

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Information Documents  
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**Quarterly report of Council of Europe Offices**

**January - March 2018**

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**A. LIAISON OFFICES**

**Introduction**

The Council of Europe Offices in charge of liaison with one or more international organisations or institutions:

- represent the Secretary General vis-à-vis international organisation(s) or institution(s);
- follow the activities carried out by the relevant international organisation(s) or institution(s) and report on developments relevant to the Council of Europe activities and policies;
- provide support for the organisation of and follow-up to high level co-ordination meetings and other meetings or events between the Council of Europe and the relevant international organisation(s) or institution(s);
- promote effective co-operation between the Council of Europe and the relevant international organisation(s) or institution(s);
- identify opportunities for joint activities and provide advice and support in planning, negotiation, implementation and reporting on these activities;
- conduct a proactive media policy in order to raise the visibility of the Organisation.

The present document covers the reporting period January-March 2018. Following decision [CM/Del/Dec\(2013\)1175/1.6E](#) of 3 July 2013, activity reports have been published every three months, starting with July-September 2013.

## **Brussels - Council of Europe Office in charge of liaison with the European Union**

### **High-level visits**

The President of the Congress, Gudrun Mosler-Törnström, and Secretary General Kiefer: meeting in the Office and annual High Level Meeting of the Congress and the Committee of the Regions (16/1).

Director General for HR and the Rule of Law, Christos Giakoumopoulos: address the EU Council WG on the relations with the CoE and the OSCE (COSCE). Director Thomas Markert, Executive Secretary to the Venice Commission also addressed COSCE the same day.

CoE HR Commissioner, Nils Muiznieks: plenary session of the European Parliament (1/3) on women rights. And exchange of views in the EU Council working group on CoE and OSCE ("COSCE") on 2/3. Meeting with Brussels based journalists/media in the Office.

### **Other meetings**

Head of Office Taubner, held meetings with EU Officials, primarily in the EEAS and in the Commission, as well as with some representatives of member - and observer states. In particular, he had bilateral exchanges on the developments and co-operation in Turkey (DG NEAR), in the EU Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans countries (EEAS, DG NEAR) and in Belarus, Algeria, and Central Asia (EEAS).

He met with the European Commission's think tank: EPSC, to exchange on respective work and possible co-operation on "fake news". He also met with the Commission's Director on Security issues to discuss a series of matters of common interest (e.g. terrorism and radicalisation, cybercrime, trafficking, sexual abuse of children and drug trafficking).

He also met with Council of Europe Secretariat colleagues in Brussels, such as the Director for Policy Planning, the Director for Communication, the Head of Programming Department and the Secretary to the partial agreement on cultural routes.

The Office welcomed the new Programme Officer, Ms Gisella Gori, who joined early February 2018.

The Brussels Office also met with EU institutions representatives on various topics, in particular:

- With EEAS, on similar issues as above, as well as on the follow-up to the EU-EaP senior official meeting, on developments in the Council WG on HR in foreign affairs (COHOM).
- With the Commission (DG Just & DG Home) on cooperation on children rights, on efficiency of judicial reforms in non EU States, on Business and Human Rights, on co-operation on drug policies.
- With the Commission (DEVCO, NEAR, General Secretariat) on the Horizontal Facility (Montenegro in particular), on the PGG, on Public Administration Reforms programmes, on support programmes for structural reforms.
- With the Commission's legal services on general matters of co-operation linked to the Council of Europe conventions and bodies.

- With the General Secretariat of the Council on developments in various Council configurations, in particular: the General Affairs Council (GAC), Justice and Home Affairs Council - JHA).

The Office welcomed and hosted meetings of the international law enforcement liaison officers in Brussels (Pompidou Group activity); as well as meetings of experts on penitentiary statistics/policies, experts on the convention on local and minority languages, a meeting of the association of local democracy (ALDA), the presentation of the report of European prison statistics ("SPACE") on 20/3, the steering committee meeting of the new project on cultural routes: "Routes4U". The Office also welcomed speakers at the conference on "fake news" organised by the Council of Europe at the Brussels "book fair". The Office accompanied the Director for Policy Planning to the hearing on "fake news" organised by the Commission (EPSC).

The Office hosted and participated in the meeting of the national co-ordinators of the "PGG" in the Eastern Partnership countries (6/2/18). And it accompanied ODGP colleagues in further bilateral meetings in the EU.

The **Office participated and represented** the CoE in various events, such as:

- Two events on women empowerment, linked to the International Day of Women (8/3), organised by the Canadian mission and International IDEA
- The launch of the new structure of the Eastern Partnership
- The EU-Central Asia Platform II meeting
- The EU Committee of the Regions' "Task Force Ukraine"

The Office further maintained its level of contacts with diplomatic missions of Council of Europe member states and neighbours (Central Asian and South Mediterranean countries), as well as Observer States (e.g. Canada).

The Office welcomed the group of legal interns from the Canadian parliament (11/1) and a delegation consisting of the Secretary General of the European Parliament Turkey Forum and representatives of the Berghof Foundation (31/1) as well as a group of German MBA students.

Reports by the Office focused on major EU activities, such as the meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council of 22/1 and 26/2 and the General Affairs Council (Art. 50) 29/1 and 27/2, informal meeting of the 27 EU leaders in Brussels (23/2), the most important debates at the EP (Future of Europe debate between MEPs and Prime Minister of Ireland (January) and of Croatia (February), human rights in Ukraine, academic freedoms in Turkey, EU-Russia relations) as well as other EU developments regarding, primarily: migration/refugees, rule of law in Poland, policies with Central Asia, Western Balkans, Ukraine, elections in Russia, in Azerbaijan, Brexit, terrorism and radicalisation (two years after the Brussels attacks), rights of women, cyber surveillance, and many others.

The Office participated in the three-day "CEPS" think tank annual event on EU policies, with speeches from COM President Juncker and Be FA Minister Reynders. The Office participated in a restricted VIP lunch with Minister Reynders on the Rule of Law in the EU.

## **Media and visibility**

The Brussels-based Spokesperson/Media Officer maintained his regular contacts with journalists on a wide range of issues including: the January session of the Parliamentary Assembly, the annual report/press conference from the European Court of Human Rights, the annual conclusions from the European Committee of Social Rights, the Secretary General's visit to Turkey, ECRI reports on Spain and Sweden, the GRECO report on Germany, the first activity report from the Special Representative on Migration and Refugees, speeches by the Secretary General and the Commissioner for Human Rights to the European Parliament, the Commissioner's statement on access to abortion in Poland, CPT reports on Belgium and Turkey, GRECO reports on Turkey and Poland and various judgments and decisions from the European Court of Human Rights

He also worked on the high-level meeting between the Congress and the EU Committee of the Regions in Brussels, the Council of Europe's participation in the annual Computers, Privacy and Data Protection (CPDP) conference and visits to Brussels by the Director General for Human Rights and the Executive Secretary of the Venice Commission. He co-ordinated communications work around the Council of Europe's participation at the Brussels Book Fair, the Brussels meeting of the Programme for Good Governance and the March CM-DH meeting.

The Spokesperson/Media Officer organised a media lunch for the Commissioner for Human Rights and several Brussels-based correspondents, as well as the Brussels presentation of the annual SPACE report on prison populations across Europe.

In addition, the Spokesperson/Media Officer continued to provide regular input into the on-going communications project to highlight the impact of the ECHR system.

## **Statistics**

Some 342 information messages and documents as well as 12 weekly reports were prepared and sent to Strasbourg by the Information Officer. 75 notes for the files were sent from the Office in addition to the information messages sent by the Head of Office directly. 29 members of Council of Europe staff visited the Office during the period. The Office hosted 39 events and visits and welcomed 314 external visitors.

## **Geneva - Council of Europe Office/Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva**

### **Visits**

On 1-2 March, DER participated in the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

On 6 March, **Nils Muižnieks, the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights**, participated in Human Rights Council side event "Beyond jargon: reframing our communication on human rights".

On 13 March, DER participated in the Inter-Regional Dialogue on Democracy: the Role of Global and Regional Organizations in the Advancement of Sustainable Development Goal 16.

### **The Human Rights Council 37<sup>th</sup> Session (26 February - 23 March)**

The HoO delivered statements as follows:

5 March: Annual Full-Day Meeting: Rights of the Child

6 March: Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

7 March: Annual Debate: Rights of persons with disabilities

8 March: General Debate on Item 3 (Human Rights Defenders)

19 March: General Debate on Item 6 (Universal Periodic Review)

21 March: Interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in Ukraine

### **The Office participated in the following meetings of the HRC 37<sup>th</sup> Session**

26-28 February: Opening of the **High-level segment**/Annual High-Level Panel: Human Rights Mainstreaming

28 February: High-Level panel: 70th anniversary of UDHR and 25th of VDPA

2 March: ITEM 3 - Individual Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on the freedom of religion or belief

2 March: ITEM 3 - Interactive Dialogue with Special Adviser of the UN SG on the Prevention of Genocide

2 and 5 March: Urgent Debate on Eastern Ghouta (Syrian Arab Republic)

6 March: ITEM 3 - Clustered Interactive Dialogue with SR of the UN SG on Violence against Children

7 March: ITEM 2 - Presentation of the annual report by the High Commissioner for Human Rights

7 March: Annual Debate: Rights of persons with disabilities

13 March: High-Level Panel: Human Rights of Children in Syria

19 March: ITEM 6 - UPR outcomes in Japan, Ukraine and Sri Lanka

19 March: General Debate on ITEM 6 (UPR)

21 March: ITEM 10 - Interactive dialogue with High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in Ukraine

22-23 March: Decisions and conclusions- adoption of session report

### **Meetings and activities of the HoO**

29 January: Official Ceremony of the International Day in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

5 February: HoO met Michael Moller, Director-General of UN Office at Geneva

7 February: UNOG Executive Briefing with Thomas Greminger, Secretary General of the OSCE

8 February: Discussion on the Launch of Data Diplomacy: Updating Diplomacy to the Big Data Era

9 February: Meeting with the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch, Kenneth Roth

12 February: UNOG Executive Briefing with A. Zouev, Assistant SG for Rule of Law and Security Institutions

15 February: HoO participated in the CM meeting on co-operation between the UN and the CoE. The President of the HRC, Ambassador Vojislav Suc, delivered a statement on the priorities of the HRC and co-operation with the CoE

27 February: An interactive panel on diversity, human rights: the costs of exclusion and the value of inclusion

1-2 March: Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region

1 March: UNOG Executive Briefing with Marie Chatardova, President of ECOSOC

2 March: HRC side events: Assessing Human Rights Impacts of Economic Reform Policies 6 6

March: The Impact of Media on Freedom of Religion or Belief- panel discussion

6 March: "Beyond jargon: Reframing our communication on human rights". The Office supported the HRC side event organised by the CoE, the Commissioner for HR, OHCHR and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

8 March: SDG Lab on women and security - Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces

12 March: Human Rights in Cyber Space, panel discussion with Ambassadors of Israel and Germany and Cyber Security Research Center, Academy of international Humanitarian Law

13/03- Inter-Regional Dialogue on Democracy: the Role of Global and Regional Organizations in the Advancement of Sustainable Development Goal 16

