

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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

**October - December 2019**

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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 2019. 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**

### **Key features and statistics**

Some statistics for the whole year 2019:

Total information messages sent to HQ:	1655
	(and around 350 words of gratitude sent back)
Notes for the files	261
Events and visits organised by the Office	139
External visitors to the Office	843
CoE visitors to the Office	114

Among those visitors, the Office welcomed, in the course of the October-December period, notably:

- Mr Frederic Dolt, member of the SG's Private Office, 8 October
- Director Matjaz Gruden, DG II, 10 October
- GREVIO Secretariat and delegation, 7-11 October
- Mr Miroslav Papa, Director of the SG's Private Office, 7-8 November
- GREVIO President, 18 November
- Director Jorg Polakiewicz, DLAPIL, and Mr Gianluca Esposito, Executive Secretary GRECO, 16 December

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

The **Head of Office**, met various EU Officials, in addition to the meetings organised for the above-mentioned visitors. He participated in the EU's inter service group meeting. He met with various Officials in the most relevant Cabinets of the new Commission, following its start on 1 December 2019. He also met the EEAS Chair of the PSC, Political and Security Committee, with the EEAS chair of the "COHOM" (Council working group on HR matters in foreign relations) and with other EEAS Officials. He represented the organisation in a conference organised by the EESC (European Economic and social Committee) on fundamental rights and rule of law trends in the EU. He had a meeting with the Brussels branch of Human rights Watch. He received a Delegation led by the Ukrainian mission to the EU. He met with the new Canadian Permanent Observer to the CoE, Ambassador Robert Sinclair.

Various **CoE expert groups** met in the Office, such as a delegation from GREVIO, an expert group on minority languages, a group on the "match fixing" (Macolin) Convention, colleagues from the Partial Agreement on the youth card and from the Youth Partnership and DGII colleagues on sport facilities and databases

The Office welcomed a Delegation from the French Senate, preparing a report on the EU's accession to the ECHR (9/12). The Office also welcomed a group of visitors from Georgia. It had the visit of Dr Marianne Mengus, the Organisation's medical doctor, of a colleague from the Safety and Security department and a colleague from the Directorate of Internal Oversight.

The Office participated or accompanied colleagues in the following main events:

- Roma workshop organised by DG Just, with DGII colleagues, 1-2 October
- Conference on protecting civic space in the EU, organised by the OHCHR, 10-11 October, with a representative of the HR Commissioner's Office

- EU Council WG on fundamental Rights ("FREMP"), with a Venice Commission member, 23 October
- EP-LIBE Committee, 6 November, exchange on freedom of media with DGI
- Exchange on practices in mental health, with civil society (25 November) in the Office, with DGI
- Intercultural regions, with DG II, 5 November
- Meetings on violence against women and gender issues with the Commission (DGII)
- Finnish Presidency event on Business and human Rights, with DGI, 2 December
- Joint hearing, EP FEMM and LIBE Committees, with Venice commission representative, around the Istanbul Convention, 2 December

It closely followed developments in the **EU policies** of direct interest to the Organisation, such as, notably, enlargement, Eastern Partnership, the Rule of Law, and various HR related topics, and kept regular contacts with the EU institutions to that end. The Office set up contacts with the incoming Croatian Presidency (January-July 2020). It also followed closely with the Commission the selection process for SRSS projects for 2020.

The Office **represented** the CoE in the annual EU HR NGO Forum (3-4/12), in the annual Forum on the Western Balkans (3/12), in the thematic network on children, organised by the European Foundation Centre (3/12), in the presentation of the incoming Croatian presidency's priorities (4/12), in the EEAS meeting on digital developments and HR and in the Eastern Partnership Platform I meeting (17/12).

The Office had **bilateral meetings** with Officials from the Commission and its competent DGs, primarily DG Just, DG Home, DG Near. It also met with Officials from the EEAS, (notably the new team of the EU SR for HR), as well as from the European Parliament. It also had contacts with various **civil society** organisations, such as Europolia, the Brussels International Centre think tank, the CCBE (European bar association), Human Rights Watch, Amnesty international, and many others.

In terms of **programmes**, the Office participated (15-16/10, Strasbourg) in the 2019 Scoreboard meeting with the EU, the joint Programme "PGG" Steering Committee meeting, and the Information meetings with representatives of EU Delegations to the Eastern Partnership countries. The Office had and/or accompanied colleagues to meetings with DG NEAR, with SRSS and with DG JUST.

The Brussels-based Secretariat of the **Pompidou Group** participated in many meetings such as: the annual meeting of the working group on drug precursors control (1-3/10, Lisbon), in the meeting on General Aviation at the annual "Airpol meeting" (16-17/10, Lisbon) and in the first Interpol – RiSCC meeting on "Internet as a facilitator of trafficking mechanisms" (Lyon, 23-24/10), the Permanent Correspondents meeting in Strasbourg (18-21/11). It organised its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual meeting on General Aviation: 26-28/11, Valletta, Malta. It was notably an occasion to bid farewell to Mr Verachtert, Belgian seconded official, who served for 6 years for the Pompidou Group in the Office.

**Youth partnership** management board meeting, 13/12, involved DG II and Commission (EAC) competent directors. It expressed full satisfaction with the implementation of the 2019 work plan by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership team and agreed the work plan for 2020.

The Office followed the discussions and **reported** on various EP Committees and reported on the various steps leading to the nomination of the Commissioners who then formed the new

Commission. It also reported on events organised by the Finnish Presidency, and on other events and discussions on various topics, such as, for instance: internet governance, EU's migration policies, AI, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EU FR Charter, the rights of the child, the EU enlargement policy and the "mounting challenges of EU-Turkey relations", victims of terrorism, IDEA's 2019 report on democracy and IDEA conference on 30 years after the fall of the Berlin wall, the EU green deal, the European day for persons with disabilities, organised crime, cyber policy, BREXIT, islamophobia, etc.

The Office welcomed its new Political Advisor, a Russian diplomat seconded to the Office.

### **Media and visibility**

The Spokesperson/Media Officer co-ordinated communications work around the World and European Day against the Death Penalty, European Anti-Trafficking Day, GRETA's first evaluation report on Turkey, the CPT report on Scotland. the December meeting of the Committee of Ministers on the execution of ECHR judgments, Human Rights Day, the Secretary General's visit to Turkey and the launch of the new Horizontal Facility project related to Turkey's human rights action plan.

He also maintained his regular contacts with Brussels-based media and carried out social media work on a wide range of issues including the October PACE and Congress sessions, two Venice Commission plenary meetings, the Commissioner's statement on EU migration policy, the GRETA report on Switzerland, Tunisia joining the Lanzarote Convention, the World Forum for Democracy, the UN day on the elimination of violence against women, the European day against child sex abuse, the GREVIO report on France, statements from the Secretary General and the Human Rights Commissioner on Hungary, Slovakia and Turkey, the PACE statement on EU accession to the ECHR, a GRECO opinion article on corruption in the Western Balkans and GRECO reports on Poland and Greece, the launch of the European Fundamental Rights Information System (EFRIS) and various judgments and decisions from the European Court of Human Rights

In addition, the Spokesperson/Media Officer arranged a Euronews interview with the GRECO Executive Secretary in Brussels and carried out preparatory work on the forthcoming media conference in Ljubljana, on the December CM-DH meeting on the execution of ECHR judgments and on the Secretary General's visit to Turkey. He continued working on on-going communications projects related to the European Convention on Human Rights and the convention's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He also presented the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights to a briefing for newly-arrived journalists in Brussels, organised by the International Press Association, and took part in co-ordination meetings with counterparts at European External Action Service and the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency.

He took part in the first meeting of an inter-institutional project team on human rights communication, coordinated by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency and involving representatives of several other international organisations. He also took part in a 3-day workshop on filming and editing in Strasbourg.

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

The Chargé d’Affaires *a.i.* of the Permanent Delegation of the Council of Europe to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations, Mr Jean Claus, facilitated the participation of Mr Christophe Poirrel, Director of Human Rights of the Council of Europe, to the 70<sup>th</sup> annual session of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ Programme, which was held in Geneva from 7 to 11 October 2019). Mr Poirrel was the Head of the Council of Europe Delegation and addressed the plenary session on behalf of the Council of Europe during the High-Level Segment on statelessness. The Chargé d’Affaires *a.i.* of the Permanent Delegation of the Council of Europe to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva was present throughout the session of the Executive Committee.

On 9 October, in anticipation of the World and European Day against the Death Penalty, the Chargé d’Affaires *a.i.* of the Permanent Delegation of the Council of Europe to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations forwarded to Ms Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the joint Declaration by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on behalf of the European Union and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty of 10 October 2019. He also forwarded the link to the campaign that the Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law of the Council of Europe had launched on its social media.

The Chargé d’Affaires *a.i.* of the Permanent Delegation of the Council of Europe to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations facilitated the participation of a Council of Europe Delegation in the Regional Meeting organized by the United Nations Economic for Europe in Geneva on 29 and 30 October, entitled “ From commitments in Beijing to Transformative Results by 2030 – Gender Equality in the ECE Region”. The CoE achieved on this occasion extremely visible and appreciated presence, notably through speeches from the President and Vice-President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) and the Chairperson of the Gender Equality Commission, as well as through the organization of two side-events. The first one was entitled “The Istanbul Convention in practice: holistic care for victims of sexual violence” (organized jointly with the Belgian Mission to the UN). The second was entitled “Ending violence against Women and Girls: Prevalence, Proposals and Partnerships” (organized jointly with the NGO CSW coalition in Geneva, and co-sponsored by UN Women, the French Presidency of the Council of Europe and the Canadian Mission to the UN).

The Chargé d’Affaires *a.i.* of the Permanent Delegation of the Council of Europe to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations facilitated the participation of a representative of the Council of Europe at the Human Rights Council intersessional meeting for dialogue and co-operation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was held in Geneva on 3 December.

The Chargé d’Affaires *a.i.* of the Permanent Delegation of the Council of Europe to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations also facilitated the participation of a Council of Europe Delegation to the first ever Global Refugee Forum organised by UNHCR, which took place in Geneva on 17 and 18 December 2019, with an advance session held on 16 December. The Forum was co-hosted by the Government of Switzerland.

The Secretary General of the United Nations was present in Geneva and addressed the Forum at its opening on 17 December. The President of Costa Rica, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, the Deputy Prime Minister of Ethiopia, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany and the President of Turkey also addressed the Forum in their capacity as co-conveners.

The Forum gathered 3000 participants (States, IGOs, NGOs, refugees, private sector representatives, civil society, academics and sports representatives). More than 700 pledges were submitted, amongst which the pledge of the Council of Europe on support for access to education through the Council of Europe successfully developed European Qualification Passport for Refugees.

The Head of the Council of Europe Delegation was Mr Christophe Poirer, Director of Human Rights of the Council of Europe.

During the advance session of 16 December, the Head of the Education Department of the Council of Europe and a colleague presented the Council of Europe European Qualification Passport for Refugees.

The Political Adviser of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on Migration and Refugees participated in the plenary session on 17 and 18 December.

On 18 December, Mr Christophe Poirer, Director of Human Rights of the Council of Europe, addressed the plenary session of the Forum.

The Chargé d'Affaires *a.i.* of the Permanent Delegation of the Council of Europe to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva was present throughout the Forum.



