

ODGP Open Day

Opening Speech by Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Strasbourg, 19 January 2018

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the third Open Day of the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes.

This is an important initiative because this part of our organisation is less visible than some others, but no less important.

The ODGP is responsible for the programming, resource mobilisation and decentralised implementation for all Council of Europe activities that are not covered by the Ordinary Budget.

Crucially, it coordinates donor relations and the relevant contractual issues too.

So it is fair to say that the ODGP supplies oxygen to the organs of our Organisation: without it, we could not function.

I am very happy that several Heads of Office have been able to join us today and talk to you about their roles.

They represent our field staff – some 300 colleagues in 17 offices.

Establishing those Offices has radically changed the way we work, allowing us to decentralise the implementation of cooperation projects in an effective and efficient way so that our expertise gets to where it is required most.

This expertise comes across our Organisation: from DG1 and DG2, and from the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress too.

So how does the ODGP succeed in delivering positive outcomes?

By sticking to best practice.

For example, today you will have the opportunity to become more familiar with the new Project Management Methodology, developed at the request of the Committee of Ministers.

The new PMM is already widely used and will now be deployed for all new projects.

And its methodology is results-oriented, taking into account donors' concerns with regard to indicators, cross-cutting issues and consistent reporting.

This thorough approach is key to the ODGP's record of delivery: it is central to the way that we pull together actors from across the House and develop a new strategic cooperation project.

As you will see today, the preparation of Action Plans and other programming documents are foremost among these.

In this regard, 2017 was a very important year, with programming documents for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Ukraine and the Southern Neighbourhood being started, finalised or launched.

Several member States have taken the initiative of present Action Plan implementation progress through information events, which have proven successful both in highlighting the work to be done and the progress that we can make together.

And as with previous Open Days, you will also be able to find out about our most important partners – including the European Union, through our joint Regional Programmatic Facilities – and about different programme and funding types that we offer.

Of course our capacity to act is linked to the funds at our disposal.

While we will have the final data for 2017 only at the end of January, we already know that last year extra budgetary contributions reached €59 million.

This is slightly less than in the previous year, essentially because of the cyclical nature of the bigger cooperation programmes with the European Union: member states' voluntary contributions are actually up on 2016.

Norway is again the single largest donor, but we are of course grateful to all our member states, observer states and the EU for giving what they can, not least because these extra-budgetary contributions are about to become more important than ever.

Because current political developments within the Council will result in a cut to our Ordinary Budget this year, the ODGP's role in coordinating extra-budgetary resource mobilisation in 2018 will be vital.

Let me say very clearly that extra-budgetary resources cannot replace the Ordinary Budget which ensures the functioning of the Organisation, the core activities.

But extra-budgetary resources allow us to invest in innovative and new developments.

To this end, we value and will continue our work with our current partners, and we would welcome your interest in extending your support.

However, we need also to explore original and less developed opportunities, such as new cooperation models with the European Union, specific support from line ministries, sports organisations, and foundations, and further contributions from non-member States.

To an extent, this is uncharted for the Council of Europe, but we can learn from the experience of our partner organisations, including some UN organisations.

It will of course be important to ensure that any potential partners fully support Council of Europe values and, to this end, due diligence will be performed before we enter into new relationships.

The Secretary General has asked me to lead our work in this area, working closely with colleagues inside the ODGP and elsewhere too, and I look forward to finding innovative, transparent ways of finding new funding and further unlocking our capacity to help member states meet our agreed standards.

So please take the opportunity of this Open Day to learn about the way in which the ODGP develops projects to the benefit of our citizens: ask any questions that you would like.

I hope that you will be inspired to continue your support, and perhaps even to extend your help into brand new areas.

It is through your generosity, and our common efforts, that we can make the maximum impact.

Thank you.