

Partnership for Good Governance



Regional Project “Strengthening Access to Justice for Women Victims of Violence in the Six Eastern Partnership Countries”

Antonina Vykhrest
Capacity Building and Co-operation Projects Unit
Equality Division

Gender Equality Commission – 13th Meeting
11 April 2018

Strengthening Women's Access to Justice

- ❑ **Follow up project to PGG Phase 1: 2015-2017**
- ❑ **Added focus on the Istanbul Convention, in line with EU Priorities for 2020**
- ❑ **Implementation period: February– November 2018**
- ❑ **Project Objectives**
 - ❑ **Improved gender-responsiveness of the justice systems** in the Eastern Partnership countries in cases of violence against women
 - ❑ **Increased application of CoE standards among justice sector professionals**, especially the Istanbul Convention and the European Court of Human Rights,
 - ❑ **Enhanced regional dialogue and exchange** among national authorities, national training institutions and legal professionals on improving women's access to justice and the ratification of Istanbul Convention

Project Components

- 1. Online e-learning course on Women's Access to Justice** for legal practitioners (judges, prosecutors, lawyers, etc.)
- 2. Translation of tools for legal professionals**, including CoE standards, case-law and reports dealing with women's access to justice, violence against women and domestic violence
- 3. Regional Conference on Women's Access to Justice and the Istanbul Convention** to take place in Strasbourg on 18-19 October 2018
- 4. Factsheet on Access to Justice for Women Victims of Violence**

HELP Course on Women's Access to Justice

- 1. Tool for the promotion of gender-sensitive justice, through the training of legal professionals**
- 2. Using the Training Manual on Ensuring Women's Access to Justice for Judges and Prosecutors and the Council of Europe HELP methodology**
- 3. Three working group meetings in 2018 with experts and representatives of the Council of Europe**
- 4. Target audience: lawyers, prosecutors, judges and members of civil society**
- 5. Scope: CoE, EU, and UN standards**
- 6. English version available online at the end of 2018**
- 7. National adaptations will be developed as of 2019**

HELP Course on Women's Access to Justice

The HELP course will cover the following six themes

- 1. Barriers to Women's Access to Justice**
- 2. International and Council of Europe Legal Framework**
- 3. Gender-based Discrimination**
- 4. Gender Stereotyping**
- 5. Roles and Duties of Legal Professionals**
- 6. Practical Implications**

PROJECT's Strategic Relevance

1. CoE Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023)

- **Objective 3: Ensure equal access of women to justice:**

- Also interlinked with:

Objective 1: Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism – judicial gender stereotyping

Objective 2: Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence – Istanbul Convention

Objective 5: Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures – justice sector

2. CoE Plan of Action on Strengthening Judicial Independence and Impartiality (2016)

- Fighting gender stereotypes within judiciary, gender balance, and gender mainstreaming in justice reforms

3. EU Deliverables for Eastern Partnership Countries

1. Ratification of the Istanbul Convention
2. Gender-based violence legislation adopted in all countries with effective referral mechanisms in place
3. Improved access to justice for women
4. Comprehensive and effective training of the judiciary

Women's Access to Justice – Synergies with the UN



EaP countries and the Istanbul Convention

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Armenia | Signed in December 2017 |
| 2. Azerbaijan | No signature yet |
| 3. Georgia | Ratified in May 2017 |
| 4. Republic of Moldova | Signed in February 2017 |
| 5. Ukraine | Signed in 2011 |
| 6. Belarus | No accession yet |

Total EaP:

1 of 6 ratifications

4 of 6 signatures

As compared to CoE at large:

45 of 47 signatures

29 of 47 ratifications

Building up on PPG Phase 1: 2015-2017

- Identified the barriers to women's access to justice in the five countries involved in the project 2015-2016 (legal, procedural, social, cultural, economic, etc.)
- Provided analysis of protection gaps in national legislation on violence against women and domestic violence, family law, employment law, gender-based discrimination, in order to align national legislation and practice with international standards
- Facilitated awareness and dialogue of the Istanbul Convention standards with legal professionals ahead of signature and ratification of the Istanbul Convention
- Improved the capacity of judges and prosecutors to implement relevant CoE standards, including the ECHR and the CoE Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) – over 500 training participants
- Developed tools and improved the capacity of national training institutions to implement curriculum on women's access to justice for candidate judges and prosecutors, as well as sitting judges and acting prosecutors, during basic and in-service trainings
- Provided platforms for regional exchange of challenges, good practices, and lessons learned among the training institution

Lessons Learned

- Engagement of national partners and experts from the onset**
- Barriers are vast and underestimated, from legislative, institutional, socio-economic**
- Significant gaps exist in all countries of the Council of Europe, not only in Eastern Partnership**
- Important to address all levels of the justice chain to prevent attrition**
- Regional projects provide important advantages and a genuine forum for exchange of challenges and good practices**
- Understanding of the need for measures is increasing among national authorities and partners**



PGG Phase 2 and Beyond

- Phase 2: 2019-2023
- Beyond PGG



Partnership for Good Governance



THANK YOU!