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

### **Participation in OSCE Permanent Council Meetings**

- 1242<sup>nd</sup> OSCE Permanent Council, 3 October
- 1243<sup>rd</sup> OSCE Permanent Council, 10 October
- 1244<sup>th</sup> OSCE Permanent Council, 17 October
- 1245<sup>th</sup> OSCE Permanent Council, 31 October
- 1246<sup>th</sup> OSCE Permanent Council, 7 November
- 1247<sup>th</sup> OSCE Permanent Council, 14 November
- 1248<sup>th</sup> OSCE Permanent Council, 21 November
- 1249<sup>th</sup> OSCE Permanent Council, 28-29 November
- 1252<sup>nd</sup> OSCE Permanent Council, 12 December
- 1253<sup>rd</sup> OSCE Permanent Council, 19 December

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

- OSCE 2019 Economic and Environmental Dimensions Implementation Meeting, 14-15 October
- International Day against Trafficking in Human Beings, event organized by the Austrian Government, 16 October
- 6<sup>th</sup> Intersessional meeting of the 62<sup>nd</sup> CND, 16-18 October
- Lecture at the Bruno Kreisky Forum by OSCE Chairman in Office, Minister Miroslav Lajčák, 17 October
- Joint meeting of the Security Committee and the Human Dimension Committee dedicated to Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, 29 October
- OSCE Security Days with CHR Dunja Mijatovic, 8 November
- 30<sup>th</sup> CoE – OSCE Co-ordination Group meeting, 15 November
- Inauguration of the 2019 Vienna Migration Conference, organised by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), 21 November
- "Talking points" – meeting with philosopher and historian Ivan Krastev; event organized by SG Thomas Greminger remembering the fall of the Iron Curtain, 26 November
- OSCE 26<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Council in Bratislava, 5-6 December
- Visit of Secretary General Marija Pejčinović-Burić to Vienna (OSCE, UN, Republic of Austria), 11-13 December
- Visit at Austria's Association for European Politics (Österreichische Gesellschaft für Europapolitik), 17 December
- Conference marking the 2019 International Migration Day, 18 December

### **Bilateral dialogue**

- Visit by Head of Office to the European Law Institute, Vienna, 8 October
- Visit to Vienna's Diplomatic Academy (preparing the visit of the SG), 6 November
- Meeting with Philippe Tremblay, External Relations OSCE (preparing the Co-ordination group meeting), 12 November
- Meeting with OSCE department of Austria's MFA (preparing the visit of the SG), 13 November

## **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**

10 December – meeting with the First Deputy Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Ms. Katarzyna Gardaphadze;

### **Activities of the Office**

**Enhancing the co-operation with OSCE ODIHR** – In November 2019 CoE and ODIHR concluded the Exchange of Letter on enhanced cooperation between both institutions in selected areas. The heads of both institutions agreed to further promote mutual relations, most notably in the fields of tolerance and non-discrimination, migration, rule of law, democratic governance, Roma and Sinti issues, gender equality, as well as communicating on democratic values and human rights. Directorate of External Relations, together with the Office coordinated the process.

Apart from contacts devoted to the conclusion of the Exchange of Letters and high-level meetings mentioned above the HoO and CoE experts attended numerous meetings and consultations convened or facilitated by ODIHR. These included i.a. (i) working meeting Impact of 2019 CJEU judgments on the Polish judiciary, (ii) event on Promoting Women's Political Participation and Leadership: Experiences from Poland, Finland and beyond and (iii) Third National Congress on Human Rights organised by the Commissioner for Human Rights in Poland and ODIHR, during which Mr Patrick Penninckx, the Head of Information Society Department delivered a presentation on CoE activities in the field of Human Rights and Artificial Intelligence.

**Continuation of the co-operation with the CoD** – The Office followed closely the beginning of the Romanian CoD Presidency, especially the preparations to the 2020 Ministerial Conference in Bucharest (25-26 June) and the 70<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CoD's Executive Committee, which in particular debated the issue of democratic backsliding among the members and non-members of the CoD, the authoritarian interference as well as far-right radicalisation as key challenges for democratic progress and welcomed the accession of Georgia and North Macedonia to the Community's Governing Council.

To this end the HoO maintained regular working contacts with staff of the Permanent Secretariat.

**Ensuring the visibility of the CoE** –\_Apart from the events organized by ODIHR and CoD, the HoO regularly attended seminars and conferences on issues pertinent to CoE activities. These included i.a. (i) 2019 edition of the Warsaw Dialog for Democracy - Freedom of religion or belief as a Pillar for Democracy organized by the MFA of Poland, (ii) the workshop The verdict in Strasbourg is not the end. How to effectively implement the ECtHR judgments? organized by the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, (iii) 13th Warsaw Seminar on Human Rights - Rights of the Child in the Light of the European Convention on Human Rights, organized by the MFA of Poland and (iv) panel debate How Europe can defend the liberal world order organised by Stefan Batory Foundation, European Council on Foreign Relations and Embassy of Finland in Warsaw.

HoO participated also in the ceremonies of presenting (i) the Badge of Honor for Merit for the Protection of Human Rights to prof. András Sajó, former judge of the European Court of Human Rights by the Commissioner of Human Rights of Poland, Adam Bodnar and (ii) the Knight of Freedom Award to Mr. Torbjorn Jagland, former Secretary-General of the CoE by the Casimir Pulaski Foundation.

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

**Introduction**

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

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

The present document covers the reporting period October-December 2019. Following decision [CM/Del/Dec\(2013\)1175/1.6E](#) of 3 July 2013, activity reports will be published every three months, starting with July-September 2013.

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

Core staff - 5, Project staff - 6, Total staff – 11.

The Office implements 4 projects, of which 3 are jointly funded with the EU, the projects on “Strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in Azerbaijan”, and “Strengthening Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery in Azerbaijan” and are being implemented under PGG II. The project on “Gender equality and media freedom in Azerbaijan” is funded by VC/Donor.

**State of implementation of projects**

- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in Azerbaijan”: (i) 20 judges and 22 staff members were trained on CEPEJ tools and methodology on court performance reporting; (ii) a mission was carried out by CEPEJ experts with a view to developing a roadmap for countrywide dissemination of the CEPEJ tools; (iii) alternative mechanisms of enforcement (e.g. by private agencies), draft Code of Enforcement were discussed during a working meeting with participation of the CEPEJ experts and representatives of the MoJ’s Directorate General of Enforcement.
- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery in Azerbaijan”: A group of prosecutors, judges and other agents of the relevant law enforcement bodies were trained on mutual legal assistance in Anti-Money Laundering/Countering Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) investigations. The Project delivered a 5-day “Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) Training” for agents of the Financial Monitoring Service (FMS) and of the Anti-Corruption Directorate. The FMS agents were also trained on how to prepare quality strategic analysis products, understand ML/TF trends, and prevent such threats.
- EU/CoE - PGG “Further Support to the Penitentiary Reform in Azerbaijan-2”: The translated version of the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the European Code of Ethics for Prison Staff was transmitted to the Penitentiary Services in order to initiate consultations regarding the necessity to adopt the domestic Code of Ethics or amend the existing Behavioural Code with a view to bringing the relevant domestic legislation in line with the aforesaid Recommendation. Feedback is awaited from the authorities before taking further steps on implementing the Recommendation at the domestic level.
- AP “Reinforcing gender equality and media freedom in Azerbaijan”: The launching conference was held on 6 November in Baku with the participation of about 40 representatives of state authorities, academia, journalists, civil society, international organisations and embassies. The Project has started its work on (i) development of an analysis to review the national legal framework in the relevant sphere, (ii, iii) two textbooks on “Journalism ethics” and “Gender equality and media freedom”, (iv) data collection on gender in Azerbaijani media with the involvement of international and local experts.

**Other relevant activities**

- 2-3 October: HoO met with the Head of the EU Delegation in Azerbaijan, Kestutis Jankauskas and Head of Department of the MFA and PGG National Coordinator, Farah Ajalova for a consultation on PGG projects;
- 3 October: HoO co-chaired the PGG Local Steering Committee meeting in Baku;
- 8 November: The Office organised and HoO co-chaired the meeting of the Democracy and Governance Thematic Working Group of Development Partner organisations;

- 15 November: HoO addressed the international conference on "Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights";
- 25 November: HoO addressed the opening of the 16 Days Campaign of Elimination of Violence against Women;
- 28-29 November: HoO opened legal seminars for judges of the Supreme Court, prosecutors and judges on the Improvement of the justice system of Azerbaijan and its adaptation to the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights;
- 10 December: HoO and DHoO took part at the international Human Rights Day commemoration event;
- 20 December: – DHoO attended the meeting organised by the OSCE ODIHR's delegation with a view to collecting information on the pre-election environment.

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

- 7-9 October: CEPEJ's mission to Azerbaijan.

## **Belgrade**

### **Situation of the Office**

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

The Office implemented 12 projects: 11 jointly funded with the EU (10 under the Horizontal Facility Phase II (HF), ROMACTED, and one through a Voluntary Contribution (VC) of the German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An anti-money-laundering project, VC of Sweden (Sida), was contracted in December to be implemented until 2022.

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

- EU/CoE HF “Quality Education for All (Quality ED-Serbia)”: An additional 40 schools across Serbia agreed to work on implementation of the framework of competences for democratic culture in education bringing the total number to 60. Teachers of mentor schools (of HF I) became trainers for new schools: action plans agreed; visibility and didactic material was distributed to 60 schools. Ministry of Education officials and representatives of the United Kingdom’s Departments for Education (England, Scotland and Wales) agreed on cooperation during a CoE/HF study visit in November.
- EU/CoE HF “Enhancing human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons in Serbia - Phase II”: The Mental Health Strategy and accompanying AP were officially endorsed. Five cascade trainings for police officers on prevention of torture were conducted within a new cycle of cascade trainings; 120 senior management-level police officers were trained. Development of training curricula for peer-to-peer trainings on new prison treatment programmes is ongoing. Comparative studies on best practice regarding complaints systems/procedures vis-à-vis police ill-treatment/torture and police medical staff cooperation with regard to medical safeguards are underway.
- EU/CoE HF “Enhancing penitentiary capacities in addressing radicalisation in prisons in the Western Balkans”: The official project launch and country-specific Component 3 in Serbia were presented during a conference in Sarajevo on 22-23 October. The 1st Steering Committee took place on 23 October resulting in the adoption of the 6-month work plan (1 October 2019 – 31 March 2020). A risk needs assessment mission was carried out from 12-14 November. The draft assessment report “Prison Radicalization in the Republic of Serbia and the Prevention of Radicalization in Prisons” has been prepared and will be presented to national counterparts at the Round Table scheduled for 29 January in Belgrade.
- EU/CoE HF “Strengthening the effective legal remedies to human rights violations in Serbia”: During the CoE Conference on tackling ill-treatment, high-level representatives of governments and the judiciary from Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia agreed on a series of measures/actions aimed at eradicating ill-treatment at the hands of law enforcement agents. The first School on the execution of the ECtHR judgments brought together 24 young legal professionals. Thirty judges and judicial assistants learned about the latest ECtHR case-law with respect to the right to a trial within reasonable time through a seminar organised on the same topic.
- EU/CoE HF “Independence and Accountability of the Judiciary”: As part of efforts to increase visibility, a 3-day promotional activity was organised at the Annual Conference of Judges on 10-12 October. Consultations were held with the Chief Prosecutor on the strengthening of prosecutorial autonomy through solidification of the results achieved in Phase I. Agreement was reached with the Office for Cooperation with CSOs on a harmonised method for including civil society in capacity-building activities for judges and prosecutors. On 2 December, support was provided on judicial ethics and discipline to MoJ’s WGs for the development of judicial legislature, which is to accompany the constitutional reform.



- EU/CoE HF "Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia": A multi-disciplinary workshop on preventing and combating THB for the purpose of labour exploitation was successfully implemented on 26-27 November in Sabac. A focus group on the functioning and training needs of staff in Shelters for THB victims was conducted.
- EU/CoE HF "Promotion of Diversity and Equality in Serbia": The reporting period was marked by the withdrawal of the draft law on the prohibition of discrimination from the adoption process because of complaints about the lack of a proper consultation process. The visibility of the CoE in this area was increased through an event with the Youth Initiative of Human Rights, on 15 October in Belgrade and a public forum "The Position of the Most Vulnerable Social Groups and Response of Communities" within Human Rights Week, on 5 December in Nis, in cooperation with ROMACTED.
- EU/CoE HF "Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Serbia, JUFREX": During the inception phase, numerous meetings with action partners were held and the implementation mechanism was fine-tuned. The 1st SC Meeting was successfully organised on 11 October. A grant agreement with the Judicial Academy was prepared (pending the green light from the EC).
- HF II/JUFREX visibility materials were prepared and printed.
- EU/CoE JP "ROMACTED: Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level": The Programme continues to support the realisation of priorities of Roma Local Community Action Groups, with grant awards to 11 participating municipalities within the small grant scheme, with the start date for implementation on 20 December. Within the marking of International Day of Human Rights on 10 December, ROMACTED organised a public forum in Nis, dedicated to the position of the Roma, one of the most vulnerable groups in Serbia.
- EU/CoE JP "Human Resources Management in Local Self-Government - Phase 2": Fifty local self-government units (LSGs) have been selected for the implementation of Municipal Support Packages. MoUs were signed between LSGs, the competent State Ministry and CoE. The Management Training Programme was agreed with stakeholders. The Analysis on the introduction of the competencies framework at local level and the roadmap for the new legal framework were completed, including the instructions for LSGs on the system for professional trainings. The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, the implementing partner, developed various e-learning programmes and regional trainings.
- VC "Strengthening the Judiciary Reform Process in Serbia": Almost 100 judges were equipped with skills to recognise and react to undue influence at events organised on 11 October and 21 October in appellate jurisdictions outside of Belgrade. Two peer-to-peer missions were organised, one on 11 October in partnership with the Supreme Court of Cassation focusing on the freedom of expression of judges, and another one on 6 December in partnership with the Prosecutors' Association of Serbia, on prosecutorial independence and integrity in the context of the European concept of judicial authority.
- VC HRTF "HELP in the Western Balkans": The knowledge and skills of legal professionals in the Western Balkans were enhanced through the successful implementation of 5 HELP online courses (on admissibility criteria in applications submitted to the ECtHR, combating trafficking in human beings, data protection, property rights, reasoning of criminal judgments).

