regional politicians, with a proposal to host representatives of Libyan local authorities. It was decided to invest in a "visitors program" running from 8 to February 10. At the request of the Libyan side, the emphasis is placed on substantive strategic planning, governance, financial management, anti-corruption and transparency. The CoR is responsible for the selection of the 13 participants, the visa process and the journey Tripoli-Brussels-Tripoli.

In 2015, the CoR established contact with Libyan local authorities to identify ways in which it could use its institutional role in the EU and the experience of its members to help them. This outreach has led to a programme aimed at improving public services to Libyan citizens and, simultaneously, connecting Libyan elected local governments with the international community. This initiative assists Libyans as they cope with the political chaos and insecurity that has plagued their country since 2011 and which has transformed Libya into a major transit route for illegal migration. At the same time, it aims to increase public trust in elected officials at the local and regional level. The matchmaking and the resulting expertise exchanges with European colleagues are meant to improve the lives of ordinary Libyan citizens through support in areas identified by local authorities themselves. Through this EU-funded programme, local governments in Libya are helped to (re)build their services in areas ranging from waste management to healthcare. This bottom-up contact between the EU and Libya's elected representatives, officials and experts should also contribute to a modest stabilization of the situation, which will have a positive long-term impact on the overall security situation and the normalization of political processes.

The CoR and Flanders thank you for your participation to this study visit and wish you a very interesting and inspiring stay.

Programme

Arr.	Dep.	Content
Tuesday 7/2/17		
	12:00	Transfer from Brussels airport to hotel "Le Plaza"
	13:00	Check-in hotel "Le Plaza", free afternoon & evening
Wednesday 8/2/17		
10:30	11:00	Transport to the Residence of the Government of Flanders (Errerahuis)
11:00	11:20	Welcome by Luc Van Den Brande (COR) and Koen Verlaeckt, Secretary-General Flanders Dept. Foreign Affairs
11:20	11:50	Informal discussion with all participants and journalists
12:00	13:30	Lunch
13:30	14:00	Transport to the Agency for Local Governance of the Government of Flanders
14:00	17:00	Meeting with Rudi Hellebosch and Bart van Doren from the service 'Local Finances' of the the Agency for Local Governance (policy planning, monitoring and evaluation)
17:00	17:10	Walk to hotel "Le Plaza"
17:10	18:25	Free timeslot
18:30	20:30	Dinner at restaurant "L'Estérel" (hotel)
Thursday 9/2/17		
9:45	9:55	Walk to Boudewijngebouw
10:00	12:00	Meeting with Hanneke De Visser and Kinda Hattar of Transparency International (fiscal accountability and anti-corruption)
12:00	13:30	Lunch Boudewijngebouw
13:30	14:00	Transport to European External Action Service (EEAS)
14:00	17:00	Meeting with EEAS
16:00	16:10	Walk to the Committee of the Regions (COR)
16:15	17:15	Meeting with the COR
17:00	17:30	Transport to hotel "Le Plaza"
17:30	18:45	Free timeslot

18:50	19:00	Walk to restaurant "Le Vismet"
19:00	20:30	Dinner at restaurant "Le Vismet"
20:30	20:40	Walk to hotel "Le Plaza"
Friday 10/2/17		
9:30	9:40	Walk to Boudewijngebouw
9:45	11:30	Meeting with director Jan Leroy of the VVSG (introduction on role and mission of the VVSG and training packages for policy planning and monitoring)
11:30	12:30	Transport to Mechelen
12:30	12:45	Welcome at the town hall of Mechelen
12:45	13:45	Walk to restaurant "De Keizer" + lunch
14:00	16:00	Meeting with the financial administration of the city of Mechelen (best practices on local financial management and policy planning)
16:00	17:30	Guided tour in Mechelen
17:30	18:00	Networking opportunity and farewell speech by mayor Bart Somers at the town hall of Mechelen
18:00	19:00	Transport to hotel "Le Plaza"
19:00	19:50	Free timeslot
19:50	20:00	Walk to restaurant "La kasbah"
20:00	21:00	Dinner at restaurant "La Kasbah"
21:00	21:10	Walk to hotel "Le Plaza"
Saturday 11/2/17		
08:00	08:25	Check-out hotel "Le Plaza"
08:30	09:30	Transfer to Brussels Airport

