

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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

**October - December 2017**

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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 October-December 2017. 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**

**SG Jagland**, 18/12, was invited by the Belgian MFA as a guest of honour to open the diplomatic week. He met Foreign Minister Reynders, with first VP of the Commission Timmermans, as well as HRVP Mogherini.

**Commissioner for Human Rights** Muižnieks, 10 and 17/10 participated in the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Equinet and met Belgian interlocutors and the media.

**DG of Democracy** Marković attended the European platform for Roma inclusion, 27-28/11, and had meetings with EU officials.

**Director of the Private Office** Kayacik addressed the EU Council working group on relations with the Council of Europe and the OSCE ("COSCE"), 10/11.

**SRSG on Migration** Boček, 11-12/12, held high-level meetings with the Commission and EEAS.

### **Other meetings involving the Office**

**Head of Office** Taubner continued to hold bilateral informal contacts with his EU counterparts. On several occasions he met members of the Cabinets of Commissioner Hahn, Commissioner Navracsics and HRVP Mogherini and maintained direct contacts with other high officials. He also:

- opened the 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of the "South Programme III" (16/10);
- participated in the EP workshop on academic freedom in Turkey;
- co-chaired the regular "Council of Europe - EU Senior Officials Meeting" (SOM) on 9/11;
- attended the public hearing on the rule of law situation in Hungary in the EP (LIBE Committee) 7/12 and had contacts with EP Rapporteur Sargentini before she met the SG on 14/12;
- met EEAS Managing Director Knudsen on the follow-up to the SOM meeting and other developments;
- met Ambassador Stevens, EEAS-Chair of the PSC (EU Council Committee at Ambassadors level on Political and Security co-operation);
- had a working lunch with Russian Ambassador to NATO Grushko, 13/12;
- had a working lunch with representatives of the Palestinian National Authority to discuss co-operation;
- welcomed PACE rapporteur Sandbaeck who was preparing a report on migration-related issues;
- hosted a dinner for the Director of the European Wergeland Centre, Ms Ana Perona;
- received PACE rapporteur De Sutter who was preparing a report on the EU initiatives on the rule of law.

The Office/the Office accompanied colleagues as follows:

- DGI and ODGP in the Eastern Partnership "Rule of Law panel", 4/10;
- Director Ruotanen and DGII to DG JUST on gender equality and women's rights related issues;

- the Office co-organised with the ECRI Secretariat, in co-operation with PICUM, a stakeholder meeting on irregular migrants, presenting ECRI's GPR nr 16, 26/10;
- DGII in the 3rd Annual Fundamental Rights Colloquium organised by the Commission's First VP Timmermans on "women's rights in danger", 20-21/11; hosted the meeting of the PACE working group on the rights of women, 21/11;
- attended the EP hearing on violence against women, with the participation of the above mentioned PACE working group, the PACE rapporteur on violence against women, GREVIO's vice-Chair and the DGI colleague in charge of the CoE HELP programme, 21/11;
- Secretary to the GREVIO Committee (DG II) addressing the EU Council working group on fundamental rights, "FREMP", 23/11;
- hosted the working group of the Committee on national and minority languages on the role of media;
- DGI, accompanied by the Chair of the CDPC, to discuss the Convention on illicit trafficking of cultural goods with the Commission, 5/12;
- DGII at a conference organised by the EU Estonian Presidency and International IDEA on empowering women and at an event organised by the European Women's Lobby on the Istanbul Convention, at the German Permanent Representation to the EU, on 6/12.

The Office organised and hosted the **11<sup>th</sup> MIM** (mutual information mechanism) meeting on normative developments in the two organisations (6/11). It also organised an information-sharing meeting with Brussels-based leading international human rights **NGOs** (5/10).

Furthermore, the Office:

- participated in the expert round table organised by the OSCE/ODIHR on migration;
- organised the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership expert group meeting on mapping educational paths of youth workers, 14/11;
- organised a presentation and exchange with the Brussels Offices of around 10 National Bar Associations, 16/11;
- participated in the debriefing by the EEAS Chair of the Council's COHOM (HR working group), 11/12;
- welcomed and opened the bi-annual meeting of International IDEA with the Brussels-based Ambassadors of International IDEA members, 8/12;
- supported the event organised by the Pharmacopeia on the network of single POCs for the implementation of the Medicrime Convention, 5/12;
- followed the video conference on combating violence against women organised by the EU, with OECD and UN Women, to which DSG Battaini Dragoni participated, alongside EU Commissioner Jourová and other high level personalities, 11/12;
- participated in an event organised by the European Regional Office of the OHCHR and met the newly-appointed Regional Representative.

Bilateral contacts with EU officials from the various institutions were maintained through various meetings and other informal means, including, for instance: meeting with the Council Secretariat on justice and HR matters (19/12) and with DG DEVCO (20/12) on co-operation on the Medicrime Convention.

The **Political Advisor** attended many events and reported on many political developments in the EU. He also developed contacts with various embassies/missions in Brussels, e.g.

Belarus, PNA, Tunisia, the Republic of Korea, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Serbia, Moldova, Ukraine.

The Office also had opportunities to maintain relations with representatives of Council of Europe member states, notably with the Estonian Permanent Representation (Presidency of the EU) in Brussels, as well as with representatives of the six Central Asian Republics (the EU's 6<sup>th</sup> Conference on the Rule of Law with the Ministers of Justice of the six republics) and representatives of the Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Brussels-based Secretariat of the **Pompidou Group** organised the meeting of its Group on General Aviation in the Office on 13-14/12; and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe - EU **Youth Partnership** organised, on 11/12, the Management Board meeting of the youth partnership with the EU DG on Education and Culture as well as its annual consultative meeting with stakeholders on 12/12.

The Office received various groups of **visitors** and presented the Council of Europe's activities and its relations with the EU (e.g. young Russian diplomats invited by the Hanns Seidel Stiftung; Chinese interpreters invited by the Commission; diplomats from the EaP countries invited by the Klingendael Institute). The Office also welcomed a group of law students from the Stockholm University.

The Office also **reported** on many specific events organised in Brussels by the EU as well as by think-tanks, foundations, etc. Reports focused on developments regarding, primarily, the rule of law in Poland (launch of Art 7 TEU), Brexit negotiations and the Western Balkans (in particular BiH and Albania). Additional reports also covered specific events dealing with issues such as developments in "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and in Turkey, as well as on issues such as freedom of religion and belief, fake news, anti-smuggling policies and civil society, the Eastern Partnership, the global policy on democracy, the annual report on freedom of thoughts, segregation in schools, the joint EP - Turkey parliamentary committee and developments in Tunisia.

### **Media/visibility**

The Spokesperson/Media Officer maintained his regular contacts with Brussels-based journalists on a wide range of issues including the October PACE session, the Venice Commission plenary, the CPT report on Turkey, the decision from the European Committee of Social, GRETA reports on Belgium and Poland, GREVIO report on Denmark, GRECO compliance report on the United Kingdom and various judgments and decisions from the European Court of Human Rights.

He also co-ordinated communications work around the Council of Europe study on balanced participation in decision-making, the World and European Day against the Death Penalty and the joint ECRI/PICUM event on irregular migrants in Brussels. He also provided communications support to Council of Europe participation in a number of events in Brussels - including the EU Colloquium on Fundamental Rights, the Children's Rights Forum and the Platform for Roma inclusion – as well as carrying out preparatory work for the December meeting of the Committee of Ministers on the execution of judgments and continuing work on the on-going communications project to highlight the impact of the ECHR system.

**Statistics**

Some 604 information messages and documents as well as 12 weekly reports were prepared and sent to Strasbourg by the Information Officer. 94 notes for the files were sent from the Office in addition to the information messages sent by the Head of Office directly. 34 members of Council of Europe staff visited the Office and another 16 staff members were also in Brussels during the period. The Office hosted 47 events and visits and welcomed 232 external visitors.

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

### **Visits**

On 18/10, **SRSG on Migration and Refugees Bocek** participated in thematic discussion three of "Towards a global compact on refugees" - "How can we support the inclusion of refugees in national systems and services?"

On 30/11, **PR of the Framework Convention on National Minorities Roter** participated in 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Minority Forum. The Office also organised a meeting with UNSR on Minority issues de Verennes.

On 11-12/12, **Rapporteur of the PACE Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy** on Strengthening Co-operation with the UN De Silva paid a fact-finding visit to the UN bodies and held meetings with: a/ WHO, Director General b/ UNHCR, Deputy Director of the Bureau for Europe c/ OHCHR, Chief of Americas, Europe/Central Asia d/DG UNOG Møller e/ ILO, Assistant DG/Regional Director for Europe and CA. The HoO participated in these meetings. The Rapporteur also visited the Office.

17-21/12 - **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**: Director Luciani (DGII) participated in the High-Level Session "The impact of digitisation on politics, public trust and democracy".

### **Meetings, participation, activities of the Office/HoO**

2/10 - presentation of the **Nansen Award** for refugees

2-6/10 - 68<sup>th</sup> Session of EXCOM, **UNHCR's Executive Committee**

12-13/10 - Sixth Informal Thematic Session on **Irregular Migration**

18/10 - HoO delivered opening statement in the panel "**Preventing Human Trafficking**" together with the EU Ambassador and IOM Deputy Director General

23/10 - UNRISD: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, **Civil Society Reflection Group Report**

2/11 - HoO met **OHCHR, Chief UPR Brunch Magazzeni** and discussed co-operation with the CoE

6-17/11 - 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the UPR working group

14-15/11 - Thematic discussion four and five "**Towards a global compact on refugees: a roadmap**"

24/11 - UNOG/DICAF seminar - **gender equality** - leveraging SDG 16 to improve implementation of SDG 5

28/11 - 108<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of the IOM - **Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration** - with the participation of President of UNGA Lajcak and SRSG for International Migration Arbour

29/11 - The Global State of Democracy - report launch with International IDEA

27-29/11 - UN Forum on Business and Human Rights 2017

8/12 - UNRISD Seminar "Towards a Post-Neoliberal World Order: Rebuilding Human Rights-Based Multilateralism" with UK MP Jeremy Corbyn as a key speaker

9/12 - HoO met **DG UNOG Møller to discuss challenges facing the UN and other IOs.**

13/12 - participation in Human Rights Day celebration together with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

12-13/12 - High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges



ODGP/DER/Inf(2018)1

18/12 - HoO met **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Zeid al-Hussein**

20/12 - HoO met **Ambassador Suc, new President of the OHRC to discuss further co-operation.**

HoO participated in **UNOG Executive briefings**: with **President of the UNGA Lajcak** (11/10) and with Executive Director, UN Security Council Report Martin (27/11).

HoO started **introductory meetings** with the Ambassadors of the EU, Germany, Russia, Switzerland, Ukraine, Austria, Slovenia, Finland, Canada, and the US (representative).

## **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 PC with the report by the Director of ODIHR on HDIM, presentation of the 2018 Unified Budget Proposal by the OSCE SG and the report by the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, 5/10.
- OSCE PC with Foreign Minister of "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Nikola Dimitrov, and Vice-President of the ICRC, Christine Beerli, 12/10.
- OSCE PC with President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Christine Muttonen, and Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission, Tigran Sargsyan, as well as the Chairs of the Security Committee, the Economic and Environmental Committee and the Human Dimension Committee, 19/10.
- OSCE PC with the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions, 2/11.
- OSCE PC with the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group and OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Harlem Desir, 9/11.
- OSCE PC with CoE Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muiznieks, and OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Lamberto Zannier, as well as Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Michael Scanlan, 16/11.
- OSCE PC with Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, Bernd Borchardt, Chair of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, Fillippo Lombardi, and Coordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Vuk Zugic, 23/11.
- OSCE PC with the OSCE CiO Personal Representatives on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners, Karl Helmut Napiontek, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Ertugrul Apakan, and Special Representative of the OSCE CiO in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Martin Sajdik, 30/11.
- 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, 7-8/12.
- OSCE PC with OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator on Trafficking in Human Beings, Madina Jarbussynova, 14/12.
- OSCE Special PC with European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, 18/12.
- OSCE PC with the Special Representatives of the CiO on Youth and Security, 21/12.

