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Action Plan
Armenia 2012-2014

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INTRODUCTION

Since Armenia's accession to the Council of Europe on 25 January 2001 as its 42nd Member State, the main objective of co-operation activities has been to support the country in fulfilling its statutory obligations as a Council of Europe Member State. Beyond these statutory obligations, Armenia freely undertook to fulfil a number of specific commitments in order to improve democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the country. These obligations and commitments are laid out in PACE Opinion No. 221 (2000).

The present Action Plan 2012-2014 takes into account the experience of implementation and results of the Council of Europe Action Plan 2009-2010 and aims at supporting Armenia in its continued efforts to meet its statutory and specific obligations as a Council of Europe Member State. The Action Plan provides a package of priority actions in the areas of democracy, human rights and the rule of law with a view to further assisting the country in bringing its legislation, institutions and practice in line with European standards.

The Action Plan has been designed in close collaboration with the Armenian authorities through bilateral consultations and meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the specialised Ministries and other national stakeholders as well as with major administrative entities within the Council of Europe's Secretariat.

Projects presented address as key priority areas further reforms of the judiciary, reform of the penitentiary, integration of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights into domestic law, media freedom and education of journalists, combating corruption, reforms in the education sector, further reform and strengthening of local self-government as well as support for free and fair elections.

A number of projects mentioned in the Action Plan are being or will be implemented as European Union/Council of Europe Joint Programmes under the Council of Europe Eastern Partnership Facility. They are designed to help Armenia to meet the targets set out under the EU Eastern Partnership Initiative, particularly in the fields of good governance, democracy and justice where the Council of Europe's expertise can prove most effective.

Projects included in the Action Plan are designed according to approved Council of Europe criteria and are to be funded from multiple sources which include the Council of Europe's ordinary budget and voluntary contributions from donor countries and international organisations. The Council of Europe, through its respective Offices will also try to raise funds in co-operation with the EU Delegations in Armenia, Brussels and Strasbourg.

The Action Plan will be periodically monitored by the Council of Europe and the Armenian authorities with a view to assessing implementation of approved and financed projects and their achievements and results.

If commonly agreed between Council of Europe and Armenian authorities new and additional projects can be integrated into the current Action Plan.

At the end of its duration the current Action Plan and projects included in it shall be subject to an independent evaluation.

1. HUMAN RIGHTS

1.1. Protection of Human Rights

1.1.1. Strengthening the application of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) at national level

Duration: 01/01/2012 - 31/12/2013
Implementation status: proposed by the Armenian authorities
Total costs: approximately €1,000,000
Funding status: required
Partners: Court of Cassation of Armenia, Justice Academy, Ministry of Justice
*Source of justification:*The ECtHR's judgments finding violations of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) by Armenia, in addition:

- Report by the Council of Europe (CoE) Commissioner for Human Rights on his visits to Armenia.
- Interlaken Declaration.
- Requests by national authorities and partner institutions for activities and consultations with the ECtHR and its Department for the Execution of Judgments.
- § 37 of ECRI report on Armenia of 7 December 2010

Short description

The Court of Cassation and the Justice Academy intend to establish an institute of human rights expertise within their structure. The CoE will contribute to promote an effective human rights protection system at the national level by providing expert advice and capacity building to this new institution. Since the adoption of the Judicial Code in 2008 and in addition to the decisions of the Court of Cassation, reference to the case law of the ECtHR has been obligatory for the courts of lower instance of Armenia. Various studies and reports have been outlining a systemic problem in the judiciary of Armenia with respect to the effective implementation of the ECHR at national level. Effective interpretation and implementation of Court judgments requires the development of a sound capacity in order to address the problem in a comprehensive and systemic manner. It is noteworthy that while the Court of Cassation in its decision-making process regularly reflects the case law of the European Court, problems persist with respect to ensuring coherence in interpreting and applying it. Studies have suggested institutional weaknesses of the judiciary related to poor knowledge of applicable international practice.

The development of the national capacity of the judiciary in Armenia will enhance the principle of subsidiary in light of the Interlaken Declaration, which, *inter alia,* underlines the important role of the judiciary at the national level in the effective implementation of the ECHR.

Overall objective
To strengthen the capacity of the Court of Cassation and Justice Academy as regards the appropriate application of law by lower courts, through improved knowledge of the ECHR and of the case law of the ECtHR.

Specific objectives
- To ensure the Court of Cassation's and Justice Academy's role as regards guidance on the appropriate application of the ECHR;
- To increase the use of the ECHR and the case law of the ECtHR by judges, including through the use of HELP materials*;
- To develop the training capacity of judges' trainers.

Expected results
- The capacity of the Court of Cassation and Justice Academy to ensure an appropriate implementation of the ECHR and the case law of the ECtHR is strengthened through ongoing advice and expertise provided by the CoE;
- An ECtHR case law database is created and relevant technical equipment is provided;
- Additional HELP materials are developed and used;
- The current pool of national judges' trainers is reinforced. The capacity of Judiciary officials to apply the ECHR at the national level is strengthened through seminars and study visits.

1.1.2. European Programme for human rights education for legal professionals (the HELP Programme)

Duration: 01/02/2010 - 31/01/2013
Implementation status: ongoing
Total cost: €100,000 (budgetary allocation to Armenia from the total €1,500,000 of the HELP programme)
Funding status: funding secured (CoE Human Rights Trust Fund)
Partners: Association of Judges, Judicial School, Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Justice.
Source of justification:
- The ECtHR's judgments finding violations of the ECHR by Armenia;
- Interlaken Declaration.

