

PROJECT NEWSLETTER

STRENGTHENING THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN UKRAINE

Issue №1 (January – August 2016)

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DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome to the first issue of the Newsletter of the Council of Europe Project “Strengthening the Human Rights Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine”. Implemented under the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2015-2017, the Project responds to the Ukrainian government’s request for support in the context of hereto unprecedented displacement within Ukraine.

Noting the positive steps made already, the Council of Europe supported the adoption of the October 2014 Law of Ukraine on the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons and the creation of a national focal point institution on IDPs. I welcome that this has come to fruition with the successful setting up of the Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons in April 2016.

At the same time, I note that many challenges remain ahead for Ukraine in the years to come. Already there are approximately 4,000 individual cases pending before the European Court

on Human Rights, dealing with the armed conflict in the east of Ukraine and the events in Crimea. Many of these deal directly with issues relevant to IDPs, such as the right to life, the destruction and loss of property, payment of social benefits, and others. It remains a serious concern that Ukraine has one of the highest numbers of IDPs worldwide, and the highest of all the CoE member States. There is a need for the international community to sustain continued international focus on Ukraine and the pressing humanitarian and human rights issues at stake. We need to support the Ukrainian authorities in developing mid-term and long-term responses and durable solutions.

The CoE will continue to assist the national and regional authorities within the framework of the Project. Such action is based on the principle of equal treatment and the recognition of the special needs of IDPs and affected vulnerable groups. The project aims at enhancing the capacity of relevant authorities, civil servants, legal professionals, public health managers, NGOs and other stakeholders to effectively protect the rights of IDPs.

We hope to continue our fruitful collaboration, and to achieve the project results together, for the benefit of Ukraine.

[Christos Giakoumopoulos](#)

Council of Europe, Director of Human Rights, Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law

STAGE OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION – Some Highlights January to August



The **Project Steering Committee** meeting was held on January 28, 2016, during which the Project partners discussed the situation of immense and unforeseeable displacement resulting in registration of over 1.7 million IDPs from Crimea and the Donbas regions of Ukraine in the span of less than two years. The Project documentation together with the project workplan was presented to partners. The Council of Europe project intervention and logic were welcomed.



First Parliamentary Hearing on the observance of the human rights of IDPs in Ukraine was organised

by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Committee on Human Rights, National Minorities and Interethnic Relations in Kyiv on February 17, 2016 and supported by the Project. The hearings provided a critical high-level national platform for the discussion of ongoing challenges experienced in the protection of the human rights of IDPs in Ukraine. Special attention was focused at the protracted nature of the displacement and the urgent need for solutions and coordinated response from national authorities.



Two trainings on the rights of IDPs for the staff of the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights was supported and organized by the Project on March 30 – April 1, 2016. Over 25 central office and 24 regional representatives were brought together and successfully participated in the trainings focused on monitoring the rights of IDPs in Ukraine in line with the Council of Europe standards.



Roundtable “Free legal aid provision for Internally Displaced Persons: consolidation of the efforts of the state and the civil society”

was supported by the Project and organised on April 6, 2016. The Roundtable aimed to support the Draft Law of Ukraine “On Amending Certain Laws of Ukraine Regarding the Facilitation of Access to Free Legal Aid and Improvement of Quality of Free Legal Aid” developed by the Ministry of Justice, and in particular the inclusion of IDPs as a distinct category eligible for free legal aid under the law.



Launching Project activities in Donetsk region with a seminar in Sviatohirsk on “Court protection of internally displaced persons: current challenges and the CoE standards” was organised in cooperation with

the Donetsk Region Court of Appeal in April 13-14, 2016. One hundred participants attended in the event including the judges of the Donetsk and Luhansk regional courts of appeal, the Donetsk Administrative Court of Appeal, the Donetsk Commercial Court of Appeal, and local courts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.