20 March: UNOG Executive Briefing with Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN

21 March: Protecting People on the Move: IDPs in the context of the Refugee and migrant crisis

26 March: A Humanitarian Perspective on Migration and Displacement – Peter Maurer, President of the ICRC

### **Meetings and activities of the Office**

13-14 February: Formal consultation 1 on the global compact on refugees

15 February: 23<sup>rd</sup> Humanitarian & Security Conference: The Need for Effective Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration; 16/02- Presentation of the zero draft of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

19 February: Twentieth session of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights

27/02- Ukraine: Perspectives on Conflict and Peace. Organized by Geneva Peace- building Platform

15 March: Accountability in Syria: the role of the international, impartial and independent mechanisms

20-21 March: Second Formal Consultation on the global compact on refugees

26 March: Briefing/dialogue on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

28 March: High-Level Event: "Quality Education for a Sustainable Future: A Comprehensive Approach for Refugees and Internally Displaced People"



## **Vienna - Council of Europe Office in charge of liaison with the OSCE, United Nations Office and other international organisations in Vienna**

### **Participation in the OSCE Permanent Council meetings**

- OSCE Special Permanent Council meeting with CiO, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, Angelino Alfano, 11 January
- OSCE Permanent Council meeting with discussion of methods of work of the PC in 2018, 18 January
- OSCE Permanent Council meeting with the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, George Tsereteli, 25 January
- OSCE Permanent Council meeting with the Head of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 1 February
- OSCE Permanent Council meeting with the Special Representative of the OSCE CiO in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Martin Sajdik, and the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Ertugrul Apakan, 8 February
- OSCE Permanent Council meeting with the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the Chief Observer of the Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk, 15 February
- OSCE PC with the Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, Maryse Daviet. Meeting with Maria Alcidi, Senior Advisor of the Italian Chairmanship, on the participation of the SRSG on Migration and Refugees at the OSCE Permanent Council, 1 March
- OSCE PC on "International Womens Day"; Address by the Special Representative of the OSCE CiO on Gender, Melanne Vermeer, ODIHR Director, Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir. Presentation of the 2017 ODIHR Annual Report, 8 March
- OSCE PC with the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Andrea Orizio, 15 March
- OSCE PC on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, 22 March

### **Participation in expert committees and conference**

- UNODC: formal meeting of the standing intergovernmental working group, 22 January
- OSCE: Briefing on the OSCE Survey on the Well-being and Safety of Women, 22 January
- OSCE Human Dimension Committee (introductory) meeting, 23 January
- UNODC: Launch of the UNODC Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System, 26 January
- ODIHR Update of the "National Referral Mechanisms – Joining Efforts to Protect the Rights of Trafficked Persons" Handbook and Survivors' Photo Presentation, 29 January
- OSCE Informal Working Group on participation of civil society in the OSCE events, with the highly valued contribution by guest speaker Jörg Polakiewicz, Director of the CoE Directorate of Legal Advice and Public International Law, 9 Februar
- KAICIID Conference "Interreligious Dialogue for Peace: Promoting Peaceful Coexistence and Common Citizenship", 26-27 February
- OSCE Human Dimension Committee meeting, 27 February
- EU FRA: Presentation of the work and priorities of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 8 February
- 61st Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs; logistical assistance for colleagues of the Pompidou Group and support at the Side Event "No place for the death penalty in the drug policy toolbox (or in criminal law generally)", organised by the

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Government of Switzerland, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
the European Union and the Council of Europe, 12-16 March

## **Warsaw - Council of Europe Office in charge of liaison with international organisations or institutions in Warsaw, in particular with OSCE/ODIHR and the Community of Democracies**

### **High-level visits/meetings**

23 January - discussion on "Building Transatlantic Consensus for Democracy" with Howard Dean, former Governor of Vermont, former Democratic National Committee Chairman and US presidential candidate

23 February - meeting with the First Deputy Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Katarzyna Gardaphadze

### **Activities of the Office**

**Enhancing the co-operation with OSCE ODIHR** – Apart from the high level meetings mentioned above, the HoO maintained close working relations with ODIHR experts. In a preparation for the first meeting of the CoE inter-secretariat Co-ordination Group on migration the HoO met with Ms. Christine Hirst, Deputy Head of Democratization Department in ODIHR and with Joanna Fomina, ODIHR consultant responsible for migration and freedom of movement to discuss ODIHR's migration related activities in coming months. HoO met also with Ghenadie Barba, Chief of the Rule of Law Unit in ODIHR to discuss the possible co-operation between CoE and ODIHR in relation to projects concerning prosecutors' independence, which both Organizations undertake in 2018 (ODIHR project on Strengthening the functional independence of prosecutors in Eastern Partnership countries and CoE CCPE forthcoming opinion on Independence, accountability and ethics of prosecutors).

The HoO attended numerous meeting organized by ODIHR during which he presented the CoE activities and perspective, including a Seminar 100 Years of Women's Suffrage in Poland, organized in cooperation with Parliamentary Group of Women in Polish Sejm and Finish Embassy in Warsaw.

The Office followed closely ODIHR's activities in relation to election observation as well as the discussions on the preparations to two major human rights meetings organized in Warsaw by ODIHR (Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and Human Dimension Seminar).

**Continuation of the co-operation with the CoD** – The Office followed closely the process of strategic review of the CoD priorities which should be concluded by the adoption of the document shaping the Community's agenda as well as the parallel process to renew democratic commitments by CoD members. In this regards regular contacts were maintained with Milka Zagloba, Legal Counsel in the PS of the CoD.

The HoO took part in the initial presentation of the polling findings on the youth democratic participation organized by the CoD and NDI – Poland's Office, which allowed presentation of CoE activities in this field.

**Ensuring the visibility of the CoE** – Apart from the events organized by ODIHR and CoD, the HoO regularly attended meetings, seminars and conferences on issues pertinent to CoE activities. These included i.a. the meeting with the Head of the American Jewish Committee - Central Europe Office, Agnieszka Markiewicz, on issues related to the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination; the launch of the Book of Good Practices in actions towards national

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and ethnic minorities and foreigners prepared by the minority organizations in Poland and the conference on the occasion of the International Safer Internet Day - "Creating the culture of respect in Internet".

## **B. FIELD AND PROGRAMME OFFICES**

## **Introduction**

On the basis of Resolution [CM/Res\(2010\)5](#) Council of Europe offices in member States and non-member states

- represent the Secretary General vis-à-vis the national authorities of the host country;
- promote and support the policies and activities of national authorities, as well as those of the Council of Europe bodies, related to membership of the Council of Europe;
- provide advice, support and overall *in situ* co-ordination with national authorities in planning, negotiation and timely implementation of targeted Council of Europe co-operation activities, including Joint Programmes with the European Union and other donors;
- facilitate the identification of needs for capacity-building, in co-operation with national authorities;
- conduct fundraising activities for specific projects;
- co-ordinate activities in the country with other international organisations and institutions (EU, OSCE, UN), as well as other international and local partners active in the country;
- in close cooperation with the Directorate of Communication, conduct a proactive media policy, in order to raise the visibility of the Organisation, its values and activities among the general public.

The present document covers the reporting period January-March 2018. Following decision [CM/Del/Dec\(2013\)1175/1.6E](#) of 3 July 2013, activity reports will be published every three months, starting with July-September 2013.

**Baku****Situation of the Office**

Core staff - 6, Project staff - 9, Total staff - 15.

The Office implements 4 projects that are jointly funded with the EU, including 2 within the framework of the PGG and 2 joint projects along with 2 new projects, one funded by the US Department of State-INL and one funded by the CoE.

**State of implementation of projects/programmes/Action Plans/co-operation documents**

- EU/CoE - PGG "Application of the European Convention on Human Rights and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights": On 15 February, a conference was held in Baku to provide a forum for open discussions on national implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights among representatives of state organisations, advocates, judges, prosecutors and human rights defenders (in total up to 80 participants). Thirty-one advocates, 25 prosecutors and 27 judges enhanced their knowledge on the ECHR as a result of 3 seminars organised in February and March in Baku.
- EU/CoE - PGG "Strengthening anti-money laundering in Azerbaijan": As of January, the project entered a new phase of implementation focusing on anti-money laundering activities. The project held a steering committee meeting in February bringing together representatives from 12 key state institutions involved in the AML/CFT system of Azerbaijan. Open discussions addressed both expected results and planned activities. Based on the recommendations of the steering committee members, the project work plan for 2018 was adopted with minor changes.
- EU/CoE JP "Civil Society Dialogue": In February, local experts revised their draft amendments to the laws on NGO registration and access to funding for non-profit organisations based on feedback received during a working group meeting and from an international expert. The final document will be discussed directly with the Ministry of Justice with the facilitation of the international expert and the participation of local experts. In March, the international expert developed a concept document for the development by local experts of a national manual on civil participation in decision-making processes.
- EU/CoE JP "Further Support to the Penitentiary Reform in Azerbaijan": On 7 February, the project's Steering Committee reviewed the progress made and adopted a work plan for the next period. An additional 40 penitentiary medical staff benefitted from 2-day cascade trainings on health promotion and disease prevention. Courtesy of an advanced, practical First Aid course, 29 nurses and feldshers of prison hospitals and medical-sanitary units of penitentiary institutions enhanced their skills in the provision of initial medical aid in an emergency situation.
- VC U.S.A. "Support to Justice Sector Reform Initiatives in Azerbaijan": The launching conference of the project was organised on 14 February with the participation of representatives of state authorities, judges, prosecutors, lawyers and non-governmental organisations. Bilateral meetings with national partners were held on 13-15 February to discuss the modalities of the implementation of the project. Twenty-three judges, 22 judge assistants and court clerks, 23 prosecutors and 39 lawyers and human rights defenders were trained on the ECHR as a result of 4 seminars held in Baku.
- AP "Gender equality and Media Freedom in Azerbaijan": The launching conference of the project took place on 27 February in Baku with the participation of 35 representatives from state authorities, civil society, academia and international organisations. In March, the

project established a working group, consisting of 5 local media and gender experts to revise the Code of Ethics for Azerbaijani journalists from a gender equality perspective.

#### Other relevant activities

- 26 January: The HoO and DHoO held a meeting at the EU Delegation (Head of the Delegation, Head of Operations and International Aid and Cooperation Officer) to discuss the draft of the next CoE-Azerbaijan Action Plan;
- The HoO chaired the Steering Committee of the CoE/EU PGG Project on "Strengthening anti-money laundering in Azerbaijan" (05/02) and the Steering Committee within the EU-CoE Joint Project "Further Support to the Penitentiary Reform in Azerbaijan" (07/02). The HoO co-chaired the launching Conference of the project "Support to justice sector reform initiatives in Azerbaijan" (14/02) and the conference "Implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights" (15/02);
- The HoO chaired and delivered opening remarks at the Round table on Gender equality and media (27/02) and attended the conference on International Labour Standards on Equality and Non-Discrimination: Improving their application in Azerbaijan organised by the ILO (29/03);
- By letter of 5 March, the EU Delegation in Baku approved the no cost extension of the Civil Society Dialogue Project for 6 months starting 1 March 2018;
- 6 March: The CoE submitted the proposal "Strengthening resilience to radicalization through education for democracy in Azerbaijan (RESILIENCE)" for the funding opportunity SFOP0003673 - Promoting Human Rights and Religious Freedom, by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL);
- 14 March: The HoO and DHoO held a meeting at the EU Delegation (Head of the Delegation, Head of Operations and International Aid and Cooperation Officer) to discuss the PGG Phase II.