Short Description
The HELP II Programme's overall aim is to strengthen implementation of the ECHR in member states by raising the level of knowledge of the Convention and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights among all groups of national legal professionals. The methodology centres around training and self-learning, and the HELP II Programme develops and disseminates all the materials and tools necessary to this end.

* European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals

The main interface is the HELP Website where the products are available free of charge, in a number of languages (http://www.coehelp.org). The types of resources range from thematic curriculum content over case studies, lecture notes, slides, and videos, to self- or group-learning E-courses aimed at illustrating the ECtHR's case law and the Court's principles of interpretation.

In addition, the HELP II Programme works directly with national training institutions and professional organisations to help them fulfil their role and make optimal use of the HELP products. The Programme also includes an important peer-to-peer and networking dimension, all with the aim of continuously enhancing the ability and readiness of the relevant national actors to use the Convention where it was intended, at the national level.

Overall objective

To strengthen the capacity of national training institutions for judges, prosecutors and lawyers to fully integrate the ECHR into initial and continuous training.

Specific objectives

- Armenia integrates the HELP curriculum and uses materials in its national training, using the HELP methodology and tools;
- Further ECtHR materials and tools are developed and updated. Armenia can access all HELP ECtHR materials on-line in its national language;
- The European Human Rights Training Network for the exchange of good practice and experience among those responsible for initial and in-service training of judges and prosecutors encouraged and facilitated through bilateral and multilateral meetings.

Expected results

1. Member states integrate the HELP curriculum and materials in their national training, using the HELP methodology, and tools.

2. Further ECHR materials and tools are developed and updated. Member states can access all HELP ECHR materials on-line in several languages.

3. The European HR Training Network for the exchange of good practices and experience among those responsible for initial and in-service training of judges, prosecutors and lawyers encouraged and facilitated through bilateral and multilateral meetings.

1.1.3. Reinforcing the fight against ill-treatment and impunity*

Duration: 01/07/2011 - 31/12/2013
Implementation status: ongoing
Total cost: €300,000 (budgetary allocation to Armenia from the total €1,500,000 of the regional EU/CoE programme)
Funding status: funding secured (EU/CoE Joint Programme)
Partners: Ministry of Justice, State Police, Police Academy, penitentiary institutions, Supreme Courts, Academies of Justice, Offices of the Prosecutors General, Prosecutors' Training Centres, Bar Associations, parliamentary bodies, Ombudsman institutions, bodies of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT), NGOs
Source of justification:

- Reports of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) on the periodic visits to Armenia;
- The ECtHR's judgments finding violations of the ECHR by Armenia;
- Reports by the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights on his visits to Armenia;
- Interlaken Declaration;
- Requests by national authorities and partner institutions for activities and consultations with the ECtHR and the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the ECtHR.

Short Description

This project aims at developing the regulatory framework, structures, procedures and mechanisms for the effective investigation of ill-treatment. It includes an element of investigation of ill-treatment inflicted by the staff of detention centres and isolators, as well as prisons. Along with Armenia, it covers four other beneficiary countries (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) and it addresses key issues of the ECtHR case law, the CPT findings and the country reports of the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights as regards combating ill-treatment and effective investigation of complaints against police. A Country Report has identified the shortcomings as regards effective investigations of allegations of ill-treatment and encouraged the authorities to develop coherent strategies for addressing them through developing an institutional and regulatory framework. The JP continues working on the implementation of the recommendations of the Country Report and on the development of the capacity of key groups of legal professionals to apply the ECHR standards in their daily work. The project is a follow-up JP to the EU/CoE JP "Combating ill-treatment and impunity" which ended on 30 June 2011 and it builds upon and expands the results and outputs achieved under the first project.

"A separate project may be developed in due course as a complement to this regional project that would include a reinforced preventive dimension and support inter alia the Human Rights Defenders' office in the strengthening of the National Preventive Mechanism, subject to discussion and agreement with the national authorities."

Overall objective
To reinforce the national capacities for combating ill-treatment by law enforcement agencies and penitentiary institutions, including strengthening the effectiveness of investigations of allegations of ill-treatment.

Specific objectives
- Development of an appropriate regulatory framework;
- Support for complaint systems that meet international requirements, and for their implementation;
- Capacity building and dissemination;
- Promoting regional synergy and support.

Expected results
- Regulatory framework and institutional/operational systems for preventing and effectively investigating complaints of ill-treatment, leading to the imposition of sanctions when appropriate, are in a better conformity with European and international standards, including the recommendations of the CPT, the case law of the Court and the Istanbul Protocol;
- Relevant actors, including judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police and penitentiary officials, legal staff of Ombudsman institutions, OPCAT bodies[†] and NGOs, decision-makers of executive and legislative institutions, have access to European and international standards for preventing and combating ill-treatment and are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with these standards;
- Regional cooperation is reinforced and good practices are exchanged among the beneficiary countries, with an input from other CoE member states with relevant experience.

1.1.4. Promoting freedom, professionalism and pluralism of the media

Duration: 01/01/2011 - 31/12/2012
Implementation status: ongoing
Total cost: €275,000 (approximate budgetary allocation to Armenia from the total €1,100,000 of the regional EU/CoE programme)
Funding status: funding secured (EU/CoE Joint Programme)
Partners: public authorities, media professional organisations, civil society
Source of justification: recommendations by the Committee of Ministers (ex-Ago group), PACE recommendations, requests from beneficiaries, needs assessment by experts and the secretariat.

Short description
The joint programme seeks to promote freedom of expression and information in line with CoE standards through information exchange, expert advice and training aimed mainly at public authorities, media professionals, journalism educators and civil society. The project includes activities targeted at Armenia as well as regional events including all four beneficiary countries.