High-level delegation visits Strasbourg for intensive discussion on internal displacement in Ukraine

was organised by the Project and took place on May 24-25, 2016 at the HQ of the Council of Europe. The visit aimed at promoting constructive discussion on ongoing challenges and strategic vision for the national response to internal displacement.

Launching Project activities in Luhansk region with a seminar in Severodonetsk

on “Strengthening the Legal Protection of Internally Displaced Persons: Accessibility and Effectiveness of Justice” was organised in cooperation with the Luhansk Regional Court of Appeals. The purpose of the seminar was two-fold: to discuss practical issues of legal protection of IDPs through the prism of the Council of Europe standards

and to elaborate recommendations on improving relevant national legislative and judicial mechanisms.



Pompidou Group contribution: to help support effective psycho-social services and prevent substance use disorders among IDPs and the conflict-affected populations, a series of activities were organized with the CoE Pompidou Group – Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs. Among these, a roundtable held in July 2016 provided a platform for Ukrainian authorities to develop strategies based on international experience. A series of workshops were carried out including in Kramatorsk to promote exchange on new methods between international experts and psychologists working directly with IDPs.

A series of trainings for lawyers providing secondary legal aid have been jointly organized by the Coordination Centre for Legal Aid Provision with the support of the Project in June and July 2016. Two launching sessions were organised for 10 lawyers-trainers on the elaboration

of training materials on protection of human rights of IDPs with 10 subsequent regional trainings for lawyers on providing secondary legal aid. Within the regional trainings, relevant international acts, the cases of ECHR, current Ukrainian legislation related to IDPs were considered. Participants analyzed court cases on IDPs issues in light of the European standards of human rights and positively evaluated the events and expressed the interest in further involvement into the Project activities.



Regional Forum “Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons: National and Regional Responses” was organised by the Project and hosted by the Dnipropetrovsk Regional State Administration in Dnipro on July 14-15, 2016. It aimed at creating a critical platform for wider social dialogue on responding to internal displacement in Ukraine. A special plenary session was dedicated to assessing the compliance of Ukrainian legislation and national policies with Council of Europe and other international standards.



Regional monitoring visits of the Representative on IDPs of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights were initiated by the Ombudsperson's Office and supported by the Project. Ms Zhanna Lukianenko, Representative on IDPs of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights have conducted three monitoring visits to Kyiv (29 March-21 April), Donetsk (18-22 April) and Luhansk (18-22 July) regions. Each of the monitoring visits in three regions was followed up with a roundtable (Kramatorsk – 22 April, Kyiv – 28 April, Severodonetsk – 22 July) with the objectives of summing-up and discussing the results of the visits, providing feedback on advancing application of current legislation related to IDPs and to elaborate recommendations on improving existing legislation and mechanism for restoring of social payment to IDPs.



A two-day training on «Business integration of Internally Displaced Persons in Dnipropetrovsk region» was organised in cooperation with the Dnipropetrovsk Regional State Administration in Dnipro in August 26-27, 2016. It aimed at supporting community-based IDPs integration initiatives and at contributing to promoting further IDPs economic participation in their new communities, by expanding their knowledge and skills.

RESOURCES

The comprehensive Baseline analysis

“Enhancing the National Legal Framework in Ukraine for Protecting the Human Rights of IDPs” was prepared in the framework of Project by the CoE international and national experts. The paper was produced as a comprehensive analysis of 21 themes on internal displacement covering relevant international, Council of Europe and Ukrainian standards.

Prior to the finalization of the study, a range of roundtable meetings took place with leading international organisations and NGOs working in the field of IDPs rights (June 14, 2016) and representatives of central executive bodies and public services involved into the implementation of policies called to protect the rights of IDPs (June 15, 2016).

FOLLOW UP ACTION:

We aim to keep you updated about the status of the project, as well as to keep you regularly informed about our latest activities, so we would like to introduce you to:

- our quarterly newsletter
- the project website

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/kyiv/idps>

We welcome your suggestions and ideas, which will be useful and valuable for our joint work.

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