

Council of Europe – partner of the EEA and Norway Grants

The EEA and Norway Grants entered into partnership with the Council of Europe to enhance democratic principles and promote international standards in the grant schemes. The Council of Europe contributes within its core areas of expertise – human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The Council of Europe (CoE) has long been engaged in setting standards on human rights and furthering democracy and the rule of law across the European continent. The partnership between the EEA and Norway Grants and the Council of Europe is based on shared aims and values.

DRAWING ON EXPERTISE

The cooperation draws on the Council of Europe's wealth of experience in areas such as justice reform, fighting corruption, trafficking and gender-based violence, and social inclusion. The EEA and Norway Grants aim to use the CoE's expertise to increase the impact of the funding and add value at a strategic level in relevant areas.

To highlight important issues on the European agenda, the partners also organise joint international conferences on topics such as gender-based violence (November 2011, Bratislava) and hate speech in social media (November 2012, Budapest).

WHAT IS THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE?

The Council of Europe (CoE) is an intergovernmental organisation, which covers virtually the entire European continent with its 47 member countries. Founded in 1949, the CoE seeks to develop common and democratic principles and the protection of individuals based on the European Convention on Human Rights.

Working in partnership with the Council of Europe, the EEA Grants support efforts to improve the well-being of vulnerable children.



WHERE IS THE CoE INVOLVED?

The Council of Europe is directly involved as a partner in 18 specific programmes in nine beneficiary countries in a number of areas. It acts as an adviser in the preparation and implementation of the programmes and facilitates networking and professional exchange.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

A well-functioning judiciary is indispensable for gaining the trust of citizens and wider confidence in society at large. Judicial systems should guarantee basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as safety from violence and discrimination. A key objective of the Norway Grants is to create fairer and more efficient judicial systems. Support for reforms in the courts to strengthen the rule of law, and within the police to increase efficiency and foster confidence, are important priorities. The CoE is involved in several programmes in this area. The Norway Grants also support reforms to reduce prison populations, improve prison conditions and promote alternatives to imprisonment.

ROMA

The Roma population is Europe's largest ethnic minority and also one of its most disadvantaged groups. Roma frequently face prejudice, intolerance and discrimination and many are denied adequate access to housing, healthcare, social services and education. The CoE is involved in programmes that address issues related to Roma and education, as well as access to justice.

The Council of Europe is involved in several EEA Grants programmes to improve access to education for Roma young people



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

According to the EU, almost 20% of children in the EU are at risk of poverty. The most vulnerable, such as children and youth living in institutions for people with disabilities or in juvenile detention centres, can face numerous restrictions or violations to their rights. Working with the CoE, the EEA Grants support efforts to improve access to education and healthcare for disadvantaged children and young people and to tackle exploitation and violence. The Grants also contribute to the development of longer-term strategies and policies to protect the rights of the most vulnerable.

EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS AT A GLANCE

Through the EEA and Norway Grants, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway contribute to reducing disparities in Europe and to strengthening bilateral relations with 15 countries in Central and Southern Europe. Funding worth €1.79 billion has been set aside for 2009 to 2014. Key areas of support include environment and climate change, civil society, human and social development, cultural heritage, research and scholarships, decent work and justice and home affairs.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Combating gender-based violence is vital for improving gender equality and empowering women. Insufficient coordination between the justice systems, social services and public health bodies is a challenge in many countries, and hampers effective detection, response and prevention of this scourge. The Norway Grants aim at improving cooperation to tackle gender-based violence and address particular challenges linked to marginalised groups such as people with disabilities, Roma or migrants.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW: PROGRAMMES WITH COUNCIL OF EUROPE INVOLVEMENT

| Country | Programme | Total amount of programme (€ million) |
|----------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Bulgaria | Children and youth at risk | 7.9 |
| | Domestic and gender-based violence | 2.0 |
| | Schengen cooperation and cross-border crime | 6.0 |
| | Judicial capacity building | 3.0 |
| | Correctional services | 7.0 |
| Cyprus | Home for Cooperation: support to civil society (including strengthening dialogue on history teaching) | 0.6 |
| Czech Republic | Capacity building and institutional cooperation (including improved implementation of the GRECO recommendation*) | 1.8 |
| | Correctional services | 2.5 |
| Hungary | Children and youth at risk | 11.2 |
| Latvia | Correctional services | 13.1 |
| Malta | Capacity building and institutional cooperation | 0.3 |
| Poland | Domestic and gender-based violence | 3.0 |
| | Schengen cooperation and cross-border crime | 10.0 |
| Romania | Children and youth at risk | 22.0 |
| | Domestic and gender-based violence | 4.0 |
| | Judicial capacity building | 8.0 |
| Slovakia | Local and regional initiatives | 1.0 |
| | Domestic and gender-based violence | 7.0 |

* GRECO is the Group of States against Corruption established by the Council of Europe to monitor compliance with the organisation's anti-corruption standards