

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Information Documents
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Quarterly report of Council of Europe Offices

January - March 2017

A. LIAISON OFFICES

Introduction

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

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

The present document covers the reporting period January to March 2017. Following decision [CM/Del/Dec\(2013\)1175/1.6E](#) of 3 July 2013, activity reports have been published every three months, starting with July-September 2013.

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

The **Director of External Relations, Zoltan Taubner**, took up his duties as new Head of Office on 15 February 2017. He met the staff of the Office and started his round of courtesy calls to EU institutions and Member States' representatives in Brussels. On 16 March, he presented his credentials to the President of the Commission, Mr **Jean-Claude Juncker**. He was received by Commissioners Hahn and Navracsics and met the Cabinets of EP President Tajani, European Council President Tusk, Commission First Vice-President Timmermans, HR/VP Mogherini, Commissioner Avramopoulos and of the King. He also met several Ambassadors from Member States, Observer States and countries of the CoE neighbourhood. He met MEPs and, respectively, the chair and/or secretariat from EP Committees and senior officials from the institutions. He introduced himself and his new mandate to the EU Council working group on the co-operation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE ("COSCE") on 17 February.

High-level visits

Human Rights Commissioner, Nils Muiznieks, 16-17 February: meetings with First Vice-President Timmermans, Commissioner Hahn on enlargement and neighbourhood policies and the EU anti-terrorism co-ordinator, Mr de Kerchove. He also addressed the "COSCE" on 17 February.

Ambassador Tomas Boček, SRSG on migration issues, 16-17 March 2017: address to the COSCE and bilateral meetings in the Commission and the general secretariat of the EU Council.

Director General Snezana Marković, with SRSG on Roma issues, Valeriu Nicolae, 28 March: final conference of the JP "Romed" on Roma issues, with high-level EU participation (First Vice-President Timmermans, MEPs, etc).

Director Thomas Markert, Secretary of the Venice Commission: address to the "COSCE" on 17 March and bilateral meetings in the Commission and the EEAS.

Other meetings and events

Ambassador Taubner, Head of Office, came to Brussels on 26 January to represent the CoE in a symposium organised by the EU (**EEAS**) and the **UN Alliance of Civilizations** and make an address on "hate speech against migrants in the media". He participated in an EEAS inter-service meeting where he introduced himself and his mandate to various EEAS officials.

The Office met CoE colleagues and facilitated meetings or participation in EU events, such as:

- Director Giakoumopoulos, DGI, participated in the Commission's conference on the "European Social Pillar", 23 January.
- Director Gruden, DPP, addressed the COSCE, 17 January, and presented the SG's annual report.
- Head of Information society (DGI), Patrick Penninckx: annual "data protection week". The Office received the Minister of Justice of Cabo Verde, Ms Janine Leles, on 17 January, on the accession by Cabo Verde to the CoE data protection and cybercrime conventions.
- A Congress Delegation: monitoring visit to Belgium (2-3 February).
- The Chair of the penological committee (PCCP) and its Secretary addressed the EP-LIBE committee at a hearing on prison conditions in the EU (9 February).
- Presentation by the Chair of committee on data protection and DG I Secretariat participated in the EP-LIBE Committee (22 March).

- DER colleague met the EEAS on the CoE and EU's contributions towards the UN SDGs (16 February).
- GRECO Secretariat participated in a Transparency international event on "revolving doors" in the EU institutions (31 January).
- ODGP colleagues had meetings on the PCF programme in the EU's Eastern Partnership countries and participated in the steering committee meeting of the PCF on 31 March.
- DGII colleague had meetings in the Commission (DEVCO, NEAR, HOME and JUST) on intercultural cities and the WFD.

The Office organised:

- organised the 10th meeting of the Mutual Information Meeting ("MIM"), 21 February: exchange of information with the EU (Commission, JUST and HOME, EEAS and General Secretariat of the Council) on normative developments.
- participated (18 January) in the EU-Tunisia Sub-Committee "Human rights, rule of law and democracy" at the EEAS.
- organised a presentation for EU officials on the work by the Secretariat of the Framework Convention on national minorities (7 February). The Secretariat colleague also participated in an event organised by the Secretariat of the EP with a Parliamentary delegation from Moldova. Another colleague, from the PACE Secretariat, also presented her work in the same event. The Office also hosted the meeting of the Bureau of the European Charter for regional and minority languages.
- organised a presentation of the SPACE annual report (penological statistics), 14 March.
- Organised an information exchange with civil servants from the Flemish authority (14 February).
- participated in a Conference on corruption co-organised by the Congress and the EU Committee of the Regions (28 February - 1 March).
- facilitated contacts JUST on co-operation in the media fields, on judicial reforms and on anti-discrimination, Roma and gender.
- met HOME on the work to be carried out on radicalisation with think-tanks and foundations.
- met NEAR and EEAS, together with ODGP colleagues, on our co-operation through the "PCF" in the Eastern Partnership countries and through the "Horizontal Facility" in the Western Balkans.
- participated (12 January) in the NECSTouR Brokerage Event about a call for proposals on transnational tourism which could involve the European Cultural Routes; and participated in a GROW (13 January) meeting, "EU joint promotion platform by EC and European Travel Commission".
- had a meeting (11 January) with Amnesty International representatives before the launch of its publication on "anti-terror legislation in the EU", and attended the press conference (17 January).
- participated in the new year receptions organised by President Juncker (25 January), EP President Tajani (24 January) and the 25th anniversary of ERA (19 January) in the presence of President Juncker.

The Office welcomed interns from the legislative body of Saskatchewan (Canada) and delivered a presentation at the Norway House. It also facilitated the organisation of a debate at the Brussels book fair, launching the CoE book on the impact of the ECtHR in the member states (9 March) and assisted with the CoE stand.

CoE co-operation programmes

The Office liaised closely with ODGP, NEAR, DEVCO and EEAS to facilitate the implementation of the PCF and the "Horizontal Facility" in the Western Balkans and activated all channels available to fund CoE joint projects in priority areas.

In addition to many activities referred to above, the Office also participated in meetings involving, in particular, programmes with the EU, such as:

- Presentation of the new PMM at NEAR and DEVCO and highlighting its impact for the EU-CoE joint project co-operation.
- Meetings (2 February) with NEAR on the Horizontal Facility and the PCF mid-term evaluation report, and possible funding of the next phase of the South Programme II.
- Discussions with DEVCO colleagues for substantial funding for a large regional JP in Central Asia to start early 2018.

Pompidou Group (Belgian secondment):

- 1-3 February, Paris: preparatory meeting for the law enforcement activities of the Pompidou Group.
- Preparations for the first international General Aviation Meeting of the Pompidou Group.
- Key-note presentation at the World Border Security Congress in Casablanca, 20 - 24 March.
- Meeting with Europol on 2-3 March: preparations for the 5th WG meeting on controlled deliveries and the First annual meeting on General Aviation.
- Participation in the meeting of the "International Doctors for Healthier Drug Policies", 30 March.

Communication activities, visibility and reporting

Communication and visibility

The Spokesperson/Media Officer maintained his regular contacts with the Brussels-based media on a wide range of issues including:

- January 2017: ad-hoc GRETA report on Italy, GRECO reports on Belgium and the United States, statement from the President of the Venice Commission on the situation in Poland. He also worked on the January session of the Parliamentary Assembly, the publication of the annual statistics from the ECHR and of major judgments and the annual conclusions from the European Committee of Social Rights, as well as carrying out preparatory work on the then forthcoming Brussels Book Fair, the launch of GRECO's 5th evaluation round and the publication of the annual SPACE report on prison conditions.
- February 2017: the Secretary General's statement on Russia, the Human Rights Commissioner's memorandum on media freedom in Turkey, the Congress visit to Belgium and the Moneyval report on the Isle of Man. He provided communications support to the joint Congress/EU Committee of the Regions event in Brussels on corruption and the Human Rights Commissioner's visit to Brussels, as well as carrying out preparatory work related to the presentation of the GRECO annual report in Brussels and the Framework Convention on National Minorities report on the UK. Furthermore, the Spokesperson/Media Officer oversaw the publication of the new website for the Brussels Office as well as launching a new communications project to highlight the impact of the ECHR system across the 47 Council of Europe member states. He also had an introductory meeting with the Guardian's new Brussels Bureau Chief.

- March 2017: Venice Commission opinion on Turkey, the regular CM-DH meeting, the FCNM report on the UK, the Commissioner's report on Ireland, statements from the Secretary General concerning the UK and Russia, as well as arranging media work around Ambassador Boček's visit to Brussels and his reports on the situation in Italy and migrant children. He also organised the Brussels presentation of the annual SPACE report on prison populations in Europe and provided communications support to the ROMED final conference in Brussels as well as coordinating communications work on the GRETA plenary session and annual report. Furthermore, he took part in a regular meeting of communications professionals working on migration-related issues.