Follow-up action

- Project launch "Preventing money laundering and terrorist financing in Serbia" (36 months), Jan/Feb 2020.
- HF II Beneficiary Steering Committee on 6 February 2020 (first meeting).

Other relevant activities

- 30 October: Belgrade Office organised a media event to introduce the Horizontal Facility in the Western Balkans and Turkey 2019-2022. The event was opened by the Minister of European Integration, Jadranka Joksimovic, Head of Cooperation in EUD, Yngve Engstroem and CoE Director General of Programmes, Verena Taylor;
- CoE Office in Belgrade marked Human Rights week with three events: on 5 December in Nis with a public forum "The Position of the Most Vulnerable Social Groups and Response of Communities" in cooperation with local NGOs; on 9 December in Belgrade with a panel discussion "Protecting human rights today: promises, challenges and responsibilities" in cooperation with Human Rights House Belgrade; and on 9 December in Belgrade with the launch of the publication "Promoting child-approaches in the area of migration: standards, guidance and current practices" in cooperation with UNICEF;
- 20 December: Briefing for member and observer States, as well as EUD, OSCE and UN, on Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM).

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

- 16-17 October: President of PACE, Liliane Maury Pasquier, paid a visit to Serbia on the occasion of the Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting in Belgrade. During her visit, she met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Speaker of the Parliament, President of the Serbian Delegation to PACE and the President of the IPU Assembly in Belgrade.

## **Bucharest**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 0.5, Project staff – 32, Total – 32.5

During this period the office was responsible for the implementation of 6 cybercrime capacity building projects with a combined budget of over 35 million EUR. Three projects are jointly funded with the European Union (EU), one is funded by voluntary contributions and another one by End Violence Against Children (EVAC) of the United Kingdom.

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

- VC "Cybercrime@Octopus": Supported the organisation of the 22nd Plenary Meeting of the Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) and the 5th meeting of the Protocol Drafting Plenary focused on reviewing the work of the Protocol Drafting Group (PDG) and adopting further decisions in relation to the preparation of the 2nd Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention. A major event was the Octopus Conference on cooperation against cybercrime which demonstrated once again the key role that the CoE is playing in this field, with some 450 participants from over 115 countries coming to Strasbourg. The visibility of the CoE's work on cybercrime, including on the 2nd Additional Protocol, was ensured through meetings organised at the C-PROC office with Embassies of the countries that are Parties to the Budapest Convention, media representatives and students of Law Faculties from Romania. Capacities to respond to the requests for assistance on cybercrime and electronic evidence of the 24/7 Contact Point Network were reinforced through a meeting organised with its members and representatives of other international networks, in the premises of Europol. The harmonisation of national legislation on cybercrime and electronic evidence was supported in Fiji through an advisory mission. Updates on the CoE's work on cybercrime, including the use of the Budapest Convention for investigative purposes, were presented in the Annual Meeting of the Global Forum of Cybercrime Expertise, National Cyber Security Month events in Ghana, Internet Governance Forum in Germany and Cybersecurity and Cybercrime training for Latin American and Caribbean partners, in Jamaica.
- EU/CoE JP "iPROCEEDS": The project supported the reinforcement of the law enforcement capacities of project countries, and two specialised training courses were delivered in cooperation with the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre (SELEC) on the topics of Open Source Intelligence Tools, Cryptocurrency and Dark web investigations. The strengthening of Albanian financial institutions in their capacities to prevent and control online fraud and money laundering in the online environment was supported by providing training on the application of cybercrime indicators for the financial sector. As the project ended in December, 7 final assessment visits were held in each project country/area aimed at reviewing and measuring progress made in achieving the project's expected results from 2016 to 2019. The progress, but also the outcomes, challenges and the success achieved during the last 48 months were reviewed and discussed at the Closing Conference of the project in December. The meeting served as a good opportunity to lay down the foundations for the future project (iPROCEEDS 2) and shape the general landscape for capacity building beyond 2020.
- EU/CoE JP "GLACY+": The project focused on the 3 project streams: cybercrime policies and legislation, strengthening of police and law enforcement capacities, judicial authorities and international cooperation. Attention was also paid to strengthening collaboration with project partners, other EU-funded initiatives and partnering projects (OCWAR-C, Cyber4Dev, ELPACcTO, CyberNet) in order to reach out to new countries/regions and to find new synergies. As a result of project efforts, 3 new countries joined the project in November, on the occasion of the 7th Steering Committee: Benin, Burkina Faso and Paraguay.

Aiming to develop international and regional activities, in order to share international best practices, further extend the reach of the project and exploit synergies with other initiatives being developed in the same geographical areas, a formal agreement for cooperation in the area of cybercrime and electronic evidence was concluded with FOPREL (Forum of Presidents of the Legislative Powers of Central America and the Caribbean Basin). The visibility of the project was ensured by supporting the African Regional Workshop on Cybercrime, National Cyber Security and Internet Piracy, held in Lagos in collaboration with the U.S. Departments of State and of Justice, the International Conference on Cybercrime for the CPLP countries (the Community of the Portuguese Speaking Countries), back-to-back with the meeting of the Ministers of Justice of the CPLP countries, held in Cape Verde, the ECOWAS Inter-ministerial Round Table on Cyber Security and Cybercrime, held in Ghana, the International conference on online investigations: Dark web and online child abuse, co-organised with Eurojust in The Hague and the International Conference of the Cybercrime Judicial Training Network of the CoE. The process of harmonisation of national legislation with the Budapest Convention and related standards were supported in Fiji, Sierra Leone, El Salvador, Mexico, Namibia, Ethiopia, and Sri Lanka. The strengthening of law enforcement capacities was supported in cooperation with INTERPOL as an implementing partner of the project, in the Philippines, Ghana, Nigeria, Costa Rica, Cape Verde, Tonga and Dominican Republic. The capacities of the judiciary and prosecution services were strengthened with targeted activities and training delivered in Mauritius, Cape Verde, Nigeria and Costa Rica.

- EU/CoE JP "CyberSouth": The drafting of amendments to Jordan's new law on cybercrime in line with the Budapest Convention was supported through an advisory mission. The recommendations and guidance on the amendments have been drafted by experts and would be further considered by the Jordanian Law Committee. The capacities of the judiciary to deal with cybercrime and electronic evidence were reinforced by organising working group meetings in Jordan and Morocco aiming to build national manuals on cybercrime and electronic evidence for magistrates. Moreover, the project supported the establishment of a Judicial Network for the project countries to serve as a permanent forum to enable exchanges of information and knowledge on cybercrime and electronic evidence. Law enforcement authorities from Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan were supported by holding in-country activities to share international standards on cybercrime investigations and electronic evidence developed by the CoE and its partners.
- EU/CoE JP "CyberEast": The project completed its inception phase by producing a Regional Assessment Report on institutional set-ups, the capacities, competencies and training needs of cybercrime units, as well as interagency cooperation gaps and opportunities in the Eastern Partnership region (EaP). In parallel, the project focused on key areas of action under the project requested by EaP states, such as legal reforms, cybercrime policy development, public-private cooperation and judicial/law enforcement training, covering all EaP states through a number of in-country events. The project supported the reinforcement of law enforcement and prosecutorial capacities of the project countries through participation in relevant regional and international events in cooperation with T-CY, INTERPOL/Europol and Eurojust.
- VC (multi-lateral) "EndOCSEA@Europe": Preliminary conclusions of a gap analysis of legislation, policies and practices to prevent and combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse were presented in a workshop organised in Azerbaijan on 23-24 October.
- During the Octopus Conference in Strasbourg on 21 November a workshop was organised to present and discuss the new trends and threats as regards online child sexual exploitation and abuse. On that occasion, two publications were launched: [The Baseline Mapping of Member State Responses to Prevent and Combat Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#) and [The Comparative Review of Mechanisms for Collective Action to Prevent and Combat Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#). A new child-friendly tool was published to raise awareness on the occasion of the European Day on the Protection of Children against

Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. The strengthening of the capacities of law enforcement and judiciary was sought by initiating the development of a training module focused on investigation and prosecution of online child sexual abuse. The second Steering Group Meeting was organised in November, taking stock of progress made and endorsing the workplan for 2020.

#### Follow up action

- Organisation of the Steering Committee meetings for CyberSouth and CyberEast projects;
- Preparation of the Launching Conference of iPROCEEDS 2 project.

#### Other relevant activities

- Brazil and Burkina Faso were invited to accede to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime;
- The new joint project iPROCEEDS 2 was signed by the European Commission with a budget of 4,945,000 Euro and a duration of 42 months;
- The addendum for the extension of GLACY+ project was signed by the European Commission (with a top up of 5,540,000 Euro) and extension of the project until February 2024.

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

Core staff – 6, Project staff –16, Total staff – 22.

The Office implements 6 projects, of which 3 are funded by the EU/jointly funded with the EU and 3 funded by VC/Donor.

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

- AP "Promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova": Component 1 - The website of the Superior Council of Prosecutors, developed under the auspices of the Programme, was launched. In total, 2250 copies of 4 publications on human rights were printed and distributed among relevant beneficiaries. Thanks to a study visit to Norway, representatives of the Ombudsperson and members of the National Preventive Mechanism became acquainted with the country's anti-torture framework, and co-developed and piloted the methodological tools for preventive visits to places of detention. Other activities supported the effective implementation of the domestic remedy to address poor detention conditions, and built the capacities of prosecutors to manage projects and speak in public. Component 2 – The Programme completed the piloting of the curriculum for probation councillors on drafting pre-sentence reports. Further activities assisted in reviewing the legal framework of the penitentiary system, finalising its human resources strategy, strengthening the capacities of the Prison Training Centre for delivering competency-based training, as well as studying the risk of re-offending and the re-offending rate after probation. The Guidelines regarding recruitment, selection, training and development of prison and probation staff were translated into Romanian and shared with the beneficiary institutions.
- EU/CoE - PGG "Strengthening the capacities of the justice sector actors to deliver justice in line with European standards, in particular to fight discrimination": The joint launch event with the regional PGG anti-discrimination project was followed by an international conference. The events enhanced relations between representatives of authorities from Eastern Partnership countries and civil society while serving as a catalyst for strengthening good domestic practices, such as the Communication Strategy developed by the Moldovan Equality Council with the project's support. Recommendations to the draft amendments to Law 121 and Law 298 were publicly presented and received an initial commitment from the side of the authorities, which also intend to organise additional public consultations. This exercise was undertaken jointly with regional PGG project.
- EU/CoE – PGG "Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova": The first Steering Committee meeting, along with the official launch of the project, took place on 10 December, with the participation of the leadership of the Ministry of Justice, the Superior Council of Magistracy, the National Institute of Justice and the National Union of Bailiffs, as well as representatives of the European Union Delegation and other justice sector stakeholders. As part of the launching, the project work plan was approved and recommendations on the effective implementation of the project's expected outcomes provided.
- EU/CoE – JP "Controlling Corruption through Law Enforcement and Prevention" (CLEP): The CLEP project enhanced the Asset Recovery Office's international cooperation capacities through a study visit to the Central Office for Seizure and Confiscation (COSC) in Belgium and EUROPOL in the Netherlands. CLEP also organised a study visit for Moldovan anti-corruption prosecutors with French counterparts, thereby strengthening the investigation and prosecution of economic and financial crimes. Thanks to targeted activities, a wide range of anti-money

laundering reporting entities increased their understanding of Beneficial Ownership identification. Lastly, journalists enhanced their skills on online investigations and the use of assets declarations for journalistic purposes.

- VC Switzerland "Education for Democracy in the Republic of Moldova": In consultation with relevant representatives of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, teachers, school inspectors and school directors, the Programme developed the draft monitoring methodology for the re-conceptualised civic education subject "Education for society" curriculum. The methodology is expected to be adopted by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research in the first half of 2020, as a tool for specialists of district education departments, school directors and the Ministry itself.
- VC (multi-lateral) "Protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the Republic of Moldova": The capacities and knowledge of kindergarten teachers in the area of prevention of child sexual abuse were enhanced through training. The findings and recommendations drawn up by the Baseline Study on systemic issues affecting the child protection system's response to child sexual exploitation and abuse and the effective implementation of the Lanzarote Convention were discussed with all relevant stakeholders, donors and civil society. In addition, the awareness of the general public on online child sexual abuse was raised through public photo exhibitions across the country.