## **Belgrade**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 6, Project staff – 22, Total - 28.

During the reporting period, the Office implemented 10 projects, of which 9 are jointly funded with the EU (7 under the Horizontal Facility) and one by the Human Rights Trust Fund (HRTF).

### **State of implementation of projects**

- EU/CoE - HF "Enhancing human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons in Serbia": Experts' assessments/recommendations on pre-/post-release reintegration and inter-institutional cooperation mechanisms; strengthening deinstitutionalisation of social care institutions; and improvements to the inspection mechanisms of the Ministries of Health and of Social Affairs have been presented to stakeholders. Working Groups continue to develop Offender Behaviour Programmes; the police curriculum on ill-treatment and torture; and SOPs for medical screening. A 2-day workshop on model individual treatment plans for forensic psychiatric patients took place.
- EU/CoE - HF "Supporting Effective Remedies and Mutual Legal Assistance (SEMA)": In February, 18 prosecutors attended a second-phase Training-of-Trainers workshop on the ECHR Art. 3. Four workshops for civil law judges on drafting first instance judgments were organised in 4 appellate court jurisdictions, in cooperation with the Supreme Court of Cassation and the Judicial Academy (JA). With the JA and the Republic Public Prosecution, a 3-month online HELP course on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters was launched for a group of 15 trainee prosecutors guided by two local mentors.
- EU/CoE - HF "Strengthening legal guarantees for independent and impartial tribunals": Under the guidance of CoE experts and members of both the High Judicial and State Prosecutorial Councils, 80 judges and 80 prosecutors were trained on how to detect and counter risks of undue pressure at 8 one-day workshops held in 8 appellate court jurisdictions. The 3rd Steering Committee Meeting adopted a revised workplan, endorsing the dropping of activities now covered by Venice Commission expertise and agreeing new activities, including drafting operating procedures for the Commissioner for Prosecutorial Autonomy and further work on the ethics curriculum of the JA.
- EU/CoE - HF "Strengthen integrity and combat corruption in higher education in Serbia": The Baseline Assessment of Integrity in Higher Education in Serbia was published and disseminated, and public forums on academic ethics and integrity involving more than 80 students and faculty members took place on 7-8 March at the universities of Niš and Belgrade. The Rector of the University of Belgrade and the President of the Conference of Universities of Serbia addressed the ETINED plenary meeting in Strasbourg on 15-16 February, confirming Serbia's active participation in the ETINED and its significant network of high-level European higher education representatives.
- EU/CoE - HF "Fostering a Democratic School Culture": In February, senior officials of the Ministry of Education and other state education institutes took part in a peer-exchange visit on inclusion of refugees in education to the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. In March, Democratic School Day was celebrated in Novi Pazar, with more than 500 participants including the Mayor. The 20 pilot schools have begun to implement local action plans in their communities, and on the basis of their experience, revision of policy and quality standards at national level will be developed.

- EU/CoE - HF "Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia": At a training session in Sabac on 26-27 February, 20 judges from 8 regional courts learned how to better provide, in both civil and criminal proceedings, appropriate compensation for victims of human trafficking. An expert fact-finding mission to Belgrade took place on 19-21 March, in preparation for the drafting of an Opinion on, and recommendations for updating, the 2010 SOPs for victims of Human Trafficking, procedures which are, themselves, linked to the Transnational Referral Mechanism. The Leaflet on victims' rights was translated into Albanian, Romani and Hungarian.
- EU/CoE - HF "Strengthening the protection of national minorities": An international expert's Opinion on the draft Law on National Councils of National Minorities was provided to the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government, as was a local expert's report on the curricula and standards for elementary and secondary schools to the Ministry of Education. In February, the Steering Committee approved a revised work-plan, including the provision of small grants to 5 municipalities.
- EU/CoE JP "JUFREX": In close association and under grant agreements with the Judicial Academy and the Press Council, implementation of freedom of expression activities continued. A 2-day training session on the application of the ECHR principles and ECtHR case-law on Art. 10 was organised for 22 judges and prosecutors from Novi Sad. Initial stakeholder consultations for preparation of the study on media literacy took place, and the project team undertook detailed planning of the April 2018 study visit to the CoE and ECtHR of representatives of the judiciary from SEE. A ROM assessment took place in March.
- EU/CoE JP "ROMACTED": Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level": Cooperation has been established through initial field visits with Mayors and officials in 11 local self-governments: Vranje, Kragujevac, Subotica, Smederevo, Niš, Vrnjačka Banja, Prokuplje, Odžaci, Belgrade's City Municipality Zvezdara, City Municipality Palilula of Niš and Požarevac City Municipality Kostolac. The national programme support team began work with local Roma communities in these localities to identify how they may participate more effectively with local governance structures in the process of problem identification and solution.
- VC HRTF "HELP in the Western Balkans": Six HELP online courses covering 5 topics (Anti-discrimination; Data protection and privacy rights; International cooperation in criminal matters; Introduction to the ECHR; Violence against women) were launched in Serbia (as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia") for selected groups of legal professionals. HELP online courses will be implemented over a 3-month period under the HELP in the Western Balkans project and/or in cooperation with other CoE projects and HF actions.
- EU/CoE – HF "Expertise Coordination Mechanism (ECM)": Following the request of the Ministry of Justice to the Venice Commission (VC) to provide assistance in the drafting of constitutional amendments pertaining to the judiciary, the VC-designated expert, James Hamilton, conducted a second visit to Belgrade on 10-11 January, consulting inter alia with the Minister of Justice and senior officials; the Public Prosecutor; the Assistant Minister of European Integration; the Director of the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society; civil society representatives and representatives of EUD. Mr Hamilton reported to the 114th Plenary session of the VC on 17 March.

#### Follow-up action

- EU/CoE – HF All Actions: Request(s) for extension pending with the EU;
- Future EU/CoE JP "Human resource management in local self-governments phase 2": Following EUD agreement in principle for IPA 2017 funding, detailed planning and negotiation of content is now under way with all stakeholders, and the contract is expected to be signed in the following Quarter.

Other relevant activities

- 25 January: The HoO attended an official Franco-German event in Belgrade marking the 50th Anniversary of the Elysée Treaty, and on 30 January, he joined senior diplomatic representatives in Belgrade in consultations with Adama Dieng, UN U-S-G and Special Adviser of the UN S-G on the Prevention of Genocide;
- 26 January: Data Protection Day was marked in Belgrade by the launch, attended by the HoO, of the report of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection. On the same day, the DHoO attended the ceremony organised by the Government of Serbia to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day at the Monument to victims of genocide during the Second World War;
- 8 February: The DHoO attended a conference on the Western Balkan Strategy where Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, was among the panellists;
- 8 March: International Women's Day was marked. The Office participated in 2 events, both organised by the Government's Coordination Body for Gender Equality.

**CoE high level visits and other official delegations**

- 19-22 February: The Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muiznieks, undertook an official visit to Serbia meeting with national authorities (including the Prime Minister) and NGOs;
- 25 February-2 March: A Delegation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages undertook an on-the-spot assessment mission to Serbia, meeting with interlocutors in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Sombor and Kula.

## **Bucharest**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 0.5, Project staff – 24, Total – 24.5

C-PROC is responsible for implementation of cybercrime capacity building projects worldwide. During the reporting period, 5 projects with a combined budget of 28.5 million EUR were under implementation of which 4 were joint projects with the European Union and one was funded by voluntary contributions. The objectives of Cybercrime@EAP II and Cybercrime@EAP III projects were merged into the new project Cybercrime@EAP 2018.

### **State of implementation of projects**

- VC "Cybercrime@Octopus": The project contributed to the development of guidelines on capacity building on cybercrime by the European Commission (Brussels), of a guide by the United Nations (Office on Drugs and Crime and Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate) on electronic evidence and cooperation with service providers (Vienna), and a conference on Jurisdiction in Cyberspace (Ottawa, Canada). It also contributed to a review of Malaysia's readiness to join the Budapest Convention.
- EU/CoE - PGG Cybercrime@EAP 2018: The newly launched project continued to support project countries in the Eastern Partnership region in their efforts to reform cybercrime legislation, develop informed cybercrime strategies, networking and understanding for improved mutual legal assistance, and to ensure better dialogue between the public and private sector. The project launched 2 regional studies on "Threats and Challenges of Cybercrime" and an update of the "Study on Cybercrime and Cybersecurity Strategies in the Eastern Partnership region", and conducted a series of workshops in all Eastern Partnership States (EAP) engaging relevant stakeholders. The project supported the Prosecutor General's Office of Moldova in organising a 2-day workshop on effective public/private cooperation to facilitate the application of procedural powers under the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime. Mutual legal assistance authorities of the EAP region gained a better understanding of the role and tools of Eurojust and the use of the Budapest Convention to assist them in international cooperation on cybercrime and exchange of digital evidence, by attending a 2-day conference on Judicial Cooperation in The Hague. In a joint effort with the GLACY+ project, a Second Regional Cybercrime Cooperation Exercise was organised in Moldova, gathering law enforcement, Cyber Security Response Teams (CERTs) and Internet service providers from the EAP region as well as participants from GLACY+ countries. Finally, the project contributed to a planning session of the European Dialogue for Internet Governance (EuroDIG) by shaping the agenda of the event and maintaining the focus on cybercrime and electronic evidence themes for the upcoming EuroDIG 2018.
- EU/CoE JP "iPROCEEDS": The project continued to pilot the combined training course on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds for judges and prosecutors, successfully completing the first phase with trainings held in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Kosovo\*. In order to strengthen inter-agency cooperation, the project organised a Cybercrime Simulation Exercise for cybercrime investigators, digital forensics specialists, financial investigators, prosecutors as well as Financial Intelligence Department from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project supported existing public/private initiatives for information sharing and intelligence exchange on cybercrime. In this context, support was provided to the Cybercrime Unit in Montenegro in the organisation of a meeting for information sharing between criminal justice authorities and the private sector. A specialised workshop was held in Sarajevo, where police officers from the UK, Germany and Romania exchanged their knowledge and experience with Bosnian counterparts with respect to the

investigation and prosecution of online financial fraud and credit card fraud, and challenges posed by the Darknet and the use of bitcoins in online illegal activities. Through the project, the participation of representatives from project countries was ensured in the international conference on international judicial cooperation organised in partnership with Eurojust.