Statistics

Some 318 information messages and documents as well as 11 weekly reports were prepared and sent to Strasbourg by the Information Officer. 43 notes for the file were sent from the Office. 18 delegations, including 29 members of CoE staff, visited the Office and another 18 staff members were also in Brussels during the period. The Office hosted 43 events and visits and welcomed 200 external visitors.

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

Visit of the Secretary General (27-28 February)

The Secretary General met UN Secretary-General António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg Jean Asselborn and Director General of the European Broadcasting Union Ingrid Deltren. He also addressed the United Nations Human Rights Council and took part in a Ministerial panel discussion on the human rights situation in Crimea.

Activities of the Office

- The Head of the Office *ad interim* presented his letter of appointment to the Director General of the UN Office of Geneva Michael Moeller on 27 December 2016. He assumed his duties fully on 10 January.
- Meetings with Permanent Representatives of three CoE member states to be reviewed by UPR mechanisms in March 2017 (Republic of Moldova, Iceland, Lithuania).
- Meeting with Gianni Magazzeni, Chief, Americas, Europe and Central Asia branch, OHCHR, to prepare the annual CoE OHCHR Coordination Meeting, (Strasbourg, 31 January).
- Meeting with Eric Tistouet, Chief, Human Rights Council Branch, OHCHR, to prepare his participation in the CM exchange of views on CoE-UN co-operation in February, as well as modalities of the Secretary General's participation in the 34th session of the Human Rights Council.
- Meeting (with participation DER) with Monika Linn, Principal Advisor of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, to discuss the CoE's contribution to Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals (24 January).
- Participation in the visit of the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks to Geneva on 26-27 January.
- Meetings with 24 Permanent Delegations in Geneva to discuss the upcoming agenda of the Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review as well as relevant draft resolutions that the delegations will present.
- Several protocol and organisational meetings in preparation of the 34th session of the Human Rights Council and the visit of the Secretary General.

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During the 34th Session of the Human Rights Council, the CoE delegation delivered 15 statements. The Office attended a number of side events and reported on the CoE related events and also on resolutions adopted by the HRC to the Secretariat.

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

High-level meetings

- Meeting with the Deputy SG of the King Abdullah International Centre for Inter-Religious and Inter-Cultural Dialogue (KAICIID), Amb Alvaro Albacete, 27 February.
- Meeting with SG of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, The Hague, Amb Hugo Siblesz, 16 March.

Bilateral dialogue

- Bilateral introductory meeting with the Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) at UNODC, 27 March.

OSCE Permanent Councils

- OSCE PC with the Opening Address by the Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria, Sebastian Kurz, 12 January.
- OSCE PC with Chief Monitor SMM in Ukraine, Amb Ertuğrul Apakan, and Special Representative of the CiO to the Trilateral Contact Group, Amb Martin Sajdik, 19 January.
- OSCE PC with the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, Ioannis Kasoulides, and the Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, Amb Mihnea Constantinescu, 26 January.
- OSCE Special PC on the escalating situation in Eastern Ukraine, 31 January.
- OSCE PC with the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Amb Jan Braathu, 2 February.
- OSCE PC with the Chairs of the Three Committees, 9 February.
- OSCE PC with the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Amb Andrea Orizio, 16 February.
- OSCE PC with the UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Volker Türk, and the Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, Amb Maryse Daviet, 2 March.
- OSCE PC with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović, 9 March.
- OSCE PC with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Nikola Poposki, and the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden, 16 March.
- OSCE PC with the Dean and Executive Secretary of the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), Martin Kreutner, 23 March.
- OSCE PC with the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Amb Michael Scanlan, and the Chairs of the 25th meeting of the Co-ordination Group between the CoE and the OSCE, 30 March.

Expert committees and conferences

- OSCE Parliamentary Assembly working luncheon on OSCE PA developments and co-operation in 2017, 31 January.
- HoO participation in a meeting on "Engagement of International Organisations in Belarus" convened by the OSCE PA, 3 February.
- HoO participation in the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) Symposium on the occasion of FRA's 10th Anniversary, with a special key appearance of the President of Austria, Alexander van der Bellen, 28 February.
- UNODC - Commission on Narcotic Drugs with the active participation of the Pompidou Group, 13-17 March.
- OSCE Human Dimension Committee Meeting on Prevention of Torture, 28 March.

- OSCE Security Days - Creating Inclusive, Safe and Sustainable Cities: Local Approaches to Global Challenges Opening Event with Mayor of Vienna Michael Häupl and OSCE SG Lamberto Zannier, 30-31 March.

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

- The first quarter of 2017 brought a change in the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Warsaw. On 31 January, Hanna Machińska concluded her work as the Head of Office and as of 1 February, Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs seconded a career diplomat, Paweł Wierdak, to act as the new Head of the Warsaw Office. Following the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding Terms and Conditions for the Secondment of a Polish Official to the Council of Europe, the Secretary General informed the Ministers' Deputies about the change during the 1279th meeting of the CM.
- Between 13 and 16 March, the new Head of Office visited the CoE headquarters in Strasbourg. During his visit he participated in the 25th meeting of the Coordination Group between the Council of Europe and the OSCE, which focused on two priority areas: (i) the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and (ii) the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination. He took part in the exchange of views between the Ministers' Deputies and Austrian Chairmanship of the OSCE regarding the priorities and objectives put forward by Vienna and in the High-Level Conference on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union.
- The Head of the Office met *Leyla Kayacik*, Director the Private Office of the Secretary General, who presented him with the SG's letters addressed to the Heads of the organisations, which the Office is in charge of liaison with. He also held numerous meetings with the representatives of the Directorates and Departments of the CoE Secretariat, most notably with the representatives of the Directorate of External Relations, the Directorate General of Human Rights and the Rule of Law, the Directorate General of Democracy and the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes. The meetings concerned the prospects for co-operation between the CoE and ODIHR, especially in the light of the upcoming change of the ODIHR Director, as well as the possibilities to invigorate the co-operation with the Community of Democracies. The Head of Office also met the Commissioner for Human Rights, Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.
- During the first quarter of 2017, the Office closely followed discussions concerning the appointments to the top OSCE positions, i.e. OSCE Secretary General, ODIHR Director, *High Commissioner on National Minorities and Representative on Freedom of the Media, with special attention given to the selection of the ODIHR Director*. In the same spirit, the Office paid attention to the succession of the Community of Democracies' Secretary General. The Office maintained regular contacts with the Polish Foreign Ministry and diplomatic corps in Warsaw.
- The transition at the position of the Head of the Office resulted in the necessity to settle numerous administrative issues related to the functioning of the Office. These included *inter alia* the assumption of the responsibility for the Office premises, conducting the procedure to authorise the new Head of the Office to act as signatory on the Office bank accounts and taking over the responsibility for the Office accounts with the local IT and phone providers.
- In the light of the forthcoming IT upgrade of the Office premises, the Office hosted the representative of the Department of Information Technology, who conducted the needs assessment, established the basis for the future solutions and drafted the preliminary schedule for the budget and future works.

B. FIELD AND PROGRAMME OFFICES

Introduction

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

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

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Baku**Situation of the Office**

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

The Office implements 6 projects jointly funded with the EU, including 4 within the framework of the PCF and 2 joint projects.