### **Participation in expert committees and conferences**

- Joint meeting of the OSCE Security Committee and the Human Dimension Committee on "Women, Peace and Security: mainstreaming the civilian aspects. Women in mediation processes", 3/10.
- OSCE Human Dimension Committee meeting on "Freedom of Religion and Belief", 9/10.
- Joint OSCE-CoE Conference on Internet Freedom "The role and Responsibilities of Internet Intermediaries", 13/10.
- UNODC: 5<sup>th</sup> CND inter-sessional meeting on implementation of the UNGASS outcome document, 16-18 October
- OSCE Chairmanship Conference on Human Trafficking in Conflict and Crisis Situations, 20/10.
- CoE Vienna Office facilitating the fact-finding mission by PACE Rapporteur Doris Fiala on the Austrian Law on Islam and its financing (*Islamgesetz*), 23-24/10.
- ICMPD Vienna Migration Conference 2017 on Migration Partnerships - Frameworks for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, 23-24/10.

- OSCE-CoE Co-ordination Group meeting on terrorism and human trafficking, 27/10.
- OSCE Human Dimension Committee meeting on "Challenges to Democracy", 30/10.
- OSCE: 2<sup>nd</sup> Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on "The role of the free media in the comprehensive approach to security", 2-3/11.
- UNODC: 6<sup>th</sup> CND inter-sessional meeting on implementation of the UNGASS outcome document, 16-17/11.
- OSCE: 3<sup>rd</sup> Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on "Access to Justice as a Key Element of the Rule of Law", 16-17/11.
- Joint meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council: Assessment of the Structured Dialogue in view of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting, 29/11.
- OSCE: expert meeting on Impunity of Murders of Journalists, 11/12.
- OSCE Human Dimension Committee meeting on "The role of Civil Society in assisting States in the implementation of OSCE commitments", 12/12.

## **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**

19/11 - meeting with the Secretary General of the Community of Democracies (CoD), Thomas E. Garrett.

30/11 - meeting with the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir.

### **Activities of the Office**

#### **Enhancing the co-operation with OSCE/ODIHR**

The main event of the fourth quarter of 2017 was the OSCE Human Dimension Seminar (HDS) organised by ODIHR in Warsaw. The conference took place on 10-11/10 and was devoted to discussing the rights of the child in the context of children in situations of risk. The Office represented the CoE during the Seminar and the CoE's contribution was significant, with interventions delivered in all Working Groups. Additionally, the 6<sup>th</sup> General Report of GRETA on trafficking in children was also distributed to participants.

Apart from the high-level meetings mentioned above, the HoO continued to maintain close working relations with ODIHR experts. The HoO also attended numerous meetings organised by ODIHR during which he presented the CoE's activities and perspectives. These meetings included i.a. a meeting with the President of the European Association of Judges (EAJ), José Igreja Matos, and a panel discussion on migrant integration in Poland ahead of International Migrants Day.

#### **Continuation of the co-operation with the CoD**

Following a decision of the 49<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the CoD to initiate a strategic review of the Community's agenda and membership, the Office followed closely the internal process of shaping new priorities for the CoD with a view to identifying areas of convergence with the CoE agenda.

In light of the 2017 edition of the Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy (*Democracy in dialogue, dialogue in democracy*) organised by the MFA of Poland, the Office consulted closely with the Permanent Secretariat's staff on the preparation of the conference. Regular contacts were maintained with Milka Zagloba, Legal Counsel in the PS of the CoD.

#### **Ensuring the visibility of the CoE**

Apart from the events organised by ODIHR and the CoD, the HoO regularly attended seminars and conferences on issues pertinent to CoE activities. These included i.a. the conferences: XI Warsaw Seminar *The right to live in dignity in light of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and other international standards*, organised by the MFA of Poland; the Interactive debate on the future of the Eastern Partnership, organised by the leading Polish NGO - Batory Foundation; the Conference *Anti-Semitism in Poland – diagnosis, consequences, countermeasures*, organised by the AJC Warsaw Office; and the 2017 edition of the Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy, organised by the MFA of Poland.

**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.

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

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

The Office implements 5 projects jointly funded with the EU, including 3 within the framework of the PGG and 2 joint projects, namely "Civil Society Dialogue" and "Further Support to the Penitentiary Reform" projects.

**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": Seventy-one advocates and 40 judges were trained on the ECHR as a result of five cascade training seminars held in Baku and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. Two study visits to Strasbourg were organised for a group of 62 judge candidates. A two-day methodological Training of Trainers was held for certified trainers of the Academy of Justice. The first three-month HELP distance learning course in Azerbaijani on "Introduction to the ECHR" was launched for advocates.
- EU/CoE - PGG "Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom: One hundred and twenty-five judge candidates were trained on Article 10 of the ECHR in Baku. The curricula on "Media and freedom of expression" and "Journalism ethics" were each printed in 500 copies. Journalism faculties of three universities were provided with four textbooks on journalism and the curricula. Two expert reports on Azerbaijani legislation on access to information and freedom of expression were finalised and submitted to the Head of the Azerbaijani Press Council (also MP) to bring them to the attention of the Parliament. In December, a conference on media education in Azerbaijani universities was held in Baku.
- EU/CoE - PGG "Strengthening capacities to Fight and Prevent Corruption in Azerbaijan": Two regional training courses on Anti-Corruption and Ethics were organised for civil servants, academia and civil society, and delivered by local trainers certified by the project. The project also developed teaching methodology and accompanying materials for introducing and delivering Anti-Corruption and Ethics courses in higher education, followed by a workshop on applying the methodology for academic staff from a selection of higher education institutions in Azerbaijan.
- EU/CoE JP "Civil Society Dialogue": A study visit to Prague was organised for a group of 12 governmental (Presidential Administration, Ministry of Justice, Council of State Support to NGOs) and non-governmental representatives. The participants had informative exchanges on the best practices of the Czech Republic in the areas of NGO registration, access to non-profit funding, as well as civil participation. Four local experts agreed upon amendments to the relevant NGO-related laws together with comparative analysis of major issues. They are being translated into English for review by an international expert.
- EU/CoE JP "Further Support to the Penitentiary Reform in Azerbaijan": Forty correctional staff of penitentiary establishments learnt about modern prison management approaches and the role of Personal Officer. Sixty-one penitentiary doctors increased their knowledge on health promotion and prevention in prisons. Two international consultants conducted an assessment of the e-database of inmates' medical records and made recommendations for further improvement. Six senior prison and probation staff participated in a study visit to Stockholm to learn about the Swedish penitentiary system. One hundred and forty judge-candidates benefitted from training on "European standards and best practices on treatment of prisoners".

### Other relevant activities

- The HoO met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Elmar Mammadyarov (4/10); the Minister of Youth and Sports, Azad Rahimov (10/10); the Minister of Education, Mikayel Jabbarov (20/10); the Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population, Salim Muslumov (24/11); and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mahmud Mammad-Guliyev (23/11). The HoO also held meetings with the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), Elmira Suleymanova (5/10); the Chairperson of the State Committee for Family, Children and Women Affairs, Hicran Huseynova (6/10); the Chairman to the State Committee on Religious Associations, Mubariz Gurbanli (8/12); the Head of Azerbaijani Delegation in the PACE, Samed Seyidov (20/11); the Rector of the Baku State University, Abel Maharramov (14/11); and the Acting Rector of Justice Academy, Elchin Khalafov (13/12);
- The HoO chaired and moderated the Presentation of CoE Regional Study on Women's Political Representation in EaP Countries (1/11), delivered opening remarks in the Regional Cybercrime Conference jointly organised by the CoE and Anti-Corruption General Directorate with the Prosecutor General of Azerbaijan (9/10), in a joint conference by the Ministry of Labour and UNICEF on "Azerbaijan's Commitments on UN CRPD: Achievements, Challenges & Perspectives" (1/12);
- The HoO notably attended the IV National Forum of Azerbaijani Children organised by State Committee for Family, Children and Women Affairs (20/11); the event dedicated to the International Human Rights Day jointly organised by the Ombudsman and UNHCR and UNICEF Offices (8/12); and joined a trip to Tartar, Region of Azerbaijan, organised by the MFA to visit newly built facilities for IDPs (11/12);
- Finally, the HoO attended the meeting of Heads of Offices in Strasbourg (25-27/10), using this opportunity to introduce for consideration in the HQ the draft of a new pilot project proposal on "Gender equality and media freedom in Azerbaijan".

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

- 24-26 October: The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) visited Azerbaijan. Alina Braşoveanu and Ryszard Piotrowicz met with representatives of the governmental authorities, the judiciary, the Ombudsperson, human rights NGOs, and international community.



## **Belgrade**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 6, Project staff – 24, Total - 30.

Ana Zec was appointed Horizontal Facility Coordinator in October.

During the reporting period, the Office implemented 11 projects, of which 10 are jointly-funded with the EU, 7 under the Horizontal Facility (HF), and 1 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": In-situ expert assessments, involving both state authorities and relevant CSOs, were made of police complaints' procedures and internal/external controls; rights of persons with mental disabilities in institutional care; inspection mechanisms of relevant Ministries; and of pre- and post-release reintegration mechanisms. Based on CoE recommendations on involuntary psychiatric hospitalisation, the Ministry of Health is to draft a new Mental Health Strategy with the Action's support. A 3-day training session on risk assessment of forensic and general psychiatric patients, and meetings of the Offender Behaviour Programmes Working Group and the Steering Committee also took place.
- EU/CoE - HF "Supporting Effective Remedies and Mutual Legal Assistance (SEMA)": A conference for 80 judges and enforcement officials took place to assess implementation of the law on enforcement and means to address cases with prolonged delays. Eighteen prosecutors attended a Training-of-Trainers workshop on the case law of the ECtHR in application of Article 5 and Article 6 of the ECHR. With the Action's support, a first workshop for civil law judges on drafting first instance judgments took place, in cooperation with the Supreme Court of Cassation and the Judicial Academy. Adaptation for Serbian legal professionals of the HELP online course on international cooperation in criminal matters has been finalised.
- EU/CoE - HF "Strengthening legal guarantees for independent and impartial tribunals": Two seminars were held on dealing with the risks of undue influence, each with 20 participants, one for the State Prosecutorial Council and higher ranked prosecutors, and one for the High Judicial Council and court presidents. With the Serbian authorities missing their EU Accession Chapter 23 Action Plan deadline (December 2017) for constitutional amendments, in consultation with beneficiaries, the EUD and NGOs, the 13 December Steering Committee meeting adopted a revised work plan, with strengthened capacity-building activities and with judicial and prosecutorial assistants as new beneficiaries.
- EU/CoE - HF "Strengthen integrity and combat corruption in higher education in Serbia": A peer-learning visit to the University of Gothenburg of high-ranking officials from the Serbian higher education sector took place in October. The 2nd meeting of the Joint Steering Committee for the two Actions (see below) was held on 7 December in Belgrade. A Conference on Academic Integrity in Serbia took place the next day and attracted more than 120 key stakeholders, including a delegation from Montenegro. The Draft Baseline Assessment presented in July has been revised and finalised.
- EU/CoE - HF "Fostering a Democratic School Culture": Inception visits to all 20 pilot schools took place during October and the initial training of more than 200 teachers from school project teams took place. An International Conference on Democratic School Culture was organised in Belgrade, attracting considerable media attention. A 1st peer learning training session for over 100 staff from pilot schools took place in Zlatibor, and a first public event with students and the wider community was organised in a school in Becej.