[†] Optional Protocol of the UN Convention against Torture

Overall objective
Support the development of legal and institutional guarantees for freedom of expression, higher quality journalism and a pluralistic media landscape in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Republic of Moldova, in line with CoE standards and as regards both traditional and new media.

Specific objectives
- Promoting professionalism, responsibility and respect of ethical rules among journalists as well as better awareness and understanding of their rights;
- Improving the quality of journalism education and training especially as concerns the rights and responsibilities of journalists;
- Providing legal assistance to the authorities to align the media-related regulation (e.g., as concerns defamation, protection of journalists and transparency of media ownership) with CoE standards;
- Promoting proper implementation of the media-related legal framework through the incorporation in public authorities' daily practice of European standards in the field of freedom of expression.

Expected results
- The regulatory framework for freedom of expression and for the media is brought closer into line with European standards;
- The implementation of the media-related regulatory framework and self-regulation are improved in line with CoE standards;
- Journalists have a better understanding of their rights, respect ethical rules and are trained to exercise their work in a professional and responsible manner, as recommended under the applicable CoE standards;
- The quality of journalism education is improved, notably through introducing new courses, or enhancing existing ones, on the rights and responsibilities of journalists (graduates have better knowledge and understanding of European standards concerning freedom of expression and the media and are trained to apply these standards in their future work).

1.2. Promoting Human Rights

1.2.1. Protecting Child Rights and Creating Child-Friendly and Non-violent Environment in Schools through Awareness Raising and Monitoring

Duration: 01/01/2012 - 31/12/2014
Implementation status: proposed by Armenian authorities
Total cost: €262,400
Funding status: required
Partners: Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia; "Civil Society Institute" NGO (CSI NGO)

S*ource of justification:* Commitment of Armenia to protect rights of children and ensure that no violence is occurring in the schools of Armenia, as well as public interest to participate in the process.

Short description

The children's rights protection issue is one of the most important and discussed topics currently in the Society. An independent public monitoring group of boarding schools acting under the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) was created by the MoES in March 2010.

The public monitoring group currently consists of members of local and international NGOs working in the field of protection of child's rights such as Civil Society Institute, Helsinki Committee of Armenia, World Vision, etc. During one year of the operation of the group a number of cases of physical violence were revealed in other schools as well, therefore, the Ministry took measures for taking relevant legal actions such as punishing those guilty in these acts. However, the ongoing monitoring of such violence cases at the schools is not complete; the tools for prevention and the methods of helping the children whose rights are violated are not developed. The existing information shows that the level of perception of cases of child rights' violation and cruelty in the public is quite low, many forms of violence such as public humiliation, threatening, light physical injuries are not perceived by the public as offences that should be punished by criminal or administrative laws. Therefore, the Ministry aims at using the potential of the civil society for identifying the existing problems in this respect including cases of violence, working out recommendations and strategies for combating them.

Overall objective

The objective of the project is to create working mechanisms to protect child rights and prevent violence towards children in schools through extending the mandate of the existing public monitoring group to cover not only the boarding schools but all schools in the country.

Specific objectives

- Training for teachers for raising the level of their perception about the unacceptability of any violence against children;
- Raising awareness of children on their rights to prevent violence against each other and preventing violence towards them;
- Developing and testing of functioning mechanisms for identification and prevention of possible violence cases in schools;
- Creating mechanisms for protecting the victims of violence;
- Increasing the capacity of the public monitoring group;
- Developing monitoring methodology and based on it conducting the actual monitoring in randomly selected schools as well as all special and boarding schools;
- Creation of a hotline and ad-hoc reacting to the received warning signals from population.

Expected Results

- Training modules for teachers on protection of child rights and prevention of violence elaborated;
- About 25 trainers prepared for conducting training of teachers, university students and high school pupils;
- 750 teachers trained by the trainers;
- Training materials including modules posters, booklets, etc. for children about their rights and unacceptability of any violence developed, printed and distributed;

- 50 students trained by trainers, about 500 high school pupils trained by university students and about 5000 secondary school pupils trained by high school pupils (cascade model is used);
- Trainings supervised by the public monitoring group and CSI NGO staff;
- Teacher ethical and conduct norms preventing cases of child rights violation and child abuse/violence are developed and applied in schools;
- Development of intra-and interdepartmental documents for protecting victims of violence in educational schools;
- Public monitoring group strategy and plan of actions for a five-year period is developed and piloted in schools. Public monitoring group role and functions strengthened and expanded;
- Hotline is functioning and ad-hoc reaction to the received warning signals is provided systematically;
- Awareness of public on ways to protect child rights and prevent violence is raised.

2. RULE OF LAW

2.1. Justice

2.1.1. Improvement of the penal system in the Criminal Code

Duration: 01/07/2012 - 31/07/2013 (to be confirmed)
Implementation status: proposed by the Armenian authorities
Total cost: approximately €1,000,000
Funding status: funding required
Partners: Ministry of Justice, Office of the Prosecutor General, the Police, relevant institutions of the Judiciary
Source of justification:

- CPT report of 2006 (CPT/Inf (2006) 38);
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the CoE Probation Rules.
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the European Rules for juvenile offenders subject to sanctions or measures.

Short description
Comprehensive reform in the penal system assumes the construction of at least two new prison facilities and extensive reconstruction of the existing ones. At the same time, for the criminal law and penitentiary system to be effective, parallel legislative and institutional reform is necessary. It is the latter component of the reform package that constitutes a proposal for co-operation with external partners and donors, including the CoE.