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

- EU/CoE - PCF "Application of the European Convention on Human Rights and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights": 92 advocates, 37 human rights lawyers and 45 judges from courts in Baku and other regions were trained on selected ECHR articles and the relevant ECtHR case-law through 7 cascade training seminars. In co-operation with the Justice Academy, 3 training courses for 126 newly selected judge candidates on the right to property under the ECHR were organised. Seven certified trainers of the ToT Programme successfully completed the HELP course on admissibility criteria in applications submitted to the ECtHR.
- EU/CoE - PCF "Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom": During the reporting period, 10 journalists and media professionals became acquainted with ECHR standards on freedom of expression and media freedom during a study visit to Strasbourg on 22-24 March. The draft curricula on "Journalism ethics" and "Freedom of expression and media" developed by local experts were reviewed by an international expert and received positive feedback. Four textbooks on Journalism are in the process of being designed for publication.
- EU/CoE - PCF "Strengthening capacities to Fight and Prevent Corruption in Azerbaijan": The project launched an online monitoring and reporting system on the National Action Plan on Promotion of Open Government 2016-2018 and trained 50 representatives of reporting government bodies on its use. The project prepared a methodology for evaluating the implementation level of the Action Plan. The project also trained Law enforcement officers and civil servants on whistle-blower protection and assisted national authorities in drafting the Law on Regulations of Ethical Conduct of Members of the Parliament.
- EU/CoE - PCF "Support to increased efficiency of courts, improved training of judges and judicial self-governance in Azerbaijan": CEPEJ experts are finalising a report assessing activities conducted by the pilot courts on the court coaching programme. The project presented a series of concept papers to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Justice Academy and to improve training for judges and held a legal awareness workshop for regional justice divisions' (RJD) staff. The Ministry of Justice and RJD representatives participated in a study visit to Hungary to learn good practices and exchange experience on the provision of local justice services.
- EU/CoE JP "Civil Society Dialogue": In March, an international expert produced the final draft report analysing NGO legislation and its practice, as well as recommendations for its improvement. The draft Report will be presented in April 2017 during a conference with all relevant stakeholders. In March, a local expert started an assessment to review laws and policies regulating civil participation in decision-making processes in Azerbaijan in addition to studying existing practices. The output of the assessment will be presented in a report with a set of proposed recommendations.
- EU/CoE JP "Further Support to the Penitentiary Reform in Azerbaijan": Two missions assessed current needs in the provision of healthcare services, including mental healthcare, for inmates and prison management in light of European standards and best practices, and identified areas for improvements system-wise and in the three pilot prisons. The assessment findings, recommendations and priority areas were discussed with local project partners and CoE consultants provided initial assistance with the development of the outline of the strategy and action plans for reforming prison healthcare services and prison management.

Other relevant activities

- 15 February: The HoO participated in the visit to Cocuk Mercanli village of Jabrail organised by the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons;
- 15 March: The HoO delivered a statement in the meeting of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons in Baku organised by the PACE and Mili Mejlis.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 11-12 January: Philippe Boillat, Director of DGI headed a mission in line with Article 52 of the ECHR;
- 12-14 January: Stefan Schennach and Cezar Florin Preda, Co-rapporteurs for the monitoring of Azerbaijan by the PACE, carried out a fact-finding visit;
- 9-10 February: Alain Destexhe, Rapporteur on Azerbaijan of the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights carried out a fact-finding visit;
- 15-16 March: Visit of Alexandre Guessel, Director of DPA, in relation to the state of implementation of the commitments entered into by Azerbaijan.

Belgrade

Situation of the Office

Core staff - 5, Project staff - 17, Total staff - 22

During the reporting period, the Office implemented 7 projects, of which 6 are jointly funded with the EU (1 national, 1 regional, and 4 within the Horizontal Facility), with 1 funded by the Human Rights Trust Fund (HRTF).

State of implementation of projects

- EU/CoE JP "Human Resources Management in Local Self-Government (LSG)": Local consultants were trained to implement Municipal Support Packages (MSPs) at a Training of Trainers session (ToT); Start of implementation of MSPs in 20 pilot LSGs; Ceremonial signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between the pilot LSGs, the Office and the EUD; Presentation of Training Needs Assessment Analyses to all relevant stakeholders; Support to the establishment of the Council for Professional Development of LSG Employees, including curriculum advice and capacity-building.
- EU/CoE – HF "Enhancing human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons in Serbia": This Action started on 26 January with the 1st Steering Committee (SC), at which the overall Action was agreed, as were the planned activities for the next six months. Initial Action documents have been revised accordingly and a detailed plan of interventions adopted. A 1st coordination meeting with CSOs took place on 28 March, reviewing their past, on-going and future activities and potential for involvement in the Action. Initial assessment missions were planned.
- EU/CoE – HF "Supporting Effective Remedies and Mutual Legal Assistance (SEMA)": The 1st SC meeting was held on 2 March in Belgrade, adopting the Action overall and its detailed work plan. A working meeting of 50 judicial advisors and assistants on case-law harmonisation and ways to improve domestic application of the ECHR took place on 7 March in Zrenjanin. A Working Group is being established to review the main obstacles to and causes of a lack of domestic remedies along with an accompanying needs assessment.
- EU/CoE – HF "Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings": TAPA fine-tuning has resulted from intensive and in-depth negotiations with the authorities and other stakeholders, notably to remove a specific focus on child victims and a component addressing capacity-building for asylum workers and victim identification.
- EU/CoE – HF "Strengthening the protection of national minorities": Again, intensive and in-depth negotiations with the authorities and other stakeholders have resulted in the amendment of TAPA, notably to extend the focus beyond revision of the Law on National Minorities to include awareness-raising of national minorities and their rights, as well as education in minority languages and their use in administration and the justice system.
- EU/CoE regional JP "Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)": Two ToTs were organised on freedom of expression, one for lawyers (23-26 February, Vrdnik Serbia), the other for judges and prosecutors (6-10 March, Budva, Montenegro), with each involving participants from both jurisdictions. A Grant Agreement with the Press Council was signed in February for the implementation of Component 3 of the JUFREX project in Serbia: training of media actors, under which the first activity on 8 March was a lecture in Belgrade for students of journalism on CoE media standards and media ethics.
- VC HRTF "HELP" project in the Western Balkans and Turkey: The course on Child-friendly Justice is being finalised. A ToT was attended by 43 future HELP trainers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". In cooperation with other CoE capacity-building projects, 16 HELP courses were implemented in four beneficiaries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey), covering six topics (Admissibility criteria,

Freedom of expression, Hate crime and hate speech, Property rights, Reasoning of criminal judgments and Transitional Justice) and involving some 450 legal professionals.

Follow-up action

- Preparations continue for the commencement of the three remaining HF Actions in Serbia in the second quarter of 2017;
- Negotiations are continuing with the EUD for an IPA 2017-financed successor project to the on-going Joint EU/CoE Programme Human Resources Management in Local Self-Government (LSG);
- The Serbia Beneficiary-level Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) takes place in Belgrade on 12 May.

Other relevant activities

- 17-18 January: A two-member delegation from the Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities visited Serbia, meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and the Office for Human and Minority Rights. The second day of the visit was dedicated to a TAIEX Workshop on the Right to Information of People Belonging to Minorities;
- 2 March: The Actions to be implemented in Serbia under the Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey were launched in Belgrade, before an audience comprising local authorities and stake-holders, representatives of member States and the IC, and the media. Keynote speeches were delivered by the Head of the EUD and Verena Taylor, Director of ODGP.

CoE high level visits and other official delegations

- 11-14 January: Gudrun Mosler-Törnström, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE) and Andreas Kiefer, Secretary General of the Congress, paid an official visit to Serbia;
- 28 February-2 March: The Congress conducted a regular monitoring visit to Serbia;
- 6 to 10 March: The second GRETA evaluation visit to Serbia took place;
- 30 March: A delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly arrived to observe the presidential elections in Serbia on 2 April.

Bucharest

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 0.5, Project staff – 19, Total – 19.5

Five C-PROC projects with a combined budget of around EUR 20 million were under implementation of which 4 were joint projects with the European Union and 1 was funded by voluntary contributions.

State of implementation of projects

- VC "Cybercrime@Octopus": Supported visits of the Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) to Argentina, Chile and Costa Rica (15-24 March). These countries had been invited to accede to the Budapest Convention 7 to 10 years ago but had not completed the accession process. The visits helped mobilise governments and major progress was made: in Argentina, the accession act was submitted by the President to Parliament immediately prior to the visit and debated in the Senate during the T-CY visit. Accession is expected by autumn 2017. In Chile, the instrument of accession was signed by the President just prior to the visit and is to be deposited at the Council of Europe in April or May 2017. In Costa Rica, the Parliament had the first reading of the accession just prior to the T-CY visit. Accession is expected by September 2017. Cybercrime@Octopus furthermore supported a project planning workshop at C-PROC (6-7 March) with the participation of experts (and their respective Ambassadors in Bucharest) from Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. The new joint CoE/EU project CyberSouth will start in mid-2017 with a budget of EUR 3.3 million and duration of 3 years.
- EU/CoE PCF "Cybercrime@EAP II": Supported follow up to recommendations of the Cybercrime Convention Committee on mutual legal assistance in this region. Training workshops on international cooperation and cooperation with service providers were held in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Reform of the procedural law on expedited preservation was promoted in Azerbaijan, and the integration of the topics of cybercrime and electronic evidence into the curricular of judicial training academies was supported in Georgia. The capacities of 24/7 points of contact of EAP countries were strengthened through a workshop at INTERPOL in Singapore.
- EU/CoE - PCF "Cybercrime@EAP III": Supported public/private cooperation in the Eastern Partnership region through a seminar on law enforcement/service provider cooperation followed by a workshop on reform of the procedural law in Ukraine and through a workshop on law enforcement/service provider cooperation in Belarus. EAP countries – together with experts from South-eastern Europe (iPROCEEDS) – joined the preparatory meeting of the Cybercrime Simulation Exercise held in Georgia which is aimed at improving information sharing across agencies.
- EU/CoE JP "iPROCEEDS": Contributed to the strengthening of cybercrime reporting mechanisms in South-eastern Europe through advisory missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Turkey, to the identification of crime proceeds online through guidelines and advice to Albania, and to interagency cooperation on financial investigations online through workshops in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Interagency cooperation was also strengthened through a regional training for cybercrime units, economic crime units, financial investigators and specialised prosecutors on virtual currencies and the dark web in Bucharest, Romania.
- EU/CoE JP "GLACY+" project on Global Action on Cybercrime Extended: Contributed to cybercrime policies in Senegal and Ghana, the involvement of law enforcement representatives from Ghana, Senegal, Morocco and Mauritius in an ICANN capacity building workshop in Kenya, the drafting of amendments to criminal law in Guatemala and Panama, the strengthening of 24/7 points of contact of GLACY+ countries in a workshop at INTERPOL in Singapore, skills on cybercrime investigation, computer forensics and public/private cooperation Sri Lanka, and the regional training of trainers for judicial training of countries of West Africa (ECOWAS) in Senegal.