- EU/CoE JP "GLACY+ project on Global Action on Cybercrime Extended": Strengthened cybercrime and cyber security policies in priority and hub countries, as well as other countries from the respective regions. National authorities were advised in Uganda, Nepal and Burkina Faso on how to harmonise their current legal frameworks with the Budapest Convention. Support was also provided to Nigeria in finalising the discussion on the Digital Rights and Freedom Bill. Two international events were organised, one focused on cyber policies in Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries, and one focused on international coordination and cooperation between CERTs, Law Enforcement Agencies of GLACY+ countries on a simulated cybercrime exercise, in collaboration with the Cybercrime@EAP initiative. Policy dialogue was further strengthened thanks to the participation of GLACY+ representatives in events organised by other international organisations, such as Global Prosecutor E-crime Network (GPEN) in Indonesia, Internet Corporate for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in Puerto Rico, Bay of Bengal Initiative on Multi Sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in Bangladesh, Eurojust, Europol and European Cybercrime Training and Education Group (ECTEG) in The Hague, Netherlands. Capabilities of law enforcement agencies were further strengthened, both at the strategic level, through an advisory mission to the Sri Lankan Police on the setup of the cybercrime unit, and at the technical level, through participation in a specialised training for digital forensic units in Asia, organised by INTERPOL. Much progress was made with regard to judicial training on cybercrime, electronic evidence, international cooperation and data protection through training events and workshops in Morocco, Senegal, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, the latter involving also judicial officers from the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) countries. An international workshop was organised at Eurojust, with the participation of all GLACY+ countries and other countries involved in judicial cooperation, to improve the approach to judicial international and regional cooperation under the auspices of the Budapest Convention. The extension of the GLACY+ budget was approved by the European Commission and the project duration prolonged until February 2021.

- EU/CoE JP "CyberSouth": The inception period was extended to ensure the full involvement of the 5 priority countries. This led to delays in the initial assessment process. During the reporting period, activities focused on the finalisation of the inception reports and organisation of the Launching Conference which took place from 21-23 March in Tunisia. In conjunction with the Launching Conference, the first Steering Committee was organised and the workplan was approved. Moreover, a number of studies were launched on cybercrime legislation, training systems, cybercrime strategies and data protection rules. A judicial training workshop for magistrates was held in Lebanon presenting the legal provisions provided by Budapest Convention for cybercrime offences, exchange of digital evidence and international cooperation. The project supported the participation of representatives from project countries in the Eurojust Conference organised under GLACY+ with the aim of improving knowledge on international cooperation on cybercrime and the exchange of digital evidence. A one-day workshop was organised in Jordan, with the participation of authorities responsible for cybercrime, to promote the benefits of the project and to prepare for a more detailed assessment visit. Identification of synergies with ongoing projects in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region remains a focus of the project, hence project staff participated in 2 events held by other projects to engage in coordination.

ODGP/DER/Inf(2018)2

Follow up action

- Implementation of the project workplans as agreed upon for the second quarter of 2018;
- Organisation of the Steering Committees for GLACY+ and iPRODCEEDS.

Other relevant activities

- The UK made a voluntary contribution of GBP 50,000 to the project Cybercrime@Octopus;
- C-PROC hosted a visit of a GRECO Evaluation Team.

**Chisinau****Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 5, Project staff – 13, Total staff – 18.

The Office implemented 5 projects, of which 3 are jointly funded with the EU and 2 funded by VC/Donor (Denmark and Norway).

**State of implementation of projects/programmes/Action Plans/co-operation documents**

- EU/CoE - PGG "Supporting national efforts for prevention and combating discrimination in Moldova": The requested IT equipment was delivered to the beneficiary. The HELP non-discrimination course was translated into Romanian. Two-day training courses on non-discrimination and equality were delivered to judges and prosecutors and a one-day training course on the same topic was delivered to clerks and judge assistants. On 1 March, the international conference "Law 121 on ensuring equality – 5 years in force" was organised jointly with the Equality Council. Video and audio spots developed for the awareness raising campaign were coordinated and approved for broadcasting.
- VC Denmark "Support to Criminal Justice Reforms in the Republic of Moldova": Several training courses on ECtHR case law, ill-treatment related topics and HELP took place at the National Institute of Justice with around 200 participants and a pool of 20 HELP trainers was created. The Prosecution Service was supported with technical equipment (computers, printers, server, etc) and the Intranet system for the Ombudsperson's office was delivered. The project finalised its implementation with the Closing Conference held on 21 March, presenting results and achievements.
- AP "Promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova": The programme was launched on 1 February and implementation started on 1 March, funded by Norway. As part of the inception phase, on 21-23 March, meetings with relevant stakeholders at national level were organised to present the expected outcomes of the programme. In addition, a coordination meeting, with representatives of international organisations currently implementing initiatives aimed at supporting the reform of the criminal justice system, was organised on 22 March. The official launching of the programme and the first Steering Committee meeting are planned for 26 April.
- EU/CoE JP "Promoting media freedom and pluralism in the Republic of Moldova": The project supported the setting up of the Documentary Films Department of Teleradio-Moldova (Telefilm-Chisinau), which was opened in February. Journalists benefited from a comprehensive range of activities aimed at improving editorial policies and the existing TV and radio content of the public broadcaster, in particular those on EU policies. The project also provided specialised TV and radio equipment, which enables journalists to produce high-quality TV and radio content, in particular documentary films. The first documentary film produced by Telefilm-Chisinau was broadcast in March 2018.
- EU/CoE JP "Controlling Corruption through Law Enforcement and Prevention (CLEP)": CLEP delivered to the Assets Recovery Office 2 essential documents for its operationalisation and budgeting process: a comprehensive needs assessment and Standard Operating Procedures. With the aim of reducing the number and increasing the quality of suspicious transactions reporting, CLEP conducted 3 workshops with reporting entities (banks, insurance and securities, etc.) to explain the new reporting system and apply it through practical exercises. About 120 participants took part in the activity. Training for public officials on monitoring and reporting on local anti-corruption plans are ongoing.

### Other relevant activities

- 13 February: The Head of Office *ad interim* held an introductory meeting with the new Deputy Prime Minister for Interethnic Relations;
- 27 February: The Head of Office *ad interim* delivered opening remarks at the screening of the first documentary film of Telefilm Chisinau, part of the public broadcaster Teleradio Moldova, together with the Head of the EU Delegation;
- 1 March: The Head of Office *ad interim* delivered opening remarks at an international conference on "Law 121 on Ensuring Equality, 5 years in force", together with the Head of the EU Delegation;
- 16-17 March: Venice Commission opinions on the amendments in the electoral code, on the right of association and on constitutional amendments relating to the judiciary were published;
- 21 March: The Head of Office *ad interim* delivered opening remarks at the Closing Conference of the project "Support to Criminal Justice Reforms in the Republic of Moldova", together with the State Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice, the General Prosecutor and the Ombudsperson.

### **Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations**

- 29 January and 5-6 February: Venice Commission delegations visited Moldova to assess amendments to the electoral code and constitutional amendments relating to the judiciary respectively;
- 9 February: Several meetings were held by the Venice Commission from Strasbourg via teleconference using the facilities of the Chisinau Office to assess amendments regarding the right of association;
- 19-20 February: The Director General of DGI, Christos Giakomopoulos, paid a visit to Moldova, meeting with the Minister of Justice, General Prosecutor and the Supreme Court to introduce the new project on promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova.



**Kyiv****Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 11, Project staff – 26, Total staff – 37.

In the framework of the CoE Action Plan for Ukraine 2015-2017, the Office implemented 19 projects, including 13 projects funded by voluntary contributions and 6 funded under the CoE/EU PGG.

**State of implementation of projects/programmes**

- EU/CoE – PGG “Support to the implementation of the judicial reform in Ukraine”: The project finalised its assistance to the High Council of Justice concerning the new power of guaranteeing judicial independence. CoE standards in this area were reflected in the first yearly independence report of the High Council of Justice – the report synthesized the relevant work of the High Council of Justice in this regard. The judges of the Grand Chamber of the new Ukrainian Supreme Court received initial information on CoE recommendations related to the mechanism of the reopening of judicial proceedings following an ECtHR judgment and the judges were provided with advice as to the approach towards the execution of a series of ECtHR judgments, including *Burmych and others v. Ukraine*. The project was completed on 28 February.
- VC Denmark “Continued Support to the Criminal Justice Reform in Ukraine”: In February, the project undertook a number of activities to enhance the system of recruitment and promotion in the Ukrainian prosecution service. A round table with the participation of the Council of Prosecutors (CP), Qualification and Disciplinary Commission of Prosecutors (QDCP), GPO, National Academy of Prosecutors, judiciary, system of free legal aid (FLA), civil society, international and national experts allowed to share the best practices of the CoE member States, as well the modern practices of HR management, and to agree on the directions for improvement of the Ukrainian system. Following the round table, 2 workshops were conducted for the CP and the QDCP respectively, where the participants learned to apply the HR management methodology and tools in the implementation of their functions in relation to prosecutorial career management. In February, in the course of expert consultations on the draft Law on amending some legislative acts in connection with the adoption of the Constitutional amendments on judiciary, positions of key stakeholders and the ways to proceed with the draft in line with CoE standards were discussed. In March, expert consultations/scoping mission on legal aid governance models and independence were organised jointly by the CJR Project and the Canadian Project “Quality and Accessible Legal Aid”.
- VC UK “Consolidating Ukraine’s Justice Sector Reform”: The project has succeeded in engaging the High Council of Justice in the planned scheme to monitor the progress of the Justice Sector Reform using the Progress Review Methodology. The High Qualification Commission of Judges and National School of Judges are the other two major beneficiaries of the PRM component. The project is bringing to an end the phase of reviewing and adjusting progress indicators and reporting for these institutions, and the online monitoring database is being developed by a hired IT consultant and is to be finalised by July 2018 for acting beneficiaries.
- AP “Decentralisation and territorial consolidation in Ukraine”: Following a request from the Parliamentary Committee on LSG, the project prepared a Comparative Overview on the organisation and statutes of administrations of parliamentary assemblies (CELGR(2018)1 as of 17 Jan) and Opinion on the proposal to appoint deputy city mayors following a competitive procedure (CELGR/LEX(2018)1 as of 12 February). The Programme has also

contributed to raising awareness of the decentralisation reform in Ukraine through organising, jointly with the DPM Zubko, a presentation about the findings of the annual opinion poll on decentralisation and announcing in co-operation with the Ministry of Regional Development the third National media contest on coverage of decentralisation reform. Moreover, in February the Programme contributed to strengthening leadership capacities of 15 local officials (jointly with USAID-funded program DOBRE) and representatives of pilot amalgamated communities on modern human resources management tools. The Programme ended on 28 February.

- AP "Strengthening Capacities of Local Elected Authorities in Ukraine": During the reporting period a workshop "Gender equality at local level: challenges and opportunities in Ukraine" was organised jointly with the Association of Ukrainian Cities to discuss the challenges and opportunities related to gender equality at local level in Ukraine. This workshop aimed to promote gender mainstreaming in the work of local authorities, and more particularly the role of national associations of local authorities in supporting their members in this respect. Following peer exchanges between representatives of European associations of local and regional authorities and inputs from local and international experts, the participants developed local plans of actions for further gender equality to coordinate between national strategies and individual initiatives implemented at the local level. The project was completed on 28 February.

- AP "Assistance to the Ukrainian authorities in reforming electoral legislation and in conducting constitutional reforms": During February-March, the project supported regional round tables in Sumy, Lviv, Lutsk and Uzhorod to facilitate discussions on the current problems and prospects for improving the electoral legislation for local elections, as well as on adoption of the Electoral Code, on which the Parliament voted in the first reading on 7 November 2017. Also, on 19 February, the second regular meeting of the group of developers of the training course for judges "Election Dispute Court" took place at the National School of Judges.