Background information on the different organisations

1. Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs

Address

Boudewijnlaan 30 bus 80
1000 Brussel
T: +32 2 553 60 32
www.vlaanderen.be/int

Contact person

Sam Vandenaabeele
Director Bilateral Affairs - Coordination Division
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Background information

The Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs is in charge of all of the Government of Flanders' international relations. It coordinates Flanders' international and European activities and therefore takes the lead in Flanders' relations with foreign governments, the European Union and international organizations.

More specifically, the following tasks have been entrusted to the Department:

- the development of cooperation with foreign partners;
- the rule-making process and transposition of European legislation and the conclusion and ratification of international treaties;
- international and European trade policy;
- Flanders' development cooperation, with a geographical focus on Southern Africa;
- monitoring import, export and transfer of weapons and strategic goods from Flanders.
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- To execute these tasks, the Department has a budget of around 46 million euros and it relies on the enthusiasm and dedication of its personnel, which includes:
 - around a hundred staff members at its head office in Brussels;
 - the interdepartmental Flemish team at the Belgian permanent representation to the European Union in Brussels, led by a General Representative;
 - ten General Representations of the Government of Flanders, accredited to the Governments of neighbouring countries and a number of well-chosen countries and international organizations (The Hague, Berlin, Paris, London, Madrid, Warsaw, Vienna, New York, Pretoria and Geneva)..

The Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs cooperates with the agencies Flanders Investment & Trade and Visit Flanders in order to realize Flanders' international ambitions.

2. Vlaams Agentschap voor Binnenlands Bestuur (ABB - Flanders Agency for Home Affairs)

Address

Boudewijnlaan 30 bus 70
1000 Brussel
T +32 2 553 39 24
binnenland.vlaanderen.be

Contact person

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Background information

The Flanders Agency for Home Affairs functions as a central Flemish administration for the municipalities and provinces and for the related public authorities. The urban policy and civic integration policy also belong to the Agency's duties.

Within the Flemish Government the Flemish Ministers who are competent for local and provincial government, urban policy and civic integration carry political responsibility for these competences as a whole. The Flanders Agency for Home Affairs supports the Ministers in their duties. It prepares decisions, implements them and makes proposals for improving the policy. In doing so, the Agency takes account of its six main duties:

1. It prepares the administrative regulation and organizes the elections for the municipal and provincial councils.
2. It finances the local authorities and provinces through public funds.
3. It handles complaints about the administration of the local authorities and provinces, and supervises these authorities.
4. It coordinates the civic integration policy.
5. It pursues a specific urban policy.
6. It offers local authorities and provinces support in their policies.

The mission of the Agency is as follows: "To establish a framework for a high-quality, efficient and coherent Flemish policy regarding local and provincial government, cities and (civic) integration, in order to enable the local and provincial authorities and organisations from the (civic) integration sector to provide a high-quality service to the public." To govern a municipality, province or OCMW is not an easy task. The authorities have competences in a wide range of social sectors. The legislation is often complex and changes rapidly. It is an important duty of the central administration to assist the local authorities with advice. This is done by disseminating information, organizing consultations, answering the questions of local authorities in a customer-friendly way and monitoring data about the local

authorities. This coaching role will grow even more important in the coming years.

3. Transparency International

Address

Transparency International Belgium
Nijverheidsstraat 10
1000 Brussel
www.transparencybelgium.be

Contact person

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Background information

In 1993, a few individuals decided to take a stance against corruption and created Transparency International. Now present in more than 100 countries, the movement works relentlessly to stir the world's collective conscience and bring about change. Much remains to be done to stop corruption, but much has also been achieved, including:

- the creation of international anti-corruption conventions
- the prosecution of corrupt leaders and seizures of their illicitly gained riches
- national elections won and lost on tackling corruption
- companies held accountable for their behaviour both at home and abroad.