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The improvement of criminal justice statistics on cybercrime was supported in all GLACY priority countries through a workshop in Ghana. In Sri Lanka, prosecutors were trained through an introductory training course.

Follow up action

- Implementation of the project workplans as agreed upon for April to June 2017;
- Submission of the GLACY final report to the European Commission.

Other relevant activities

- Completion in March of a Grant Agreement with INTERPOL through which INTERPOL (Singapore) will take the lead in the law enforcement component of the GLACY+ project;
- Briefing in March for Embassies of Parties to the Budapest Convention represented in Bucharest, Romania, on the work of C-PROC and the activities of the Cybercrime Convention Committee.

Chisinau

Situation of the Office

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

On 1 January, the new Deputy Head of Office took up her duties.

The Office implemented 6 projects, of which 5 are funded by the EU/jointly funded with the EU and 1 funded by a voluntary contribution.

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

- EU/CoE - PCF "Strengthening the efficiency of justice and support to lawyers' profession": The project conducted a three-day expert mission, two final training sessions and two closing events – Final Conference and Final Steering Committee Meeting. Activities were based on a review of all the steps taken by the CEPEJ team and the pilot courts themselves for the purpose of assessing the efficiency and quality of judicial services. The courts also conducted satisfaction surveys for users, lawyers and court employees, in a move to evaluate the quality of services based on the perception of users and staff. CEPEJ experts presented a final report on the court coaching.
- EU/CoE - PCF Regional Programme "Strengthening institutional frameworks for local governance": A Steering Committee meeting took place on 26 January. A draft of the IMC pre-feasibility study on Solid Waste Management in Adjara, Georgia was prepared. Seven amalgamated municipalities in Armenia are conducting Local Finance Benchmarking piloting. Twelve applications by local authorities from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were selected for the implementation of local initiatives on ethical governance and transparency. The third meeting of the Community of Practice and a meeting on local initiatives that were selected to implement small grants took place in Strasbourg on 1-2 March.
- EU/CoE - PCF "Supporting national efforts for prevention and combating discrimination in Moldova": Over 100 participants were trained on 27-31 March on anti-discrimination in Moldova. The event covered 5 different target groups and focused on European non-discrimination best practices to support nationally the alignment of both European Court of Human Rights and European Social Charter legal standards. Participants included representatives of the State Chancellery from local district councils, managers of kindergartens, heads of department of local health-care centres/hospitals, students of the Police and Military Academies, and journalists.
- EU/CoE - PCF "Pre-electoral assistance to the Republic of Moldova": On 16-17 February, a post-election review conference on the 2016 Presidential Elections took place in Chisinau, focusing on lessons learnt as well as challenges and constraints of the current electoral legislation, and practices of campaign finance oversight, media, electoral disputes, and out-of-country voting. It brought together over 100 participants, including presidents of the Constitutional Court and Central Election Commission, members of Central and District Electoral Commissions, Parliament, and Government, judiciary, political parties, international organisations and civil society organisations.
- VC Denmark "Support to Criminal Justice Reforms in the Republic of Moldova": An international conference on Modern Public Prosecution Service was organised, which hosted around 200 participants from different European countries, aimed at discussing the progress of the public prosecution reform in Moldova. A capacity-building seminar about communication with the media targeted 30 prosecutors. The Department of Penitentiary Institutions received technical equipment (cameras and other technical devices) over 32,000 Euros, which went to 17 institutions for proper documentation of indications on torture and ill-treatment, as well as enhancing human rights protection and security in prisons.

- EU/CoE JP “Promoting media freedom and pluralism in the Republic of Moldova”: The project’s inception phase started with several meetings with local counterparts and development partners, and the drafting of a more detailed work plan.

Other relevant activities

- In January-March 2017, the Jewish Community of Moldova carried out a project on Holocaust Remembrance with CoE support (3000 Euros);
- 10-11 March, the Venice Commission (VC) adopted at its plenary session an Opinion (Amicus Curiae Brief) on Article 307 of the Criminal Code (delivering a ruling that is contrary to the law), following a request from the Moldovan Constitutional Court (CC). Hence, on 28 March, the CC issued a decision to dismiss the exception of unconstitutionality and declare as constitutional Article 307;
- 14 March, the VC issued a joint opinion on the draft law 281 on amending and completing legislation on the so-called “mandate of security”.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 23-25 March: A GR-DEM delegation (Lithuania, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Sweden, the Republic of Moldova) paid a visit to Moldova for an extensive exchange of views with the Moldovan authorities, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary parties, civil society and representatives of the international community with a view to the new CoE Action Plan for Moldova. The delegation was accompanied by CoE Secretariat officials.

Kyiv**Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 10, Project staff – 32, Total staff – 42.

In the framework of the CoE Action Plan for Ukraine 2015-2017, the Office implements 15 projects, including 9 projects funded by voluntary contributions and 6 funded under the CoE/EU PCF.

State of implementation of projects/programmes

- EU/CoE – PCF: “Support to the implementation of the judicial reform in Ukraine”: The Project cooperated closely with the High Council of Justice (HCJ) and, as per its requests, provided expert opinions as to its Rules of Procedure and the Law on the HCJ, which improved the respective legislation with regard to compliance with Council of Europe standards. The expertise of the CoE also helped the Public Integrity Council to develop its procedure concerning the assessment of individual judges and candidate judges. Moreover, the Project helped the Ukrainian Government Agent Office to improve the quality of its reporting to the 7-10 March meeting of the Committee of Ministers on the status of ECtHR judgments on the independence of the judiciary and the non-execution of domestic court decisions.
- VC Denmark “Continued Support to the Criminal Justice Reform in Ukraine”: During the reporting period the Project organised 8 trainings on implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights and the ECHR case law for more than 400 newly recruited prosecutors of local public prosecutor’s offices, jointly with the National Academy of Prosecutors of Ukraine (NAPU). A study visit to the CoE HQ for the General Prosecutor’s Office (GPO) and NAPU representatives took place in February to discuss and agree upon the specific follow-up actions to be implemented within the project. On 22 March the Project held a round table on “Execution of the ECHR judgments and application of the Court’s case law in prosecutorial activities”, jointly with GPO and NAPU, as one of the follow-up activities to the visit. Further measures to enhance the execution of the ECtHR judgments and implementation of the ECHR standards into the operation of the public prosecution service, and CoE support actions were indicated. On 1-3 March the Project organised a study visit of the Ukrainian prosecutors’ delegation to the French National School of Magistrates, familiarising the participants with the system of initial and continuous training of prosecutors. The Project Steering Committee meeting was held in March where the Project report for 2016 was presented and the work plan for 2017 was approved.
- AP “Decentralisation and territorial consolidation in Ukraine”: As per the request of the Parliamentary Committee on LSG, the Overview of metropolitan governance was prepared and presented by the Programme. 37 mayors of the newly amalgamated communities strengthened their leadership capacities through the training programme “Leadership Academy”. Furthermore, the Programme organised a cascade of capacity building events in March for representatives of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, namely: (i) Second session of the Leadership Academy and (ii) a study visit to Poland. The Programme has also contributed to the process of raising awareness of the decentralisation reform among the general public, local government officials and media through organising, jointly with the Ministry of Regional Development, a national Contest “Best practices of local self-government” and a meeting of Prime-Minister Hroisman and 4 sectoral ministers with more than 120 representatives from regional media outlets on the occasion of the 3-year anniversary of the adoption of the Concept of the LSG Reform. Finally, the Programme Steering Committee meeting took place in March, which approved the report on the Programme implementation for 2016 and recommended the approval of the proposal for the Programme’s revision and its further implementation in 2017.
- AP “Promoting Local Democracy in Ukraine”: In the course of the 3 practical workshops, which were held by the Project in the cities of Lviv, Kharkiv and Odessa, 80 local elected representatives (47 mayors, 6 heads of local councils and 27 councillors from eastern, southern

and western Ukraine, of which 26% were women) enhanced their awareness of the principles of local and regional democracy, in particular those enshrined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government, as well as on the participatory decision-making process and ethical standards in local policies. Through peer-to-peer exchanges with members of the CoE Congress and experts from the Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovenia and Ukraine, mayors and councillors discussed practical implementation of good governance standards at the municipal level.