- AP "Reform of the electoral practice in Ukraine": 2017 gender peer review results were presented and discussed during the meeting of the national experts' working group to develop amendments to the Parliamentary rules of procedure in the field of gender expertise of draft legislation. Supporting and reference materials for the training course for judges on electoral law and election dispute resolution were presented and discussed at the second meeting of the experts' working group. The Ukrainian translation of the ECtHR Guide on Article 3 Protocol 1 to the ECHR was revised and updated as per its 2017 English version. The project was completed on 28 February.

- AP "Promoting civil participation in democratic decision-making in Ukraine": The pilot academy, a 3-day training exercise took place from 18 to 20 January with 51 participants (31 representatives of NGOs, representing different social groups, and 20 public officials from the Kyiv City Council Secretariat and Kyiv City State Administration). Informal communication and interaction between NGOs and public officials, role-playing and interactive exercises, including a joint elaboration of draft guidelines on public consultations and participatory policy-making in Kyiv were ensured, which strengthened mutual trust and recognition. In addition, public officials together with NGOs elaborated an action plan of public consultations on the development and implementation of a Kyiv water resources strategy and on amendments to the municipal regulations on participatory budgeting. The project was completed on 28 January.

- AP "Strengthening the Human Rights Protection of IDPs in Ukraine": On 21 February, the final Steering Committee Meeting took place in Kyiv to take stock of project results and achievements. With the project's expert contribution, the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 422 on the Order of Forming and Allocation of Temporary Housing and this was amended in January to provide temporary housing solutions for IDPs. Since January 2018 the newly formed Ukrainian Supreme Court has delivered a number of rulings against State Pension

Fund of Ukraine recognising the unlawfulness of the suspension of pension payments to IDPs based on the Cabinet's regulation № 365. The role of judiciary in the protection of IDPs in line with CoE standards was discussed on 23 March at the round table "Property Rights of IDPs" that was organised by the project following the initiative of the Supreme Court.

- AP "Strengthening freedom of media and establishing a public broadcasting system in Ukraine": A new model of funding of the Ukrainian Public Broadcaster UA:PBC was discussed at a round table organised by the project for international experts and MPs on 28 February. Open debates on the draft concept of national minorities' broadcasting on UA:PBC was held on 13 February. The project team contributed to discussion «Gender equality in media and advertising: European standards and Ukrainian reality» held in Kyiv on 23 March. A video on results of the CoE media projects in Ukraine was produced. The project ended on 28 February.

- AP "Combating violence against women and children in Ukraine": Both HELP courses on Child-friendly Justice and VAW and DV were adapted into the Ukrainian legal order and launched officially in a joint kick-off meeting on 24 January. Ukraine was the first country to adapt and launch the HELP course on CFJ. The tested approach with lessons learnt will be used in other countries adapting the HELP course on CFJ. A total of 30 judges and 30 prosecutors, adding to the HELP ToT tutors (4 prosecutors and 4 judges for each thematic area) attended the kick-off meeting. Moreover, the HELP Guidebook on Human Rights training methodology for legal professionals ensured the coherent implementation of ToTs throughout the CoE member States. Successful participants were certified on 25 January and included in a list of certified HELP trainers. Finally, the Project Steering Committee meeting took place on 25 January to take stock of project achievements, conclusions and lessons learnt. The project ended on 28 February.

- CoE/EU PGG "Strengthening the implementation of European HRs standards in Ukraine": The project provided expert support in reviewing the professional skills tests to be used for selection of the State Bureau of Investigation's central and regional staff. At a working dinner with CoE high level officials and the SBI leadership on 27 March the participants discussed the SBI's institutional development process and defined priorities for cooperation in the future. Furthermore, the project contributed to strengthening operational capacities of the Ombudsperson Office in the efficient implementation of the NPM through delivering 2-day training on stress management. Finally, the project carried out a series of working meetings with the National Prosecutor Academy that resulted in the commitment of the Academy to pilot the HELP on-line course on prohibition of ill-treatment in law-enforcement starting from May 2018. The project was completed on 28 February.

- CoE/EU PGG project "Further support for penitentiary reform in Ukraine": On 15 February, following the initiative of the Justice Ministry, the Kyiv-based CoE Gender Adviser delivered a gender awareness Q&A session to the staff of the Penitentiary Inspection Department. At the event, all the participants received the Fact Sheets "Women in Prison" prepared by the CoE Anti-Torture Committee. On 15-16 March a 2-day workshop on fighting ill-treatment in prisons and introducing the newly developed standards for internal penitentiary inspections took place in Kharkiv, attracting 60 prison staff of the North-East Interregional Administration of the Criminal Executive Service.

- CoE/EU PGG "Freedom of Media in Ukraine": The project organised a number of meetings and expert discussions with regard to the ongoing media reforms. As a result, the sectoral Parliamentary Committee confirmed its readiness to request an expertise on the Draft Law on Audio Visual Services; representatives of all Parliamentary factions raised awareness among the MPs on the financial and editorial independence of the Public Broadcaster; CoE and European standards on gender and non-discrimination were presented at the discussion to about 80 participants.

- CoE/EU PGG "Fight against Corruption": The project focused its actions mainly on the inception of activities under Expected Results 2 and 3, related to the development of training

courses on aspects of adjudicating economic crimes and the delivery of associated pilot and train-the-trainers trainings. Accordingly, the project team carried out a series of consultative meetings with the key beneficiary of the project, the National School of Judges, with the aim of agreeing on steps and timelines, as well as determining specific needs for tailoring upcoming training and capacity building actions. To this end, steps were taken to engage international and local experts to collaborate with the Working Groups set up by the NSJ.

### **Gender mainstreaming**

In January, the gender adviser carried out a session on lessons learned on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in 2017, as well as on gender mainstreaming in reporting, at the Office. She provided basic training on gender equality and gender mainstreaming to the penitentiary inspections department of the Ministry of Justice. The gender adviser also attended various project activities to speak about gender equality and gender mainstreaming, including the gender and media seminar, the seminar on the prosecution services career management, and the public participatory policy academy. She continued to support gender mainstreaming in the project proposals that are being developed as well as actively contributing to the development of the gender mainstreaming toolkit for the PMM.

### **Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations**

- 30-31 January: FCNM and ECRML;
- 21-23 February: Regis Brillat, SASG to Ukraine;
- 26 February-1 March: Sadet Karabulut, PACE;
- 19-21 March: PACE Monitoring Committee;
- 26-27 March: Christos Giakoumopoulos, Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law.

## **Pristina**

Core staff- 6, Project staff - 15, Total - 21.

The Office implements 9 projects, of which 8 are jointly funded with the EU (of which 2 are regional joint programmes) and one project that is funded by voluntary contributions from Switzerland, Norway and by the CoE budget. Another project is also implemented in Kosovo\* by the Bucharest Office for Cybercrime: the EU/CoE regional joint project "*iPROCEEDS*".

### **State of implementation of projects**

- EU/CoE JP "Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo\*" (PECK II): PECK II held preparatory and explanatory meetings on AC and AML/CFT assessments, a working group meeting on targeted financial sanctions related to terrorism financing and financing of proliferation, and a 2-day training on Monitoring and Reporting on Corruption Risks. It presented the Analysis of the Integrity System of the central administrative bodies in Kosovo. It supported the Ministry of Justice with the organisation of a public event to mark International Whistleblower Day, and meetings on drafting the Law on Protection of Whistleblowers.
- EU/CoE – HF "Strengthening the Quality and Efficiency of Justice (KoSEJ)": Courts have introduced CEPEJ indicators when reporting to Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) on court performance to monitor their evolution over time and this has become mandatory as of 1 March upon the KJC's decision. The Action, together with USAID's Justice System Strengthening Program (JSSP), worked with the KJC Statistics Department to start monitoring the length of proceedings. Statistical reports (to be generated through the Case Management Information System-CMIS when operational) were developed. The Action has been preparing a report analysing the results of the court users' satisfaction surveys conducted last November.
- EU/CoE – HF "Strengthening integrity and combating corruption in higher education": The Action has been providing legal expertise on the draft law on higher education to the Ministry of Education (MEST). Following the dismissal of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) from the European Quality Assurance Register, MEST requested assistance, notably from the Action, to draft an Administrative instruction on the criteria and procedures to appoint members to the Quality Council of the KAA. With the support of the Action, a MEST representative and a University of Pristina representative participated in the second ETINED plenary meeting in Strasbourg in February.
- EU/CoE – HF "Fostering a democratic school culture and diversity in schools": The 26 April was established as the official date for "Diversity day" by the MEST. The Action organised a workshop for 20 school directors on "democratic school leadership" in February, as well as 2 regional peer-learning events with pilot schools in March. Over 230 participants attended thematic workshops on competences for democratic culture. A workshop was also organised on gender roles/stereotypes. A policy roadmap is being prepared for guiding policy-makers in the education sector on how to promote experience from the field into policy-making level.
- EU/CoE – HF "Enhancing human rights policing": The launching event and first Steering Committee were organised in January. Two 4-day needs assessment missions were carried out, one on the Police Inspectorate's functional and operational independence and training needs, and one on the training curricula, modules, teaching methods, materials and tools applied for in-service training courses for police officers on human rights, police ethics and prevention of ill-treatment. Needs assessment reports will be shared with the beneficiary when finalised.

- EU/CoE – HF “Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners”: The Kosovo Correctional Service adopted the training strategy drafted with the assistance of the CoE. Prison inspectors from 3 correctional institutions benefited from on-site coaching sessions based on the working methodology drafted by the CoE. Two offender treatment programmes for short term and long term prisoners were launched in two correctional institutions, and prison healthcare staff received training on medical ethics. An additional 100 correctional officers were trained on dynamic security. A working methodology for the Prison Inspectorate was prepared.
- VC Switzerland/AP “Strengthening the National Preventive Mechanism in Kosovo\* (SNPM)”: A 4-day theoretical module on general prison monitoring was delivered (for NPM staff, Ombudsperson staff and relevant NGOs), as well as a 3-day practical module including a monitoring visit of the NPM to the largest correctional facility in Kosovo\*, Dubrava Prison, as part of the NPM annual programme of visits to places of deprivation of liberty. The project also provided further support to the development of the NPM annual operational and visits plan as well as to drafting its internal regulation on the NPM staff entitlements. The project held its second Steering Committee meeting.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)”: JUFREX organised training on local and international standards on defamation and a legal clinic for lawyers. Two cascade trainings for judges and prosecutors, from all over Kosovo\*, were organised in close cooperation with the Academy of Justice in February and March. The negotiation for the grant agreement with the Press Council is at its final stage. The ROM assessment, which includes Kosovo\*, was conducted in March. A study visit for judges, prosecutors and lawyers to the Council of Europe, including the ECHR and JUFREX Steering Committee is under preparation.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED)”: Meetings with relevant ministries, institutions and eight beneficiary municipalities were held during the reporting period. The MoU was drafted and presented to the beneficiary municipalities to frame the cooperation with the project. Guidelines on defining the role and procedures of the Community Action Group (CAG) and the Institutional Working Group have been initiated. Community meetings have started and two CAG members have been identified. The cycle of community meetings is expected to be completed by the end of April. The project kick-off Conference for Kosovo\* is planned in May.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Targeting crime proceeds on the Internet in South-eastern Europe and Turkey (iPROCEEDS)”: iPROCEEDS in cooperation with the Academy of Justice organised in Pristina a 4-day introductory training module on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds for judges, prosecutors and members of the Police Inspectorate. The project also held a working group meeting with the Financial Intelligence Unit in Pristina to prevent money laundering in the online environment. It also facilitated the participation of 2 Kosovo\* representatives from the Office of Prosecutor and Ministry of Justice, in the international conference on Judicial Cooperation in Cybercrime Matters in the Hague, Netherlands.

