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12-14/XI/2012: conference on the "Rule of Law and Transitional Justice"

From 12th to 14th November 2012 the conference ***“Rule of Law and Transitional Justice: Towards a Triangular Learning – the case of Colombia”*** took place at the EIUC - Human Rights Village in Venice Lido (Italy). The conference was promoted and sponsored by the **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)** GmbH Programme “Strengthening the Rule of Law” Colombia.

In this context, **EIUC** has been identified as the most appropriate venue and laboratory to bring together scholars, researchers and practitioners for exchanging views and experiences on these matters, representing a common ground for future meetings.

Though Colombia has gone through a democratic transitional process in 1991, with the enactment of a new Constitution dealing with a wide range of human rights and codifying the Rule of Law, the armed conflict has not ended yet. Thus, improving access to justice in the actual Colombian situation involves on the one hand questions of post-conflict justice in a context of still ongoing violent conflict, and on the other hand the use of Transitional Justice categories in a context where no full transition has taken place yet.

Different visions coexist concerning how Transitional Justice and Human Rights are operating in Colombia, reflecting a fragmented discussion about the interrelation of Rule of Law, Human Rights and Transitional Justice. This scenario brings up the need of an in-depth discussion about interdependencies and differentiations in order to comply with the “do-no-harm” approach.

Tunisia is facing a similar situation, as after the revolution people and state institutions are facing the question of how Human Rights violations can be processed and dealt with. Another question arises from

the transformation process concerning the design and future reforms of the judiciary system and the administration. However the mandate of the *Commission for the Processing of Violations of Human Rights* set up in January 2011 is limited to the unrest immediately preceding the Revolution. Mechanisms for processing the previous tyrannical regime do not exist so far, and the state judiciary does not have the capacity to proceed human rights abuses of the former regime under regular procedures.

Within the context of these two not dissimilar situations, the conference “Rule of Law and Transitional Justice” helped the GIZ programme to advice Colombian authorities within the context of case solutions and monitoring public politics to remedy the victims of the armed conflict on a more systematic and better grounded conceptual basis. Besides, the experience in Colombia with Institution Building, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice is of utmost interest for other countries, especially Arab ones, facing deep transitions and transformations.

The conference brought together scholars, researchers, NGOs and practitioners that work in the field of Transitional Justice, the Rule of Law and Good Governance. Experts and practitioners from Colombia, from Tunisia and academics shared their experience in respect to the long term impact of Transitional Justice mechanisms and measures. Conference participants were asked to support a triangular learning concept between stakeholders from Colombia, from Tunisia and the GIZ as a mediator and facilitator to strengthen the Rule of Law in both regions. The conference also aimed at establishing and encouraging continued cooperation between agencies, scholars and practitioners from both regions well into the future.

A handbook based on academic research, guidelines, best practice and advice on cooperation in the field of Transitional Justice will be published in 2013.

Click [here](#) to view the **programme of the conference**.

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