- AP "Assistance to the Ukrainian authorities in reforming electoral legislation and in conducting constitutional reforms": In March the Project, in cooperation with the Parliament and the National Agency on Corruption Prevention, organised an international conference to address the issues relating to the financing of political parties in Ukraine, including current legislation, recent developments and perspectives. In addition, in cooperation with IFES, the Project held a round table to discuss international standards for establishing effective election dispute mechanisms in Ukraine. Moreover, jointly with OSCE, IFES and CEC, the Project organised a 2-day conference on use and application of new IT systems in the electoral process for more than 100 representatives from civil society, media, IT companies, election management bodies from Ukraine, Latvia, Georgia, and Moldova. The conference served as a platform for discussing the advantages and disadvantages of various electoral IT systems, as well as the security implications of different results management systems globally and in Ukraine.

- AP "Reform of the electoral practice in Ukraine": The Project, in cooperation with two other on-going CoE/EU PCF projects, organised an international conference on recent developments and perspectives concerning the financing of political parties in Ukraine. Findings and recommendations of the participants of the conference will be disseminated among relevant national stakeholders for further improvement of legislation. The Project also contributed to the organisation of an international conference on challenges and risks of the use of new information technologies in the electoral process by ensuring the participation of the Chair of the Council of Europe's Ad-hoc Committee on e-voting (CAHVE) in 2015-2016.

- AP "Strengthening the Human Rights Protection of IDPs in Ukraine": In February the Project Steering Committee Meeting approved the Project report for 2016 and the Project Work Plan for 2017. During the reporting period, the Project facilitated further work of the Working Group on improving national legislation on the protection of the human rights of IDPs established by the Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs through carrying out a study visit of its members to European institutions in Strasbourg, a number of meetings of respective sub-groups, as well as a series of regional round tables. In addition, draft legislative amendments entitling IDPs to get free secondary legal aid and simplifying an access to education for IDP students have been adopted in line with the CoE standards. In order to ensure better application of judicial and non-judicial remedies for IDPs rights protection, the Project supported working visits of the Ombudsperson to the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, as well as ambulatory consultations for IDPs in remote settlements. The draft methodology on monitoring the human rights of IDPs for the Ombudsperson Office and its civil society partners has been finalised; its piloting is now in progress. As a result of the call for grants for NGOs "Human rights, integration and empowerment of IDPs in Ukraine", 11 NGOs were selected by the Project out of 93 applicants to deliver assistance to IDPs in the Project targeted regions.

- AP "Strengthening freedom of media and establishing a public broadcasting system in Ukraine": The legal entity of the Public Broadcaster was registered in January and the Project supported activities to increase the transparency of the election of management to the Supervisory Board and competition for the position of the Head of the Management Board. The Supervisory Board was trained on regional models of Public Broadcasting in Europe. The issues of safety of journalists and impunity were addressed through a high-level international conference "Safety of journalists: an imperative for free media. Freedom of expression and public order" and a study visit of key stakeholders to Strasbourg. An online course "Access to information: from A to Z" was produced and placed on the Ukrainian web platform Prometheus and more than 2000 people registered before the official launch of the course.

- EU/CoE - PCF "Ukraine: Fight against corruption": The Project supported the international conference "Political Parties Financing in Ukraine: current legislation, recent developments and perspectives", which was held on 15 March and served as a platform to discuss the most recent developments in the area and define the next steps to be taken by the key stakeholders. Also, the Project supported development of Recommendations for the Internal Controls Department of the National Anticorruption Bureau on internal and management controls issues, which will be translated into Ukrainian and sent to the respective beneficiary.
- EU/CoE - PCF "Strengthening the implementation of European HRs standards in Ukraine": The Project contributed to the post-adoption review of the Law of Ukraine "On High Council of Justice" in the part related to the amendments to the CPC and the Law on Operative Search (Detective) Activities of Ukraine regarding the introduction of the investigative unit within the State Penitentiary Service that contradicts the declared policies and relevant institutional framework in Ukraine. More than 70 staff members of the central and regional offices of the HRs Directorate of the National police strengthened their knowledge and skills in strategic planning, analytical research and data collection through two special trainings delivered by the Project. The guidebook "On European Standards of Prevention of Ill-treatment" for police, prosecutors, judges and lawyers was presented to the national stakeholders in March. Also, the Project contributed to the expert consultations on the draft law amendments to the current Law of Ukraine on "Personal Data Protection" in Strasbourg in February. Finally, the Project provided its expert support to the National School of Judges in developing a training course for judges on prevention of discrimination based on the materials of the HELP distance learning course on antidiscrimination.
- EU/CoE - PCF "Further support for penitentiary reform in Ukraine": Through exposure to the rehabilitation programmes in the Scottish Prison Service during a study tour to Edinburgh, senior officials of the Justice Ministry became familiar with best practices and models of rehabilitation work. In line with the recommendations of the Mid-Term Project Review, the focus of the Project in the field shifted from mini-projects to the development of guiding documents: the Basic Dynamic Security Guidelines is one of them. After the first presentation of the expert report, one of the non-pilot prisons, Kachanivska Female Prison No. 54, started the "individual inspectors scheme" as one of the models of dynamic security arrangements. This is a voluntary follow up to the two juvenile prisons in Kremenchuk and Pryluky, which started the application of this effective scheme earlier this year. While the revised Code of Ethics for Prison Staff is still awaiting approval by the Justice Ministry, a programme of 3 trainings on the ethical principles and dilemmas of prison work has involved 69 prison heads from Kyiv, Kharkiv and Dnipro's interregional administrations of prisons and probation into interactive exercises, which were built on real life situations and case studies from the ECtHR. Contrary to public stereotyping, the participants' feedback forms welcome the ethical norms discussions and approved of their interactive formats.
- EU/CoE - PCF "Freedom of Media in Ukraine": The Project provided expert assistance to the Parliamentary Committee on Freedom of Speech and the National TV and Radio Broadcasting Council in reviewing the draft Law on audiovisual services (chapter on new media). More than 20 members of the WG on audio-visual services, increased their knowledge on European standards on new media, in the framework of a 3-day workshop on new media regulations delivered by the Project in partnership with the Parliamentary Committee. In addition, 25 representatives from the media industry took part in a Project-organised seminar "Creative Europe: new opportunities for Ukrainian media industry" to obtain information about tools and mechanisms of the Media sub-group, which will be accessible to Ukraine after the adoption of the new law on AVS.
- EU/CoE JP "Promoting Human Rights Education and Democratic Citizenship": The Project experts provided consultations for the representatives of the Ministry of Education in order to integrate the citizenship competence into the content of secondary education standards of the New Ukrainian School. The MoES elaborated a draft of secondary education standards with the EDC/HRE competencies integrated into the curricula for 5th-9th forms. An elaborated glossary of EDC/HRE terms has been prepared for printing. The glossary is now used by the European Wergeland Centre and other local projects implementing EDC/HRE in Ukraine and other EaP countries.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 10-13 January: Tiny Kox, PACE Rapporteur of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs;
- 8 February, 27 February: Régis Brillat, SASG to Ukraine;
- 27 March–7 April: MONEYVAL on-site visit to Ukraine.

Pristina

Situation of the Office

Core staff - 6, Project staff - 11, Total - 17.

The Office implements 7 projects, of which 6 are jointly funded with the EU (of which one is a regional joint programme) and one project is funded by a joint voluntary contribution from Norway and Switzerland. Two other projects are also implemented in Kosovo* with the support of the Office but not by the Office, one is a regional JP ("*iPROCEEDS*"), and the other one is funded by Turkey.