Legislative reform is aimed at the modernisation of the penal system in the Criminal Code of Armenia, in order to elaborate a system of non-custodial and alternative sentencing in conformity with European standards.

The Criminal Code of Armenia was adopted in 2003 and subsequently was subject to numerous amendments. The Ministry of Justice has initiated an evaluation of the effectiveness of the system of sanctions prescribed by the existing Code. Upon request from the Ministry of Justice of Armenia the Council of Europe provided in July 2011 an expert opinion on the provisions of the Armenian Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code related to alternative sanctions and alternatives to pre-trial detention and on the organisation and functioning of a probation service, based on best practices in Europe. The expert opinion is a starting point and a sound basis for amending the existing legislation and for drafting necessary new legislation in order to extend the use of community sanctions and measures and establish a fully functional probation service.

Overall objective
Reducing use of custodial sentences in line with European standards.

Specific objectives

- Promoting alternatives to pre-trial detention by amending relevant provisions in the Criminal Procedure Code, based on the CoE's legal expertise.
- Extend the scope of community sanctions and measures and development of a system of conditional release and parole;
- Providing training for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and law enforcement officials on the enforcement of the relevant amended and/or new legislation;

Expected results

- Needs of legislative, institutional and operational reform of the penitentiary system are identified;
- Amendments to the Criminal Code which will provide a wide scope of alternative sanctions as well as specific provisions regarding juvenile offenders, development of a system of conditional release and parole and necessary legislation regarding the structure, organisation and the functioning of the probation service are drafted and presented to the national authorities with a view of its swift adoption;
- The criteria for the evaluation of the effectiveness of non-custodial sentencing are elaborated;
- Awareness raising, training seminars and study visits on best practices as well as translation of relevant documentation into Armenian are organised for Armenian stakeholders, including authorities and public sector.

2.1.2. Penitentiary reform

Duration: 2013 - 31/12/2015 (to be confirmed)
Implementation status: proposed by the Armenian authorities
Total cost: approximately €5,000,000 (including acquisition of equipment for proper functioning of the probation service)
Funding status: funding required
Partners: Ministry of Justice, Criminal-Executive Department of the Ministry of Justice, Judicial Institute of the Ministry of Justice, Local NGOs
Source of justification: CPT report of 2006 (CPT/Inf (2006) 38); Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the CoE Probation Rules. Recommendations by the Committee of Ministers (ex-Ago Group)

Short description

Enhance the establishment and the functioning of the probation system in line with the Council of Europe Probation Rules

Overall objective

Establishment of a comprehensive system of reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals in social life, improved system of social-psychological work with sentenced individuals.

Specific objectives

- Improving the institutional capacity building of the probation service and other relevant services
- Developing pre-release reintegration programmes for the offenders;
- Developing a system of conditional release and restorative justice;

- Obtaining technical equipment for the supervision of the enforcement of non-custodial sentences, including the IT equipments and monitoring bracelets;
  Renovating the premises of the regional probation centres and obtaining the necessary furniture and office equipment;
- Improving prison management in line with the Council of Europe standards and best European practices;
- Supporting the establishment of a Training Centre for the training of prison and probations staff;
- Developing the curricula for initial and in-service training for prison and probation staff.

Expected results

- The Probation Service is established in line with the Council of Europe Probation Rules and best European practices
- Probation service staff is trained through initial and in-service training provided at a well established Training Centre for prison and probation staff.

2.1.3. Support for Access to Justice*

Duration: 01/10/2009 - 31/12/2012
Implementation status: ongoing
Total cost: €4,159,500
Funding status: funding secured (EU/CoE Joint Programme)
Partners: Ministry of Justice, Ombudsman's Office, Chamber of Advocates, School of Advocates, Justice Academy, NGOs
Source of justification:

- The ECtHR's judgments with findings of violations in Armenia;
- CEPEJ report;
- Reports by the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights on his visits to Armenia;
- Recommendations by the Committee of Ministers (ex-Ago Group);
- Requests by national authorities and partner institutions for activities and consultations with the ECtHR and the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the ECtHR.

Short description

The Project aims to support the reform of the justice sector in Armenia through institutional capacity-building, training of legal professionals and provision of legislative assistance.

* *"A separate project may be developed in due course as a follow-up to this existing project that would include the implementation of the sustainability plan for the School of Advocates and the development and implementation of such a plan for the future Justice Academy subject to discussion and agreement with the national authorities."*

Overall objective
To promote the rule of law and human rights in Armenia through the improvement of the training of judicial professions and advocates, to support the reform of the justice sector by improving the efficiency of the judiciary; to improve access to justice for the population in general and free/affordable access for vulnerable groups of the population.

Specific objectives
- Support to the Chamber of Advocates;
- Support to the improvement of training and education of judges and court personnel;
- Support to access to justice and transparency of the judiciary.

Expected results
Support to the Chamber of Advocates (component 1):
- School of Advocates established and operating.
- Regulations on the examination and testing procedures of the School of Advocates developed; operational capacities for the implementation of these procedures established.
- Mandatory initial training for candidate advocates and mandatory continuous legal education for licensed advocates in place.

Support to the improvement of training and education of judges and court personnel (component 2):
- Legislation adopted on the examination procedures for the selection of candidate judges at the Judicial School and their initial training which meets European standards.
- Initial and in-service training for judges and training for court personnel strengthened.

Support to the facilitation of access to justice and transparency of the judiciary (component 3):
- Appropriate legislative framework and procedures on free legal aid in place.
- Legislation on appeals, the notification of judgments and payment of court fees are in conformity with the requirements of the ECHR.