#### Follow up action

- Following a request sent by the Moldovan authorities in September, the Venice Commission released a Joint Interim Opinion together with DGI on the draft law on the reform of the Supreme Court of Justice and the Prosecutor's Office. Similarly, upon requests sent in October, the Venice Commission responded with two amicus curiae in December on the criminal liability of judges of the Constitutional Court and on the amendments to the Law on the Prosecutor's Office respectively. Furthermore, on 23 December, the Ministry of Justice requested an additional opinion on the draft Law to amend the Superior Council of Magistracy;
- 27 December: The Government Decision on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention was approved and sent to the Parliament.

#### Other relevant activities

- Between 2 and 13 October, the Office, in partnership with Telefilm-Chisinau, and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research organised the Diversity and Human Rights Travelling Film Festival, in the context of the CoE's 70th anniversary. Eight documentaries, portraying visions and challenges of ordinary people living in the Republic of Moldova, France, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Georgia, provided Moldovan citizens with insights into diversity and human rights on the European continent;
- 3 October: The Office, in cooperation with the Embassy of France, the MFAEI and the Law Faculty of the State University, organised a Round table on preventing and combating violence against women to present the Istanbul Convention and discuss the country response to violence and the main challenges for the ratification of the Convention by the Republic of Moldova;
- Following the investiture of the Chicu Government on 14 November, the HoO had meetings with the new PM and new MFAEI to discuss cooperation priorities and present the activities and areas of intervention of the CoE Office in Chisinau.

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

- 10- 11 October: Nine ambassadors from the CM Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM) visited Chisinau. The delegation participated in the Steering Committee meeting on the implementation of the CoE-Moldova Action Plan 2017-2020 and held meetings with the PM, Speaker of Parliament, MFAEI, central authorities, representatives of civil society and the international community;
- The Office assisted in the organisation of the electoral observation mission of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to observe the local elections held in the Republic of Moldova on 20 October. The report on this fact-finding mission will be examined for approval on 11 February 2020;
- The President of the Venice Commission, accompanied by the Deputy Secretary of the Commission, paid a visit to Chisinau to meet high-level justice sector actors and discuss the necessary reforms.



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

Core staff – 10, Project staff –37, Total staff - 47.

In the framework of the CoE Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2021, during October-December, the Office implemented 18 projects, including 13 projects funded by voluntary contributions, one funded under the CoE/EU PGG, 3 funded under the joint CoE/EU and one project funded by HRTF.

**State of implementation of projects/programmes**

- VC HRTF “Further support for the execution by Ukraine of judgments in respect of Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights”: On 1 November, the inception phase started. In November-December, the project, through consultations with its key partners, agreed the main priorities of work and prepared its work plan for 2020. The project launch event is scheduled on 4 February. Furthermore, the project supported the visit of members of the High Council of Justice (HCJ) to Strasbourg, aimed at discussing issues concerning the execution of the ECtHR judgments in the Volkov group of cases, the impact of the new legislation on the status of execution and on the status of judicial independence in Ukraine, and the re-structuring of the HCJ in light of the new legislation.
- AP “Support to the implementation of the judicial reform in Ukraine”: On 2-3 October, the project organised a forum, which brought together up to 300 representatives of the judiciary, to discuss the implementation and further integration of CoE standards in the judiciary reform in Ukraine. On 22-23 November, the project carried out international discussions on the ECtHR case-law with the participation of 4 ECtHR judges. Additionally, the project raised the awareness of 15 journalists on CoE standards in the judiciary through 2 information sessions in October-November. Finally, on 16 December, the project presented Opinion No. 22 (2019) of the Consultative Council of the European Judges, about the role and mandate of judicial assistants, to key national partners.
- AP “Human Rights Compliant Criminal Justice System in Ukraine”: The Project completed its inception phase in November. On 12 December, the first steering committee of the project took place, during which the project’s work plan was presented and accepted by the project partners. In addition, expert assessments of the newly adopted law on immediate measures of the public prosecution reform, as well as expert assessments of some bylaws and relevant policy documents were completed.
- AP “Decentralisation and local government reform in Ukraine”: The project continued comprehensive and tailor-made support to improve national legislation on local government in line with European standards through several working groups: (i) at the profile Parliamentary Committee on Capital City Kyiv and (ii) at the Ministry of Regional Development on new framework legislation on local self-government, local administrations and territorial structure. The project contributed to the establishment by the Kyiv City authorities in October of the new local government association “Kyiv Agglomeration”. In addition, the project strengthened the quality of multilateral dialogue platforms dedicated to the ongoing local government reform and other areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions through thematic activities and discussions. Support was also provided to the reform of the national training system for local civil servants and strengthening capacities of local authorities in the implementation of a modern Leadership and HRM tools. The annual cycle of the 2019 National Media Contest on decentralisation was completed and its final seminar and awards ceremony held on 3 December in the Minregion. The annual cycle of regional media contests on decentralisation in 2019 was completed in 4 oblasts of Ukraine.

- AP “Strengthening democracy and building trust at local level in Ukraine”: The institutional capacities of local authorities and their national associations were strengthened through the Community of Practice on Local Democracy in Ukraine, which was established to enable them to advocate local self-government reforms with a common voice. The discussion between representatives of all national associations on 12 December contributed to identifying opportunities and actions needed to create a mechanism of consultation between local and central authorities. In addition, the strategic orientation of the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) was discussed and agreed through several meetings in November-December with mayors from all regions. Thirteen local authorities signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Congress to implement sustainable, replicable and innovative policies and practices in their municipalities. These will promote ethical, transparent and participatory local decision-making, and ensure equal opportunities for women and men, and underrepresented groups, to take part in local political life.
- AP “Promoting civil participation in democratic decision-making in Ukraine”: The project carried out a monitoring study on the implementation of the national strategy for civil society development, which highlighted its milestones and shortcomings, and also provided recommendations on how to further strengthen civil society in Ukraine. Tailored expert support was provided to the profile Parliamentary committee in the process of improving draft legislation on citizens’ participation. The project experts have contributed to the revision of the Government’s regulation to make the process of implementation of municipal statutes faster and more efficient. An Academy of Civil Participation in Lviv on 18-20 November, helped to identify barriers and how to overcome them, in participatory policymaking. A new training model in civil participation tools for Kyiv citizens was developed and piloted by the project experts.
- AP “Supporting constitutional and legal reforms, constitutional justice and assisting the Parliament in conducting reforms aimed at enhancing its efficiency”: The project contributed significantly to the preparation and adoption by the Parliament on 19 December of the new Electoral Code, which follows a number of the Venice Commission recommendations and international practices. In November, a Concept paper was developed by project experts on the necessary legislative changes in relation to local elections. Expert assistance was also provided to develop the Rule of Law Checklist training methodology to help the members and employees of the Parliament to take informed decisions during the preparation of the new draft laws and amendments to the existing ones.
- AP “Supporting the transparency, inclusiveness and integrity of electoral practice in Ukraine”: The concept paper for amendments to the legal framework of local elections to ensure proportional representation of amalgamated territorial communities was publicly presented and discussed in the respective Parliamentary Committee and in Kramatorsk during the LSG Forum organised by CoE projects in late November. A 3-day Party Innovation Hub united 60 women from regional branches of 25 political parties. A toolkit on the political participation of young women and girls from vulnerable groups in local politics was developed by project experts. The project contributed to the organisation of a high-level conference on the protection of human rights through judicial education, which was organised by the National School of Judges on 9-10 December.
- EU/CoE JP “EU and CoE working together to support freedom of media in Ukraine”: The project provided extensive expert support to develop a concept of the draft law on media, which was registered in the Parliament on 27 December. Furthermore, the project trained key stakeholders on aligning media legislation with the provisions of the EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive at a seminar on 30-31 October. Expert assistance was also provided to the working group of the Ministry of Culture on the draft law “On countering disinformation”. An in-depth discussion on the current situation in the area of safety of journalists was held at the Parliamentary Hearing on 6 November. The recommendations of the Hearing were produced, taking into consideration CoE standards. The Coordination Council on access to public

information was established by the Ombudsperson's Office and its first meeting was held with the Project's support. The editorial offices of regional branches of UA:PBC broadcasting in languages of national minorities were trained on storytelling. In addition, the Manual for journalists "National minorities in Ukraine: from mutual understanding to tolerance" was published at the request of UA:PBC.

- EU/CoE JP "EU and CoE working together to strengthen the Ombudsperson's capacity to protect human rights in Ukraine": Being in the inception phase, the project focused its activities on adjustment of the activity plans with the Ombudsperson Office as a main beneficiary under two principle directions of cooperation – National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) and Data protection. As a result the detailed plan of activities was agreed and will be further approved at the Steering Committee meeting in January 2020. The State policy on digitalisation mainstreamed a need to amend data protection legislation in Ukraine to align it with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Modernised Convention of the Council of Europe 108 +. Three working groups have been established before two Parliament Committees and the Ombudsperson Office to develop a new draft law on data protection. The Project started active cooperation with each of the working groups, encouraging all of them to find a common vision on the draft law taking into consideration the previous recommendations already provided by the CoE and the Twinning Project. To facilitate the draft law process that should be based on a common approach and vision of all the necessary changes to be introduced, a thematic meeting will be held in Strasbourg on 30-31 January 2020 with the participation of all interested parties. With the joint support of the Project, UNDP and leading NGOs weekly thematic discussions were held in the Parliament in December. The Draft Resolution of the Human Rights Parliament Committee addressed inter alia a need for new data protection legislation in Ukraine, as well as the establishment of an independent oversight institution of the Information Commissioner responsible for data protection and access to public information with authority to issue binding decisions, and incorporated recommendations of the Project and other institutions, that should be adopted by the Committee for further actions.
- EU/CoE - PGG "Strengthening measures to counter money laundering and financing of terrorism in Ukraine": Expert support was provided to national stakeholders in their work on the new AML/FT legislation, which was approved by the Parliament on 16 December. Expert assistance was also provided to develop a legal framework for the new LEA - Bureau of Financial Investigations. The project steering committee meeting in December approved the project's work plan. Comprehensive trainings were organised by the project on money laundering detection and investigation and on financial investigation and confiscation of proceeds from crime for up to 70 representatives of law enforcement and the judiciary in October and December respectively.
- AP "Internal displacement in Ukraine: building solutions": The project continued to promote CoE standards on internal displacement in national legislation and legal practice. The baseline analysis "Enhancing the national legal framework in Ukraine for protecting the human rights of IDPs" has been updated and its current recommendations on housing programmes for IDPs and compensation for damaged housing were incorporated into national legislation. Moreover, the analysis recommendations were integrated into the work plan of the Parliamentary committee on human rights for 2020. Over 250 judges, lawyers, and free legal aid staff members mastered the 8-week long HELP course on Internal Displacement. A preliminary evaluation shows the increased quality of legal consultations and support provided by learners to IDPs and members of the conflict-affected population.
- AP "Promoting social human rights as a key factor of sustainable democracy in Ukraine": Following an international conference on judicial education, it was proposed that the European Social Charter and its monitoring mechanism be included as one of the mandatory subjects for the judicial training curricula. Knowledge on the European Social Charter and its monitoring mechanism was raised among students of law and social sciences through an open

lecture in Kyiv attended by a group of 15 students and watched more than 200 times online. The platform for donors' co-ordination in the field of social rights was established and agreement was reached on bi-monthly meetings.

- AP "The Istanbul Convention: a tool to advance in fighting violence against women and domestic violence in Ukraine": A 2-day training for judges was conducted under the project on 8-9 October. The training was requested by the National School of Judges and designed specifically for judges to enhance their capacity to deal with cases related to gender-based violence. The participants were introduced to a victim-oriented approach and specific aspects of judicial proceedings, in particular, criminal proceedings.
- AP "Enhancing Implementation of the European Human Rights Standards": The capacity of the Ombudsperson's Office in the implementation of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) was further strengthened through an exchange of practices on monitoring of places of deprivation of liberty with representatives of the Austrian NPM on 7-8 November and, in particular, during 4 monitoring visits and thematic trainings on methodological human rights-based guidebooks for NPM staff, monitors, Ministry of Health representatives, and chief doctors of psychiatric hospitals. As reported by the Ombudsperson's Office, following 2019 NPM monitoring visits, the Ministry of Social Policy improved the regulatory framework on the organisation of residential care establishments and changes to the Law "On Social Services" were introduced. Ukrainian legal professionals will be given open access to new online self-education tools in the sphere of human rights protection, following the piloting of two HELP courses on "Ill-treatment" and "Key Human Rights Principles in Biomedicine" throughout October 2019 – January 2020.
- AP "Protection of national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine": The project has continued to assist the Ukrainian authorities in implementing its obligations under the FCNM and ECRML. The project work focused on institutional and structural changes to enhance the protection of minorities' rights, the establishment of communication platforms, creation of effective mechanisms for consultation and participation of national minorities, as well as the protection of minorities' languages. In parallel, practical support was provided to implement new practices of monitoring and mapping the presence of Roma in Donetsk and Zakarpattia regions. An awareness raising campaign aimed at enhancing the protection of minorities and counter discrimination on all grounds covering 200 students was organised by the project. In December, the Political School for Roma prepared 20 Roma to participate in local elections in 2020. The 2019 project results and the 2020 project work plan were discussed and agreed at the project steering committee meeting on 13 December.