Mission

To stop corruption and promote transparency, accountability and integrity at all levels and across all sectors of society. Our Core Values are: transparency, accountability, integrity, solidarity, courage, justice and democracy.

Vision

A world in which government, politics, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption.

Background Information Ms Kinda Hattar, Regional Coordinator for MAGHREB

Country of nationality: Jordan

Responsibilities include: Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Sudan

Kinda Hattar joined Transparency International in 2012. Her previous experience spans the fields of human rights, youth, communication, and humanitarian aid. Ms Hattar has worked as a facilitator, trainer and a project manager at national institutions and international NGOs in the Arab region. She also headed the Jordanian Student Delegation for the 16th International Student and Youth Conference held in Caracas - Venezuela, August 2005. As a journalist she covered gender issues and human rights, among other topics. Kinda Hattar holds a Masters (LLM) in International Human Rights Law from the University of Nottingham - UK

and BA in Journalism and Mass Communication from Yarmouk University - Jordan.

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4. European External Action Service

Address

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Contact person

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Background information

The EEAS is the European Union's diplomatic service. Its role is to make sure the voice of the European Union and its people are heard in the world.

A key aspect of the work of the EEAS is its ability to work closely with the foreign and defence ministries of the 28 member states of the EU and the other EU institutions such as the European Commission, Council and Parliament. It also has a strong working relationship with the United Nations and other International Organisations.

Following the Treaty of Lisbon, the EEAS is responsible for the running of EU Delegations and Offices around the world.

The 139 Delegations play a vital role in representing the EU and its citizens around the globe and building networks and partnerships. The main role is to represent the EU in the country where they are based and to promote the values and interests of the EU.

They are responsible for all policy areas of the relationship between the EU and the host country - be they political, economic, trade or on human rights and in building relationships with partners in civil society. In addition they analyse and report on political developments in their host country. They also programme development cooperation through projects and grants. A fundamental aspect of a Delegation is its public diplomatic role which consists in increasing the visibility, awareness and understanding of the EU.

Delegations are diplomatic missions and are usually responsible for one country, although some are representatives to several countries. The EU also has Delegations to international organisations like the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation for example.

5. Vlaamse Vereniging voor Steden en Gemeenten (VVSG - Flemish Association of Cities and Municipalities)

Address

Paviljoenstraat 9
1030 Brussel
T: +32 2 211 55 00
www.vvsg.be/

Contact person

Betty De Wachter
Team Coordinator International
T: +32 2 233 20 20
E: betty.dewachter@vvsg.be

Background information

The Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) is the representative organisation of all (308) Flemish local authorities including the public centres for social welfare, about 60 intermunicipal cooperations, nearly all the police zones and the newly installed 20 zones for fire brigades and civil protection.

VVSG represents the interests of both local elected politicians and municipal employees. The VVSG is promoting strong local governments and is committed to strengthening quality and sustainability in local policy and local democracy. The VVSG is providing information, advice and counselling to its members and organises trainings, workshops and conferences. Furthermore, the VVSG defends the interests of the local authorities vis-à-vis the regional, national and European spheres of government. The VVSG is an active member of the European and global network of associations of local authorities.

6. City Services Mechelen - Financial Service

Address

Stadsbestuur Mechelen
Grote Markt 21
2800 Mechelen
T +32 800 20 800
<http://www.mechelen.be>

Contact person

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Background information

Mechelen is a city and municipality in the province of Antwerp, Flanders, Belgium. Mechelen lies on the major urban and industrial axis Brussels-Antwerp, about 25 km from each city. Mechelen has almost 86,000 inhabitants. It is the fifth city to number of inhabitants of Flanders and the second largest city of the province, after the city of Antwerp itself.

Inhabitants find employment at Mechelen's southern industrial and northern office estates, as well as at offices or industry near the capital and Zaventem Airport, or at industrial plants near Antwerp's seaport.

Mechelen is one of Flanders' prominent cities of historical art, with Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, Ghent, and Leuven. It was notably a centre for artistic production during the Northern Renaissance, when painters, printmakers, illuminators and composers of polyphony were attracted by patrons such as Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria and Hieronymus van Busleyden.



European Committee of the Regions



Flanders State of the Art