- EU/CoE - HF "Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) in Serbia": Two multidisciplinary workshops on THB for the purpose of labour exploitation were held: one in Arandjelovac for 70 labour and market inspectors, the other in Sabac for 35 different stakeholders. A Pocket Guide for labour inspectors has been developed. A Round Table on good practices for establishing a state compensation scheme for THB victims in Belgrade, and the 3rd Steering Committee meeting took place.
- EU/CoE - HF "Strengthening the protection of national minorities": An international consultant's report on the use of minority languages by public authorities was submitted to the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government, as was a similar report, prepared by an international and a local consultant, on the use of minority languages in relation to the judiciary, to the Ministry of Justice. Consultation with project Steering Committee members resulted in agreement to boost the use of the minority languages awareness-raising element of the Action.
- EU/CoE JP "Human Resources Management in Local Self-Government (LSG)": Municipal Support Packages were completed in all 20 pilot LSGs, with constant refinement and improvement of the Package. Sixty-five country-wide training sessions for 1368 local officials took place. The following documents were finalised: a Revised Strategy for professional development of LSG employees; a Monitoring Methodology for training at local level; and Recommendations for the integration of the professional development system at local level within the national training system. The Closing Conference took place on 5 December.
- EU/CoE JP "JUFREX": Eight training sessions took place for judges and prosecutors to enhance the application of the ECHR and the ECtHR case-law in the daily work of the judiciary. Other activities included a workshop in Belgrade on national media laws for judges; an inter-professional training session for judiciary and media actors in Kragujevac; and a regional conference in Budva (MNE) for judges, prosecutors and lawyers on 'Freedom of Expression and the Internet'. Studies on Co-Regulation and on Independence and Functioning of Media Regulatory Bodies have been prepared, and a Hate Speech handbook has been published in Serbian.
- EU/CoE JP "ROMACTED: Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level": The project commenced implementation in Serbia. Local facilitators have been appointed in ten selected LSGs: Kragujevac, Odžaci, Palilula (Niš), Požarevac/Kostolac, Prokuplje, Smederevo, Subotica, Vranje, Vrnjačka Banja and Zvezdara (Belgrade).
- VC HRTF "HELP in the Western Balkans and Turkey". The project ended on 30 September, but a "HELP in the Western Balkans (Phase II)" project has been approved by the HRTF, and inception work for Phase II is on-going. The project will strengthen the capacity of National Training Institutions and Bar Associations to provide high quality human rights training, and enhance the capacity of professionals to effectively and coherently apply European human rights standards in their daily work.
- EU/CoE – HF "Expertise Coordination Mechanism (ECM)": At the request of the Ministry of Justice, the Venice Commission began an intermittent four-month (ending March 2018) expert mission (James Hamilton, Expert, and Mesut Bedirhanoglu, VC ECM coordinator) to assist in the drafting of constitutional amendments pertaining to the judiciary.

#### Follow-up action

- EU/CoE – HF All Actions: Consideration of possible extension (both resources and time);
- EU/CoE JP "Human Resources Management in Local Self-Government (LSG)" Phase II: Agreement in principle for IPA 2017 funding to be finalised and contracted with the EUD to Serbia.

Other relevant activities

- 5 October: The DHoO opened the Annual Conference of Judges of the Republic of Serbia in Vrnjacka Banja;
- 25-27 October: The HoO attended the Heads of Office meeting in Strasbourg;
- 20 November: The HoO addressed an international conference on "New opportunities in cross-border cooperation in the Balkans" in Novi Sad;
- 30 November and 1 December: The DHoO participated in the HF TAPA Coordinators' meeting in Podgorica;
- 4 December : The DHoO delivered an opening speech at the conference of the joint project iPROCEEDS "Cybercrime Coordination and Partnership Exercise" in Belgrade;
- The HoO delivered a speech at the Opening of 45th Session of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities.

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

- 13-14 November: A delegation headed by Anna Rurka, President of the Conference of INGOs of the CoE, conducted a fact-finding visit to Belgrade, meeting with local NGOs, representatives of the Independent Regulatory Bodies and relevant Government Authorities.

## **Bucharest**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 0.5, Project staff – 23, Total – 23.5.

During the reporting period, 6 projects with a combined budget of EUR 24.4 million were under implementation of which 5 were joint projects with the European Union and 1 was funded by voluntary contributions.

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

- VC "Cybercrime@Octopus": The project promoted the accession of India to the Budapest Convention through support to the CyFy Conference as well as the Global Conference on Cyberspace (GCCS), both held in New Delhi in October and November respectively. The latter helped ensure that the experience of capacity-building projects of the CoE and the EU is duly reflected in the Delhi Communiqué adopted by the GCCS. This project furthermore carried out an analysis of Korean legislation to facilitate a decision by Korea to accede to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime. Moreover, Cybercrime@Octopus supported the organisation of the plenary of the Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) in Strasbourg in November.
- EU/CoE - PGG "Cybercrime@EAP II": Supported both the network of 24/7 points of contact (through in-country advice on institutional set-up and participation in international meetings) and mutual legal assistance authorities in EAP States, contributing to a better regulatory framework and development of necessary skills to enhance international cooperation on cybercrime and electronic evidence. This was achieved through: a cross-project regional Cybercrime Conference on 9-11 October in Baku; supporting attendance at the General Assembly of the European Cybercrime Training and Education Group (ECTEG) in Lisbon on 26-27 October in view of the delivery of ECTEG courses in 2018 in EAP countries and supporting attendance at the 18th Plenary of the Cybercrime Convention Committee on 27-29 November in Strasbourg.
- EU/CoE - PGG "Cybercrime@EAP III" (public/private cooperation): Supported a constructive dialogue between law enforcement and Internet service providers through both in-country presentations and training on interagency cooperation, cooperation agreements and legislative review. Follow-up visits to all EAP states (in October-November) directly contributed to the finalisation of reports on safeguards and guarantees and public-private cooperation in the EAP region. Country teams and project counterparts in Azerbaijan and Ukraine were able to benefit from targeted CoE expertise on subjects of industry cooperation (Kyiv, 5-6 October) and handling of data and human rights guarantees (Baku, 6-7 November), while attendance at the Internet Freedom Conference on the Role and Responsibilities of Internet Intermediaries (Vienna, 13 October), IV South East European Regional Forum on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime (Sofia, 30-31 October) and Georgian ICT Development and Cyber Security Event (Tbilisi, 16-17 November) engaged country teams in regional discussions on a wide spectrum of issues pertaining to public-private cooperation.
- EU/CoE JP "iPROCEEDS": The project focused on the training of magistrates from Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Turkey in the area of cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds. A regional workshop on guidelines and indicators to prevent and detect online crime proceeds was organised in cooperation with the Financial Intelligence Unit of Slovenia in Ljubljana, as a follow-up to seven assessment visits undertaken in the region. One workshop on inter-agency and international cooperation was organised in Podgorica, Montenegro, which resulted in the preparation of draft guidelines for the search, seizure and confiscation of online crime proceeds. A study visit on CSIRT/CERT

regulations and operational environment was organised in cooperation with the Romanian Computer Security Incident Response Team (CERT-RO). The project also supported participation of national team members in the 4th South East European Regional Forum on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime. The project continued the replication at national level of the "coordination and partnership cybercrime exercise" organised in Pristina (Kosovo\*[1]) and Belgrade (Serbia). A regional workshop on obtaining and using electronic evidence organised in Bucharest, Romania served as an opportunity for participants from South Eastern Europe and Turkey to review relevant legislation, practice and procedure to allow more effective use of electronic evidence, with the appropriate safeguards. Project countries/areas had an opportunity to exchange good practices related to reporting mechanisms of cybercrime at a dedicated regional workshop held in Skopje, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". The Steering Committee for the project was held in December and the working plan for 2018 was approved.

- EU/CoE JP "GLACY+ project on Global Action on Cybercrime Extended": Continued to strengthen cybercrime and cyber security policies both at national level, providing advice to Ghana, and at international level through the organisation of the "Hemispheric Forum on cybercrime policies and international cooperation on cybercrime", held in the Dominican Republic, which saw the participation of almost all Latin American and Caribbean countries, as well as regional and international organisations. Policy dialogue was further strengthened thanks to the participation of GLACY+ representatives in events organised by other international organisations. Activities to strengthen capabilities of law enforcement officers were supported via INTERPOL under the second objective of the project, with a specific focus on cybercrime investigation and open source investigation techniques for Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu. The meeting of the "African Working Group of cybercrime heads of units" was hosted in Mauritius and saw the participation of 11 countries from the region as well as regional and international organisations. Reporting mechanisms and the collection of reliable criminal justice statistics were the focus of an advisory mission in the Dominican Republic. Strong action also continued on judicial training on cybercrime, electronic evidence, international cooperation and data protection through training events and workshops in the Dominican Republic, Sri Lanka and Ghana, the latter involving also judicial officers from Gambia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. An international workshop was organised in the Philippines, with participation of all GLACY+ countries and representatives from ASEAN countries, to re-discuss the approach to judicial training both at the national and the regional level, and basic principles were agreed to guide the drafting of relevant training strategies. The Steering Committee of the GLACY+ Project was held in Strasbourg, back-to-back with the T-CY, during which the work plan for 2018 was approved.

- EU/CoE JP "CyberSouth": Scoping missions and assessment visits were conducted in Algeria, Lebanon and Tunisia in order to promote the benefits of the project, set up the country project teams and decide on future activities. The engagement of Jordanian authorities was also sought. Preparation of the launching conference, scheduled for February 2018 in Tunisia, was initiated during these activities. Participation in the TC-Y of representatives from Algeria and Tunisia was supported by the project. Identification of synergies with on-going projects in the MENA region remains a focus for the project.

### **Follow up action**

- Implementation of the project workplans as agreed upon for the first quarter of 2018;
- Approval of the expansion for Glacy+ project until 2021;
- Completion of projects annual reports.

**Other relevant activities**

- The USA made a voluntary contribution of US\$ 500,000 to the project Cybercrime@Octopus.

## **Chisinau**

### **Situation of the Office in Chisinau**

Core staff – 5, Project staff – 18, Total staff – 23.

The Office implemented 6 projects, of which 5 are funded by the EU/jointly funded with the EU and 1 funded by VC/Donor (Denmark).

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

- EU/CoE - PGG "Strengthening institutional frameworks for local governance": A final regional conference on Ethics and Transparency took place in Georgia on 6-7 December and a handbook on change management for local authorities was distributed in five languages. A series of closing events dedicated to lessons learnt, assessing progress and future challenges in local governance and inter-municipal cooperation in the EaP countries were held. A final capacity-building training seminar for senior executive leaders of ATU Gagauzia/Moldova was organised on 9-10 November to discuss matters relevant to ethics and communication. The project ended on 31 December.
- EU/CoE - PGG "Supporting national efforts for prevention and combating discrimination in Moldova": An IT company that will provide technical equipment to the Equality Council was selected. A training course on the Revised European Social Charter for the Equality Council and the Ombudsperson Office was provided. A fact-finding mission for assessing domestic legislation in regard to social rights on conformity with the Social Charter was held on 20-21 December and the report will be delivered in January. Video spots for the awareness-raising campaign on discrimination are in the process of being coordinated. Achievements for 2017 and plans for 2018 were presented during the Steering Committee Meeting in December.
- EU/CoE - PGG "Pre-electoral assistance to the Republic of Moldova": On 10 November, the closing event of the Mentoring Programme for Women from communities with zero women representation in local councils took stock of activities and results. On 14-15 December, around 120 participants shared their views during the Conference on Financing of Political Parties in the Republic of Moldova. The Joint VC/ODIHR Opinion on the legal framework governing the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns was presented. On 18 December, the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training (CCET) organised the closing event of the project on strengthening their research capacity and presented their first policy paper. The project ended on 31 December.
- VC Denmark "Support to Criminal Justice Reforms in the Republic of Moldova": Twenty-two young judges and prosecutors were trained on ECtHR case law and its national implementation during the first Winter Human Rights School. Approximately 80 prosecutors benefited from the five-day management and leadership training module. Staff of the Ombudsperson's office (including the Ombudsperson) and members of the NPM (in total 13 participants) became acquainted with the Georgian experience of the functioning of the NPM during a study visit to Tbilisi. Two HELP courses were launched: one on Prohibition of Ill-treatment for 35 judges and prosecutors in cooperation with the NIJ, and one on pre-trial investigation for 30 lawyers, in cooperation with the Bar.
- EU/CoE JP "Promoting media freedom and pluralism in the Republic of Moldova": The draft new Audio-visual Code and the draft Media Development Strategy of the Republic of Moldova (2018-2025) were elaborated by the members of a public-private working group established by the Parliament with the assistance of the project. The draft code ensures transposition of the EU Audio-visual Media Services Directive and takes into account the

recommendations by CoE, OSCE and EBU. Adoption is expected in early 2018. Furthermore, the training centre for documentary film-making at Teleradio Moldova is now operational. Its first documentary is being produced with project support.

