

Tunisia



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Country Profile

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Conseil Économique et Social

Year Established	1959
Year Operational	1961
Legislation/Executive Orders	First included in Constitution (1959), Article 58. Later changed to Article 70 in amended Constitution (1976). http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/Tunisiaconstitution.pdf Organic Law n° 12/88 (1988) http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan027551.pdf
Frequency of meetings	-
Membership structure	110-118 members drawn from a broad range of civil society experts, including economic and finance, agricultural development, social affairs, education, youth, and culture, and exterior relations.
ESC Focus	To serve as a consultative organ in economic and social matters.
Executive Director(s)	Mr Sadok CHAABANE, President Mr Mohamed BELGHITH, Secretary General
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Affiliation	International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (IAESCSI) Francophone Union of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (UCESIF)

Country Profile

Economic and Social Council¹

BACKGROUND

The ESC in Tunisia was established based on the 1959 constitution² and became operational in 1961³. First included in Constitution (1959), Article 58, it was later changed to Article 70 in the amended Constitution (1976).

The ESC was created under the terms of the first Tunisian Constitution, occurring three years after the country's independence from France. It does not seem to be a direct response to any particular social and economic challenge as is the case in other national contexts.

Since its inception, the Council has undergone many reforms in order to make it more in tune with its mission. From 1961 to 1988, the date of the adoption of the organic law governing it⁴, it has seen its total membership increased from 30 members to 118 representing all civil society organizations in addition to the state and local government.

The **objectives** of the Tunisian ESC per the law establishing it are 1) formulating opinions on draft laws, draft codes of economic and social nature as well as on the Economic and Social Development Plan and the Economic Budget 2) any official document of non-legislative nature pertaining to social and economic policy submitted to it by the government 3) any consultation requested from the government related to its dialogue with civil society organizations 4) examine and make suggestions on any economic and social issue as well as draw the government's attention to reforms to be implemented on questions within its competence.

Established to serve as a consultative organ in economic and social matters, the Tunisian ESC constitute, as per its attributions and its scope of action, the principal governmental body to make recommendations and render Opinions on economic and social issues as it can give its advice even when not previously seized by declaring itself competent in the matter.

The **organizational structure** of the Tunisian ESC is a composition of five bodies, as follows:

- 1) The President and the Bureau
- 2) The General Assembly
- 3) The Permanent committees (five committees respectively on economic and financial issues; agriculture and regional development; health, labor and social affairs; education, youth and culture; and cooperation and external relations)
- 4) Ad-hoc committees

¹ Information has been sent to ESC for verification. Information obtained from publicly available and internal UN sources.

² Constitution of 1 June 1959, article 58 that became article 70 in the amended constitutions of 1976 and 2002.

³ Law No. 23/61 of 8 June 1961.

⁴ Organic law number 88-112 as modified and completed by organic law number 90-75 of 7 August 1990.

5) The Secretariat (performs administrative work on behalf of the Council)

FUNCTION

The ESC is entirely funded by the government. The total membership is 118 members nominated by decree, of whom 18% are women, representing the following civil society organizations:

- 26 representatives from professional organizations;
- 20 representing national organizations, associations including women's and youth organizations and different professions;
- 1 representative from each of the 24 regions or governorates;
- 18 from the public sector and public enterprises;
- 20 to 30 members chosen for their expertise in the economic and social fields.

Accomplishments/outcomes involving civic engagement

No concrete examples are available on civil society engagement. Beyond their being represented in the ESC, there is no evidence of the level of their participation, contribution and impact on policy-formulation and decision-making processes.

Some of the ESC initiatives that were translated into government policies include:

- Creation of the Council of Competitors to regulate competition;
- Establishment of a national fund to maintain food subsidies as part of fight against poverty;
- Several policies to address trade competitiveness in the areas of agriculture and textile.

International Cooperation:

The Tunisian ESC has strong links with other ESCs and similar institutions at both the regional and the international levels (Algeria, Belgium, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Côte d'Ivoire, the EU, France, Gabon, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Luxemburg, Mali, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, South Africa, and Spain.)

This cooperation includes the exchange of information and experience, dialogue on questions of common interest and the organization of joint seminars and preparation of reports within the framework of the *International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions*. At the multilateral level, Tunisia is member of the IAESCSI, and founding member of the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of ESCs as well as the Union of African ESCs.