#### Gender mainstreaming and gender equality

- The office had meetings with new authorities on gender issues to discuss priorities and possible cooperation. To mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November, the Office published a joint statement. In the framework of the 16 days of activism against violence against women, the gender adviser gave a presentation on sexism and its prevention at the annual conference of the Ukrainian Association of Women in Law Enforcement (UAWLE). The Office continued to actively participate in different gender related working groups and the projects continued mainstreaming gender in their activities.

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

- 24-25 October, 11-12 November: Venice Commission;
- 11 November, 9 December: SASG, Regis Brillat;
- 9-10 December: CPT secretariat;
- 11-13 December: CLRA Secretary, General Andreas Kiefer;
- 13 December: ODGP Director, Verena Taylor.

## **Pristina**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff - 5, Project staff – 15, Total – 20.

The Office implements 8 projects, of which 5 are jointly funded with the EU including 1 regional joint programme, and 3 are funded by voluntary contributions (VC) from Norway and also by the CoE's ordinary budget.

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

- EU/CoE - HF "Strengthening the Quality and Efficiency of Justice (KoSEJ II)": A group of experts from different international projects was established to provide technical advice to the KJC/CMIS team to develop statistical reports generated by the case management system. CEPEJ experts provided expertise on the first batch of statistical reports, and a workshop took place in December.
- EU/CoE regional JP "Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX2)": The first Steering Committee meeting was organised in October. Two workshops on media literacy with high school students were organised in cooperation with Independent Media Commission. A conference on Freedom of Expression and Constitutional Justice in WB was co-organised with another VC/CoE project dealing with the Constitutional Court of Kosovo\*.
- EU/CoE - HF "Promotion of diversity and equality in Kosovo\*": The first Steering Committee meeting was held in mid-November as a workshop for finalising the Strategy and Action Plan for HR (2020-2024), the Advisory Committee meeting for the rights of LGBTI and a coordination meeting with human rights institutional mechanisms took place in December.
- EU/CoE JP "Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo\* (PECK II)": Three information sessions on conflict of interest targeted public officials from 16 different municipalities and publications on conflict of interest and protection of whistle-blowers were dispatched to various institutions in public administration. Mentoring support to the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) on protection of whistle-blowers was provided through a roundtable on the gender dimension of corruption that marked International Anti-Corruption day.
- VC Norway/AP "Fostering rapprochement through education for democracy and language learning (FRED)": Four hundred students from 6 schools attended the pilot classes on Albanian, Serbian, Turkish and Bosnian languages and 100 more students attended a workshop on rapprochement on 9 November, where model multilingual education materials were presented to teachers. The 3rd Steering Committee presented the project activities and 3 peer exchanges with schools holding language classes were organised with 224 participants to discuss the experiences and benefits of language learning. The catalogue showcasing school practices was published.
- VC Norway "Improving the Protection of European Human Rights Standards by the Constitutional Court of Kosovo\* - IPEHRSCC": A third thematic workshop on the Most Important Doctrines and Methodology of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) took place. In the context of the international conference "Freedom of Expression and Constitutional Jurisprudence in Western Balkans", a video-guide on Admissibility Criteria to the Constitutional Court was officially launched. Four judges and 3 legal advisors of the Constitutional Court completed 1 and 2-month traineeships with the ECtHR respectively. An assessment on the effectiveness of the Constitutional Court as key implementer of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was finalised.

- VC Norway/AP "Reinforcing the fight against violence against women and domestic violence in Kosovo\*": The local adaptation of the HELP course on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (in Albanian and Serbian) was completed. A workshop for over 40 local media representatives on the role of the media in raising awareness on violence against women and domestic violence was organised in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo\*. Moreover, a lecture/discussion session with over 30 law students was organised to discuss the role of young legal professionals in countering gender inequalities and violence against women/domestic violence in Kosovo\*. A needs assessment mission for developing quality guidelines for shelters was completed.
- EU/CoE regional JP "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED)": Two workshops were organised with Roma communities in the beneficiary municipalities respectively, to train Roma youth on how to utilise an online reporting platform on needs related to public services emanating from their neighbourhoods, and to train Roma women/girls on the legal framework on women rights. Nine grant agreements were finalised with beneficiary local authorities.

#### Other relevant activities

- A regional gender advisor has been recruited and is based in the Pristina Office to ensure the integration of a gender dimension in projects and activities in the region. Currently 15 gender analyses are planned under the Horizontal Facility covering all thematic areas. Two have been finalised and 11 are still in process.

#### Follow up action

- A new EU/CoE joint programme "Building capacity for inclusion in education – INCLUDE" (€2.2 million) was signed in December to start in January 2020.

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

## **Sarajevo**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 7, Project staff - 17, Total staff – 24.

The Office implements 9 projects, of which 5 projects are funded within the EU/CoE Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey, 1 VC project funded by UK and US, and 1 VC funded by the government of Norway, 1 funded by SIDA and 1 other project funded by voluntary contributions to the CoE Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021. In addition, the Office contributes to the implementation of 1 regional project, a Joint Programme on Roma empowerment at local level.

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

- EU/CoE - HF "Strengthening human rights treatment of detained persons based on European standards and best practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina": In October-December, 21 members of law enforcement agencies and Forensic Facility staff improved their presentation and communication skills on topics related to human rights of detainees through a train the trainers programme delivered by core prison trainers in Tuzla, Medjugorje and Mostar. In October, the assistant prison governors from all 14 prisons in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) attended a prisoners' case management mapping exercise aimed to design the structure of future training material for enabling the consistent treatment of persons deprived of liberty through the criminal justice chain. In November-December, preliminary work on technical specifications for establishing an electronic system for exchanging prison-related data to facilitate efficient and effective management of prisons was conducted by external consultants.
- EU/CoE - HF "Strengthening the protection of national minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina": In October, the launching event of the Action in Sarajevo gathered 67 representatives of relevant ministries/institutions at the State, Entity, Cantonal and Brčko District levels; civil society organisations; national minority advisory bodies; international organisations, and other relevant stakeholders, who welcomed the initiative and stressed its importance. In October, the inaugural meeting of the Steering Committee agreed on its composition and endorsed the Action's work plan. In November, the first Minority Coordination Board meeting gathered representatives of Councils of national minorities on the state, entity and cantonal level as well as national minority civil society organisations, who discussed potential initiatives that can be carried out through the Board, expectations and the latest report of the BiH on ECRML monitoring bodies. In December, the Action organised a thematic discussion on LGBTI rights and the first meeting of the working group in charge of developing the BiH LGBTI Action Plan.
- EU/CoE - HF "Quality education in multi-ethnic societies": The mapping of existing history curricula in BiH was conducted to assess their correlations to the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and the Common Core Curricula developed by the Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education (APOS). The Education Policy Network was established as a multi-level, cross-sectorial platform representing a broad range of stakeholders (policymakers - from education, social protection and healthcare sectors, from all levels of government; practitioners – school principals, members of school boards, representatives of education inspectorates, researchers and teacher educators, civil society representatives, parents). In November, members of the Policy Network conducted its first peer learning through a visit to their counterparts in Serbia. The specific practices on how to foster democratic school culture and how to include migrant children in the education system were discussed. The School Network, consisting of 29 pilot schools from 10 Cantons, Republika Srpska and Brcko district was established and held its first meeting on 5 December in Sarajevo.

- EU/CoE - HF "Preventing and combating human trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina": In October, the Action held its first Steering Committee in Sarajevo, during which it marked the launching of the Action and adopted its 3-month work plan. The content of the HELP online courses on trafficking in human beings for judges and prosecutors has been finalised and the adaptation of the platform for BiH started, in order to enable the accessibility of online courses as of March 2020. Preparatory activities for research on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation and on the phenomenon of child trafficking, and a related awareness campaign were conducted. A gender analysis of the anti-trafficking field in BiH was also initiated.
- EU/CoE - HF "Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina – JUFREX 2 (HFII)": During the reporting period, the inception report was finalised, presented and further approved by the Steering Board of the Action. A number of preliminary activities for working with the judiciary, with media partners and with the Communication Regulatory Agency were conducted.
- VC Sweden "Human Rights Reporting and the role of media in BiH - media freedom legal framework analysis": During the reporting period, the project received a 3-month extension until 31 March 2020, in agreement with the donor. A legal analysis of the media law in BiH resulted in further recommendations on how to achieve a legal framework on media freedoms in line with European standards. In December, the project organised a round-table discussion on draft laws on transparency of media ownership and media pluralism, and the draft law on advertising.
- VC UK/US "Structured sentence management for violent and extremist prisoners in Bosnia and Herzegovina": During the reporting period, the working group finalised a first draft of the Strategy on prison organisation and management, rehabilitation and reintegration, staff training, legislation and secondary legislation, and multi-agency cooperation and agreed that it will be accompanied with an Action Plan. In November, 8 senior BiH Ministries of Justice and prison officials participated in a study visit to Northern Ireland, to improve their legislative and institutional capacities. The Training Manual for the Case Management System (CMS) for violent and extremist prisoners (VEPs) was developed and further work on the "Methodology and Reliability in the Development of the Tool for the Manual" was conducted. Complementary standard operating procedures (SOPs) enabling prison staff to efficiently recognise radicalisation signs among prisoners and promote treatment for VEPs were drafted. In November, the 3rd Steering Committee meeting endorsed the 6-month work plan for the period January-June 2020.
- VC Norway "Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina": In October, the second Steering Committee meeting analysed the pace of implementation and endorsed the work plan. In October, the Human Rights Legal Clinic for the Law Faculty of the University of Sarajevo was launched, following the previous successful experience of the legal clinic in Mostar. A Regional conference "Shared Responsibility in Implementing the ECHR: addressing challenges with (new) judicial tools" was organised in Sarajevo, in October. In November, the project delivered a Training for Trainers (ToT) for judges on the technique of drafting judgments in criminal matters with the focus on reasoning. Two successful activities were held in December, in Banja Luka: the 3rd training session for judges and judicial assistants on legal reasoning and legal drafting with consideration given to ECtHR case-law and decisions of the Constitutional Court of BiH (CCBiH), and a ToT for judges on the technique of drafting judgments in civil matters with the focus on reasoning. In December, a workshop was organised in Sarajevo for staff of case law departments of the highest instance courts in BiH, on the methodology of human rights identification and classification, and also a Moot Court competition for clinical students.
- VC "Reconciliation through cooperation between divided municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina": In October, during the Congress of local and regional authorities session, in the presence of the CoE Secretary General, seven women mayors from BiH representing the



municipalities of Kalinovik, Mrkonjić Grad, New Goražde, East Drvar, Jezero, Visoko and Drvar signed an agreement on Intermunicipal/City Cooperation.

#### Implementation in BiH of regional projects (see also under 'Belgrade Office')

- JP EU/CoE "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED)": During the implementation period, small grant applications for 10 programme municipalities were launched, awarding up to 10.000 EUR for Roma inclusion in the respective municipalities. In November, the Second Advisory Group gathered representatives of 10 programme municipalities, international community, Roma representatives, ROMACTED Strasbourg team and Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, and concluded that ROMACTED Programme is a strong point for Roma inclusion in the mainstream society and should be expanded or replicated to all municipalities where Roma populations reside. The project is constructing synergies with Care International, REF, OSCE, Caritas and Kali Sara in order to avoid overlapping and achieve a greater impact in the field of Roma inclusion.