- EU/CoE JP "Controlling Corruption through Law Enforcement and Prevention (CLEP)": Inter-agency coordination activities brought the National Anti-Corruption Centre (NAC) and the National Integrity Authority (NIA) closer, with an exchange of focal points and training plans for joint activities in 2018. CLEP also improved the knowledge of NAC officers in human rights and corruption, while an international expert supported the NAC in defining a monitoring and reporting methodology for local level anti-corruption action plans. Additionally, the NIA was equipped with a video tutorial to help subjects of asset declarations to navigate the new online system. Work with the new Assets Recovery Office (ARO) started with a comprehensive needs assessment and support in drafting internal standard operating procedures for the office.

#### Follow up action

- 4 December: Norway officially announced funding for the Action Plan. Preparations for the new project on criminal justice reform with colleagues from DGI have started, in particular for staffing (5 staff based in Chisinau);
- 8 December: Venice Commission opinions on political party financing, jointly with ODIHR, and the financing of the Ombudsperson Office were published.

#### Other relevant activities

- 29 November: The Head of Office ad interim met the State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice to discuss the draft amendments to Law 121 and Law 298 on the Equality Council, for which recommendations by CoE experts had been prepared;
- 4 December: The Head of Office ad interim participated in the Moldova Open Day in Strasbourg.

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

- 9-13 October: Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks, visited Chisinau and Tiraspol. Amongst others, he met with the Prime Minister, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Justice, Ombudsperson, civil society, and the de facto authorities in Tiraspol;
- 17-18 October and 28-29 November: Venice Commission delegations visited Moldova to assess political party financing and financing of the Ombudsperson Office respectively;
- 13 December: A high-level delegation of the Congress visited to follow up on the situation of suspended Chisinau Mayor Dorin Chirtoaca and local democracy in Moldova in general.



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

Core staff – 12, Project staff – 40, Total staff – 52.

In the framework of the CoE Action Plan for Ukraine 2015-2017, the Office implements 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”: Supported the final stages of the establishment of the new Ukrainian Supreme Court by informing the newly-appointed judges about the CoE, its standards on the judiciary and its work in Ukraine. This included the orientation of the new judges through a special series of events, such as the inauguration of the Supreme Court, the presentation of the new Consultative Council of European Judges’ (CCJE) Opinion on the uniformity of judicial practice, and the provision of an expert opinion on the compliance of the procedure of selection of judges to the Supreme Court with CoE standards. Recommendations from international and national experts were provided to Ukrainian partners with regard to CoE standards: within the draft law on the bar and legal practice; as to the legislation on the execution of judgments of the ECtHR; the content and structure of the report of the High Council of Justice on independence; disciplinary decisions against judges of the High Council of Justice; and the practice of the Public Integrity Council.
- VC Denmark “Continued Support to the Criminal Justice Reform in Ukraine”: Following the needs assessment of the Council of Prosecutors (CP) and the Qualification and Disciplinary Commission of Prosecutors (QDCP) conducted in August-September, the Report containing a set of recommendations for the enhancement of capacities of both bodies was finalised and presented to the CP and QDCP, followed by two workshops on results-based budgeting in November. Also in November, about 200 representatives of the Bar, judiciary, law enforcement, and civil society discussed specific aspects of the criminal justice reform during the IV All-Ukrainian Conference on Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure, organised in Kyiv by the All-Ukrainian NGO “Ukrainian Bar Association” (UBA) with the Project’s grant support. In addition, two thematic visits, one to Lithuania and the second to Moldova, allowed the Project’s beneficiaries to exchange experiences on the quality of legal aid and prosecutorial self-governance. Furthermore, about 300 local and regional prosecutors improved their knowledge on the application of Articles 5 and 6 of the ECHR in prosecutorial activity during regional seminars held in Lviv, Kharkiv and Odessa. Finally, two laptops with the relevant software and three document scanners were provided to the GPO, to be used for the launch of the implementation of a pilot project of electronic document flow and in order to further enhance the effectiveness of the Office’s work.
- VC UK “Consolidating Ukraine’s Justice Sector Reform”: The project has succeeded in engaging the High Qualification Commission of Judges and National School of Judges as two major beneficiaries for the Progress Review Methodology (PRM) component. In the course of two kick-off round tables and working group meetings, a team of three experts from the Project have begun reviewing and adjusting progress indicators and reporting for these institutions, which will be finalised in the next reporting period. The second component of the Project has been completed with presentation of the Report regarding the National Bar Association Needs Assessment exercise, conducted during September-November.
- AP “Decentralisation and territorial consolidation in Ukraine”: Following a request from the Parliamentary Committee on LSG, the project provided policy and legal advice on the status of local councillors, on municipal amalgamation, on urban agglomerations and on

public control over local authorities in Europe. Importantly, the Concept of reforming professional training system of civil servants and local government officials, which was drafted by the National Agency on Civil Service with extensive CoE expert support, was approved by the Government on 1 December. In November, the Programme contributed to strengthening multi-lateral dialogue platforms through organising the 2nd Forum in Kramatorsk that focused on peculiarities of the decentralisation reform in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as supporting the 2nd All-Ukrainian Forum of amalgamated communities attended by more than 900 participants under the leadership of the country. In addition, 17 local projects were implemented in 8 regions with financial support from the Programme amounting to 5.6 million UAH (equivalent of app. 170 000 euros), aiming at improvement of the amalgamation process, and provision of municipal, social services etc. Also, two 2-day training sessions on modern HR management tools for local government officials from 22 amalgamated communities were delivered by the Programme in October-November. The Programme raised awareness of CoE standards and best practices in decentralisation through organising study visits, exchange sessions and round table discussions for Ukrainian MPs, winners of the Annual International Children's TV festival "Dytiatko", the National media contest, the National Contest "Best practices of LSGt" and regional media contests. Communication of the on-going reform was facilitated through commissioning the third wave of the annual All-Ukrainian opinion poll, the second wave of the opinion poll in amalgamated communities and production of 4 live series of TV Talk show programme "Time of opportunities" as requested by the Government.

- AP "Promoting Local Democracy in Ukraine": Five municipalities received grant support to implement local initiatives aimed at increasing citizens' participation and the transparency of public policies. In October-November, selected mayors and local councillors attended the 33rd Congress Session in Strasbourg, and young activists and local councillors participated in the 2017 World Forum for Democracy. In November, members of the Ukrainian national delegation to the Congress and representatives of national LSG associations exchanged views on the path and challenges of the ongoing decentralisation reform. In December, a round table was jointly organised with the Parliamentary Committee on LSG to discuss the current legislation on the status of local councillors, which resulted in the establishment of a Working Group by the Committee to improve the legislation. Furthermore, a networking event gathered mayors, local councillors and young leaders who had been active in the Project since 2015 so they could exchange best practices on local democracy. Finally, a number of analytical papers were developed and disseminated, notably a handbook on transparency and citizen participation, a tool guide on management of change, as well as studies on gender equality, the situation with IDPs, and the powers and duties of local councillors.
- AP "Assistance to the Ukrainian authorities in reforming electoral legislation and in conducting constitutional reforms": In October, at its 112th session, the Venice Commission approved Opinions on the draft Law on the Rules of Procedures of the Parliament and the draft Law on the Anti-Corruption Court in Ukraine. In November/December the Project delivered four regional round tables to discuss ways of improving the electoral legislation for local elections, as well as procedures of the Electoral Code, which was voted on by the Parliament in the first reading in November. Also in November, the Project provided support to the International Conference on "Ways of improving the election administration system" which gathered more than 300 participants to mark the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the CEC and review the achievements and challenges. The Project also, jointly with the National School of Judges, organised a seminar for more than 40 judges from local administrative courts and administrative courts of appeal on election dispute resolution: international standards, the ECHR case law, national practice in Ukraine.
- AP "Reform of the electoral practice in Ukraine": A dialogue among national stakeholders was facilitated to discuss (i) necessary improvements to the election

administration system in Ukraine, (ii) role of the internet and social media in media coverage of elections, ways to tackle fake news during elections, (iii) effectiveness of accountability mechanisms in light of CoE survey results on causes for electoral violations, (iv) ways to increase women's political representation in Ukraine. A peer-to-peer exchange on gender equality in politics was held. Development of a training course for national judges on Election Dispute Resolution (EDR) was launched.

- AP "Promoting civil participation in democratic decision-making in Ukraine": Drawing on results and conclusions of the needs assessment and the audit of civil participation mechanisms in Kyiv, carried out by the Project, as well as a series of thematic events and consultations organised by the Project team for and with the Kyiv public authorities and NGOs during October-November, a draft concept for the Public participation academy, NGO Platform and online platform were developed. With CoE support, the NGO Platform was established as an independent policy actor in the city of Kyiv. The Project has also contributed to the promotion of CoE standards in civil participation in decision-making through an expert presentation and facilitation at the national conference organised by the OSCE in partnership with the CoE in December.

- AP "Strengthening the Human Rights Protection of IDPs in Ukraine": One hundred and twenty participants in the national forum on challenges and good practices of IDPs' integration, which was organised by the Project in October, discussed inter alia the draft "Strategy of Integration of IDPs and Providing Durable Solutions for IDPs till 2020". The Strategy was adopted by the Government on 15 November setting the 3 month deadline to prepare the Action Plan for its implementation. As a follow up, proposals to the Action plan were discussed on 15 December by members of the WG on improvement of the national legislation on HRs protection of IDPs with Project support. During November-December, the Project in cooperation with partner NGOs carried out three working thematic breakfasts for MPs to discuss legislative initiatives on protection of IDPs' rights in Ukraine. Furthermore, the Project organised study visits to Slovakia in October and to CoE HQ in December for national partners and stakeholders on IDPs and refugees' rights and application of the ECHR recommendations.

- AP "Strengthening freedom of media and establishing a public broadcasting system in Ukraine": The Strategy and action plan for staff reorganisation of the Ukrainian Public Broadcaster (UA:PBC) were developed by a leading law firm in Ukraine. Reduction and optimisation of the staff are particularly important in the situation of 50% state budget underfinancing of the PBC in 2018. The Project helped to improve communication of the UA:PBC with the audience through a new website and sociological survey to assess its starting positions at national and regional levels. The CoE expertise on the Ukrainian criminal legislation protecting safety was produced and presented. Challenges of media & elections were addressed at the international conference. In addition, the international conference on the archives system reforms was held and the road map for the reform produced. The Project supported the participation of 3 CoE experts as judges in the Price Media Law Moot Court.