2.1.4. Enhancing judicial reform

Duration: 01/03/2011 - 31/08/2013
Implementation status: ongoing
Total cost: €154,000 (approximate budget allocation to Armenia from the total €923,995 of the regional EU/CoE programme)
Funding status: funding secured (EU/CoE Joint Project - Eastern Partnership Facility)
Partners: Ministries of Justice of the beneficiary countries, juridical communities
Source of justification:
- The ECtHR's judgments finding violations of the ECHR by Armenia;
- CM and PACE Recommendations;

- Recommendations of CEPEJ on increasing the independence, efficiency and professionalism of the judicial systems.

Short description
The Project mobilises expertise and experience from all participating beneficiary and contributing countries. It provides the opportunity to discuss the legal and practical obstacles to the implementation of the applicable European standards in the participating countries and to further adjust their respective policies in the areas of particular concern identified by the Project, the CoE monitoring mechanisms, the EU progress reports and the beneficiary countries themselves.

Overall objective
The overall objective of the Project is to support and enhance the on-going process of reform of the judiciary with a view to increasing the independence, efficiency, and professionalism of the judicial systems of the participating beneficiary countries, through intensive information exchange and best practice sharing.

Specific objectives
To provide a forum for discussing among the participating countries applicable European standards on the judiciary and their state of implementation; to identify good practices and extract key findings for shared use.

Expected results
Identification of legal and practical obstacles to the implementation of the relevant European standards in the areas of concern. Formulation of recommendations and best practices to address these obstacles.

Dissemination of the Project's proposals among national authorities and other stakeholders.

2.2. Threats to the Rule of Law

2.2.1. Good Governance and Fight against Corruption

Duration: 01/03/2011 - 31/08/2013
Implementation status: ongoing
Total cost: €187,700 (approximate budget allocation to Armenia from the total €1,126,365 of the regional EU/CoE programme)
Funding status: funding secured (EU/CoE Joint Project - Eastern Partnership Facility (EaP))
Partners: Ministry of Justice, State Police, Ministry of Finance; Judicial Council, Specialised agencies on anti-corruption and Financial Intelligence Unit, Civil Society and Private Sector Associations, Central electoral administrations, General Prosecutor's Office, Supreme Court
Source of justification: GRECO recommendations; MONEYVAL recommendations

Short description
The purpose of this project is to strengthen national capacities of Armenia (along with other members of Eastern Partnership Initiative) to apply prevention and law enforcement measures in order to enhance their good governance and fight against corruption.
Furthermore this regional project being part of the EaP/CoE Facility will:

- increase regional dialogue and create a forum for sharing good practices in the prevention and fight against economic crime;
- Good Governance and the fight against corruption remain an acknowledged priority and thus results and work under this project will be reviewed by the Eastern Partner;
- address the relevant GRECO and MONEYVAL recommendations through Pilot Activities;
- Provision of specialised training to law enforcement staff and with regard to detecting and investigating corruption offences those directly involved in the fight against corruption (Rec vi) from the joint 1st and 2nd GRECO evaluation Report.

Overall objective
To enhance the reform processes in the six partner countries through a multilateral approach and to bring them closer to CoE and EU standards in core areas covered by the Eastern Partnership Platform 1.

Specific objective
To enhance good governance and strengthen the capacities of the public administration and criminal justice sector in order to effectively prevent and fight corruption in line with the CoE Conventions and other international treaties.

All activities will follow a regional approach and combine technical advice, with training, assessments, development of methodologies, and policy design and tools exchange in the area of good governance, corruption and money laundering.

Expected results
- Armenia has defined and is committed to apply policy and prevention measures concerning enhancement of good governance and the fight against corruption;
- Armenia is provided with the tools for effective law enforcement and implementation of legal frameworks when fighting economic crime;
- Armenia efficiently applies and implements European and international standards on good governance and the fight against corruption when addressing its specific needs.

2.2.2. Co-operation against Cybercrime

Duration: 01/03/2011 - 31/08/2013
Implementation status: ongoing
Total cost: €120,700 (approximate budget allocation to Armenia from the total €724,000 of the regional EU/CoE programme)
Funding status: funding secured (EU/CoE Joint Project - Eastern Partnership Facility)
Partners: Ministry of Justice, State Police, Judicial Council, Prosecutors Council, Specialised agencies, local NGOs, General Prosecutor Office, National Academy of Prosecutors, Ombudsman Office
Source of justification: Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185); European Convention for Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters; 2nd Additional Protocol to this Convention (ETS No. 182); Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Short description

The purpose of this project is to strengthen national capacities of Armenia (along with other members of Eastern Partnership Initiative) to effectively investigate, prosecute and cooperate against cybercrime. By the end of the project it is expected that the standards and practices of Armenia (along with other EAP countries) are more in line with international standards, including in particular the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, a document on regional and domestic priorities regarding cybercrime to be adopted by Eastern Partnership countries and assessment reports are adopted for each Eastern Partnership country.

It addresses the following needs related to cybercrime:

- Policies and awareness of decision-makers: The project will raise awareness among decision-makers and help them determine strategic priorities regarding cybercrime and electronic evidence
- Harmonised and effective legislation based on the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime: The project will assess legislation in place, help draft proposals for amendments to legislation and assess the effectiveness of legislation, among other things based on criminal justice statistics and case law
- Judicial and law enforcement training on cybercrime and electronic evidence
- Law enforcement – Internet service provider cooperation in the investigation of cybercrime
- International cooperation, including judicial and police cooperation and strengthening of 24/7 points of contact
- Financial investigations: measures to prevent and control laundering and to search, seize and confiscate crime proceeds on the Internet.

