

# LEGAL CO-OPERATION PROJECTS



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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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## LEGAL CO-OPERATION PROJECTS

Independent, impartial and efficient justice systems are essential to the implementation of the rule of law, the full enjoyment of human rights and the proper functioning of democracies.

The Division for Legal Co-operation, within the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law of the Council of Europe, supports member and neighbourhood States in their justice sector reforms.

Legal co-operation projects make use, in particular, of the standards developed by the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) and the expertise of its members.

Synergies are also ensured with other key Council of Europe bodies and mechanisms, such as the Venice Commission, the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE), the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE), the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and Secretariat services such as the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights.

In member States, co-operation projects help countries to apply Council of Europe standards and recommendations in their respective national contexts.

In non-member States, the emphasis is on exploring how best to use the Council of Europe standards and tools to strengthen the independence and efficiency of their justice systems.

## AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

Typical areas of co-operation include:

### Legal system reforms

- ▶ Civil law and procedure
- ▶ Administrative law and procedure
- ▶ Criminal justice
- ▶ Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms

### Access to justice

- ▶ Free legal aid schemes
- ▶ Legal services for vulnerable people
- ▶ Lawyers – training, bar and professional associations

### Quality of justice

- ▶ Court administration and case management
- ▶ Case-law harmonisation
- ▶ Digitalisation of legal procedures
- ▶ Enforcement of court decisions
- ▶ Execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights as regards specific legal or institutional issues

### Judicial independence

- ▶ External independence
- ▶ Functioning of judicial self-governing bodies
- ▶ Judges' appointment, transfer, assessment and promotion
- ▶ Judicial training and training bodies

### Judicial accountability

- ▶ Integrity and codes of ethics
- ▶ Inspection systems
- ▶ Disciplinary bodies
- ▶ Transparency, public trust and communication.

## MAIN PARTNERS

Ministries of justice, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, lawmakers, court staff, higher courts, self-governing bodies of judges and prosecutors, judicial academies and training institutions, bar associations, lawyers' professional associations, and civil society organisations are the main partners in the implementation of legal co-operation projects.

## WAYS OF CO-OPERATION

Project activities include:

- ▶ Providing expertise on law, policy and practice
- ▶ Supporting legislative reform
- ▶ Supporting internal institutional reform
- ▶ Sharing good practices of member States
- ▶ Building institutional links between international and national counterparts
- ▶ Developing and testing pilot measures
- ▶ Evaluating justice sector reform
- ▶ Design and provision of training
- ▶ Awareness-raising and information campaigns.

## COUNTRIES

Legal co-operation projects are supporting, or have recently supported, justice sector reforms in the following member States: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, North Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine. Non-member States such as Belarus, Kazakhstan and Tunisia have also benefited from such co-operation.

## FUNDING

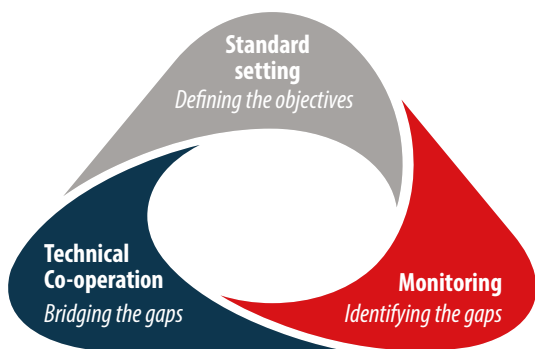
Voluntary contributions are the primary source of funding for co-operation projects. Funds are currently provided by:

- ▶ European Union, funding through various programmes, including:
  - Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)
  - Partnership for Good Governance (Eastern Europe)
  - Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey
  - Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP)
  - Joint EU and Council of Europe programmes
- ▶ European Economic Area (EEA) Grants and the Norway Grants Financial Mechanism
- ▶ Council of Europe Human Rights Trust Fund
- ▶ Member state voluntary contributions.

## ADDED VALUE

Co-operation programmes implemented by the Council of Europe bring several distinctive advantages:

- ▶ **Underpinning values**, based on the principles of human rights, democracy and rule of law
- ▶ **Unique strategic triangle** of standard-setting, monitoring and technical co-operation
- ▶ **Broad and varied expertise** developed by the Organisation's member States, bodies and mechanisms.



## PROJECT MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

The high quality of legal co-operation projects is guaranteed by the Council of Europe's specific project management methodology based on:

- ▶ **Human rights approach**  
Taking a human rights perspective at all stages and at all levels of the projects including the incorporation of cross-cutting dimensions such as gender equality mainstreaming and civil society participation
- ▶ **Results-based management**  
Focusing on bringing about concrete change
- ▶ **Field presence**  
Ensuring direct communication and co-operation with partners through Council of Europe's field offices.

## INFORMATION

### Council of Europe

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all 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.

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