State of implementation of projects

- EU/CoE JP "Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo*" (PECK II): PECK II organised focus group meetings on corruption risks in prosecution, judiciary and public procurement. It presented final technical papers on the review of the regulatory, institutional and operational framework of the Anti-corruption Agency, as well as inputs to the Working Group responsible for revising the Law on implementation of international sanctions, and a technical paper on the Regulation on public financing of NGOs. The project also organised an interagency study visit to Warsaw for anti-corruption beneficiaries. PECK II finalised the 2016 annual report and submitted it to the local EU Office.
- EU/CoE – HF "Strengthening the Quality and Efficiency of Justice (KoSEJ)": Court-coaching activities have been held in the Basic Courts of Pristina, Ferizaj, Gjilan and the Court of Appeals. The Comprehensive Evaluation Report assessing the efficiency of the justice system (on courts' organisation/workload/budgets/staffing, etc.) is about to be finalised. The Action supports the Case Management Information System (CMIS), a Norwegian-funded project, using the CEPEJ Cyberjustice Guidelines and CEPEJ indicators and dashboards designed to improve the methodology to collect and analyse judicial statistics. KoSEJ organised a Conference on CEPEJ tools, standards and methodology.
- EU/CoE – HF "Strengthening integrity and combating corruption in higher education": This action, together with the following one on "fostering a democratic school culture and diversity in schools", were officially launched on 26 January in the presence of the Deputy Minister for Education, Science and Technology, and relevant stakeholders. It gathered some 50 participants from relevant partner institutions and organisations and received wide media coverage. The "Baseline study on issues affecting integrity, ethics and transparency in the higher education system" was presented to the main stakeholders in a round table in March in Pristina. The presentation generated a high level of public interest and was followed by wide public media coverage.
- EU/CoE – HF "Fostering a democratic school culture and diversity in schools": Following the official launching of the two Actions on Education, the first joint Steering Committee was held on the same day. Participants agreed on the upcoming 24 month plan of activities. The SC will meet every six months. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) contacted all five municipalities to ask them to select potential pilot schools for the Action. Subsequently, a committee composed of representatives from the CoE, EU office and MEST will select the schools based on the defined criteria.
- EU/CoE – HF "Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners": Five working groups have been organised respectively on designing a rulebook on prison staff recruitment, a rulebook on rules and protocols to facilitate the transfer of health care from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Health, a training manual on the mental care of prisoners, and on prison staff training curricula. A risk and needs assessment and rehabilitation mission was organised.
- EU/CoE regional JP "Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)": Trainings of Trainers (ToT) on Article 10 of the ECHR have been held for judges, prosecutors and lawyers as well as local and international experts,

based on a tailor-made handbook adapted to the local context and legislation. The top ranked lawyer of the ToT took part in the conference "Promoting dialogue between ECtHR and the media freedom community", held in Strasbourg on 24 March.

- VC Norway/Switzerland "Support to the Implementation of European Human Rights Standards and Reform of the Ombudsperson Institution" – SIEHRS/OIK: Seminars were organised for legal advisers, lawyers, judges and prosecutors of the Constitutional Court. 25 lawyers went on a study visit to the CoE HQ. Training was provided to the OIK staff on monitoring human rights and drafting reports, and three manuals (on working with victims and applicants, on executing the NPM mandate and on examining discrimination cases) were prepared. Two assessment reports (on the impact of the new human rights legislation on the work and mandate of the OIK, and on the system of evaluation of prosecutors' performance) were delivered by international consultants. The project ended on 28 February.
- VC Turkey "Reinforcing the fight against violence against women and domestic violence in Kosovo*": The kick-off meeting was held in London in January to agree on the methodology to use for mapping general and support services for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence in Kosovo*. The two tools used are: a survey for service suppliers and a set of interview questions for in-depth one-to-one interviews to selected providers. The survey is currently being conducted and interviews are in progress.

Follow up action

- New project on "Strengthening the National Preventive Mechanism in Kosovo*" to start on 1 May;
- JP ROMACTED to start on 1 May; Kosovo* is one of the six beneficiaries;
- UN fifth committee to discuss the possibility to support partly two project proposals within the framework of the UN-Global Focal Point and the 2013 agreement between CoE and OHCHR;
- EU-CoE HF Beneficiary Steering Committee: (25 April) to oversee the state of play and guide for the future;
- PECK II: support to the revision of the Law on implementation of international sanctions;
- HF Education: international conference on "Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Higher Education" (23 May); Dissemination of the Baseline Study in English, Albanian and Serbian languages;
- Expected transmission of the AC/FCNM Opinion on Kosovo* to the authorities for their comments;
- SIEHRS/OIK: dissemination of the two above-mentioned assessments reports.

Other relevant activities

- iPROCEEDS held a regional pilot training on Investigation on Darknet and Virtual Currencies in Bucharest, in which a financial investigator, a cybercrime investigator and a prosecutor from Kosovo* took part;
- HoO took part in the first meeting of the Inter-ministerial Coordination Group on Human Rights, designed to coordinate development of policies and monitor the implementation of legislation on human rights;

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 6-9 February: The Human Rights Commissioner carried out a mission to Kosovo* focusing on the freedom of the media and transitional justice.

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

Sarajevo

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 6, Project staff – 7, Total staff – 13.

New HoO Drahoslav Stefanek took up his duties in mid-January 2017.

The Office directly implements 4 projects: 2 projects within the EU/CoE Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey, one funded by a voluntary contribution from Norway and one funded by voluntary contribution from Liechtenstein and the CoE ordinary budget. In addition, the Office contributes to the implementation of one regional Joint Programme with the EU on media.

State of implementation of projects / the Action Plan

- EU/CoE – HF “Enhancing human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons in BiH”: Guidelines for law enforcement officers for dealing with persons deprived of liberty in a closed environment, for which training will be delivered later in the Action, have been finalised and the draft was presented for substantial comments to representatives of all 10 police agencies in BiH on 9-10 March in Teslic. These consultations ensured that the proposed operational procedures are fully in line with the best police practices in BiH, while international consultants ensured their alignment with CoE and other relevant standards. Drafting of the Handbook on developing offenders’ management programmes that will be the basis of the training delivered later in the Action’s implementation period continued during Working Group sessions held on 19-20 January (Mostar), 9-10 February (Teslić) and 22-23 March (Banja Luka). Drafting of the Handbook on the key health care protocols in prison environments was completed at the Working Group session held on 26-27 January in Mostar. This Handbook is intended to harmonise the provision of health care in prisons with that in the community. The developed protocols will be an essential part of the training material to be delivered later on in the Action’s implementation period.
- EU/CoE – HF “Strengthening the Human Rights Ombudsman to fight discrimination”: Two workshops on the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights relating to discrimination on various grounds, on 1-2 February in Mostar and on 16-17 March in Teslic; HELP online course on hate speech and hate crimes was launched during the kick off meetings on 8 March in Banjaluka and on 9 March in Sarajevo with the objective of helping to identify and address the issues of incitement of hatred on various grounds; and a 2nd co-ordination meeting between the Ombudsman and other relevant institutions on implementation of the Ombudsman’s recommendations was held on 24 March in Banja Luka, aiming at improving their cooperation.
- VC Norway “Reinforcing the capacity of the judiciary to apply European human rights standards at the national level in BiH”: HELP Focal Point for Bosnia and Herzegovina appointed from 1 February until 25 August 2017. Three HELP courses for judges, lawyers and legal professionals (Transitional Justice, Reasoning of Criminal Judgments and Property Rights) were launched in Sarajevo in cooperation with the Judicial and Prosecutorial Training Centres of FBiH and Republika Srpska. Five judges from Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in HELP ToT in Belgrade 2-3 March.
- VC Liechtenstein “Strengthening Democratic Electoral Culture and the Role of Young Political Leaders”: On 7 March, the public call for applications was published, within the “Strengthening democratic culture and the role of young political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina” project (School of Political Studies in BIH). The selection process of the potential participants of the SPS in BiH, also includes direct contact with political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina, civil society, journalists and institutions. The final selection, based on the applicants’ CVs, letter of motivation and interview, should be completed by 5 April.

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

- JP EU/CoE "Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe" (JUFREX): From 21-24 February 2017: Training of Trainers on application of Article 10 standards of ECHR, took place in Mostar. To date, grant agreements on implementation of capacity development exGrant Agreements on implementation of capacity development exercises signed with Centre for Education of Judges and Prosecutors in Federation of BiH, Centre for Education of Judges and Prosecutors in Republika Srpska and Bar Association of Republika Srpska.

Follow up action

- New Action Plan to be developed in 2017 for the period 2018-2021.