#### Other relevant activities

- 6 October: HoO accompanied Adama Dieng, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General for Genocide Prevention, on a joint visit of the UN High Delegation, OSCE BiH, CoE Sarajevo and the European Union BiH to Museum of War Childhood in Sarajevo as well as gave media statements following the tree planting, focusing on reconciliation and tolerance, with the young people of BiH as catalysts of new positive, tolerant and open societies;
- 7-9 October: HoO and DHoO attended the 'Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey' regional conference that took place in Skopje, North Macedonia;
- 22 October: HoO attended the Regional conference on addressing radicalisation in prisons organised by the CoE;
- 24 October: HoO gave speech at the Regional conference: "Shared Responsibility in Implementing the ECHR: addressing challenges with (new) judicial tools", organised by the CoE;
- 29 October: HoO attended the ceremony "20 years of Association of municipalities and cities in Republika Srpska", organised in Banja Luka;
- 30 October: HoO met in Banja Luka with the President of Republika Srpska, Zeljka Cvijanovic, and discussed with her issues related to cooperation with the CoE in general;
- 13 November: DHoO attended the First Regional Working Group (WG) meeting under Theme 2: Rehabilitation and disengagement from violence of Violent Extremist Prisoners (VEPs);
- 14 November: DHoO gave introductory speech at the Regional conference related to cooperation in the field of migrations and asylum, organised by the CoE;
- 10 December: HoO attended Human Rights Day conference - organised by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH at the end of November, 11 joint projects of 22 municipalities divided by administrative entity.

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

- 4-5 November: Visit of the Venice Commission related to BiH Legal Framework of freedom of assembly;
- 26-28 November: Congress of Local, and Regional Authorities of the CoE;
- 3-5 December: CoE High Commissioner for Human Rights to BiH.

## **Tbilisi**

### **Situation of the Office**

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

The Office implemented 9 projects, funded by VC/Donor. The project “Enhancing the accountability and the efficiency of the judicial system and the professionalism of lawyers in Georgia” started on 1 November and the projects “Reform of the Electoral Practice in Georgia” and “Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Georgia” were completed on 31 December.

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

- AP “Support to the Judicial Reform in Georgia”: A Study and a workshop on women judges and enhanced representation in managerial positions within the judiciary led to the establishment of the Women Judges’ Association in Georgia. A study of all 65 court buildings identified barriers that persons with disabilities face, and was followed by renovation works in the Poti District Court and a special State budgetary commitment for 2020. An International Conference of Lawyers brought together Bar representatives from 20 countries to discuss challenges legal professionals face while defending their independence.
- EU/CoE – PGG “Reform of the Electoral Practice in Georgia”: On 4 October, the findings and recommendations of research on Election Dispute Resolution were introduced to an audience of electoral stakeholders and the research was sent to the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament as an input to the ongoing electoral legislation reform. Strengthening electoral jurisprudence was discussed at a seminar organised jointly with the Venice Commission. In cooperation with ISFED (local NGO), a permanent training course on Election Law and Election Dispute Resolution was introduced at the High School of Justice for common court judges. On 30 November-2 December, 6 judges from the Tbilisi Court of Appeals and the Tbilisi City Court successfully completed a 3-day training of trainers. On 5 December, a dialogue was organised for political party representatives and the CEC to exchange views on practical steps aimed at enhancing women’s political empowerment.
- AP “Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Georgia”: Twenty-seven legal professionals, including judges, prosecutors and representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs improved their knowledge and practical skills on effective investigation, prosecution and adjudication of crimes of violence against women and domestic violence as a result of a second face-to-face training held in December. Research on the administration of justice on sexual violence crimes against women in Georgia was conducted in cooperation with the Public Defender’s Office. CoE methodology and tools for mapping support services for victims of violence against women were piloted with the aim of compiling data on existing support services. Members of the Inter-agency Commission on gender equality, violence against women and domestic violence increased their knowledge of data collection requirements of the Istanbul Convention and its monitoring mechanism. Materials on the Istanbul Convention and a new Recommendation of the CoE Committee of Ministers on Preventing and Combating Sexism were made available in the Georgian language.
- AP “Fight against discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech in Georgia”: The project and partner organisations launched the first ever Equality Week in Georgia, as part of the “I Choose Equality” campaign, during which 1055 events were organised with the participation of more than 26 000 people, with the aim of increasing tolerance and providing information on available redress mechanisms. The Project also marked International Human Rights Day on 10 December together with the Public Defender and the EU Delegation to Georgia with an awareness raising event in front of one of the central metro stations and people had the

opportunity to participate in quizzes on equality. Twenty-nine judges increased their knowledge of the most recent case-law of the ECtHR on the fight against discrimination and hate crimes and national and international standards on the right to freedom of expression. The initial launch of the HELP online skill-based course on Combating Hate Crimes emphasised the role of state institutions in fighting crimes committed on dissimilatory grounds and brought together high-level participants from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor's office and the judiciary.

- AP "Strengthening Personal Data Protection in Georgia": Two books, "Guidelines on Safeguarding Privacy in the Media" and "Handbook on European Data Protection Law", have been published in Georgian and disseminated to beneficiaries. A conference was organised on 6 December, bringing together up to 80 legal practitioners and media representatives, during which current data protection issues were discussed. The HELP course on Privacy and Data Protection was launched, with high visibility and press coverage ensured.

- EU/CoE JP "Supporting Freedom of Media and Internet in Georgia": The CoE supported the organisation and the presence of an international expert at Georgia's Internet Governance Forum. This support resulted in the launching of the first Georgian Youth Internet Governance School and high visibility and press coverage were ensured. A round table on the safety of journalists was organised, gathering representatives from the Government, civil society and journalists, and resulted in the planning of further common responses to recent issues in the field. A 6-month media monitoring on gender issues was launched, and a media literacy web-platform developed.

- EU/CoE – PGG "Enhancing the systems of prevention and combatting corruption, money laundering and terrorism financing": Training for representatives of the Georgian gambling business sector, aimed at enhancing understanding of AML/CFT standards, and typical risks and vulnerabilities for the gambling sector, was organised. A workshop on the draft AML/CFT National Risk Assessment Report of Georgia, brought together representatives of the relevant state institutions and the private sector, to discuss findings and areas of improvement. The project also organised trainings on the investigation and prosecution of terrorism financing cases, as well as corporate criminal liability.

- VC (multi-lateral) "Juvenile and adult detainees support" (JADES): The Office of the State Inspector received support in developing their Communication Strategy and Action Plan. Additionally, the OSI developed a 1-year Action Plan, spelling out the main challenges and advancing possible solutions. The project supported the Ministry of Internal Affairs with developing specialisation criteria for police officers, investigators and other persons involved in the work with juveniles. Fifteen doctors working with the Department of Temporary Detention Isolators benefited from a training of trainers on documenting injuries. Sixteen staff members of the Human Rights Protection and Investigation Monitoring Department of MoI received training on the Child Rights' Code and psychological aspects concerning juveniles committing offences or their victims. Additionally, 16 managers from regional police departments increased their awareness of the newly adopted Child Rights' Code.

- VC HRTF "Supporting Parliamentary Oversight over Execution of the European Court Judgments in Georgia": The official launch of the project served as an inclusive platform for high-level discussions on the existing mechanisms for the efficient implementation of human rights standards enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights at national level.

- EU/CoE – PGG "Supporting Criminal Justice Reforms - Tackling Criminal Aspects of Judicial Reform": Twenty-three prosecutors enhanced their capacity to efficiently identify, qualify and investigate facts of torture and ill-treatment. A report on the Prohibition of Torture prepared by the Analytical Department of the Supreme Court of Georgia, published with CoE support, analysed judgments delivered by national courts in cases of torture or ill-treatment, as well as international standards in this field. This research contributes to the development of a unified approach towards cases of torture. An updated training curricula on human rights, including topics such as antidiscrimination standards and women's access to justice, was

developed with CoE support, for use by the High School of Justice (HSoJ) in their teaching/training activities.

#### Other relevant activities

- HoO presented opening remarks at the Conference of the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe (AIPCE), roundtable meeting on Access to social and economic rights and integration related services for refugees and stateless persons, the high-level conference "Measuring and Enhancing the Impact of National Preventive Mechanism", celebration of the European Days of Jewish Culture EDJC 2019, the 7th International Conference of Advocates, and at the Advancing Youth Participation on Local and Regional Life event.
- HoO also attended the opening of Workshop for the discussion of the draft AML/CFT National Risk Assessment Report of Georgia, the conference on Community Networks: Connecting the Next Billion, opening of Regional Parliamentary Conference on preventing and responding to the misuse of administrative resources during electoral processes, Workshop for political party representatives: Measures for providing more balanced participation of men and women in politics, and the Tbilisi School of Political Studies seminar.
- In addition, the HoO took part in other meetings and briefings on issues falling within the CoE's mandate, including meetings with the Ambassador of Norway and desk officer for South Caucasus at MFA Norway, Chairperson of the Parliament Legal Issues Committee, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Head of Government's Administration, the Chairperson of the Parliament, the EU Ambassador, and participated in the French embassy working lunch with the delegation from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, French National Assembly.

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

- On 10-11 November, the Secretary General of the CoE, Marija Pejčinović Burić, carried out an official visit to Georgia, in preparation of Georgia's CM Presidency, and launched the Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2020-2023;
- On 4-8 November GRETA's third evaluation cycle visit took place in Georgia.

## **Tirana**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 7, Project staff –12, Total staff - 19.

The Office implements 8 projects, out of which 7 are co-funded by the EU, one by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC).

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

- VC Switzerland “Strengthening the local government structures in Albania”: The capacities of over 16 mayors and senior local administration officials were increased through the Leadership Academy Programme implemented by the Academy of Political Studies in cooperation with the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA). Ninety human resources’ staff of 61 municipalities were capacitated on how to use the administrative online platform. ASPA was supported with a new Training Needs Assessment (TNA) Methodology and 30 ASPA’s staff were trained on its implementation.
- EU/CoE – HF “Strengthening the Efficiency of Justice (SEJ II) in Albania”: The High Judicial Council (HJC) adopted two internal rules related to the performance evaluation of judges, respectively the “Point-based scheme and methodology for evaluation of judges” and “Complementary rules for the judges’ evaluation scheme” in line with SEJ recommendations. The first Steering Committee meeting of the project was organised on 17 October.
- EU/CoE – HF “Economic Crime in Albania”: Draft guidelines and a methodology on Risk-Based Approach for Legal and Accounting Professions were developed and presented to relevant domestic authorities while two different workshops on Risk-Based approach measures for the Non-financial Sector took place in Tirana. Guidelines on effective implementation of Targeted Financial Sanctions, related to proliferation financing for supervisory authorities and reporting entities, were provided to relevant institutions in view of the recently adopted law “On international restrictive measures” and best practices.
- EU/CoE – HF “Supporting effective domestic remedies and facilitating the execution of judgments (D-REX)”: In partnership with the School of Magistrates, about 100 staff members of the State Advocate’s Offices were capacitated on the recent legislative changes governing the execution of ECtHR judgments and the competences of the State Advocate on the matter, as well as on legal reasoning skills. The Albanian Parliament was assisted in reviewing the draft law on the finalisation of the transitional processes of ownership, following an opinion issued by the Venice Commission asking the Albanian authorities to improve the clarity and the overall standards of the law. The first Steering Committee meeting of the project was organised on 17 October.
- EU/CoE – HF “Promotion of Diversity and Equality in Albania and Judiciary and Freedom of Expression (JUFREX)”: The No Hate Alliance was established as a joint initiative of equality bodies, Media Regulatory Authority and Albanian Media Council, aimed at engaging and coordinating key stakeholders nationwide in raising awareness and combatting hate speech.
- EU/CoE regional JP “ROMACTED Programme”: The local Action Plan on the Integration of Egyptian Minority 2019-2022 in the Municipality of Permet was approved. Seven beneficiary municipalities were awarded grants for projects in the areas of local culture and heritage, employment and infrastructure as per the selected actions defined in the respective Local Action Plans for Roma and Egyptian Minorities.
- A new project was signed with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) on “Strengthening Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania” for a 4-year duration.

- In the framework of the 70th Anniversary of the Council of Europe, the Office in Tirana, in cooperation with the French Embassy, within the French Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, as well as other partner institutions, organised 4 thematic activities in different cities with the aim of raising awareness of the CoE's main areas of activity, key achievements and challenges ahead.

Follow up action

- Identify relevant activities to mark the 25th anniversary of Albania's accession to the Council of Europe.

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

Core staff – 6, Project staff –16, Total staff - 22.

The Office implements 8 projects, of which 2 national projects and 1 decentralised regional project are funded by the EU under the Partnership for Good Governance (PGG), 1 project is funded by the Government of the United Kingdom, 1 project funded by the Government of Switzerland, 1 project funded by the Government of Austria and 2 projects funded by donors' Action Plan-level voluntary contributions.