- AP "Combating violence against women and children in Ukraine": The project finalised a series of guiding documents and practical handbooks for the authorities on the long-term approach to awareness-raising on VaW&DV, on general approaches for combating VaW&DV for police officers, on running shelters for victims of VaW&DV, for a multidisciplinary and interagency response to child victims and witnesses of violence. Thanks to the international conference for civil society on the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention in Ukraine, the Project succeeded in mapping and gathering together key NGOs in the area of protecting children's rights. As a result, these NGOs contributed to the thematic questionnaire for the 2nd monitoring round of the Lanzarote Committee facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs). In the course of several working

group meetings of national tutors, the Project has adapted two HELP courses for legal professionals on child friendly justice and on preventing VaW&DV in Ukraine.

- CoE/EU PGG Project "Strengthening the implementation of European HRs standards in Ukraine": The operational capacities of the Ombudsperson Office and its regional branches in implementation of the non-discrimination and data protection mandate was strengthened via a series of tailor-made trainings for 43 civil servants. In addition, 5 staff members of the Ombudsperson's office visited the Office of the Defensor del Pueblo in Spain in December to learn about the approaches and practice of anti-discrimination in policy implementation. The Project provided analytical support to the National Police in analysing the grounds and reasons for human rights violations originating within the police system. The report will be presented in 2018 to key partners and stakeholders for wider public discussion. Furthermore, at the request of the National Police, 42 computers and other technical equipment were purchased by the Project and transferred to the HRs Directorate of the National Police. Finally, the Project organised the piloting of new courses under the HELP, among which there will be "Pre-trial Investigation in the light of the ECHR" for prosecutors in October and a course on "Deliberate Ill-treatment" for academia in December. Both courses will be integrated into the training curriculum of the National Prosecution Academy and the National Internal Affairs Academy in 2018.

- EU/CoE – PGG "Further support for penitentiary reform in Ukraine": The Project held its Stocktaking Conference in Kyiv on 16 November to report to all stakeholders on the progress made since 2015 and to share plans for 2018. One of the highlights of the Stocktaking Conference was a presentation by the NGO Expert Centre for Human Rights of the survey "Prison through the Eyes of Prisoners" reflecting the opinions of 105 inmates from five penal institutions in Ukraine. On top of the prisoners' concerns, there are issues of poor healthcare and a lack of trust in prisons, both in prisoner-personnel and prisoner interrelationships. At the Project's initiative, the Code of Ethics for Prison Staff was revised and then approved by the Minister of Justice. Over 90% of prison heads took part in interactive training on the new Code. Eight thousand copies of a new edition of the Prison Management Manual, which promotes European standards and best practices in managing prisons and contemporary concepts of dynamic security and pro-social modelling, were printed.

- EU/CoE – PGG "Freedom of Media in Ukraine": The project has actively supported the reform of state and communal print media through delivering 6 thematic regional trainings and the launching of an online course for media professionals. An expert round table on community media development was held for media representatives to discuss the current challenges of the reform. The Project has also contributed to the International conference on media and elections. International experts from France and Italy shared their experiences on the transparency of media ownership at a seminar for the National TV and Radio Broadcasting Council of Ukraine in December.

- EU/CoE – PGG "Fight against Corruption": In the framework of strengthening compliance of the Ukrainian anti-corruption legislation with European standards, the Project's expert opinion on the draft laws on financial reporting by civil society organisations was submitted to the Parliamentary Committee on Anti-Corruption. The Project continued supporting the institutional capacities of anti-corruption agencies. Furthermore, detectives from the National Anti-Corruption Bureau who are engaged in intelligence data analysis in their professional activities received training on the use of the IBM i2 Analyst's Notebook 9.0.

### **Gender mainstreaming**

- The Office initiated and coordinated a joint statement on the International Day for the elimination of VaW on 25 November, along with 19 embassies and IOs that was published at a press event and through social media. A training session for project staff was

held on advocacy for gender mainstreaming and gender equality. The gender adviser also met several project teams to train them on mainstreaming gender in their specific field of action. Gender issues have been included in the various events of the projects. The Gender adviser also provided advice for the planning of new projects. Project officers from the relevant projects met with other IOs/missions working on similar subjects and gender to enhance coordination and create possible synergies.

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

- 2-7 October: GRETA;
- 7-8 October, 12-14 December: Regis Brillat, SASG to Ukraine;
- 17-19 October: Verena Taylor, Director, ODGP;
- 31 October -1 November: Venice Commission;
- 21-22November: High level visit of the Congress of the local and regional authorities;
- 15 December: Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission.

## **Pristina**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff - 6, Project staff - 13, Total - 19.

The Office implements ten projects, of which nine are jointly funded with the EU (of which two are regional joint programmes) and one project is co-funded by a voluntary contribution-VC from Switzerland, Norway and 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 provided a Legal Opinion on Administrative Instruction No. 04/2014 on Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs). It also provided training of trainers on prevention of integrity, and specialised training on financial crimes investigation techniques for law enforcement institutions. It finalised and presented the gap analysis on interagency cooperation in the area of economic crime. It organised awareness-raising activities on whistleblowing issues followed up with a TV video clip on the impact of corruption. It also provided substantive support in the drafting process of the Criminal Code related to bribery and terrorism.
- EU/CoE – HF "Strengthening the Quality and Efficiency of Justice (KoSEJ)": With the support of the Action, three pilot courts conducted court users' satisfaction surveys in November. The Action also organised a workshop with court staff (including K/Serb staff from the Basic Court in Mitrovica) to discuss statistics to be generated in the future by the Case Management Information System. Participants have agreed to further improve the use of CEPEJ indicators in the end of year annual reports on court performance. Finally, the Action is improving statistical templates used by the Basic Court in Pristina and is raising awareness on the importance of controlling the data entry process.
- EU/CoE – HF "Strengthening integrity and combating corruption in higher education": Draft codes of ethics in higher education for academic staff, high-level management of universities and students have been presented to the Ministry of Education (MEST), and at a round table with relevant stakeholders. MEST set up a working group to review the controversial draft law on higher education, to which the Action will provide expertise. Some 300 students and academic staff took part in lectures on Academic integrity at the Universities of Pristina, Prizren and Ferizaj/Urosevac. The Action co-organised one lecture with the Kosovo Anti-corruption Agency to mark the international day against corruption.
- EU/CoE – HF "Fostering a democratic school culture and diversity in schools": The local school coordinators, who will be working with 20 pilot schools, started mentoring and monitoring individual school development plans aimed at identifying challenges to developing a democratic school culture. Thirty-three representatives from 11 of the pilot schools participated in the Kosovo\* Academy for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship. The CoE Commissioner for Human Rights' paper on "Fighting School Segregation in Europe through Inclusive Education" was translated into Albanian and disseminated. Translation into Serbian, Bosnian, Roma and Turkish is underway.
- EU/CoE – HF "Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners": The rules and protocols on prison healthcare have been disseminated to all relevant stakeholders, and some 100 healthcare staff have been trained on applying them. Three trainings of trainers were held respectively on dynamic security, needs assessment and treatment programmes,

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with the UNSCR and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

and on prevention and treatment of transmissible diseases. Some 100 correctional staff were trained on dynamic security. A training strategy and a manual on dynamic security were prepared, as well as two treatment programmes for inmates. Work on revision of the prison inspectorate methodology is underway.

- EU/CoE – HF “Enhancing human rights policing”: Following the approval of the HF Steering Board to support the 18-month Action, an inception visit by the HQ project team took place in September. Meetings have taken place with all beneficiary institutions (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Police Directorate, Police Academy, Police Inspectorate, as well as the EU Office, Ministry of European Integration, Ombudsperson/NPM, and representatives from other related projects. Preparatory work has been carried out for the launching event and first Steering Committee in early 2018.
- VC Switzerland/AP “Strengthening the National Preventive Mechanism in Kosovo\* – SNPM: A 32-day training curriculum to develop NPM capacity was designed. The first module on monitoring health care in places of deprivation of liberty was delivered to the NPM, Ombudsperson and NGOs. The fourth awareness-raising workshop on the role and mandate of the NPM was held in Gjilan/Gnjilane gathering people from relevant institutions and civil society. Thirteen capacity-building activities will be implemented in 2018, consisting of workshops on prevention of torture standards/interview techniques and report drafting, and practical visits to places of deprivation of liberty.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)”: JUFREX organised, in cooperation with the Kosovo Bar Association, a training session for lawyers on the limits of protected speech, and in cooperation with the Kosovo Justice Academy, a training activity on balancing the exercise on defamation cases for judges and prosecutors. The Regional Conference on freedom of expression and the media held in November involved 50 judges, prosecutors and lawyers, 8 of whom were from Kosovo\*. An inter-professional seminar on online media content held in December gathered around 30 representatives from the judiciary and the media.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED)”: The project inception report was submitted to donors in November. A support organisation and focal point have been identified and initial meetings with them were held on the project methodology. The budget adjustment and work plan have been prepared, as well as stakeholder mapping. A regional training on national teams was held in Budapest, Hungary, gathering together the project team, the supporting organisation, the focal point and the three facilitators, as well as counterparts from the five other regional beneficiaries.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Targeting crime proceeds on the Internet in South Eastern Europe and Turkey (iPROCEEDS): iPROCEEDS held a Cybercrime and Partnership Exercise consisting of a 4-day simulation exercise for cybercrime investigators, prosecutors, forensic specialists, financial investigators and financial intelligence specialists from relevant Kosovar authorities and institutions in Pristina. Kosovar authorities from these agencies also took part in a regional workshop on guidelines and indicators to prevent and detect online crime proceeds, on sharing good practices and reporting mechanisms in SEE, on obtaining and using electronic evidence, and in the 4th SEE Regional Forum on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime.

#### Follow up action

- PECK II: provided assistance in drafting the draft Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Discharge of Public Duties, in reviewing the Criminal and Criminal Procedures Codes in relevant matters, the Draft Law on Freedom of Association in non-governmental organisations the Draft Law on Freedom of Association in NGOs, and in drafting the anticorruption Strategy and Action Plan 2018-22;

- HF-Higher Education Action will assist the authorities in reviewing the draft law on Higher Education;
- KoSEJ: Launching event of the in-depth assessment report on the judicial system in January;
- JUFREX: preparation of training handbook to be disseminated to the beneficiaries in early 2018;
- HF Prison Action: piloting the treatment programmes in two prisons, and healthcare protocols in one;
- A project proposal on assistance in getting access to learning the local official languages was developed with the Kosovo\* Language Commissioner, and proposed for funding.

#### Other relevant activities

- The Office organised with UNMIK, OSCE, EU Office a "Gender Library" on the Human Rights Library model, for International Human Rights Day and the campaign against gender-based violence;
- HoO together with PECK II and KoSEJ and HF Education Projects Managers respectively met the new Minister of Justice, and MEST to discuss on-going and possible further cooperation. The Ministers have been encouraged to resort to the Expertise Coordination Mechanism;
- UNMIK has been collecting the comments on the 4th Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the FCNM on Kosovo\* and transmitted it to the Secretariat of the AC. Publication is expected soon;
- HoO met with the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture on the occasion of his visit in November.

\*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 – 8, Total staff – 14.