Other relevant activities

- 23 February: HoO gave introductory speech at the opening of conference under the title "Local Elections 2016 – Lessons learned", organised by the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Council of Europe;
- 22 March: DHoO gave speech at the opening of LAP academy in Konjic, organised by the Council of Europe and Association of Cities and Municipalities of FBiH;
- 25 March: DHoO gave speech at the final conference of the project "Education for Peace" of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Republika Srpska which took place in Bijeljina.

Tbilisi

Situation of the Office

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

The Office implements 15 projects, of which 12 are funded by the EU/jointly funded with the EU and 3 funded by VCs.

State of implementation of projects/programmes/Action Plans

- EU/CoE – PCF “Application of the European Convention on Human Rights and harmonisation of national legislation and judicial practice with European Standards in Georgia”: 316 legal professionals (judges, prosecutors, lawyers, courts’ staff) improved their knowledge on issues related to the ECHR standards, fair trial and jury trial issues, prohibition of discrimination, protection of right to property and reasoning of court decisions. Pursuant to increased jurisdiction of jury trials in Georgia from 1 January, through a Bench & Bar meeting, 60 legal professionals were given the opportunity to discuss current experiences and challenges in the field and get international expertise from the perspective of the ECtHR Case Law. The project presented publicly the Assessment Tool on Pre-trial Detention, which elaborates in detail the methodology for internally reviewing the practice in the field. The document offers a step by step methodology on the use of statistical and thematic analysis to assess the application of pre-trial detention and uncover problems connected to its use.
- AP “Strengthen the capacity of the High School of Justice of Georgia”: A training module was developed for the Georgian judge-experts on the Effective Judicial Review of Corruption-related Crimes (January); A training module was developed, followed by the Training of Judge-Trainers on Effective Judicial Review of Cybercrimes (January-February); High School of Justice Training Unit and Analytical Unit staff members were trained on curriculum development, training needs and the impact assessment process (February-March).
- EU/CoE – PCF “Promoting freedom, professionalism and pluralism of the media”: A series of trainings were organised for members of the Georgian National Communication Commission on European standards concerning regulation of “TV products having a detrimental effect on children” and of “TV-like services”.
- EU/CoE – PCF “Protecting internet freedom through legislation and arrangements for multi-stakeholders dialogue”: Trainings of Trainers (ToT) were organised for Georgian judges on Effective review of Cybercrimes, which is part of the cycle that involves the curriculum drafting process for judges.
- EU/CoE – PCF “Electoral Assistance – Programme to support Georgia in view of the 2016 (parliamentary), 2017 (local) and 2018 (Presidential) elections”: On 13 March, the CoE together with IFES organised the conference “Parliamentary Elections 2016 in Georgia - Lessons Learned and Steps Ahead”. Around 80 policy and law makers – members of the Central Election Commission, representatives of State Audit Office, and representatives of political parties, international community, media and civil society – drew lessons from the organisation and management of 2016 parliamentary elections in view of compliance with European and international standards and for further improving the electoral processes in Georgia. The Conference also provided a platform to discuss expected challenges ahead of the 2017 local elections.
- EU/CoE JP “Human Rights and Healthcare in Prisons and Other Closed Institutions II”: The staff of the Ministry of Corrections and the Ministry of Internal Affairs received training on first aid. With the aim of improving suicide prevention, hot and cold debriefing protocols have been developed with the involvement of international and local experts. A special training programme for psychiatric nurses has been developed. Support was provided for the implementation of psycho-social rehabilitation programmes through developing guidelines and expert advice. The capacity of the inspection and monitoring bodies was enhanced through

training. The Academy of the Ministry of Interior and the Department of temporary detention isolators were supported in the development of distance learning courses.

- EU/CoE – PCF “Civic Integration of National Minorities in Georgia and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages”: Signing of the Grant Agreement with the Tbilisi Development Fund under the Tbilisi City Hall for trilingual signposting of objects related to the heritage of national minorities in Tbilisi; Production of bilingual street signs for Asureti; transfer of signs to the Tetritskaro Municipality; 6 journalistic trainings for over 120 students of secondary schools from Tbilisi and regions teaching minority languages, in cooperation with minority language newspapers; Updating, printing and distribution of Greek language textbooks (5 volumes) and Modern Greek - Georgian Dictionary, in cooperation with the Institute of Classical Philology, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University; Printing and distribution of the Cultural Route Publication (first phase) and branded canvas bags; Production of bilingual and monolingual kindergarten textbooks (4 books in each language) for 13 minority languages (4 books in each language);
- EU/CoE – PCF “Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing in Georgia”: Training on Beneficial ownership: transparency of legal persons and legal arrangements (17-18 January) Training for supervisory institutions defined under the law of Georgia “on prevention of illicit income legalization”. Training on Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) Compliance for Accountants and Auditors (27-28 February); Training on Investigation and Prosecution of Terrorism Financing Cases
- EU/CoE JP “Community Led Urban Strategies in Historic Towns (COMUS)”: The activities focused on finalisation of the Project phase and launching the final (consolidation) phase of COMUS. The preliminary technical assessments and feasibility studies were elaborated for the selected Priority Actions in Dusheti and Chiatura pilot towns. The publication and short films for Pilot Towns were released. The self-evaluation process was launched at local and national levels. Various community events took place in Dusheti and Chiatura. The communication with potential donors and decision makers continued to ensure implementation of the priority actions. On 21 March the National Stakeholder and Donor Information meeting was co-organised by the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection, the National Heritage Agency, and Dusheti and Chiatura Municipalities and attended by representatives of ministries and international organisations and embassies.

Other relevant activities

- The HoO acted as a moderator at the Conference “The 2016 Parliamentary elections: lessons learned and steps ahead”. In addition, the HoO was invited to deliver a presentation on CoE-related issues at a EU HoMs meeting and took part in the Second Steering Committee Meeting for the Elections support programme and the workshop for Enhanced Jurisdiction of Jury Trials Current Experience and Challenges.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 20 January: the President of the Venice Commission visited Georgia;
- 30 January: the Secretary General of the Council of Europe visited Georgia;
- 20-21 February: a Council of Europe Secretariat Delegation visited Tbilisi, in preparation of the next consolidation report on the conflict in Georgia;
- 28-30 March: PACE Co-rapporteurs visited Georgia for a fact finding mission on honouring obligations and commitments;
- 30 March: an expert delegation of the Venice Commission visited Tbilisi, in preparation of the upcoming Opinion on draft constitutional amendments.

Tirana

Situation of the Office

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

The new HoO, Claus Neukirch, took up his duties on 1 January 2017.

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

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

- VC Switzerland “Strengthening the local government structures and cooperation of local elected representatives in Albania”: The Consultative Council (CC) of central and local authorities was officially launched. The SG of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Andreas Kiefer, addressed the opening ceremony on 19 January. Under Line of Action I, 108 HR managers of 72 Local Government Units (LGUs) concluded the full cycle of training on Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS). 125 LGU representatives attended 32 training sessions on the application of the E-Recruitment system.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)”: The midterm strategy of the Audio-visual Media Authority (AMA), was reviewed by a CoE expert and discussed prior to its adoption on 29 March at a national conference. Moreover, a group of 16 judges, prosecutors, and lawyers were trained as trainers on Freedom of Expression.
- EU/CoE JP “Enhancing the effectiveness of the Albanian system of human rights protection and anti-discrimination”: 14 representatives of partner institutions were trained on CoE monitoring mechanisms and ECtHR case law, 12 staff members of the Commissioner of Protection from Discrimination (CPD) were trained on monitoring discrimination and 16 AMA staff members were trained in the area of Anti-Discrimination, using the HELP training platform. In addition, agreements on the establishment of 3 regional CPD desks were concluded between the CoE, the CPD and the municipalities of Korça, Shkoder and Gjirokaster.
- EU/CoE – HF “Strengthening the Quality and Efficiency of Justice (SEJ 2)”: A national conference on “Supporting the justice reform in Albania with the tools and methodology of CEPEJ: addressing challenges with new opportunities” took place in Tirana on 9 March. On 27-31 March a first round of Court Coaching activities took place in 10 pilot courts across Albania.
- EU/CoE – HF “Economic Crime in Albania”: The legislation on political party funding and the corresponding institutional framework were reviewed by an expert. His recommendations were in principle endorsed by the majority and opposition members of the Ad-Hoc Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reform. A Legal Opinion on the Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism was submitted to the Financial Intelligence Units (FIU). The CoE recommendations were reflected in the draft law.
- EU/CoE – HF “Fighting Bullying and extremism in the Education System in Albania”: A National Survey on Bullying and Extremism in the education system was conducted in 145 schools involving over 2377 students, 960 parents and 3560 teachers in 12 regions in Albania. The survey’s findings led to the selection of 21 pilot schools with a focus on the project’s follow up actions.
- EU/CoE – HF “Enhancing the Protection of Human Rights of Prisoners in Albania in line with Council of Europe and European Committee for Prevention of Torture (CPT) Standards”: An expert assessment mission was carried out. In February, the General Directorate of Prisons in Albania established three working groups (WG) focusing on staff recruitment, training of trainers and healthcare.