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

- EU/CoE – PGG Component 1 “Support to the judicial reform – enhancing the independence and professionalism of the judiciary in Armenia”: In October, the Project conducted the Assessment of the Strategy for the Judicial and Legal Reform of the Republic of Armenia and the deriving Action Plans for 2019-2023. The Assessment was aimed at evaluating the compliance of the proposed strategic reform directions with CoE standards and best practices of CoE member States and at identifying the areas where structural and content-related improvements are necessary. The MoJ revised the draft Strategy and the Action Plans based on the proposed recommendations and the document was adopted by the Government on 10 October. In addition, a Joint Opinion of the Venice Commission and Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law on the amendments to the Judicial Code and some other laws was drafted, which was adopted by the Venice Commission at its 120th plenary session on 11-12 October. On 6 December, the Project had its first meeting with the members of the Association of Arbitrators of Armenia and Grigor Semirjyan, Director of G-Design Group which was chosen by the Project for the provision of website design and development services for the Association of Arbitrators of the RA. Trilateral meetings with the Association of Arbitrators, G-Design Group and CoE are still ongoing until the final construction of the website which is scheduled for 31 January 2020. The Project aims to support the registration of a team from Armenia to participate in the 13th Frankfurt Investment Moot Court Competition to be held in Frankfurt from 2 to 6 March 2020. In cooperation with the Association of Arbitrators of Armenia, the Project launched a call amongst 28 Law Schools of Armenia to select a team to participate in the Frankfurt Investment Arbitration Moot Court 2020. As a result, a team composed of 4 students from different Law Schools was formed and registered for the Competition. During the reporting period, the Project envisaged the publication of 2 books to be provided to the Court of Cassation: the volume of indexed decisions passed in 2018 by the Civil and Administrative Chamber of the Court of Cassation of the Republic of Armenia for 2018 and the Annual Report on the activities of the Civil and Administrative Chamber of the Court of Cassation of the Republic of Armenia for 2018.
- EU/CoE – PGG Component 2 “Support to the judicial reform - supporting the criminal justice reform and harmonising the application of European standards in Armenia”: During the reporting period, the criminal justice reform significantly moved forward, the draft Criminal Procedure and Criminal Codes were posted on the e-draft.am platform for public review and comments. In addition, the project organised several round-table discussions on the draft Codes. In particular, on 20-21 and 28-29 November, the draft Codes were discussed with law enforcement bodies, the judiciary, advocates, and the Human Rights Defender (HRD). On 6 and 12 December, 2 public discussions were held with the participation of all stakeholders, including civil society and international organisations. This was an important step in preparing the Codes, providing an opportunity to the invited stakeholders, specialists and members of

the working group assigned with drafting the new Codes, to benefit from an open exchange of views and discussion with CoE experts. In November, the Minister of Justice (MoJ) asked for a CoE opinion on the finalised versions of the draft Codes, which will be provided in February 2020. During the reporting period, 268 completed questionnaires were received in response to a survey on the opinions of legal professionals on the possible divergences and approaches regarding the uniformity of application of the ECtHR case-law on Article 3 and 5 of the ECHR by national courts. The survey report that will encompass a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the responses given by judges, prosecutors, investigators and advocates will be ready by the end of January 2020. These questionnaires should make it possible to identify the position of legal professionals regarding the quality of application of case-law of ECtHR on Articles 3 and 5 of the ECHR in criminal cases by national courts.

- EU/CoE – PGG “Strengthening institutional capacities to fight and prevent corruption in Armenia”: During the reporting period, as a follow-up to an expert opinion on the new draft of “Law of Republic of Armenia on Civil Forfeiture of Illegal Assets”, the Project expert provided answers and an explanation to a set of questions and issues on the topic that had been identified by the authorities. On 16 October, the Project held a workshop on the Assets Declaration System in Armenia. The objective of the workshop was to present the findings and recommendations from the analysis of the legal framework of Armenia’s assets declaration system and discuss possible solutions for further strengthening it with relevant national authorities and civil society organisations. The workshop was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Commission on Ethics of High-Ranking Officials of Armenia, National Assembly of Armenia, Prime Minister’s Office, Civil Service Bureau, State Revenue Committee, and civil society organisations. The recommendations provided by the CoE expert touched upon important topics such as persons obliged to declare, items to be declared, beneficial ownership, and verification of declarations. After the discussion, the finalised paper with recommendations made by the CoE international expert were submitted to the Ministry of Justice. In addition, the Project held working meetings with representatives of the MoJ to discuss upcoming activities taking into consideration the priorities of the Ministry.

- EU/CoE – PGG “Strengthening the profession of lawyer in line with European standards”: During the reporting period, the Project began an expert comparative review of the procedural and institutional set-up of the Bar Associations in 5 participating countries (Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). In the framework of the comparative review, CoE consultants held a series of bilateral meetings in Yerevan, Tbilisi, Minsk, Chisinau and Kyiv. The participants of the bilateral meetings were the respective presidents of the national bar associations, representatives of the Ministries of Justice, Supreme Courts, academia, free legal aid services and professional associations of lawyers (including young and women lawyers). The aim of the comparative review is to provide lawyers in the participating countries with the first assessment of the compliance of the current set-up of the bar with European standards. Moreover, the bilateral meetings also helped identify the composition of the Technical Project Committee. On 10 December, the first meeting of the Technical Project Committee Meeting was held in Yerevan (Armenia). On 11 December, back-to-back with the Committee Meeting, a Conference on current challenges and opportunities of procedural and institutional set-up of the functioning of lawyers in Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine was organised. The overall objective of the Conference was to bring together bar associations, free legal aid institutions and professional associations of lawyers from participating countries and engage them in discussions on the procedural and institutional set-up of the functioning of lawyers and perspectives for regional co-operation. The Conference provided an opportunity for lawyers from Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine to foster their understanding of European standards related to the functioning of the bar in their countries.



- VC Switzerland “Strengthening the Communities Association of Armenia and transparent, participatory local governance in Armenia”: On 26 November, the CAA Executive Director (ED) presented a resignation letter to the Board of the CAA. As was negotiated during the initiation period of the Project, support to the CAA should continue after the resignation of the Executive Director. A local HR consultant started to draft the recruitment procedure for the new ED and 3 local consultants were contracted in December to provide legal expertise on several legislative amendments. On 4 December, the Project team organised a meeting with Project stakeholders to discuss the ToR of the Community of Practice on political integrity and ethics in local governance. Representatives from the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Ministry of Justice, SDC, and CAA were present at the meeting. The ToR was updated considering the comments and suggestions of the Project stakeholders, and an announcement about this initiative was sent to all of the amalgamated communities of Armenia. After the deadline (12 Jan 2020) the Project team will share the applications received with other stakeholders and come up with a group of selected communities for the Community of Practice.
- VC Austria “Democratic development, decentralisation and good governance in Armenia”: On 3-10 October, the Project initiated a series of workshops designed to build the capacities of the communities to develop project proposals eligible for small grants. Regional workshops covering proposal writing, project management, performance management, civil participation and inter-municipal cooperation (IMC) were attended by representatives from more than 30 consolidated communities. These communities were also guided through the grant proposal writing process by experienced local consultants. As a follow-up to these capacity-building activities, a call for grant proposals was announced among consolidated communities, with sub-grants for the renovation or development of community facilities, live webcasting of local council sessions, and IMC initiatives. By the deadline of 6 December, a total of 45 applications were submitted from 33 consolidated communities. In the reporting period, the Best Practice Programme Selection Committee was established, aiming to score and rank applications in the 3 sub-categories and making recommendations for the award of grants. In the reporting quarter, the modules of the E-learning course on 12 principles of good governance were adapted to the Armenian context, and a specific module on the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making processes was developed. On 8 November, a focus group discussion was held to test the main concepts and local case studies of the selected modules with key stakeholders. Within the legal and policy component, the Project initiated amendments to the RA Law on Local Self-Government, analysis of the RA legislation on the organisation and implementation of control, oversight and monitoring practices over the LG powers, methodological guidelines on how the local government can appeal to the court in relation to civil and administrative cases, as well as institutional recommendations on the draft Roadmap for Decentralisation of Powers. Within the financial component, a new policy of providing grants, subventions and loans to communities from the RA state budget, along with a draft law, were developed. On 28 November, the first consultation meeting on LG Legislative Initiatives was organised to mobilise the main stakeholders to contribute to policy dialogue and development. On 27 November, the Project Steering Committee approved the plan of activities for 2020, which included the awarding of grants to several consolidated communities in Armenia.
- AP “Support the scaling-up of the probation service in Armenia”: Project implementation started on 1 October followed by the inception phase. The Project held a series of coordination meetings with the partners, with the aim of discussing the Project objectives and activities. The Project work plan has been revised and approved by its partners and followed by the preparation of a draft 6-month work plan to be adopted by the Project’s 1st Steering Committee. The 1st Steering Committee meeting date and overall format was agreed with partners.

- VC UK "Human rights and women in the armed forces": The Project facilitated the annual meeting of the Expert Council set up at the Human Rights Defender's Office (HRDO), which contributed to the building of the HRDO's capacity to identify and report human rights violations in the armed forces. In addition, the Analysis of Armenian legislation vis-à-vis European and international human rights standards on women in the armed forces was drafted and discussed with the main counterparts of the Project. Based on the Analysis of Armenian legislation vis-à-vis European and international human rights standards on women, as well as the Suggestions related to the draft of the National Strategic Programme developed by the Project, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) revised the National Strategic Programme for Human Rights Protection and the respective Action Plans for 2020-2022. During the reporting period, the Project produced a report on the whistleblower protection legislation of Armenia and its applicability in the armed forces, which was discussed with all national partners of the Project and other interested parties. The recommendations of the report will be considered further to make relevant improvements in the legal acts related to whistleblower protection of the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Sixteen service persons raised their knowledge on human rights and women in the armed forces in Armenia. The trainers identified future training needs of this group and the participants themselves confirmed that they needed more training on human rights. During the reporting period, the Project organised a technical donor coordination meeting in order to map the activities conducted by different donor organisations in the area of reform of the armed forces and complement each other, where appropriate. The Project also increased the knowledge of 15 professors from different universities, including representatives of the military universities on the HELP Programme as a result of the presentation of HELP activities with Universities. The HELP course on Access to Justice for Women was also presented as a course example.
- AP "Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Armenia: continuing the path towards ratification of the Istanbul Convention": During the reporting period, the Project consultant reviewed the draft criminal code of Armenia, identified main gaps in this draft vis-à-vis the standards of the CoE Istanbul Convention (IC) and developed recommendations to adjust and align the current draft laws with the IC. On 30 October and 1 November, a high-level contact visit (GREVIO, VC, Serbian MP and CoE HQ) was organised to discuss with the Government of Armenia, members of the National Assembly, Police, civil society organisations and other relevant organisations, the opportunities and challenges of the IC ratification. On 16 and 17 November, 20 journalists were trained on the principles of media reporting on the topics of violence against women (VAW) and domestic violence (DV). On 29 November and 1 December, education experts responsible for reviewing and revising new educational standards and criteria, subject learning outcomes, criteria for developing curricula for secondary education in Armenia, were trained on the principles of gender mainstreaming in education. The CoE HELP online 3-month course on VAW and DV was implemented together with the Armenian Academy of Justice, and 14 legal professionals were trained on this course. Eleven legal professionals (judges, prosecutors, investigators) were trained to teach a face-to-face course on preventing and combating VAW and DV developed for the Academy of Justice and taught as part of in-service training for investigators, prosecutors and judges.
- AP "Enhancing health care and human rights protection in prisons in Armenia": Project implementation started on 1 November and the inception phase is currently ongoing. A series of meetings were held with the main partners of the Project, i.e. Ministry of Justice, Penitentiary Medicine Centre, to agree on details of the activities that are expected to be implemented from February onwards. The Project Steering Committee is in the process of formation.

### Other relevant activities

- 1 October: HoO chaired the PGG II Local Steering Committee Meeting;
- 8 October: HoO participated in high-level donor coordination meeting on justice reform;
- 16 October: HoO opened the workshop on Assets Declaration organised by the project "Strengthening institutional capacities to fight and prevent corruption in Armenia";
- 18 October: HoO attended launching of the Project on "Support for Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of the Armenian Human Rights Defender's Office in the field of Human and Labour Rights Protection and Promotion";
- 11 November: HoO met with the Head of the EU Delegation in Armenia;
- 16 November: HoO opened the training on Reporting on violence against women and domestic violence organised by the project "Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Armenia: Continuing the Path towards Ratification of the Istanbul Convention";
- 26 November: HoO was a guest lecturer at UWC international school to mark the Human Rights Day;
- 27 November: HoO participated in the 2nd SC meeting of the project on "Democratic development, decentralisation and good governance in Armenia";
- 28 November: HoO opened "The Gender Mainstreaming in Education" training organised by the project "Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Armenia: Continuing the Path towards Ratification of the Istanbul Convention";
- 4 December: HoO participated in the roundtable "On collection and verification of data on refugees and stateless persons" organised by the UNHCR;
- 6 December: HoO opened the "Public discussion on the Draft Criminal Procedure and Criminal Codes" organised by the project "Support to the judicial reform - supporting the criminal justice reform and harmonising the application of European standards in Armenia";
- 10 December: HoO was a guest lecturer at the Quality International School to mark Human Rights Day;
- 11 December: HoO opened the Regional Conference on current challenges of procedural and institutional set-up of the functioning of lawyers in Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine

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

- 30 October-1 November: CoE high-level visit on Istanbul Convention;
- 2-12 December: CPT periodic monitoring visit to Armenia on December.