#### Follow up action

- Publication and dissemination of the 4th Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities to all relevant stakeholders/institutions;
- HF-Higher Education Action: Conference on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Higher Education with the main stakeholders to take place in April in Pristina;
- PECK II: to organise AC and AML/CFT assessment process activities including on-site visits;

- KoSEJ: to hold a workshop to support CMIS implementation in cooperation with the KJC/KPC Italian/French Twinning Project and the USAID/JSSP Project;
- NPM project: to attend the Western Balkans NPM Conference scheduled in June in Pristina;
- Preparation for the project "Fostering rapprochement through education for democracy and language learning" to promote intercultural dialogue, inclusion and access to learning the official languages of Kosovo\*.

#### Other relevant activities

- The Office took part in different international conferences organised by various IGOs present in Kosovo\* (EU, UNMIK, OSCE, KFOR) inter alia in the field of protection of minorities, vulnerable groups (LGBTI, women), and media issues;
- UNMIK translated into Albanian and Serbian the 4th Opinion of the AC/FCNM;
- The Office together with relevant CoE implemented projects takes part in the exercise of Functional Review of the Rule of Law Sector. The Concept Note on the functional review makes numerous references to the CoE bodies, standards and instruments;
- The Office continues to take an active part in various donor activities coordination mechanisms with a view to promoting the Council of Europe's work, ensuring efficiency of activities implementation and avoiding duplication.

\*All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo

## **Sarajevo**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 6, Project staff – 10, Total staff – 16.

The Sarajevo Office directly implements 6 projects, 4 projects within the EU/CoE Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey, one funded by the CoE ordinary budget and one funded by the UK. In addition, the Office contributes to the implementation of 2 regional projects, Joint Programme with the EU on media and Joint Project on with EU on Roma empowerment at local level.

### **State of implementation of projects / the Action Plan**

- EU/CoE – HF “Enhancing human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons in BiH”: Three ToT sessions reaffirmed the capacity to deliver human rights-based training programmes among law enforcement agencies. The core prison staff training team are mentoring their police colleagues in further embedding standardised procedures for dealing with persons deprived of liberty into practice. Two meetings with the senior management of all 14 prisons in BiH provided the opportunity to discuss and plan the application of knowledge and skills acquired during the recent training cycles on meaningful activities and treatment, as well as aligning health care practices in prisons with those available in the community. These activities will be supported by the enhanced role of prison inspectors who agreed on a common set of standards to adhere to when inspecting the work of prison staff. Drafting of the Protocols for the treatment of forensic patients commenced in close cooperation with the management of the Forensic Psychiatric Institution in Sokolac to foster implementation of the CPT recommendations from previous visits to BiH. The core prison staff training team was accredited for its original competence to deliver human rights based training in closed environment across the law enforcement sector. The Action’s Steering Committee signed off on the progress made in the implementation of the project and made the necessary adjustments to the work plan. A study visit to the Slovak Republic provided the opportunity to exchange experiences and learn about a more developed jurisdiction and common issues revolving around the provision of health care to persons deprived of liberty in closed environment.
- EU/CoE – HF “Strengthening the Human Rights Ombudsman to fight discrimination”: An advisory and assessment mission was organised to BiH from 22–26 January with the objective of having consultations with the IHRO BiH, international organisations, civil society and other relevant public institutions in order to assess the advocacy activities of the Ombudsperson, which will be followed by a report. The Anti-discrimination Manual for public institutions, civil society and media was distributed throughout BiH. Presentations of the AD Manual and AD database, for public institutions and NGOs were organised. Three separate anti-discrimination on-line HELP courses were launched; for staff members of the Gender centres in BiH, the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR) of BiH and CSOs, for the judiciary on and for staff members and interns of the Ombudsperson. A 2-day regional conference: “Exchange of best practices of addressing human rights violations with a special focus on combating discrimination” for National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) of the Western Balkans and Turkey was held on 15-16 February in Sarajevo. The role and efficiency of the Ombudsperson Institution has been assessed during the mission organised to BiH from 12 – 16 March. Recommendations for a better functioning of the Institution will be summarised in a report. A 2-day seminar for the judiciary on protection against discrimination was held from 22–23 March in Teslic.



- EU/CoE – HF “Strengthening the protection of national minorities in BiH”: the official project implementation started in March. Visibility material for the promotion of the project (roll-up banners, flyers, pens, etc) has been designed and approved. The set up and membership of the action specific Steering committee has been agreed with the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees who will have a leading role in the implementation of the action. The updated version of the project workplan has been prepared.
- EU/CoE – HF “Quality education in multi-ethnic societies”: The project was launched on 27 February in the Parliament of BiH outlining its main objectives. The audience included ministry officials, embassy representatives, other international organisations (OSCE), academics and NGOs. The first project Steering Board meeting was held on 27 February, following the launching event. The project is implemented in close cooperation with the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the EU Delegation’s Political Department..
- AP “Strengthening Democratic Electoral Culture and the Role of Young Political Leaders” School of Political Studies: The selection of the participants of the SPS BiH, generation 2018, was completed in the second half of February. More than 100 applications with CVs and letters of motivation have been received after the Call for Applications was published in January, and also after direct contact with political parties in BiH, civil society, media, various institutions and the alumni network of the school. A group of 35 participants has been selected in accordance with established criteria. Selected participants are mostly young politicians (26), but there are also representatives of the media and civil society (10). It is important to underline that the participants come from the all over Bosnia and Herzegovina and from different political parties from both entities with an equal gender balance.
- VC UK “Supporting reintegration of violent and extremist prisoners in BiH”: A total of 5 activities were implemented during the reporting period. Senior level policy makers met in mid-January and endorsed the project, in particular the Manual on assessment and rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners in BiH and approved its use in prisons. Representatives from law-enforcement agencies and staff from 8 prisons in BiH met in mid-February in order to discuss possible means of cooperation in order to facilitate effective reintegration of violent extremist prisoners taking into consideration the lack of institutional post-penal assistance. The general conclusion was that the exchange of information between police agencies and prisons needs to be further enhanced through a series of institutionalised multiagency meetings that will be held on a regular basis. A series of 3 training sessions was held over the course of 3 months (January – March). A total of 41 prison staff (20 treatment officers and 21 security officers) were trained to apply the Risk and needs assessment tool and intervention programmes for violent extremist prisoners, thereby ensuring the protection of their human rights.

Implementation in BiH of regional projects (see also under ‘Belgrade Office’)

- JP EU/CoE “Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe” (JUFREX): A training course for judges and prosecutors, organised by the Center for the Education of Judges and Prosecutors of FBiH, gathered together 19 participants who were trained on balancing protected speech in defamation cases. Four inter-professional seminars also gathered over 120 participants from both the judiciary and media communities in BiH who discussed topics such as: ethical standards in journalism and freedom of expression, journalists’ safety and protection, defamation and journalism in BiH and how to avoid it, and political pressures on journalists as a limitation to freedom of expression. The seminars were organised in partnership with Association of BiH Journalists and Press Council of BiH.
- JP EU/CoE “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level” (ROMACTED): During the reporting period, 10 of the programme’s beneficiary municipalities were visited in order to present ROMACTED, to confirm their dedication and to create a joint

action plan for the implementation of the programme. Mayors and municipal representatives, from 10 municipalities, all welcomed the programme, and preliminary action points were agreed. In addition, a series of meetings were conducted with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, in order to align programme activities with the National Roma Strategy. ROMACTED fully corresponds to the strategy and the MHRR is fully supportive of all of the activities proposed. Additionally, the MHRR sent a letter of support to all mayors once again confirming that ROMACTED is of major importance to BiH. Possibilities for cooperation and synergy were explored with UNDP ReLoad project, OSCE, Care International and World Vision. The ROMACTED programme was officially launched in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 20 March. The launching conference gathered together representatives of local and national authorities, Roma representatives, and representatives of the local and international community. Mayors and municipal representatives, from 10 municipalities, Bijeljina, Brčko, Donji Vakuf, Gradiška, Kakanj, Prnjavor, Tuzla, Visoko, Vukosavlje and Travnik and the HoO signed the Memorandum of Cooperation, once again confirming the commitment towards Roma inclusion.

#### Other relevant activities

- 5 February: HoO attended and gave an introductory speech at the presentation of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees' anti-discrimination database and promotion of Manual on AD for civil servants, civil society and media, in Tuzla, organised by the CoE. On the same day HoO met with Mayor of Tuzla, Jasmin Imamovic, representatives of the Ministry of Education of Tuzla Canton as well as with representatives of the Association EURO ROM from Tuzla;
- 15 February: HoO attended and gave an introductory speech at the Regional conference of the National Human Rights institutions on their role in administrative and judicial proceedings, organised by the Council of Europe;
- 20 February: HoO attended and gave an introductory speech at the presentation of AD data base and AD handbook for public institutions, judiciary and CSOs, in Mostar, organised by the CoE. 27 February: HoO attended and gave an introductory speech at the launching conference of the CoE BiH project "Quality education in multi-ethnic societies";
- 28 February: HoO attended handover ceremony of answers to the EC questionnaire for the preparation of Opinion of the application of BiH for the EU as well as the address by President Juncker to a joint session of the BiH Parliament;
- 5 March: HoO met with Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, Ms Zeljka Cvijanovic, as well as with Minister of Local Self-governance of Republika Srpska, Lejla Resic and President of PDP Borislav Borenovic, to whom he presented the new projects of the Council of Europe, on education, minorities and Roma;
- 6 March: HoO attended and gave an introductory speech at the presentation of the AD data base and AD handbook for public institutions, judiciary and CSOs, in Banja Luka, he also met with the Human Rights Ombudsman of BiH, Ljubinko Mitrovic;
- 8 March: DHoO gave an introductory speech at the Thematic session on gender equality of the House of Representatives of the PABiH;
- 10 March: HoO attended and gave an introductory speech at the closing activity of the project "Together into the Fire", financed by in Doboje;
- 16 March: DHoO gave an introductory speech at the Regional conference on the implementation of the Istanbul convention, organised by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees;
- 20 March: HoO gave an introductory speech at the launching Conference of the Joint CoE/EU ROMACTED Programme on "Promoting Good Governance and Roma Empowerment at Local Level". On the same day, the DHoO gave introductory speech at the Second International Conference on Cyber Security.

## **Tbilisi**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 5, Project staff – 11, Total staff - 16.

The Office implements 9 projects, of which 4 are funded by the EU/jointly funded with the EU and 5 are funded by VC/Donor.

