



HORIZONTAL FACILITY FOR WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners in Albania

As part of the European Union and Council of Europe programmatic framework “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey” (Horizontal Facility), the Council of Europe will implement the Action “Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners in Albania”, in close partnership with the Ministry of Justice, the Directorate General of the Prison Administration and with other relevant institutions and stakeholders, including civil society organisations active in the penitentiary field.

Being party to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) – (<http://www.echr.coe.int>) as well as the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ECPT) – (<http://www.cpt.coe.int>), Albania is obliged to eradicate torture and other forms of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the findings of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) during country visits have revealed the necessity that the Prison Administration and other relevant institutions in Albania increase their efforts to improve the protection of prisoners’ human rights and support the rehabilitation of prisoners (to reintegrate them into society after their release in order to reduce reoffending).

The Action will focus on enhancing the capacities of the prison staff, including managerial and health care staff, to apply human rights standards in their daily work. To this end, an assessment will be carried out of the competencies of prison staff, focusing on recruitment and training, the level of health care provided, prisoners’ individual sentence planning and regime (based on risks and needs) and the safeguards against ill-treatment. Specific recommendations will follow the assessment in order to facilitate the completion of the action.

The Action will finish on 30 September 2018 and has an overall budget of 654 000 EUR.

The objective of the Action

The overall objective of the Action is to enhance the protection of human rights of prisoners in Albania. The outcomes of the Action will be achieved through the following **expected results**:

- ✓ Enhanced professionalism of the prison staff to ensure a better human rights protection for prisoners;
- ✓ Establishment of individual sentence planning and regime for different categories of prisoners based on a needs and risk assessment;
- ✓ Improved provision of health care, including mental health care, and the application of medical ethics in prison;
- ✓ Establishment of an efficient complaint system, as well as strengthened governmental inspection and independent monitoring.

Background information

On 11 April 2016, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, and the European Union's Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, announced a new co-operation initiative of the two organisations aimed at supporting South-East Europe and Turkey in their efforts to comply with European standards. The initiative is called the European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey (Horizontal Facility). It is a three-year programme (May 2016 – May 2019), focusing on three themes: ensuring justice, fighting economic crime as well as combating discrimination and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups. It has a budget of €25 million, of which €20 million has been provided by the European Union and €5 million by the Council of Europe. Through the Horizontal Facility, the European Union and the Council of Europe will assist beneficiaries in South-East Europe and Turkey to comply with Council of Europe standards and the European Union *acquis*, through a complementary two-fold approach of technical co-operation and the provision of expertise. The Horizontal Facility relies on the Council of Europe's unique working methods, whereby tailor-made technical co-operation activities are based on conclusions and recommendations of the Council of Europe's monitoring bodies, which highlight areas where improvements are needed in legislation and policies of the beneficiaries to comply with the Organisation's standards.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organization. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 democratic European countries. Its aims are peace, prosperity and freedom for its 500 million citizens – in a fairer, safer world. To make things happen, EU countries set up bodies to run the EU and adopt its legislation. The main ones are the European Parliament (representing the people of Europe), the Council of the European Union (representing national governments) and the European Commission (representing the common EU interest).

www.coe.int <http://europa.eu>