## **Rabat**

### Situation of the office:

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

The Office mainly co-ordinates the implementation in Morocco of the EU/CoE regional joint programme “Ensuring Sustainable Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the Southern Mediterranean” (South Programme 3) 2018 – 2020. It also provides ad hoc logistical support for the implementation in Morocco of the EU/CoE regional joint programme “CyberSouth – Cooperation on cybercrime in the Southern Neighbourhood Region” (2017-2020), for the EU/CoE regional joint project “Global Action on Cybercrime Action Extended (GLACY+)” (2016-2021), a project on combating discrimination in Morocco (VC Norway), a project to promote freedom of expression and media pluralism in Morocco, another in support of the protection of personal data in Morocco (VC Norway), and other projects implemented under the Neighbourhood Partnership between the CoE and Morocco 2018-2021.

## **State of implementation of programmes**

### EU/CoE Programme “Ensuring Sustainable Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the Southern Mediterranean”

- A co-construction workshop with the Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights (IDHR) to develop a dashboard for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the National Action Plan on Democracy and Human Rights (PANDDH) was held in Rabat from 15 to 17 October and brought together the IDHR monitoring team, representatives of the principal ministries concerned and representatives of the regions. A second workshop was held in Rabat on 5 and 6 December.
- In the context of the South Programme 3 – “Ensuring Sustainable Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the Southern Mediterranean” – and following the HELP Training of Trainers session, which took place in Strasbourg on 25-26 March 2019, the Council of Europe Office in Morocco issued HELP certificates to all participants on 1 November.
- This provided an opportunity for the tutors to hold discussions on this programme and the various courses and to report on progress made with the contextualisation of the HELP course on “Violence against Women and Domestic Violence”.
- The Council of Europe, in collaboration with the Higher Institute of the Judiciary (ISM) and the Presidency of the Public Prosecution Office, organised the cross-border launch of the course on “Violence against Women and Domestic Violence” in Rabat on 25 and 26 November at the ISM and several representatives of the region participated, especially from Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine.
- The Council of Europe, in collaboration with the Presidency of the Public Prosecution Office, organised training sessions for public prosecutors in Marrakech on 12 and 13 December and in Agadir on 16 and 17 December on combating violence against women with the aim of strengthening the role of prosecutors in the fight against violence against women and domestic violence.

### Voluntary contribution by Norway

- Under the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership with Morocco 2018-2021, with funding from Norway, from 6 to 8 December, in Asilah, the Council of Europe held a training course in partnership with the Forum for Mediterranean Youth (FOMEJE) for young journalists of the Moroccan Forum of Young Journalists (FMJJ) on combating hate speech in the media.
- Again under the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership with Morocco 2018-2021, funded by Norway, on 9 and 10 December the Council of Europe held, in collaboration with the Higher Institute for Information and Communication (ISIC), a workshop for third year ISIC students on the subject of "Journalistic practices and fake news".

### Other programmes

- As part of the CyberSouth project, on 13 and 14 November the second meeting of the working group responsible for developing the basic Moroccan training course on cybercrime and electronic evidence for members of the judiciary was held at the Higher Institute of the Judiciary in Rabat. With Council of Europe support, over the two-day meeting the Moroccan delegates presented the course content and discussed future improvements and its implementation.
- As part of the CyberSouth project, on 28 and 29 November at the Higher Institute of the Judiciary the Council of Europe supported the Presidency of the Public Prosecution Office in the delivery of a two-day training course on international co-operation on cybercrime for 40 reference prosecutors, who were trained in using the tools of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and obtaining data from multinational service providers.
- As part of the CyberSouth project, follow-up meetings on law enforcement training were held in Rabat on the subjects of cybercrime, from 3 to 12 December, and electronic evidence, on 9 and 10 December.
- On 23 and 24 October in Rabat, the Venice Commission held a conference on "The rights of the child, a priority for parliamentarians and ombudsmen in French-speaking countries" in co-operation with the Ombudsman of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Association of Ombudsmen of French-Speaking Countries.

### Other activities to be mentioned

- 10 December: the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Morocco participated in the No Hate Speech Action Day as part of the International Human Rights Day organised by the Forum for Mediterranean Youth (FOMEJE), the Lycée Français International André Malraux Amalgame Club (LFIAM) under the direction of Ms Bouyarden, and the National Committee against Hate Speech in Morocco, in the presence of pupils from the Lycée André Malraux in Rabat;
- The Ministry of Justice, the High Council of the Judiciary and the Presidency of the Public Prosecution Office of the Kingdom of Morocco organised the second Marrakech conference on "Justice and Investment: Issues and Challenges" on 21 and 22 October. The participants included Verena Taylor, Director of the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes of the Council of Europe, Muriel Decot, Secretary of the Commission for the

Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), the Head of the Office and members of the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE);

- The Head of the Office participated in the 2nd edition of the Academy of Young Leaders for Democracy, held by the Moroccan School of Political Studies (ECEP) and co-sponsored by the International Organisation of La Francophonie, on 13 December in Salé.

## **Tunis**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff - 3, Project staff - 17, Total – 20.

The Office implements country-related activities of 2 regional joint EU-CoE programmes: Ensuring sustainable democratic governance and human rights in the Southern Mediterranean ("South Programme III", 2018-20) and the CyberSouth Programme 2017-20; 2 CoE/EU joint programmes "Improving the functioning, performance and access to justice in Tunisia - AP-JUST" and "Project to support independent bodies in Tunisia - PAII-T (2019-21)" and a total of 6 projects funded from Voluntary Contributions from France, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, Norway, Portugal and Spain.

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

#### **"Improving the functioning, performance and access to justice in Tunisia - AP-JUST"**

- Coordination – While awaiting strategic decisions from beneficiaries on priority needs, the 2nd steering committee, on 11 December, validated provisional work plans for the first quarter of 2020. Efforts continued to step up coordination and cooperation between key stakeholders, including civil society representatives, and other international donors and actors.
- Institutional support – In association with IRZ, the Administrative Tribunal of Tunis and the Independent body in charge of elections matters (ISIE), in December, the Venice Commission co-organised a regional seminar on electoral disputes at which the VC President gave a keynote address, as well as meeting with high-level officials (see below).
- E-justice – Delivery of computers to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) regional training centres and the Institut Supérieur de la Magistrature took place in October, and the first capacity-building activities for judicial actors on the new criminal case management system (CMS) were conducted subsequently throughout different regions. A database and online consultation platform, linked to the MoJ's new CMS and providing access to information to both lawyers and litigants, were successfully developed and will be rolled out in early 2020.
- Access to justice/Support to civil society – Terms of reference and tender documents for a study on the commercial justice sector were developed in consultation with the MoJ, the EUD and other stakeholders. The grant programme to support access to justice through non-State actors was finalised and, following completion of a needs assessment on the indexation of judgments of the Tunisian Supreme Court, expertise will be provided to the MoJ and other stakeholders.
- CEPEJ – In October in Strasbourg, at a Mena region peer-to-peer event on the role of judicial councils in promoting the independence of justice, members of the Judicial Council exchanged expertise and know-how. Road maps to support the Judicial Council, the General Inspection of the MoJ and the Supreme Court were developed, with priority needs of the latter being agreed at a seminar in November. Support to the capacities of defence lawyers, on mediation, civil and commercial procedures, was provided in October, through training and exchanges with experts from the CEPEJ group on mediation.

#### **"Project to support independent bodies in Tunisia - PAII-T"**

- Coordination – Following intensive consultations between the independent bodies, the EUD and the CoE, strategic work plans for the whole duration of PAII-T (2019-21) were developed and validated by stakeholders, including national authorities, the independent bodies (IBs), and civil society organisations, at the 1st steering committee meeting on 11 December. The VC facilitated an exchange of views with representatives of the IBs in the framework of the "Ligue des Instances indépendantes" (LIPI) to identify possible ways of

fostering the “Ligue” as a coordination mechanism for the IBs and a vehicle for relations with civil society.

- Cross-cutting support/legal basis – A diagnosis, conducted under the aegis of the VC by Tunisian experts, on the legal basis of the independent bodies (IBs) with a view to enhancing their effective functioning and independence, was presented to representatives from the Independent bodies and the EUD in November. Proposals for both the individual and corporate legal and normative frameworks of the IBs will now be developed. In cooperation with the Service for relations with the independent bodies’ technical committee, the VC strengthened the capacity of the IBs regarding visibility and communications (October) and budgetary matters (December).
- Human trafficking body – Expert support continued to the implementation of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), with the development of a number of NRM tools, including identification and referral factsheets, for trialling and validation in regional simulation workshops.
- Anti-corruption body – At an Anti-corruption Congress organised on International Anti-corruption Day (9 December), with the support of the CoE, INLUCC launched its radio station “Nazaha” (Integrity) to promote transparency and raise awareness. Technical assistance in establishing an INLUCC media centre and an online course on good governance and anti-corruption are ongoing, and CoE expertise contributed to enhancing capacity in the areas of operational analysis in AML, combating terrorist financing and in forensic accounting. With CoE assistance, INLUCC became part of the Šibenik Network of Corruption Prevention Authorities.
- Anti-torture body - Under the responsibility of the INPT and the General Directorate of Penitentiary Services within the MoJ, the Tunisian Penitentiary Law Manual and the Prisoners’ Guide were completed, endorsed by the Minister of Justice, and officially launched at a high-level event organised at a regional prison and training centre on the occasion of International Human Rights Day on 10 December. The CoE also supported exchanges of expertise and best practices for INPT members and their peers regarding the role of national prevention mechanisms in preventing and addressing torture at events taking place in Tbilisi (October), Strasbourg and Yerevan (November), and Tunis (December).
- Data protection body – A manual on control operations was developed with CoE expertise, followed by training for data protection body members on control operations.
- Media body – Expertise and advice was provided to the IBs in the preparation of its report on the presidential and legislative elections, and measures to strengthen its monitoring capacity were undertaken.
- Access to information body – Support continued for the establishment of a ‘digital data centre’, aimed at facilitating investigations and networking among information officers.
- HELP – Adaptation to the Tunisian legal framework and context by Tunisian experts of the HELP courses on Gender Based Violence (GBV) and on human trafficking was completed, with the courses being officially launched at a regional event in Morocco in December, in the presence of Tunisian stakeholders, including representatives from the independent body in charge of the prevention of human trafficking (INPTP). The subsequent tutoring phase began in December, with the participation of 20 Tunisian law professionals including judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and judicial police.

### South Programme III

- Violence against women - Following official notification of Tunisia’s intention to accede to the Istanbul Convention (see below) and in preparation of this accession, the CoE provided practical and technical assistance and expertise, including from GREVIO experts, notably to the Ministry of Women and other stakeholders, and in the context of a seminar “From Law no. 2017-58 to the Istanbul Convention” held in La Marsa in October.
- HELP – see also above under PAII-T (It should be noted that HELP GBV course drew on resources of both SPIII and PAII-T).



CyberSouth

- At various training events, co-organised with local partners, Police and National Guard officials were familiarised with CoE resources on electronic evidence (EE): EE Guide, Digital Forensics Guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures for the collection, analysis and presentation of EE, developed by ECTEG and adapted in the Arabic language with the support of CyberSouth. Tunisian representatives took part, within the project, in a Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean Conference in October on counterterrorism, and attended on 3-4 December, the first meeting of the CyberSouth Judicial Network that took place at the Prosecutor General's Office, in Lisbon, Portugal.

Follow up action

- Once a new government in place, Tunisia's pending accessions to the Istanbul Convention and to the Pompidou Group will be followed up.

Other Relevant activities

- Child Protection – Tunisia became the 45th state to join the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention) after the deposition of accession instruments on 15 October;
- 29 October: Local and Regional Government – Tunisia was granted Partner for Local Democracy status with the Congress (CRLAE).

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

- 16 October: In Tunis, Congress Vice-President, Xavier Cadoret, gave a keynote address at a seminar on the role of the High Authority of Local Finance and took part in other bi-lateral meetings;
- 12-13 December: The President of the Venice Commission, Gianni Buquicchio, held bilateral meetings with the President of the Administrative Tribunal, the President of the Parliament, the President of the Conseil Supérieur de la Magistrature, the State Secretary of the MFA and the Head of the EUD.