### **State of implementation of projects/programmes**

- AP "Support to the Judicial Reform in Georgia": A study has been finalised on the Supreme Court judges' selection criteria and procedures, in line with the new Constitution of Georgia. The newly established Independent Inspector's needs were assessed, followed by recommendations on further capacity-building. Outcomes of the conflict of interest rules in judiciary-related legislation were presented to the High Council of Justice members. Support has been extended to the "Winter School of Justice" to further enhance judicial assistants and analytical unit representatives' drafting, reasoning, and research skills. The project continues to provide expertise to the Parliamentary Working Group on the "4th wave" of the judicial reform.
- EU/CoE – PGG "Application of the European Convention on Human Rights and harmonisation of national legislation and judicial practice in line with European Standards in Georgia": Sixty-one prosecutors were made more aware of fair trial standards following ECHR standards and the case-law of the ECtHR. Forty-five judges and staff members of analytical units updated their knowledge on the reopening procedure of court cases following a judgment of the ECtHR and the implementation of the Restitutio in Integrum principle.
- AP "Strengthening the capacity of the High School of Justice of Georgia": On 23 January the closing ceremony of the project was organised. The event was attended by the top level Management of the High School of Justice, representatives of the High Council of Justice and the Government of Georgia, and representatives of embassies of donor states and other international actors, as well as leading NGOs working in the field of justice. The participants reviewed the projects' results and their sustainability, and pointed to the importance of further reform of the School and the continuous training of judges.
- EU/CoE – PGG "The Council of Europe Programme to support Georgia in view of the 2016 (parliamentary), 2017 (local) and 2018 (presidential) elections": In March 2018, the CoE co-organised, together with IFES, a one-day conference "2017 Municipal Elections – the Lessons Learned and Next Steps," with more than 80 participants. The Conference aimed at engaging the government, politicians, the Central Election Commission, the State Audit Office, civil society, media, and the international community, in drawing lessons from the organisation and management of the 2017 local elections in view of compliance with European and international standards and for further improving the electoral process in Georgia. The conference also provided a platform to discuss expected challenges ahead of the 2018 presidential election.
- AP "Improving mental health care of persons detained in Georgia": The new project was launched on 1 January. The first 6 month period of the project has been planned and the work plan of the project confirmed with the steering committee members. The first working group meeting to identify and discuss the problems existing in the mental health related legislation was organised with the participation of involved agencies and the deputy ministers of the MoC.
- AP "Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Georgia": The project started on 1 February and runs until October . The online HELP course on combatting violence against women and domestic violence was launched for Georgian

prosecutors. The course will continue for three months and will be supervised by a national tutor.

- EU/CoE JP “Combating money laundering and terrorism financing”: The second Steering Committee Meeting of the project took place on 23 February, where the progress achieved so far and the work plan for 2018 were discussed. A workshop on the draft law on “Facilitating the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing” was organised on 29 March; the legal opinion provided by the experts of the Council of Europe on this legislative initiative was discussed, with a view to identifying gaps and strengthening the draft law in line with international standards.
- AP “Fight against discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech in Georgia”: On 14-15 February an inception visit to Georgia took place within the project. The official launching of the project is planned to take place in June.

#### Other relevant activities

- 27 February: The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme was officially launched in Georgia;
- HoO presented opening remarks at the Parliament Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee activity report presentation for 2017 (on 26 January), the Kick-off meeting of the HELP course “Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence” (22 February), the Winter School of Justice (24 February), the roundtable on Conflict of interests: application of European and international standards (28 March), the Workshop on the Council of Europe Legal Opinion on Draft Law of Georgia on “Facilitating the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing in Georgia” (29 March), and the workshop for judges at Supreme Court on “Reopening court cases following judgments of the ECtHR” (30 March). He also acted as a moderator at the 8th Annual Meeting of Election Management Bodies (28 February - 1 March) and the Post-Election Conference “The 2017 Municipal Elections: Lessons Learned and Steps Ahead” (13 March).

#### **Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations**

- 22-24 March: A delegation of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers’ Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM) paid a visit to Georgia. The delegation had meetings with the President of Georgia, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Minister of Justice, the High Council of Justice, the Deputy Minister of Corrections, international organisations, as well as representatives of NGOs.

## **Tirana**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 6, Project staff – 15, Total staff - 21.

The Office implements 11 projects, out of which 10 are co-funded by the EU and one by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC).

### **State of implementation of projects / programmes / Action Plans / co-operation documents**

- VC Switzerland “Strengthening the local government structures in Albania”: The framework of the collaboration and knowledge platform for Public Administration has been developed, while the Leadership Academy Programme for Senior Local Government Officials kicked off in partnership with the Academy of Political Studies.
- EU/CoE JP “Enhancing the effectiveness of the Albanian system of human rights protection and anti-discrimination”: Over 200 participants from Municipalities, Regional Education Directorates, Employment Offices and school representatives were trained on international and European standards on anti-discrimination as well as national legislation in this field. Nineteen staff of Albania’s Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) and People’s Advocate (PA) were capacitated on theoretical and practical aspects of public communication, while 12 representatives from the Albanian Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the CPD and the PA enhanced their knowledge of the Austrian system of human rights protection and anti-discrimination.
- EU/CoE – HF “Strengthening the Efficiency of Justice (SEJ II)”: In Albania, a draft report on court notifications and service of judicial documents was prepared and followed by the training of 120 judicial staff of Tirana District Court, postal workers and bailiffs. Court chancellors at all levels were capacitated on judicial statistics and judicial time management as judges/prosecutors/attorneys/journalists received training on improving the relationship between media and justice. A report on the status of unclosed cases in the case management system for all pilot courts was prepared along with a report on the evaluation of judges.
- EU/CoE – HF “Economic Crime in Albania”: A comprehensive document with recommendations on political party and election campaign finances was provided to the Ad-Hoc Committee on Electoral Reform. The Central Election Commission was supported with audit report templates, along with guidelines and tools on election campaign reports, monitoring reports, and political party annual reports. The capacities of the Financial Supervisory Authorities were enhanced with regard to a risk-based approach to supervision and aligned with Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing risks. The cooperation between law enforcement agencies on financial investigations was streamlined.
- EU/CoE – HF “Fighting Bullying and extremism in the Education System in Albania”: Forty-one teachers from 21 pilot schools in Albania were capacitated on the development of anti-bullying school policies and started the process of formulating anti-bullying school policies. A series of Peer Learning events targeted over 100 teachers from 21 pilot schools to exchange ideas and practices, foster exchange, dialogue, cooperation, and built a network that will remain active even after the duration of the action.
- EU/CoE – HF “Enhancing the Protection of Human Rights of Prisoners in Albania”: Over 100 staff from seven prisons were trained on dynamic security, pro-social modelling and European Prison Rules. A draft document with recommendations for improving prisoners’ regimes, based on the assessment of their risks and needs, provides a clear pathway for

improvements in the legislation. The 3rd Steering Committee Meeting held in January highlighted the support provided to the prison administration.

- EU/CoE – HF “Supporting effective domestic remedies and facilitating the execution of judgments (D-REX)”: Three training manuals on property rights, fairness of criminal proceedings and effective remedies for the length of proceedings were prepared and distributed through cascade training organised in cooperation with the School of Magistrates. A selected group of 20 legal professionals paid a study visit to the CoE HQ and European Court of Human Rights with a view to strengthening their knowledge on the functioning of the ECtHR and the impact of its case-law on national decisions.
- EU/CoE – HF “Preventing and Combating Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Albania”: Following the preparation of a new guide on “Policing Hate Crime against LGBTI persons: Training for a Professional Police Response”, over 150 police officers from different parts of Albania were capacitated in identifying and addressing hate crimes against LGBTI people.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)”: The Journalistic Code of Ethics was revised and new Ethical Guidelines for Online Media are prepared and distributed to relevant stakeholders. The capacities of lawyers were enhanced on defamation cases and the balancing act in freedom of expression cases.
- EU/CoE regional JP “ROMACTED”: The launching conference took place on 22 February in Tirana with the participation of representatives of Albanian local authorities, community action groups, Roma and pro-Roma civil society organisations, development organisations and representatives of the CoE and EU.

#### Other relevant activities

- Coordination/consultation meetings have taken place with domestic stakeholders in view of the second phase of the Horizontal Facility with the European Union.

#### Follow up action

- Follow up discussions with Swedish and UK Embassies in Tirana in view of materialising the proposed actions in the sector of human rights, judiciary and media;
- Follow up discussions with the Albanian Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA) with regard to the new cooperation assistance framework.

**Yerevan****Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 6, Project staff –14, Total staff - 20.

The Office implements 6 projects, of which 2 projects are funded by the EU under the Partnership for Good Governance (PGG), one project is funded partially by VC/Donor and the United Kingdom and partially by the EU (PGG), 3 projects funded by voluntary contributions from the Governments of Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom respectively.

**State of implementation of projects/programmes/Action Plans/co-operation documents**

- EU/CoE – PGG “Supporting the criminal justice reform and combating ill-treatment and impunity in Armenia”: In January, the CoE prepared, and delivered to the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Armenia, an expert report with recommendations to improve the functionality of the electronic pre-trial investigation system. A related IT assessment of the system will be conducted in April. The CoE facilitated in March, an inclusive public discussion on the draft of the new Criminal Code recently published online, during which international experts provided recommendations for the harmonisation of the text with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. In March, the CoE organised a round table to discuss the methodology for the preparation of a study on the application of Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights in national judgments.
- EU/CoE – PGG “Strengthening Health Care and Human Rights Protection in Prisons in Armenia”: In March, the Government adopted a Decree “On establishment of Correctional Medicine Center State Non-Profit Organization” prepared with the legal expertise of the CoE, for ensuring professional independence of medical personnel working in penitentiary institutions, as well as for enhancing their professional competences. In March, an assessment mission on prison hospital services was organised. In February-March, inspection visits were conducted to 9 prisons where new equipment was installed in 2017; new equipment was installed in the remaining 2 prisons Abovyan and Hrazdan, following completion of the renovation of the premises. More than 1,340 (out of 2,000) copies of the “Guideline on the realization of healthcare rights of detainees and convicts and mechanisms for their realization” were disseminated in 9 prisons and the Ministry of Justice. In March, a call for tender for additional necessary medical equipment was launched following an agreement with the Ministry of Justice. Five training modules on the professional curriculum were adapted in line with the current needs of the medical service.
- EU/CoE – PGG / VC UK “Support to the implementation of the judicial reform in Armenia”: In February, the Judicial Code and the Civil Procedure Code, prepared with the support of the CoE, were adopted by the National Assembly. A number of related legal acts deriving from the Judicial Code were finalised: the draft Law on Mediation, the draft Law on the Service at the Judicial Department, draft laws on making amendments and additions to the Law on the Justice Academy and the law on the Remunerations of Persons Holding State Positions. The CoE continued to work on strengthening the application of arbitration: teams were prepared to participate in international moot court arbitration competitions and registered good results. The Code of Ethics for Arbitrators received Council of Europe expertise. A number of events were organised: an outreach seminar on arbitration for the business community of Armenia and representatives of embassies and organisations with foreign investment in cooperation with the Arbitrators’ Association of Armenia; a study visit to the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution in London for the Organisation of Mediators of Armenia; an event on the challenges and opportunities of the bar associations and law

societies of CoE member States in cooperation with the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) and the Chamber of Advocates, was concluded with the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Law Society of Ireland.