Overall objective

To enhance the reform processes in the six partner countries through a multilateral approach and to bring them closer to CoE and EU standards in core areas covered by the Eastern Partnership Platform 1.

Specific objective

To strengthen the capacities of criminal justice authorities of Armenia to cooperate effectively against cybercrime in line with European and international instruments and practices.

Expected results

- Armenia has defined strategic priorities regarding cybercrime and assessed measures taken;
- Armenia is provided with the tools for action against cybercrime;
- Armenia participates more actively in international cybercrime efforts.

3. DEMOCRACY

3.1. Democratic Governance

3.1.1. Support to Local Government Reform

Duration: 01/01/2012 - 31/12/2015
Implementation status: proposed by the Armenian authorities
Total cost: €1,000,000
Funding status: funding required; €50,000 available from the Ordinary Budget for 2012-2013
Partners: Ministry of Territorial Administration, Ministry of Finance, Parliament, Association of Communities
Source of justification: Request from the government of Armenia, Congress monitoring reports, CoE expert reports and background studies.

Short description
The Programme aims at supporting the Government of Armenia in the implementation of decentralisation reform, based on the Action Plan developed by the Government in consultation with CoE experts.

Overall objective
Provide CoE legal expertise, policy advice and support to the process of local self-government reform, including preparation of the administrative-territorial reform, and strengthening of capacities for local authorities.

Specific objectives
- Fiscal decentralisation;
- Improved legislation on Local Self Government, corresponding to CoE standards;
- Integration of Local Self Government into Public Administration Reform (PAR) administrative-territorial reform, encouragement of intermunicipal co-operation (IMC)
- Implementation of the Law on Yerevan;
- Implementation of capacity-building and training programmes for local authorities.

Expected results
CoE support provided and local government and fiscal decentralisation reform implemented; legislation revised and improved in accordance with CoE standards, administrative-territoral reform prepared, capacity of local authorities strengthened

3.1.2. Capacity building of local authorities

Duration: 01/01/2011 - 31/12/2014
Implementation status: proposed by the Communities Association of Armenia and the national authorities
Total cost: €245,000
Funding status: funding required
Partners: Association of Communities and Ministry of Territorial Administration of Armenia
Source of justification: Request from the Communities Association and the government of Armenia, CoE local and international experts' reports, background studies and appraisals, Congress monitoring reports, local authorities' official documents and publications.

Short description
The Programme aims at supporting the Government of Armenia and the Communities Association of Armenia in building the administrative capacities of Armenian local authorities, in parallel to the decentralisation strategy that is being implemented based on the Action Plan developed by the Armenian Government in consultation with CoE experts.

Overall objective
Develop the administrative capacities of Armenia local authorities with a view to ensure that they can properly use the competences and funds that are being transferred to them through the decentralisation strategy, and deliver quality services to citizens.

Specific objectives
Develop public ethics and human resources management in the institutional functioning of internatal administration in Armenian local authorities. Identify, celebrate and disseminate best practices between local authorities in order to favour exchanges of know-how and experience.

Expected results
- Promotion of a modern Management of Human Resources at municipal level (HRM) focusing on the development of clear and effective recruitment procedures, evaluation mechanisms as well as quality training of staff;
- Implementation of a Public Ethics Benchmarking programme for municipal staff, which identifies a level of reference and helps the administrative staff working at local level to change their practice through self-assessment, and the use of comparisons and opinions shared by peers;
- Implementation of a Best Practice Programme to identify, celebrate and disseminate best achievements in local government with a view to in order to favour exchanges of know-how and experience.

3.1.3. Strengthening leadership by local elected representatives

Duration: 01/01/2013 - 31/12/2014
Implementation status: proposed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (the Congress)
Total cost: €400,000
Funding status: funding required
Partners: Local elected representatives, the Communities Association of Armenia, the Armenian delegation to the Congress, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA)
Source of justification: European Charter of Local Self-government, CoE Reference Framework for Regional Democracy, European Code of Conduct for the Political Integrity of Local and Regional Elected Representatives, Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, Monitoring recommendations on local and regional democracy in Armenia, Recommendation 255 (2008) on local elections in Armenia and Recommendation 277 (2009) on First Municipal Elections of Yerevan.

Short description/objectives
The overall objective is to contribute to the development of local and regional democracy in Armenia, to build confidence and trust in local elected representatives and foster greater transparency at local level.

The proposed programme focuses on the quality of local self-governance and the consolidation of the reforms in this field. It aims at improving the leadership capacities of local elected representatives and empowering them to engage in constructive dialogue with the central authorities and with the citizens. It also aims at strengthening the local authorities association.

It consists of a series of peer-to-peer exchanges and interactive seminars with the participation of Congress members of other member states of the CoE and experts. The work will be organised into the following main themes: the role and responsibilities of local elected representatives, ethics in politics and decision making, citizen participation, Transfrontier cooperation, positive campaigning (with a view to the next local elections), and the implementation of human rights at local level.

The programme will complement other programmes implemented by the Council of Europe Centre of Expertise in coordination with the inter-governmental sector. It will take into consideration the proposal by the Armenian authorities to further promote legal and operational capacities for local self-government of Armenia.

Expected results
- More effective and democratic local self-government;
- Better implementation of the principles of the European Charter of local Self-government;
- Improved practices and power of advocacy of local elected representatives;
- Empowerment and better understanding by local elected representatives of their role and duties as part of the political and decision-making system;
- Enhanced institutional capacity of local authorities;
- Increased dialogue with citizens and involvement in local public life and decision making;

- Stronger involvement of the association of local authorities with consolidated multi-level relationship.