The Sarajevo Office directly implements 4 projects: 2 projects within the EU/CoE Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey, 1 funded by a voluntary contribution from Liechtenstein and the CoE ordinary budget and 1 funded by the UK. In addition, the Office contributes to the implementation of 2 regional projects, the Joint Programme with the EU on media and from November 2017 the Joint Project with the 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”: Two sessions reaffirmed the law enforcement training capacity building programme as the first opportunity for prison staff to deliver training to police officers in any European jurisdiction. This multiagency team is developing in parallel the accompanying train-the-trainers manual as one of the Action’s added values. The summary evaluation report following delivery of two extracurricular sessions, at the specific request of local authorities, to improve prison staff’s core and advanced skills is evidenced by the overall rate of success achieved in improving knowledge of new recruits at 86%. Two training sessions on the Handbook for managing prisoners and enhancing human rights in closed environment were delivered to prison staff to directly support the CPT’s recommendations to provide a wider range of purposeful activities to detainees and sentenced prisoners. The summary evaluation report evidences the overall rate of success achieved in improving knowledge at 88%. Three training sessions on the Protocols for enhancing health care and human rights in closed environment resulted in an agreement on the list of future medical protocols to be developed in the subsequent Actions. In addition, a joint message was agreed on to be conveyed to senior prison managers, underlying the need to unify medical procedures throughout BiH prisons. The summary evaluation report evidences the overall rate of success achieved in improving knowledge at 100%.
- EU/CoE – HF “Strengthening the Human Rights Ombudsman to fight discrimination”: A review of the implemented distance-learning course on Hate Crime and Hate Speech for staff members of the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman (IHRO) BiH was organised from 5-6 October in Bjelasnica and from 14-15 November in Teslić. The Action supported the Associations of Judges with the organisation, in co-operation with the Judicial Training Centres and the Bar Associations at national level, of the 12th Regional conference of civil law legal professionals held from 19–21 October in Jahorina. The 2nd Steering Committee meeting was held on 17 October in Sarajevo and its members were informed of the progress made during the implementation of the action; the amended work plan was also presented and subsequently endorsed by all members. A one-month placement of an Ombudsperson’s staff member in the human rights protection institutions in Northern Ireland started in October and ended on 16 November. A study visit of the IHRO BiH to the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia took place from 31 October-2 November. Training on protection and the fight against discrimination for the Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Gender Centres of Republika Srpska and Federation of BiH, was organised on 8-10 November in Mostar. Fifteen judges from BiH attended a comprehensive training of trainers course on European anti-discrimination standards, where all forms of gender-based violence (Istanbul Convention), as well as other forms of discrimination and inequality were tackled, in Mostar from 29 November-1 December. The

5th co-ordination meeting between the Ombudsman of BiH and relevant public institutions was held on 5 December in Tuzla and on the 6 December lawyers from the Ombudsperson Institution organised training on discrimination for public institutions and NGOs in Tuzla.

- VC Liechtenstein "Strengthening Democratic Electoral Culture and the Role of Young Political Leaders": The National seminar of the SPS BiH, Generation 2017, was organised in Petrovac-Budva as a joint seminar with the school of Montenegro from 5-8 October. The title of the seminar was "Strengthening Accountability, Transparency and Governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina" and it was the fourth, out of four planned sessions for this year's school generation. The main objective of the seminar was to increase the engagement of women and youth in public and political processes and to empower women and youth to take more active roles in the political processes in BiH with the aim of creating a new and more accountable generation of political party leadership. Participants from the school also participated in the 2017 edition of the World Forum for Democracy under the topic "Is Populism a Problem?" which was held in Strasbourg from 6-10 November. In addition to the main Forum events, a comprehensive series of events and meetings have been designed specifically for the schools, notably a speed networking by profession, a diploma ceremony and thematic sessions. The Alumni Network meeting of the SPS BiH, under the title: "Strengthening democratic standards within the political parties in BiH", was organised on Vlačić, from 15-17 December. The aim of the seminar was to discuss how to intensify and enrich democratic reforms inside political parties, on the level of internal legislative documents (statutes), democratic culture and everyday political practice, based on the present legal framework for the functioning of political parties in BiH.

- VC UK "Supporting reintegration of violent and extremist prisoners in BiH": The objective of the project is to support BiH authorities in standardising prisons' operational procedures in relation to violent extremist prisoners that are based on the lawful exercise of public safety duties, thereby enabling prisoners' effective and efficient reintegration into the community. A set of indicators was developed in order to facilitate the identification of such prisoners. These indicators are embedded in a Manual on risk and needs assessment (RNA) protocol, specific individual sentence planning and treatment programmes, such as the pre-release programme (PRP) for violent extremist prisoners. The Manual is focusing on disengagement interventions and aims to change violent behaviour. It is important to emphasise that the main work on the development of these essential documents was carried out by a Working group composed of representatives of all three Ministries of Justice in BiH and CoE international consultants, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Security and police services (State Investigation and Protection Agency, Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs, BiH Border Police, Republika Srpska Ministry of Internal Affairs, Service for Foreigner's Affairs) to enable an effective response to violent extremism.

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): Two trainings took place in the last quarter. Both of them focused on Article 10 of ECHR and the legal practice of European Court in regard to Article 10. The training for lawyers was organised in cooperation with a grantee Bar Association of RS, and it gathered 15 lawyers from both entities in BiH. The other one, for judges and prosecutors was organised by the Center for the Education of Judges and Prosecutors of FBiH, and it gathered 17 participants.

- JP EU/CoE "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level" (ROMACTED): The Programme aims to promote good governance and Roma empowerment at local level. The project started in May 2017 with a duration of 3 years. The objective of the programme is to build up political will and the sustained policy engagement of local authorities to enhance democratic local governance and to build up capacity and stimulate the empowerment of local Roma communities. The programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina

will be implemented in 10 municipalities. During the inception phase, efforts focused on an overview of possible synergies with Roma-focused projects implemented within the country as well as on building an in-country ROMACTED team consisting of a partner NGO, focal point and 6 facilitators. The official in-country launching conference is planned for March 2018.

#### Other relevant activities

- 9 October: HoO attended and gave introductory speech at the opening of the training centre of the Central Election Commission of BiH;
- 16 November: HoO attended and gave an introductory speech at the opening of the first office for the national minorities in BiH, in Bijeljina;
- 21 November: HoO attended and gave an introductory speech at the “No Hate Speech in Sport Workshop” organised by the Council of Europe;
- 7 December: HoO attended the Press Conference organised by the Museum of War Childhood in Sarajevo. The 2018 Council of Europe Museum Prize, has been awarded to the War Childhood Museum;
- 7-8 December: HoO and DHoO attended the regular meeting of the Peace Implementation Council to review the process of implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP);
- 12 December: HoO attended a Conference of Ministers of Education in BiH;
- 14 December: HoO attended and gave introductory speech at the Council of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe meeting – Enhancing Culture for Sustainable Development;
- 14 December: HoO also attended and gave an introductory speech at the CoE Confidence Building Measures Programme showcase event organised in Sarajevo, which presented the results of the project which aims to support reconciliation between neighbouring municipalities on each side of the entity line.

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

- 13-15 November: Visit of Gianluca Esposito, Executive Secretary, Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

## **Tbilisi**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 5, Project staff – 12, Total staff - 17.

In October the DHoO ended her duties.

The Office implements 13 projects, of which 10 are funded by the EU/jointly funded with the EU and 3 funded by VC/Donors.

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

- AP "Support to the Judicial Reform in Georgia": High Council of Justice (HCoJ) members and staff were trained to effectively apply the Judicial Strategy and Action Plan monitoring and evaluation tools (31 October); Judicial Performance Evaluation criteria are being revised as a follow up of the joint workshop with the ODIHR (13-14 November); Expertise was provided to the Parliament and the HCoJ to revise existing grounds on disciplinary proceedings (3-4 December); Framework is set to evaluate GBA mentor and intern lawyers.
- 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": One hundred and thirty-one legal professionals (judges, prosecutors, lawyers, courts' staff) improved their knowledge on various ECHR articles and the case-law of the ECtHR. Nine judges of the Supreme Court of Georgia became more aware of the ECtHR's latest landmark cases. Access to the ECtHR judgments was increased by preparing and translating into Georgian 45 excerpts of ECtHR judgments and their summaries. The HELP guidebook on Human Rights Training for Legal Professionals was made available in Georgian.
- AP "Strengthening the Capacity of the High School of Justice of Georgia": In November, the project co-funded the study visit of the High School of Justice (HSoJ) representatives to the Public Servants Association Academy in Berlin, aimed at familiarising them with the process for obtaining the ISO 9001 certificate. Development of four training modules for the HSoJ was completed and pilot trainings were delivered: International Humanitarian Law – 25-26 November; Anti-trafficking in Human Beings – 1-2 December; Effective Communication – 2-3 December; Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – 9-10 December. In December, books were donated to the HSoJ library to complement the development of new training modules.
- EU/CoE – PGG "Programme to support Georgia in view of the 2016 (parliamentary), 2017 (local) and 2018 (presidential) elections": On 4-8 December, the CoE's Electoral Assistance Division organised training in Tbilisi on New Voting Technologies/ NVTs, during which 28 participants from Election Monitoring Bodies, Civil Society and academia from Eastern Partnership countries were introduced to operational and political pre-conditions for a successful implementation of NVT in the electoral process and discussed the advantages and risks of the different tools. Participants learned about the technical functioning of three main technologies used in elections: biometrics, e-voting, and electronic result management.
- EU/CoE – PGG "Promoting freedom, professionalism and pluralism of the media": An expert reviewed the legal framework and practice of funding Georgian public and private media outlets including the transparency requirements. The report suggested recommendations for a proper funding practice of media companies in order to ensure the promotion of media independence and professionalism.
- EU/CoE – PGG "Protecting internet freedom through legislation and arrangements for Multi-stakeholder dialogue": Two Georgian experts participated in the Internet Freedom

Conference in Vienna. The participants increased their knowledge about the nature and scope of the responsibilities of internet intermediaries, their relationship with state and non-state actors. In addition, 5 Georgian experts participated in the 12th Internet Governance Forum 2017 in Geneva, aimed at promoting dialogue on public policy issues related to the internet.

- EU/CoE JP "Human Rights and Healthcare in Prisons and Other Closed Institutions in Georgia II": Based on the grant agreement with the PPTC, the prison directors and deputy directors, in total 45 senior managers, increased their understanding of the following issues: prison management, human rights and fundamental freedoms, protection of personal information, and newly developed decrees and regulations based on European standards. The managers of the Ministry of Corrections healthcare unit and the prison healthcare establishment attended specially designed training courses on healthcare management, including on European standards relating to qualitative healthcare services. The suicide prevention programme's conclusions for 2017 and the action plan for 2018 were drafted.
- EU/CoE JP "Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing": Representatives of the Georgian custom authorities (Custom Department of the Revenue Service), the Investigation Service of the Ministry of Finance, Chief Prosecutor's Office, and the Financial Monitoring Service of Georgia participated in a 2-day training on "Cash and money laundering". The activity aimed at raising awareness and training custom authorities on cash smuggling and cash-based money laundering, criminal exploitation of money services and emerging trends, and the use of cash in relation to terrorist financing. CoE experts presented best practices and discussed possible steps for improving money laundering investigations and cash seizure in Georgia.

#### Other relevant activities

- 3 November: The Annual Co-ordination Platform of the Partnership for Good Governance took place in Tbilisi;
- 6 - 7 December: The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe organised a regional conference in Tbilisi, which brought together around 100 mayors and local elected representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. In addition, on 8 December, the Secretary General of the Congress intervened at the 6th General Assembly of the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG);
- In December the Closing Event of the EU/CoE Joint Projects "Promoting freedom, professionalism and pluralism of the media" and "Protecting internet freedom through legislation and arrangements for multi-stakeholder dialogue" took place in Tbilisi. The event brought together project stakeholders in order to discuss results and achievements of the projects,
- HoO held introductory meetings with Acting Minister of Environment Mr. Solomoni Pavliashvili (6 Nov) and with the Minister of Finance (8 Dec), the new Auditor General, as well as the new Public Defender (13 Dec). He also presented opening remarks at the workshop on the Evaluation of Judges' Work (14 Nov), workshop on Reporting on Piloting of the Local Finance Benchmarking (2nd phase) and the LF database in Georgia (28 Nov), conference on Ethics and Transparency at Local Level: strategies and tools (6 Dec), Regional Conference on Self-regulation (15 Dec); he also spoke at the Parliament-organised Human Rights Day reception (11 Dec). He was an invited speaker at the European Youth Parliament Panel Discussion (15 Nov). The HoO had working meetings with the Prime Minister of Georgia, the State Minister of Reconciliation and Civic Equality, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Chairpersons of the Parliament Committees for Legal Affairs and Human Rights, the Chief Justice, the Ambassadors of Germany, Italy and Greece, and UNICEF Representative to Georgia. In addition, the HoO took part in other meetings and briefings on

issues falling within CoE's mandate, including gatherings of the Ambassadorial Working Group.