- VC Switzerland "Institutional Support to Communities Association of Armenia (CAA)": During the reporting period 4 (out of 6) newly formed Committees of the CAA - on Finance and Budgetary Issues, on Sustainable Development, on Gender, Health and Social Issues, on Legal and Policy Issues held their first sessions, the Board of the CAA also convened a meeting to discuss its Financial Sustainability Strategy. In March, a conference "Women and Local Democracy" on women's political participation and economic empowerment was co-organised by the CoE, CAA, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development, GIZ, USAID, UNDP and the Embassy of Sweden in Armenia. In the framework of the conference, CAA has issued a statement, adopted earlier by its Committee on Gender, Health and Social Issues, calling upon the Government of Armenia to introduce a quota for women's representation in local councils. The midterm assessment of the organisational capacities of the CAA revealed important progress, but also the need for further work during the second phase to achieve sustainability.

- VC UK "Strengthening the application of European human rights standards in the armed forces in Armenia": In March, a high-level Colloquy on the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights against Armenia concerning effective investigation of ill-treatment, attended by all relevant national stakeholders and CoE experts, concluded with the preparation of a related Road map. A study visit to the CoE and Eurocorps HQ in Strasbourg by a group of Armenian officials from the MoD, the Human Rights Defender's Office, military prosecution and military investigation took place in March. The CoE Manual on effective investigation of ill-treatment and relevant standards was translated into Armenian. A number of research, training and awareness raising materials are under development: research on the functioning of the MoD's human rights hotline and on the awareness of future military conscripts (schoolboys from forms 11-12) about their human rights and the means of their protection; the revision of the human rights education curriculum for the Armenian military universities; a sub-module on investigation of human rights violations in the military context for the Justice Academy; training-of-trainers materials for deputy commanders, lawyers of military corps and officers; a booklet on the Human Rights Defender's mandate related to the protection of human rights of military personnel; an IT application with information on the protection of rights of soldiers and their families. The first 100 copies (out of a total of 400) of the Booklet on CoE instruments on human rights in the army were sent to the MoD for the subsequent dissemination among military personnel.

- VC Sweden "Support to Consolidating Local Democracy in Armenia (follow up)": In March, the project contributed with international expertise on "introducing gender action plan at the local level" to the conference on "Women and local democracy" In March, 2 capacity building sessions on "Civil Participation in local decision-making" were attended by 52 representatives of consolidated municipalities, including elected officials and staff members. International and local experts presented the respective toolkit of the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform and shared their experience of working in different contexts while engaging the training participants in practical exercises and active discussions.



Follow up actions

- 26 January: HoO met with a Deputy Minister of Justice to discuss conception of future projects;
- 14 February: HoO met with a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs to update him on the implementation and the level of funding of the AP;
- 19 February: HoO had dinner with Ylva Hammarsten, Desk Officer (Development Cooperation), and the Ambassador of Sweden to Georgia and Armenia;
- 28 February: HoO met with a Deputy Minister of Justice to discuss the implementation of activities related to the fight against domestic violence;
- 20 March: HoO met with the Minister of Justice to discuss the current and future implementation of co-operation activities;
- 21 March: HoO/ DHoO met with representatives from the UK Foreign Office in the framework of their scoping mission under the Good Governance Fund for possible further funding of CoE projects;
- 22 March: DHoO met with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Advisor for Armenia, based in Bern Switzerland to discuss about SDC and CoE current and further cooperation;
- 23 March: DHoO participation in the SDC Presentation of the Evaluation of the SDC Programme in Armenia, which included the evaluation of the CoE implemented project "Institutional Support to Communities Association of Armenia (CAA);
- 29 March: DHoO met with the Deputy Head of the Office of Technical Cooperation of the Austrian Embassy (ADA) to discuss potential cooperation in the field of local governance;
- HoO met with German, UK and French Ambassadors to discuss funding of the Action Plan.

Other relevant activities

- 6-8 February: Workshop on Cybercrime Threats, Strategies and update of the Online Resource;
- 13-15 March: EURIMAGES Management Board meeting.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 6-7 February: Venice Commission/ODIHR visit to Armenia to provide an opinion on the Draft Law On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Organizations.

**Rabat****Situation of the Office**

Core staff - 2, Project staff - 6, Total staff - 8.

The Office co-ordinates the implementation of the "Neighbourhood Partnership with Morocco 2015-2017" action plan and the EU/CoE joint programmes "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean" (South Programme 2), and "Improving the functioning of justice in Morocco using the tools of the CEPEJ" 2016-2017 along with a voluntary contribution from Norway for 2016-2017.

**State of implementation of the programmes**

- EU/CoE JP "Improving the functioning of justice in Morocco using the tools of the CEPEJ". The Ministry of Justice organised a seminar on the "legal concept of an enterprise", in partnership with the CEPEJ, on 1 and 2 March.
- EU/CoE JP "Improving the functioning of justice in Morocco using the tools of the CEPEJ": On 29 March 2018, the CEPEJ organised in Rabat, for the first time in conjunction with the Public Prosecution Service which with effect from 7 October 2017 had become independent of the Ministry of Justice, a seminar on "managing the resources of the prosecution service". This was attended by the Minister of Justice, the President of the Prosecution Service and the Vice-President of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary.
- EU/CoE JP "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean". Training in visit report writing and individual competency appraisal interviews was held in Rabat from 5 to 8 February, for members and partners of the National Human Rights Council (CNDH), ahead of the forthcoming establishment in Morocco of a National Torture Prevention Mechanism (NMP), further to the ratification by Morocco of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).
- EU/CoE JP "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean". The rapporteur appointed by the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Bogdan Klich, carried out a working visit to Morocco from 5 to 8 February in preparation of a report on the Partnership for Democracy with Morocco between 2015 and 2018. During the visit, he met a number of senior officials of the government and other public institutions, and various members of civil society and the media.
- EU/CoE JP "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean". On 8 February, at the invitation of the Moroccan parliament, PACE's parliamentary network on diaspora policies organised a regional meeting on "Prevention of migrants' radicalisation through integration: the role of parliaments and diaspora associations".
- EU/CoE JP "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean". Between 26 and 28 February, two training courses were held for the Moroccan police at the Royal Police Institute in Kenitra. The first focused on financial crime in Rabat in partnership with the ICPC, the second was a national basic judicial course on cyber-crime and corporate legal evidence.
- EU/CoE JP "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean". The Moroccan parliamentary delegation holding partnership for democracy status took part in the winter part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

- EU/CoE JP "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean". A Moroccan delegation attended the 4th meeting of the ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF), in Strasbourg from 21 to 23 March.
- VC Norway "Freedom of expression and freedom of the media". On 19 February, a seminar was held in partnership with the ISIC (Institut Supérieur de l'Information et de la Communication) on "the roles of the media in the fight against terrorism – different perspectives", for students of the ISIC and journalists. The aim of the seminar was to share views on trends in media reporting on the fight against terrorism.

## **Tunis**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 2, Project staff – 4, Total – 6.

The Office implements country-related activities of 6 regional programmes, of which 2 are funded by the EU and 4 are funded by Norway.

### **State of implementation of programmes**

- South Programme II “Human Rights”: Technical support was provided to the National Commission for the Prevention of Torture (INPT) for the drafting of its first Activity Report. Following support provided in 2016-2017, the main purpose of the CoE expert’s mission was to share the experience of other National Prevention Mechanisms (NPM) in the preparation of such reports and in their use in raising awareness on torture prevention. In the area of fighting human trafficking, a conference was organised with the law faculty of the University of Tunis. The event is part of the newly established cooperation with the university in areas of the CoE’s work, to increase knowledge and understanding among the academia of the CoE’s standards and cooperation activities. The conference was organised in cooperation with the Tunisian National Commission against Human Trafficking.
- CyberSouth: The launching conference of the CyberSouth project took place on 21 March in Tunis. The conference was attended by more than 100 participants from Tunisia, as well as representatives of the Programme’s other main beneficiary countries (Jordan, Algeria, Morocco and Lebanon) and experts from CoE member States. The event provided the opportunity to start the discussion on cybercrime policies and strategies in the region, as well to discuss the harmonisation of the legislative framework and the capacity building needed to ensure close international cooperation on cybercrime and digital evidence.
- VC Norway “Combatting violence against women and girls”: As part of the ongoing CoE cooperation in Tunisia in the area of child sexual abuse, an expert workshop was organised on 15 February with psychiatrists and other health professionals to review existing practices in the country and exchange with experts from Belgium and France. The event was part of a series of activities initiated in 2014 by the CoE in Tunisia, which led to the request by Tunisia (and subsequent invitation by the CM) to accede to the Lanzarote Convention. In the area of violence against women, 2 monthly meetings, coordinated by the National Office for Family and Population (ONFP) and supported by the CoE, were organised in February and March to facilitate the intersectoral coordination for the care of women victims of violence. These meetings are pilot initiatives at the local level aimed at providing a platform for the exchange of information between the national actors – governmental and non-governmental – involved, that will need to be further developed following the entry into force of the new legislation.
- VC Norway “Media and Freedom of expression”: The third training session on media coverage of local elections, organised in cooperation with the Journalist trade union (SNJT), took place in Tabarka (North-West of the country) on 26-28 January. It was a continuation of previous training sessions organised with the SNJT, putting emphasis this time on the key role of the media in ensuring free and transparent elections, in preparation of the municipal elections scheduled for 6 May. As a contribution to the ongoing debate on the draft law relating to the Constitutional Commission on Audiovisual Communication currently under discussion in the Parliament, a conference/debate was organised with the Parliamentary Committee on Rights, Freedoms and External Relations at the Parliamentary Academy on 22 February. The initiative was intended to provide a forum for dialogue between representatives of the ministry in charge of drafting the bill, the Parliament, civil society

organisations and the media, as well as members of the current Independent Commission on Audiovisual Communication at a time when the debate on the law is extremely polarised.

- VC Norway "Local democracy": Experts from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities provided reports containing detailed suggestions on bylaws currently under preparation in the framework of the new Code of the local authorities, and currently under discussion in the Parliament. The authorities expect the Code and related bylaws to be adopted before the upcoming municipal elections on 6 May.

#### Other Relevant activities

- The Office participated in donor coordination meetings in the fields of local elections (coordinated by the EU), media and justice (High Judicial Council – CSM);
- Bilateral meetings were held with the Swiss and Belgium ambassadors, as well as the EU Ambassador and Chief of delegations to discuss the CoE's priorities in Tunisia;
- In preparation for the EU-funded programme on support to civil society and independent institutions PASC II), under which the CoE will be responsible for support to independent institutions, and meetings with all chairs (and or members) of existing independent institutions to review their current activities and priorities for the coming years.

#### **Council of Europe high-level visits and other official delegations**

- In the framework of Tunisia's request for accession to GRECO, its Executive Secretary, Gianluca Esposito paid a visit to Tunis on 21 February. He was received by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as well as the Minister in charge of Civil Service, Governance and Administrative Reform. The aim of his visit was to clarify the finalisation of the accession process, following the invitation by the Committee of Ministers to Tunisia to accede to the GRECO, formally communicated in November 2017.