3.1.4. Support free and fair elections in Armenia

Duration: 01/01/2012 - 31/12/2013
Implementation status: proposed by the Secretariat, under discussion
Total cost: €400,000
Funding status: partially secured, €70,000 available from the Ordinary Budget in 2012 and 2013
Partners: Central electoral administration, local NGOs
Source of justification: CM and PACE recommendations, Venice Commission opinions

Short description/objectives
The overall aim of the project is to complement the Eastern Partnership Facility through bilateral activities in ensuring the effective implementation of the principles of the European electoral heritage in Armenia, relying notably on capacity building and awareness raising activities involving both the competent authorities and civil society.

Specific objectives
To implement in Armenia the tools developed at regional level through the Eastern Partnership Facility. To enhance the capacity of the Armenian electoral administration at all levels to organise elections in compliance with European standards by addressing specific issues related to recent changes in the elections related legislation. This is to be carried essentially by involving local experts and making them the focal point for the training of Armenian election commissions and officials at all levels, so as to ensure sustainability; to support Armenian civil society and the CEC in informing voters more deeply in the electoral process as a pre-condition for full participation in public and political life, making them aware of the importance of participating in elections, the individual rights of each voter, and the freedom of choice in the casting of a ballot. The activities will target in particular young first-time voters and women, to fight phenomena such as family voting.

Expected results
The training of national observers according to the methodology is supported and widened to be made better sustainable, the school curricula is implemented, the measures recommended to increase participation of women in political life are supported and translated into concrete policies.

3.1.5. Support free and fair elections in the Eastern Partnership countries

Duration: 01/03/2011 - 31/08/2013
Implementation status: ongoing
Total cost: €156,000 (approximate budget allocation to Armenia from the total €923,995 of the regional EU/CoE programme)
Funding status: funding secured (EU/CoE Joint Project - Eastern Partnership Facility)
Partners: Central electoral administrations of the beneficiary countries, local NGOs

Source of justification: CM and PACE recommendations, Venice Commission opinions

Short description/objectives
The overall aim of the project is to ensure the effective implementation of the principles of the European electoral heritage, relying notably on capacity building and awareness raising activities involving both the competent authorities and civil society.

Specific objectives
To enhance the capacity of the electoral administration at all levels to organise elections in compliance with European standards. This is to be carried essentially by involving local experts and making them the focal point for the training of election commissions and officials at all levels, so as to ensure sustainability; to address problems of common concern in the region linked to the organisation of democratic elections and, notably, to the modernisation of the electoral process such as the creation of accessible electronic voter registers or mechanisms for the registration of voters abroad; to support civil society in developing its capacity to act as a reliable source of independent national observers for elections in a sustainable manner relying on a regional exchange of knowledge and experience and pooling of training resources; to involve voters more deeply in the electoral process as a pre-condition for full participation in public and political life, making them aware of the importance of participating (and hence abstaining from) in elections, the individual rights of each voter, and the freedom of choice in the casting of a ballot. The activities will target in particular young first-time voters and women, to fight phenomena such as family voting.

Expected results
- Better compliance with and awareness of European electoral standards in Armenia: electoral administrations are better prepared to fulfil their tasks; NGOs are better prepared to fulfil their role as observers and provide constructive criticism about the electoral process; voters are better aware of their role in the functioning of democratic elections and increase their participation;
- Methodology for the training of domestic observers is elaborated and cascade trainings carried out according to it. An overview of best practices for domestic observation is drafted and published. A curriculum on elections for high school is elaborated. An analysis of measures aimed at increasing women's participation in political life is carried out and recommendations formulated.

3.2. Sustainable Democratic Societies

3.2.1. Supporting higher education reform

Duration: 01/06/2012 - 31/12/2014
Implementation status: ongoing
Total cost: €300,000
Funding status: funding required, €40,000 available from the Ordinary Budget in 2012 and 2013
Partners: Ministry of Education and Science

Source of justification: commitment of Armenia upon acceding to the Bologna Process in 2005; results of the visit of the Minister of Education and Science, Mr Armen Ashotyan to Strasbourg in November 2010

Short description

In 2005 Armenia joined the Bologna Process and stepped on the path of structural reforms in higher education. While a lot of progress has been achieved, there are still challenges facing the higher education system of Armenia. National qualification frameworks, student participation in university governance and recognition are very much interrelated issues and are key in advancing such reform. The implementation of the national qualifications framework in Armenia will automatically facilitate the recognition of these qualifications both nationally and internationally. Therefore, the increased mobility of the students and staff will be assured, which is one of the main aims of the Bologna Process (European Higher Education Area). The success of reforms largely depends on students' involvement: they should become key stakeholders and active participants of the higher education reform process.

Overall objective

To reform of the higher education system of Armenia, in line with the requirements of Bologna Process (the European Higher Education Area).

Specific objectives

To align the Armenian Higher Education system and practice with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Specific purposes will be to improve the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia and higher education institutions (HEIs) in Armenia, in line with the developments in the Bologna Process mainly concentrating on:

- national qualifications frameworks (NQF);
- recognition of qualifications;
- student participation in university governance.

Expected results

- The National Qualifications Framework in Armenia is self-certified against the overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA);
- The National Qualifications Framework in Armenia is implemented and coherence between the framework and other parts of the national qualifications system is ensured;
- Holders of foreign qualifications have their qualifications fairly assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and within reasonable time;
- Student participation in university governance is strengthened;
- CoE publications in the Higher Education series on the relevant topics are translated and are available in Armenian.

