

## Strengthening the capacity for domestic application of the European Convention on Human Rights and of the Revised European Social Charter

### *Project summary*

<b>Project title</b>	Strengthening the capacity for domestic application of the European Convention on Human Rights and of the Revised European Social Charter
<b>Country</b>	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine
<b>Budget</b>	2 015 000 €
<b>Funding</b>	EU/CoE Joint Programme
<b>Duration</b>	30 months (1 January 2013 – 30 June 2015)
<b>Partners and beneficiaries</b>	Bar Associations, lawyers, human rights defenders and NGOs.
<b>Main objective</b>	<p>to develop the national capacities for effective human rights protection by increasing knowledge and skills on anti-discrimination aspects under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the Revised European Social Charter (RESC) and admissibility criteria before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• enabling lawyers and human rights defenders in the partner countries to successfully litigate cases based on the ECHR and on the RESC, in proceedings before national courts, as well as before the ECtHR in the case of well-substantiated claims;</li><li>• avoiding submission to the ECtHR of manifestly ill-founded or inadmissible claims.</li></ul>
<b>Outputs and results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a total of 163 legal professionals completed in-depth training to become national trainers on the ECHR and the RESC with special emphasis on anti-discrimination;</li><li>• a new HELP course on “Anti-Discrimination” was developed and adapted to the national orders of the countries involved in the Project. The Course “Introduction to the ECHR” was also adapted to the national legal orders;</li><li>• the FRA/ECtHR Handbook on European non-discrimination law was translated into the languages of the Project countries,</li></ul>

where such translation did not exist, was published and distributed among the Project's target audience;

- trainers trained have carried out more than 130 cascade training sessions across the region, which benefitted to nearly 4700 lawyers and human rights defenders. Training sessions by these trainers on ECHR continued after the Project's end;
- over 2100 lawyers and human rights defenders enriched their skills and knowledge by taking part in the Thematic Workshops, with participation of international trainers and consultants;
- in the smaller countries, the proportion of lawyers who benefitted from the Project's training activities comprises a significant percentage (up to 35-45%) of all licensed lawyers in the country;
- lawyers trained by the Project are actively invoking discrimination in cases before the domestic courts and specialised anti-discrimination institutions.
- the regional network-building component of the Project resulted in useful idea exchanges and closer ties between Bar associations;
- country-specific Guidelines were developed on the use of domestic remedies in anti-discrimination cases;
- in some of the countries (Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine) the Project's participants have formed groups to discuss and deal with discrimination topics, including creation of informal alternative mechanisms to address cases of discrimination (Armenia);
- while the Project did not directly aim at specific legal reforms, active stance of the Project's participants in various fora in their respective countries contributed to better visibility and a higher professional level of debate on issues of discrimination and the ECHR in general. In some instances, this increased interest significantly contributed to maintaining the degree of debate sufficient to re-trigger a process of development of anti-discrimination legislation, which had come to a halt. A number of the Project's participants are now contributing to legislative reform in the area of discrimination in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova.

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<b>Follow-up</b>	Through a number of bilateral Projects the CoE continues to work with the lawyers in the recipient countries further building their capacities to apply the ECHR and the ECtHR case law. The CoE also continues to strengthen the capacities of national training institutions and Bars to deliver training on these topics in line with the European standards and the methodology of the HELP Programme.
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