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

- 7-9 November: Council of Europe Development Bank Vice-Governor, Rosa Maria Sanchez-Yebra Alonso paid a visit to Georgia.
- 6-8 December: The Secretary General of the Congress visited Tbilisi, to take part in a regional conference, as well as NALAG's General Assembly;
- 20-22 November: PACE Co-rapporteurs visited Georgia within a fact-finding mission on honouring obligations and commitments by Georgia.

**Tirana****Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 6, Project staff – 17, Total staff - 23.

The Office implements 11 projects, out of which 10 are co-funded by the EU and 1 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”: A peer exchange seminar on the CoE HRM toolkit involving 15 senior HR managers from Albania as well as experts from Albania, Serbia and BiH took place on 22-23 November in Durres.
- EU/CoE JP “Enhancing the effectiveness of the Albanian system of human rights protection and anti-discrimination”: The strategy and action plan for 2018-2021 for the Commissioner for the Protection against Discrimination (CPD) is in place, its electronic database is fully developed, its internal policies and procedures have been improved and CPD offices in Korca, Shkodra and Gjirokastra have been established along with plans for preventive measures for respective municipalities. The capacities of over 120 representatives of the CPD, the People’s Advocate, legal professionals and relevant domestic institutions were enhanced on various aspects pertaining to antidiscrimination standards and practices.
- EU/CoE – HF “Strengthening the Efficiency of Justice (SEJ II) in Albania”: A new curricula for initial and continuous training of chancellors was prepared for the School of Magistrates. The CEPEJ Tools Handbook was published and distributed to all judges across the country. A Report on Developing a New Judicial Map in Albania was prepared. An IT Strategy outline for improving the electronic case management system was drafted along with an Assessment Report on Court Security in Albania. The MoJ incorporated the CEPEJ tools on judicial statistics as part of their collection of statistics from all Albanian courts.
- EU/CoE – HF “Economic Crime in Albania”: The Central Election Commission (CEC) received further support on establishing the oversight structure of Political Party and Election Campaign finance. The Action contributed to strengthening inter-agency cooperation mechanisms with regards to Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) and provided practical guidance to enhance the ability of prosecutors and investigators, specialising in economic crime, to trace, seize and ultimately confiscate criminal assets.
- EU/CoE – HF “Fighting Bullying and extremism in the Education System in Albania”: Open day events were organised on 27-31 October in 21 pilot schools in Albania, reaching out to over 11,000 citizens and receiving high media visibility. The Albanian education authorities accredited a comprehensive training package for teachers. The third Steering Committee meeting of the Action took place on 23 November in Tirana.
- EU/CoE – HF “Enhancing the Protection of Human Rights of Prisoners in Albania”: Forty-two prison staff were capacitated on ethical and professional standards, while 95 medical staff improved their knowledge on common mental disorders as well as on prevention and treatment of transmissible diseases and treatment of drug-related problems based on CoE standards and CPT recommendations.
- EU/CoE – HF “Supporting effective domestic remedies and facilitating the execution of judgments (D-REX)”: Three training modules and ToT manuals were prepared for the School of Magistrates (SoM) and the School of Advocacy (SoA) and incorporated into their respective in-service training curricula. Three ToTs were successfully completed, targeting over 59 participants. The SoM included in its calendar a cascade of nine training seminars. A

comparative analysis on the progress made by Albania in meeting the ECHR standards was provided through three assessment reports. The Steering Committee meeting of the Action took place on 5 December in Tirana.

- EU/CoE – HF “Strengthening the Protection of National Minorities in Albania”: The Framework Law on Minorities was adopted by Parliament taking into account recommendations made by a CoE expert. A final expert opinion was prepared on 8 December.
- EU/CoE – HF “Preventing and Combating Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Albania”: A CoE handbook on Policing Hate Crime against LGBTI persons was adapted to the local context and translated into Albanian. The capacities of 30 gender focal points, representing their municipalities in north and central Albania, were enhanced with regards to the implementation of the National Action Plan on LGBTI.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)”: The audio-visual media authority (AMA) approved the revised Transmission Code which has been legally reviewed with CoE expertise, while a high level event was organised with the Albanian Assembly to guide the legal initiatives pertaining to freedom of expression online.
- EU/CoE regional JP “ROMACTED”: Started in Albania in October 2017. Draft MoUs were introduced with the target municipalities of Roskovec, Fier, Vlora, Permet, Elbasan, Pogradec and Korca.

#### Follow up action

- A shortlist of priority Horizontal Facility (HF) Actions requiring an extension has been prepared and shared with ODGP;
- A draft final report of the Programmatic Cooperation Document (PCD) 2015-2017 is under review;
- Follow up discussions with Swedish and UK Embassies in Tirana with a view to materialising proposed actions in the sector of human rights and fight against corruption, economic crime and organised crime;
- Follow up discussions with the Albanian Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA) with regards to the new cooperation assistance framework.

#### Other relevant activities

- A joint CoE/Central Election Commission conference focusing on the 25 June 2017 Parliamentary Elections, took place in Tirana with a view to sharing lessons learnt and defining needs for further assistance in the light of OSCE/ODIHR and CoE election monitoring reports;
- The Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE organised on 24th November, in co-operation with the Albanian Parliament, a seminar on Albanian legislation with regard to the fight against intolerance, discrimination and hatred.

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

- The President of the Venice Commission participated in the international conference on “Europeanisation of the Constitutional Law and Constitutionalization of the European Law – challenges of the future” on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Constitutional Court of Albania;



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

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

The Office implements 7 projects, of which 3 projects are funded by the EU under the Partnership for Good Governance (PGG), 1 project is funded partially by VC/ Donor Government of the United Kingdom and partially by the EU (PGG), and also 1 project funded by the Government of Sweden and 1 project funded by the Government of Switzerland.

**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”: The draft Law on Prosecution, prepared with CoE support was adopted by the National Assembly; the draft Criminal Code has been finalised and made available for public discussion. One hundred and two investigators were trained in the Justice Academy on the human rights curricula prepared within the project, thus bringing the total number of trained investigators to 450. Thirty participants from the Human Rights Defender’s Office and NGOs of the National Prevention Mechanism (NPM) were trained on international standards on “Isolation of persons deprived of liberty”. A needs-assessment mission for the development of the electronic investigation system of the Investigative Committee was conducted; the third Steering Committee meeting endorsed the results achieved in 2017 and adopted the work-plan for 2018. A HELP course on Domestic Violence was launched in the Justice Academy.
- EU/CoE – PGG “Strengthening integrity and combatting corruption in higher education in Armenia”: The piloting phase of the institutional mechanisms developed by the project (toolkits and codes of ethics) prompted six state universities to adopt their codes of ethics and 15 universities to publish via an online reporting platform their annual institutional reports focusing on transparency practices in the six key areas of university governance. Through the mini grant scheme, 4 civil society organisations implemented awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns for the general public on main corruption risks in higher educational institutions. In November, the project closing conference brought together about one hundred educational professionals and decision makers from the higher education field in Armenia to discuss the project results achieved during 2015-2017.
- EU/CoE – PGG “Strengthening Health Care and Human Rights Protection in Prisons in Armenia”: The project resumed in November for a period of 14 months. Guidelines addressing the healthcare rights of inmates, including specific groups as women and juveniles were prepared and delivered. A number of 43 medical staff (15 women) from nine prisons healthcare units were trained on the use of the equipment, provided earlier by the CoE. An assessment mission on sanitary, hygienic and epidemiological supervision issues was conducted in 4 prisons, including the Prison hospital, in order to evaluate related needs. A round table on the report for mental healthcare issues in Armenia enjoyed the participation of the Ministry of Justice, Penitentiary Department, and CoE experts.
- EU/CoE – PGG / VC UK “Support to the implementation of the judicial reform in Armenia”: The draft Judicial Code and the draft Civil Procedure Code, prepared with project support, were finalised, and the draft Judicial Code was adopted in the first reading in the National Assembly. A package of related laws, including the new Law on Mediation and the Law on the Service of Judicial Marshals is under development and revision. Expert input on the draft Code of Administrative Offences was provided at the request of the Ministry of Justice. Work on the alternative dispute resolution mechanism continued with the

strengthening of the Association of Mediators and the Association of Arbitrators. A series of documents were prepared and submitted for the approval of the Association of Mediators: Baseline Survey of the Needs of the Self-Governing Organisation of Mediators of Armenia, the Strategic and Organisational Development Plan, the Communication Plan for the Self-Governing Organisation of Mediators of Armenia, the Procedure for Conducting Mediation. The platform of women judges was established. A public event on "Support to the Implementation of the Judicial Reform in Armenia: "Preventing corruption and promoting human rights: the implementation of GRECO's recommendations in Armenia" enjoyed the participation of the Minister of Justice, the Human Rights Defender and other high level officials.

- VC Switzerland "Institutional Support to Communities Association of Armenia (CAA)": The President of the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities opened the forum on local democracy in Armenia "Outlook for the future: a new agenda for decentralisation" organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development. The forum brought together over 200 mayors, representatives of the Government, the National Assembly, and international organisations. In December, the project supported the CAA Republican Council meeting, which convened to elect the Chairpersons of its committees and to discuss its position on the current LG reform agenda. The event enjoyed the presence of the President of Armenia, MTAD and CAA leadership and about 150 mayors.

- VC UK "Strengthening the application of European human rights standards in the armed forces in Armenia": Three needs assessment reports (i) on Armenian military legislation, (ii) on human rights training and educational needs in the Armenian armed forces and (iii) on mechanisms of prevention and effective investigation of human rights violations in the army were presented to stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Project. The second Steering Committee meeting discussed the results of the first year of implementation and endorsed the following three-month work plan. An analysis of new draft laws "On defence" and "On military service and the status of military servicepersons" was prepared based on European human rights standards and CoE recommendations. On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, a round table discussion on human rights in the armed forces gathered representatives of the Ministry of Defence, Human Rights Defender's Office, Investigative Committee, Military Prosecutor's Office and National Assembly. The awareness-raising activities included a seminar on the case-law of the ECtHR related to the military sphere and on specificities of protection of human rights of military servicepersons in criminal proceedings in Armenia.

- VC Sweden "Support to Consolidating Local Democracy in Armenia (follow up): The first Steering Committee meeting of the Project took place, and main activities to be implemented were discussed and approved by stakeholders. Working discussions and consultation meetings were organised with representatives of communities, state authorities, non-governmental and international organisations, and CoE experts working on improving legislation on local self-government. Training on the European Charter of Local Self-Government was provided to officials of consolidated municipalities. An international expert opinion was delivered to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development on the draft law on Inter-Community Unions.

#### Other relevant activities

- 27 November: DHoO chaired the Steering Committee meeting - Support to Consolidating Local Democracy in Armenia;
- 29 November: HoO/ DHoO chaired the Steering Committee on HR in armed forces ; HoO participated with opening remarks at the presentation of the needs assessment reports under this project;

- 30 November: HoO participated in the closing Conference of "Strengthening integrity and combatting corruption in higher education in Armenia" project;
- 30 November: DHoO chaired the Steering Committee meeting PGG Project "Supporting the criminal justice reform and combating ill-treatment and impunity in Armenia"
- 12 December: HoO met with the Deputy General Prosecutor to discuss future co-operation;
- 14 December: HoO attended the Kick-off meeting of the HELP course "Violence against women and domestic violence" at the Justice Academy of Armenia;
- 25 November - 10 December, CoE Office participated in the organisation of UN-led campaign against domestic violence and on 25 November HoO took part in the launching of the campaign.

