

# Programmatic Cooperation Framework for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus



## Mid-term results of regional projects under the Council of Europe/European Union Programmatic Cooperation Framework (2015-2017)

### What is the Programmatic Cooperation Framework?

In April 2014, the European Union and the Council of Europe agreed to implement targeted cooperation activities with EU's **Eastern Partnership countries** (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus) to bring them closer to European standards in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The regional projects under the 'Programmatic Cooperation Framework' (PCF) in 2015-2017 bring participants from the six countries together and are funded primarily by the EU, and funded and implemented by the Council of Europe.

All Eastern Partnership countries, apart from Belarus, are member states of the Council of Europe.

### Civil participation in decision-making process

**Budget:** 300,000 EUR

This project aims to strengthen civil society, to promote its effective interaction with public authorities and participation in the democratic decision-making process. A special focus in this project is on civil society leaders and public servants at the regional level. Under the project, a study on '[Civil participation in decision making in Eastern Partnership countries](#)' has been published, a multi-stakeholder network created, and a regional strategy for promoting civil participation in decision-making is currently being developed.

▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

### Regional dialogue on judicial reform in the Eastern Partnership countries

**Budget:** 500,000 EUR

The project aims at helping the six Eastern Partnership countries to effectively reform their justice systems. A regional steering group was set up to examine challenges faced by the judiciary in the region, identify best practices and formulate recommendations on how to reinforce the national reform processes in such areas as judicial ethics, e-justice, legal aid, equality of arms, the role of the high courts in harmonising judicial practices, selection of judges and ensuring their independence, as well as alternative approaches to dispute resolution.

▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

## Strengthening constitutional justice

**Budget:** 279,000 EUR

The project is implemented by the Council of Europe's body of constitutional law experts - the Venice Commission. Under the project, representatives of constitutional courts examined the courts' role in democracies, focusing on independence of judiciary and individual complaint procedures, as well as improved their command of existing tools, such as the CODICES database and the "Venice Forum" that allow for a prompt inter-court information exchange, thus helping them to deliver higher quality judgments.

▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

## Improving women's access to justice in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

**Budget:** 110,000 EUR

The project aims at conducting studies and developing practical tools to overcome obstacles to women's equal access to justice. As a result of the project, the Justice Academy of Armenia, the Justice Academy of Azerbaijan, the High School of Justice of Georgia, the Chief Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, the National Institute of Justice of the Republic of Moldova, and the National School of Judges of Ukraine integrated themes related to women's access to justice in its training curricula. National-level training seminars for judges and prosecutors were also organised. A training manual on ensuring access to justice for women, including "national chapters" with examples from each of the five countries, will be the final result of the project.

▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

## Promoting Human Rights Education and Democratic Citizenship

**Budget:** 800,000 EUR

National policies on teaching human rights and democratic citizenship at schools were analysed, challenges and priorities for every country were identified. To complement the review, teachers were trained, and given assistance in developing their school curricula and education materials. Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights education manuals have been translated into several languages; including the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education into Belarusian for the first time.

▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

## Promoting penitentiary reforms: from a punitive to a rehabilitative approach

**Budget:** 110,000 EUR

Prison overcrowding being a serious problem, the Council of Europe prepared a regional report and four country-specific reports with proposals on fighting prison overcrowding in **Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine**. The proposals and the ways towards their implementation were discussed at the closing conference

of the project; a workshop focussing on the next steps and individual needs of each country for further technical assistance was also held.

▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

## Criminal justice responses to drug dependency in prisons

**Budget:** 400,000 EUR

The Council of Europe drug policy experts the Pompidou Group worked closely with the authorities of the target countries to improve drug-related legislation and drug treatment services in prison. With **Georgian** authorities, the Council of Europe developed a national roadmap for policy and legislative changes to reduce prison overcrowding and the number of drug-dependent offenders. In **Moldova**, a ward *Pruncul* Prison was refurbished to host a therapeutic community for drug-dependent prisoners, and local staff was trained on how to run it. Twenty-five doctors and psychologists from **Armenia** and staff of **Ukraine's** Pryluky and Melitopol juvenile prisons improved their therapeutic skills in family therapy and risk assessment.

▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

## Fight against corruption, money laundering, and fostering good governance

**Budget:** 1.2 million EUR

The Council of Europe has developed international standards-based model legislation for all six countries on such issues as conflict of interest, criminal liability of legal entities, and integrity testing. Expert opinions on draft legislation were also provided: the authorities of **Moldova** received advice on illicit enrichment provisions of the Criminal Code, amendments to the Integrity Testing Law, draft Law on combating money-laundering and terrorist financing; **Azerbaijan** received assistance in introducing the concept of risk management; and **Belarus** will use the Council of Europe's expertise to identify corruption risks in the education sector.

## Cybercrime: projects on regional/international and public/private co-operation

**Budget:** 800,000 EUR (for the project on regional and international co-operation)  
700,000 EUR (for the project on public/private co-operation)

The Council of Europe helped the mutual legal assistance authorities and staff of the 24/7 points of contact to establish and develop international and regional co-operation, and worked to enhance public/private cooperation in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime. The project team analysed the rules and procedures for the mutual legal assistance for each country, offered peer networking and expert review, and developed on-line tools and multilingual standardised templates to handle international requests of access to stored computer data. This has helped enhance information exchange between the target countries on cybercrime and electronic evidence.

▶ [Link to the factsheet on Cybercrime in EaP II: regional and international cooperation](#)

▶ [Link to the factsheet on Cybercrime in EAP III: Public/Private Cooperation](#)

## Enhancing respect for the protection of human rights online

**Budget:** 300,000

Under the regional project, a common understanding of Internet use policy and the Council of Europe standards on Internet governance was promoted among the target countries. The project brought together the executive and legislative branches, judiciary, local Internet service providers and non-governmental actors to discuss Internet public policy and ways to address new challenges arising from Internet use. The project participants increased their knowledge of human rights issues related to the Internet. The project specifically contributed to the establishment of a sustainable Internet Governance Forum in **Georgia**.

## Developing and strengthening national data protection systems

**Budget:** 300,000

The Council of Europe gave recommendations to the target countries to improve their data protection legislation. **Georgia** and **Moldova** have subsequently drafted legislative amendments currently pending the Parliament's examination. A dialogue with **Belarus** continues to define the scope of the Council of Europe support in analysing existing guarantees for data protection.

## Promoting professional and responsible journalism through regional network of self-regulatory bodies

**Budget:** 409,000 EUR

The Council of Europe worked with members of the network of regional self-regulatory bodies to better handle cross-border complaints, combat hate speech and deal with cases of alleged unethical behaviour of journalists. As a result, a regional complaint mechanism was established, and the Charter of the Regional Ethics Commission was adopted.

► [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

## Reforming electoral legislation and practice, and developing regional co-operation in electoral matters

**Budget:** 1.3 million EUR

The Council of Europe assisted the target countries in identifying key facts and addressing barriers that restrict women's political representation in the region. Studies, practical tools and peer-to-peer exchange are developed regionally and bilaterally in order to encourage and support women to come forward as candidates and get elected in national and local elections.

Two handbooks were developed to help national observers become more efficient and produce more effective reports and how to apply daily international standards in the field of elections. This also contributes to increasing peer-to-peer civic observation in the EaP countries.

The capacity of the Eastern Partnership countries' Central Election Commissions (CEC) to organise genuine and credible elections was strengthened through regional and country-specific initiatives organised by the Venice Commission. Regional exchanges enabled CEC members to improve their knowledge about fundamental aspects of electoral processes. For this purpose, the Venice Commission organised the European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies on how to ensure neutrality, impartiality and transparency in elections and also a multilateral conference on gender equality with the participation of the central election commissions from five partner countries.

► [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

## Strengthening institutional frameworks for local governance

**Budget:** 2.5 million EUR

The Council of Europe assisted the target countries in fostering a more efficient, transparent and ethical governance at the local level, improving the consistency of legal frameworks and local finance management. More than 60 mayors from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine increased their awareness of the ways to implement higher ethical standards in public policies, to promote good governance and transparency in their daily activities, and to lead change within their communities. Pilot projects on inter-municipal cooperation were developed in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, and the local financial benchmarking approach is currently being tested in Armenia and Georgia. Thirty-five representatives of the local Belarus administration have been trained on leadership topics, good governance and efficient management. In Moldova, the Council of Europe supported the dialogue between central authorities and the autonomous authorities of Gagauzia.

► [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

**More information:** <http://eap-pcf-eu.coe.int>

**Contact:** [Mrs Nichola Howson](#), Senior Communication Officer +33 88 41 22 39

**October 2016**