3.2.2. Combating Corruption in Higher Education

Duration: 01/01/2012 - 31/12/2014
Implementation status: Proposed by the Armenian authorities
Total cost: €500,000
Funding status: funding required
Partners: Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia, Higher Education Institutions

Source of justification: Commitment of the Government of Armenia to reduce the corruption in the Education sector

Short description
Corruption may be found at all levels of the education system and may take several forms, ranging from monetary compensation for undue favourable treatment through mutual favours to much subtler forms of misdemeanour. Corruption in education is particularly damaging because of its negative long-term effects on a country's social, economic and political future. In 2011 the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia issued a decree, approving a comprehensive plan of measures and actions directed at reducing corruption in the education sector.

This project will support the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia in curbing the spread of corruption in higher education.

Overall objective
The overall objective of the project is to combat corruption in the higher education sector by improving transparency, accountability and student participation in institutional governance.

Specific objectives
- To contribute to effective implementation of the action plan adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia through risk analyses with regard to dangers of corruption in the higher education system of Armenia and recommendations to the Ministry on its future strategy in combating corruption;

- To develop mechanisms and propose measures which would contribute to increased autonomy (including financial) and better accountability of higher education institutions in Armenia, strengthened student participation in higher education governance, enhanced integrity of university staff and ethical standards and practice.

Expected Results
- Mapping of opportunities identifying main areas and types of corruption in higher education in Armenia, wide discussion and dissemination of its findings;
- Expert evaluation of the action plan adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia to combat corruption in the higher education sector and recommendations to the Ministry on its further strategy;
- Adoption of measures which would contribute to increased institutional autonomy (including financial) and better accountability of higher education institutions in Armenia;
- Strengthened student involvement in higher education governance and the decision-making process through enhanced information, consultation and dialogue, training and improved contacts with their European counterparts;
- Development of mechanisms to ensure integrity of university staff and ethical standards and practice.

3.3. Building a Democratic Culture

3.3.1. Implementing the Revised Core Curriculum Based on the Modern Languages Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

Duration: 01/01/2012 - 31/12/2014
Implementation status: proposed by the Armenian authorities
Total cost: €200,000
Funding status: required
Partner: Ministry of Education and Science
Source of justification: commitment of Armenia to bring foreign languages teaching in line with Language Education Policy in modern Europe, to develop plurilingualism and enrich Armenian citizens' linguistic and cultural repertoire; result of the visit of the Minister of Education and Science of Armenia, Mr Armen Ashotyan, to Strasbourg in November 2010

Short description
The requirement to give a European perspective to Armenian schoolchildren, young people and adults in order to increase their ability to "connect" with a modern world through better knowledge of foreign languages has a vital importance to Armenia. Besides, promotion and supporting of mobility (students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff) is one of the directions of the Bologna Process (Armenia has joined in 2005). It is obvious that mobility can not be established without mastering foreign languages.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages launched by the CoE in 2001 gained great importance for language teaching in many countries. Likewise, the Government of Armenia acknowledges that the improvement of foreign languages learning and teaching in Armenia in line with CEFR is an important and actual challenge. In addition, population of our country, especially young people also value language learning and understand the importance of plurilingualism and its role in their personal lives.

At the current phase of education sector reforms in Armenia the development of new approach to teaching and learning languages at all levels of education (primary, secondary, and upper secondary/high school, as well as higher education-Bachelor and Master levels) in accordance with CEFR became a high priority.

Overall objective
The overall objectives of this project are: to develop the common reference levels for Armenian Language and 4 foreign languages: English, French, German and Russian, for all levels of education in accordance with CEFR; and to introduce the developed reference levels into the core curriculum for primary, secondary and high schools as well as into the standards (learning outcomes) for languages at the bachelor and master levels of higher education.

Specific objectives

- To elaborate languages' curricula based on common reference levels for primary, secondary and high schools in order to develop communicative language competencies of students;
- To elaborate language standards for higher education in order to increase communicative language competencies of students;
- To create new generation of textbooks and teacher guides based on new curricula enabling development of communicative language competencies;
- To increase capacities of textbook authors in writing new type of such textbooks, that increase the linguistic competencies of children, in particular in understating, speaking and writing skills in both Armenian and foreign languages; as well as facilitate the use of languages in oral and written communication;
- To increase capacities of textbook evaluators to become capable in assessing new textbooks based on the language competency approach.

Expected results

- Armenian Framework of common reference levels for Armenian language and 4 foreign languages is developed;
- New languages curricula for all levels of school (primary, secondary and high) and language standards for higher education (bachelor and master) are introduced;
- Trained textbook authors and textbook evaluators ensuring the compliance of new textbooks to the modern requirements in communicative language competencies.

Appendix 1 Financial table

TOTAL ACTION PLAN BUDGET: €15 760 300

Table 1

	Funding secured				
Type of project	**Ordinary Budget**	**EU/CoE Joint Programmes**	**Voluntary Contribu-tions**	**Total funds secured**	**Additional funds required**
National	160 000	4 159 500		4 319 500	10 147 400
Regional/ Multilateral		1 193 400	100 000	1 293 400	
TOTAL	**160 000**	**5 352 900**	**100 000**	**5 612 900**	**10 147 400**

Table 2

Pillars	**Total funds secured**	**Additional funds required**
1. Human rights (5 projects)	675 000	1 262 400
2. Rule of law (6 projects)	4 621 900	6 000 000
3. Democracy (8 projects)	316 000	2 885 000
TOTAL	**5 612 900**	**10 147 400**