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

- 25 October: Directorate of Political Affairs;
- 2 November: The Director General of DG II, Snežana Samardžić-Marković within the framework of the Conference on the Right of the child to live in a family
- 6-7 November: PACE visit to Armenia, Honouring of obligations and commitments by Armenia;
- 9-10 November: Delegation from the Congress headed by President Gudrun Mosler-Törnström, within the framework of "Outlook for the future: a new agenda for decentralisation" forum on local democracy in Armenia;
- 17 November: Venice Commission visit to Armenia to provide opinion on the Draft Law on referendum;
- 27 November: Executive Secretary Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

## **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”: training sessions for Moroccan heads of judicial bodies (court presidents and prosecutors) with just under 300 participants, were organised by the CEPEJ with the participation of the Judicial Training Academy and in co-operation with the Ministry of Justice. The sessions took place simultaneously in the three Moroccan cities of Tangiers, El Jadida and Agadir in October, November and December in order to raise awareness and introduce participants to the issue of court management. The training covered the following three topics: organisation of courts and the role of court presidents, human resource management, and, lastly, budgetary management, real estate management, security and communication. The December training session provided an opportunity to award training certificates to the participants and to canvas their views on the quality and conduct of the three training sessions.
- EU/CoE JP “Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean” (Prevention of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment): in October, Council of Europe experts and members of the National Council for Human Rights (CNDH) met in the context of the fourth training module with a view to establishing a National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture (NPM) in Morocco. This module centred on field visits to places of deprivation of liberty. The fifth training module, which was organised in December, afforded an opportunity to focus on visits to prisons in conditions that mimicked the real world as closely as possible. During the two modules, the experts visited prisons in the Rabat and Meknes regions.
- EU/CoE JP “Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean”, Fight against trafficking in human beings: a memorandum of understanding for organising a training course on combating trafficking in human beings was signed between the Hassan II University in Casablanca, the Delegation of the European Union to Morocco and the Council of Europe on Tuesday 21 November 2017. This ceremony was followed by the second training session which was a follow-up to an initial session held on 3 and 4 May 2017 on trafficking, and which is part of a training cycle on the same subject launched by the Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences of the Mohammedia University and the Council of Europe. This training dealt with the different ways in which victims of trafficking are exploited, the various factors enabling trafficking in human beings, the victims, and the trafficking networks.
- EU/CoE JP “Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean”: on 6 and 7 December the Pompidou Group - Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs - held a seminar in Rabat on “Mednet Gambling” to discuss addiction to gambling in Moroccan society.
- EU/CoE JP “Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean”, Combating violence against children: the E-Salama programme for the

protection of children on the Internet was launched on 13 October by Bassima Hakkaoui, Minister for the Family, Solidarity, Equality and Social Development, in the presence of Council of Europe experts. E-Salama is part of a co-operation arrangement with the Council of Europe, notably in the context of the Lanzarote Convention. Morocco is one of the first African countries to develop a programme of this kind. E-Salama supports and strengthens the Integrated Child Protection Policy, creating a leverage effect thanks to the inclusion of a section on the protection of children on the Internet.

- EU/CoE JP "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean", Combating violence against women: on 8 December 2017, the Council of Europe organised a working breakfast at the Norwegian Embassy in Rabat around the issue of women's portrayal in the media, which brought together journalists and representatives of Moroccan civil society. The discussions focused on the challenges faced by each stakeholder, sharing good practice and developing mechanisms to allow closer co-operation with all the players concerned.

- EU/CoE JP "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean", No Hate Speech Morocco: to mark International Human Rights Day, the Moroccan Committee for the No Hate Speech Movement and the Council of Europe held a study day on 6 December on "Love Human Rights Everyone, Everywhere" which aimed to mobilise young people in order to raise their awareness of the issues surrounding online hate speech and human rights. Among those present were the EU Ambassador in Morocco and the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Morocco.

- EU/CoE JP "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean", PATHS: on 27 and 28 November, the Council of Europe, together with the CNDH, delivered the fourth module of the Programme of Advanced Training in the field of human rights, the rule of law and democracy for the Southern Mediterranean which focused on the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP). This module aims to improve participants' knowledge of the applicable Council of Europe norms in the areas of data protection and the right to privacy, the rights of the child, and the fight against trafficking in human beings. Several participants from Southern Mediterranean countries including Tunisia, Libya, Lebanon and Palestine took part in this training which is regional in nature.

- Freedom of expression and media freedom: in October, two training workshops for staff from the Ministry of Culture and Communication (MinCom) looked at the issue of freedom of expression online, and journalists' rights and responsibilities. Through numerous European examples, participants were able to enhance their knowledge of the definition of the status of journalists, the role of self-regulation in the protection of rights and observance of ethical norms, recent changes in the daily lives of journalists and the legal protection of journalistic activities. In December, a Moroccan delegation from MinCom took part in the 13th meeting of the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI). Lastly, a working breakfast centred around the issue of women's portrayal in the media brought together journalists and representatives of Moroccan civil society. The discussions focused on the challenges faced by each stakeholder, sharing good practice and developing mechanisms to allow closer co-operation with all the players concerned.

- EU/CoE joint programme "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean", the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities: in September 2017 the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities published the findings of a study on the powers and training resources available to Moroccan elected officials. In addition, from 20 to 22 November 2017, the Congress, in partnership with Rabat City Council, held an international conference on "Building inclusive communities: integrating migrants, fighting extremism, involving citizens". During the conference, participants shared their experiences at thematic roundtables, and concrete examples were given on the following three topics: the role of local authorities in the integration of migrants, preventing radicalisation and

manifestations of hatred at local level, and establishing mechanisms for citizen participation. Furthermore, on 28 and 29 November 2017, a parliamentary colloquy was held in partnership with the Committee for Home Affairs, Local and Regional Authorities and Urban Policy at the House of Representatives. During the colloquy, discussions were held at thematic sessions, with the focus on the framework for the decentralised system in Morocco and the European framework for local and regional democracy, administrative and fiscal decentralisation, access to public services in disadvantaged areas and the development of sustainable towns and cities.

## **Tunis**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 2, Project staff – 5, Total – 7.

The Office implements country-related activities of five regional programmes, of which two are funded by the EU (Towards a strengthened democratic reform in the Southern Mediterranean ("South Programme II" for the period 2015-2017 and CyberSouth for the period 2017-2020) and four are funded by Norway (Schools of political studies; Combatting violence against women; Promotion of freedom of expression, independence of the media and public access to information; local democracy).

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

- South Programme II "Human Rights": The CoE's Independent Human Rights Bodies Division provided decisive support to the National Commission for the Prevention of Torture (INPT) for the International Conference organised on 14-16 December in Tunisia in securing the participation of about ten senior representatives of European National Prevention Mechanisms in (NPM) Europe, as well as of the former Executive Secretary of the CPT. The International Conference's main purpose was to provide a forum for exchange of experiences on NPMs working tools and methods.
- South Programme II "Justice": CEPEJ experts visited several of the pilot courts (Tunis, Nabeul, Zaghouan) and held meetings in Tunis with the Ministry of Justice, other national stakeholders and the EU delegation on 25-27 October. The main objectives of the visit were to continue the implementation of the cooperation activities currently carried out in each tribunal as well as to review the progress made in 2017.
- CyberSouth: A first assessment visit was conducted in Tunisia on 13-17 November to meet key institutions in charge of cybercrime matters. The results of this mission will be presented in an assessment report that will serve in identifying the needs and actions to be carried out in the next three years within the framework of CyberSouth in Tunisia. It was agreed that the launching Conference of the project would take place in Tunis in March 2018.
- VC Norway "Combatting violence against women and girls": A workshop was organised on 9-10 November in partnership with the Center for Legal and Judicial Studies of the Ministry of Justice and the Medico-Judiciary Unit of Charles Nicolle Hospital to adapt judicial practices in Tunisia to the needs of child victims of sexual violence. The workshop provided the opportunity to introduce European best practices, such as the Nordic model of children's homes (Barnahus) and is part of the larger support provided to the Tunisian national authorities on the standards of the Lanzarote convention, to which Tunisia has requested (and been invited) to become a party. On the issue of child participation, the CoE, together with the National Observatory for Information, Training, Documentation and Studies for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, organised on 12 December in Tunis an international symposium on "The Children's Parliament: exchange of experiences". The event brought together around a hundred participants including young members of the Tunisian Parliament of the Child and their Cypriot and French counterparts, as well as government officials and Tunisian parliamentarians. The event aims to contribute to the on-going reflexion in Tunisia on encouraging and strengthening children's participation in public affairs.
- VC Norway "Media and Freedom of expression": Four events were organised during the reporting period: in preparation of the upcoming municipal elections due to be held in May 2018, the National Union of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT) and the CoE organised on 24-25 November the first session (for Northern Tunisia) in a series of trainings for Tunisian

journalists on media coverage of upcoming local elections in Tunisia. The session for Southern Tunisia was held in Djerba on 15-16 December. The trainings aim to provide journalists with knowledge and tools to ensure a complete and balanced coverage of the electoral process. An international symposium on the Place and image of women in the audiovisual media was organised by the CoE, the Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HAICA) and the Higher Audiovisual Council (CSA) of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (Belgium) on 7 and 8 December in Tunis. The event was a contribution to the CoE's cooperation to fight gender-based stereotypes and promote equality between women and men. As part of the reform of the legislation on audiovisual communication in Tunisia, the CoE organised on 14 December a third meeting-debate with the deputies of the Assembly of People's Representatives in Tunis. It was an opportunity for dialogue between experts, members of Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HAICA) and Tunisian MPs on the independence of the future constitutional body of audiovisual communication and on the conditions for the effective accomplishment of its mission. The initiative is a follow up to several activities organised by the CoE in 2016 and 2017 with the Tunisian Parliament.

- VC Norway "Local democracy": As part of the activities implemented by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, a training of trainers on conflict management at the local level was organised on 16-18 November in cooperation with the Tunisian Center for Training and Support to Decentralisation (CFAD). Fifteen Tunisian trainers and facilitators from CFAD, academia, Ministry of Local Affairs and Environment participated in the training, which aimed to develop and strengthen the capacities of the selected trainers in the context of the first municipal elections due to be held in May 2018 and implementation of a new Code of local authorities currently under discussion before the Parliament.

#### Follow-up action

- Regarding the GRECO accession process, discussions were held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the National Anti-Corruption Unit (INLUCC) to clarify the future steps in the accession request.

#### Other Relevant activities

- The Office participated in donor coordination meetings in the fields of elections, local elections and justice (High Judicial Council – CSM);
- Following the EU's decision to grant funding to the CoE as part of its future programmes in the field of justice (PARJ III) and in the new support programme to civil society and independent institutions (PASC II), a meeting at the EU Delegation was organised on 20 November to discuss the modalities and calendar of preparation of the Descriptions of Action (DoA) for the two programmes;
- The Tunisian Bilateral Steering Committee of the South Programme II was organised in Tunis on 21 November. It provided the opportunity to review the progress in work undertaken since 2015. Significant results were acknowledged by the participants under the three pillars of cooperation, stressing in particular CEPEJ's work with the ten pilot courts, the support provided to independent institutions and the harmonisation of national legislation in line with European standards through the requests for accession to several CoE conventions and partial agreements (GRECO, Pompidou Group). A technical meeting on CoE conventions was held on 22 November to review the progress made in 2017 and identify priorities for 2018.



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

- The Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional authorities and the Director of the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes participated in the Bilateral Steering Committee on 21 November. The visit also provided the opportunity for meetings with the State Secretary of Foreign Affairs and several high-level personalities. The Director of Human Resources, who was on visit to Tunisia at the same period for meetings with the authorities and other international organisations to review the status and conditions of Tunis Office staff, also attended the Steering Committee.