- EU/CoE – HF “Supporting effective domestic remedies and facilitating the execution of judgments (D-REX)”: Contacts were established with the main stakeholders and preparations were concluded for the first Steering Committee Meeting on 5 April.
- EU/CoE – HF “Preventing and Combating Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Albania”: The second meeting of the National Implementation and Coordination Team (NICT) of the LGBTI Action Plan and the training of focal points from line ministries was carried out, followed by the first Steering Committee Meeting.
- EU/CoE – HF “Strengthening the Protection of National Minorities in Albania”: The draft framework law on minorities was reviewed by a CoE expert upon the request of the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Follow up action

- On 7 April, the 1st HF Steering Committee meeting for Albania will take place in Tirana. Close coordination with the EU Delegation in Tirana and national authorities is required in particular for the identification of recommendations to the HF Steering Board on the use of the Reserve Fund;
- Follow up discussions with MFA on the modalities of the cooperation between Albania and the Council of Europe’s next Cooperation Document with Albania. To this end, coordinate with ODGP and relevant MAEs on the priority areas for action based on recommendations of CoE monitoring bodies;
- Follow up discussions the Swiss, Swedish and UK Embassies in Tirana regarding potential cooperation in the sector of human rights and fight against corruption and economic crime and organised crime.

Other relevant activities

- 27 February–1 March: The PACE co-rapporteurs for the monitoring of obligations and commitments by Albania, paid a visit to Albania. Their visit focused on recent political developments, including justice and electoral reforms.

Yerevan**Situation of the Office**

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

The Office implements 7 projects, of which 4 are PCF projects funded by the EU, and 3 are projects funded by Voluntary Contributions (United Kingdom, Switzerland and Norway). In addition, the Office implements one PCF centralised project (COMUS).

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

- EU/CoE – PCF “Supporting the criminal justice reform and combating ill-treatment and impunity in Armenia”: In January, the CoE provided to the Ministry of Justice its expert opinion on the draft Code of Criminal Procedure. In March, the CoE commissioned an assessment of the draft law on Prosecution at the request of the MoJ. A group of 15 legal professionals were trained on the new HELP e-learning course on “Admissibility of Evidence in Criminal Proceedings”. 300 copies of human rights modules were re-printed for the use of the Justice Academy, which will start in April with the training of the remaining 300 investigators.
- EU/CoE – PCF “Strengthening integrity and combatting corruption in higher education in Armenia”: The CoE made recommendations to the ministerial working group for the Anti-Corruption Activity Plan 2018, led by the Ministry of Education and Sciences. Four NGOs have been selected to receive micro grants and to implement projects promoting transparency and integrity in higher education. Prior to the training on developing Codes of Ethics, a needs assessment is being carried out in ten Universities.
- EU/CoE – PCF “Strengthening Health Care and Human Rights Protection in Prisons in Armenia”: A Concept Paper on “Upgrading medical services in penitentiaries in the Republic of Armenia”, including the CoE’s recommendations, was adopted by the Government. The new expert team on the legislative component developed 13 amendments to be sent for an international expert opinion. A number of 502 medical and non-medical prison staff were trained on medical ethics and human rights in the Law Institute. Medical equipment for 11 prisons in Armenia was purchased following the completion of the tender procedures.
- EU/CoE – PCF “Long-Term Electoral Assistance to the Election Related Stakeholders of Armenia”: 294 members of the 38 territorial electoral commissions (TECs) underwent a Training of Trainers (ToT), of which 40 trainers are participating in two ToTs for precinct electoral commissioners (PECs) and contributing to the new training manual for PECs. 250 domestic observers and 40 investigative journalists were prepared for observing the parliamentary elections on 2 April. 18 representatives of civil society and 14 of political parties attended training on electoral dispute resolution with a contribution from the Venice Commission. “Recommendations of International Election Observation Missions in Armenia” were discussed in a Conference with more than 65 participants from government institutions, electoral administrations, media, civil society and international organisations. 23 women elected as community councillors attended a leadership school for women. Mock elections for first-time voters’ education were organised in 20 high schools.
- VC Norway “Support to the establishment of probation service in Armenia”: The project was extended with the agreement of the donor, in order to allow the Ministry of Justice to complete the procurement of the electronic equipment and capacity building for its usage.
- VC Switzerland: “Institutional Support to Communities Association of Armenia (CAA)”: The new Charter of the CAA was adopted in the first General Assembly (GA) of the Association within the last 15 years, which brought together 400 mayors. The Minister of Territorial Administration and Development and the Congress representative attended the event. Further content for the new CAA website was developed. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) agreed to support the continuation of the CoE’s work with the CAA until the end of 2018.

- VC UK "Strengthening the application of European human rights standards in the armed forces in Armenia": Key Council of Europe standards related to human rights in the armed forces were translated into Armenian and domestic legislation was translated into English for further expertise. Two needs assessments of the military legislative framework, with respect to human rights training and the education system of the military, were conducted during the reporting period.
- EU/CoE - PCF "Community-Led Urban Strategies in Historic Towns" (COMUS): The project seeks to stimulate social and economic development by enhancing cultural heritage in 9 historic towns in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. During the reporting period, Preliminary Technical Files on Shortlisted Heritage-led projects in Pilot Towns - Gyumri and Goris - and Feasibility Studies on the Selected Heritage-led project in the same Pilot Towns were prepared. Short films on COMUS activities in Pilot Towns were presented. A follow-up with Consolidation Phase activities has been planned.

Follow up action

- Follow-up of the EU/CoE Joint Project "Strengthening the Independence, Professionalism and Accountability of the Justice System in Armenia": the Court Users Satisfaction Survey has been finalised and sent for electronic publication. Discussions to establish an Armenian Arbitration Association have been initiated;
- HoO/ DHoO had meetings with the EUD in order to follow-up on previous discussions for securing funding for justice sector.

Other relevant activities

- 14 February: HoO participated in the Conference "Follow-up to the Recommendations of International Election Observation Missions in Armenia";
- 4-10 March: Trainings on electoral disputes for the CEC, Justice Academy and political parties;
- 8 March: The CoE Office attended the peer review of the justice sector organised by the EUD in Armenia.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 22-23 February: PACE Pre-electoral mission - meetings with international organisations, embassies and civil society;
- 27-28 February: Venice Commission mission related to assistance for the parliamentary elections;
- 31 March-3 April: PACE/ODIHR/ European Parliament electoral mission.

Rabat

Situation of the office

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

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

State of implementation of the programmes

- EU-CoE "Improving the functioning of justice in Morocco using the tools of the CEPEJ" programme: in February and March, the participation of Moroccan delegations (Ministry of Justice and Freedoms, the Judicial Services Commission, the new High Council of the Judiciary) in meetings of the CEPEJ Working Group on quality of justice (CEPEJ/GT-QUAL) and the SATURN Working group provided the Moroccan participants with an in-depth analysis and a better understanding of the CEPEJ tools which would help Morocco in its ongoing process of judicial reform. In addition, following the participation of representatives from the Ministry of Justice in the meeting of the Working Group on the evaluation of judicial systems (CPEJ/GT-EVAL) in October 2016, the Moroccan authorities officially announced, in March 2017, their participation in the next CEPEJ monitoring cycle during a launch event in Rabat, which was also an opportunity to present the data collection methodology to be used in this exercise. Also in March, in response to the difficulties encountered by the Ministry of Justice and the courts in the physical management of judicial archives, the discussions at a workshop organised with the Archives of Morocco focused on the mechanisms for identifying documents as archives and the procedures for destroying them, and on the possibility of organising study visits in CoE member states which have particular expertise in this area.
- EU-CoE "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean" Programme (Prevention of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment): in January, CoE experts and members of the National Human Rights Council (CNDH) met to define the conditions for launching a training programme for the CNDH, with a view to creating a National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture (MNP) in Morocco. In March, the first module of this training programme was held for executive staff and members of the CNDH, its regional committees and a representative from the Tunisian National Authority for the Prevention of Torture. It focused on the practical conduct of members of the future MNP when visiting places of deprivation of liberty.
- EU-CoE "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean" Programme (fight against trafficking in human beings): in February, the CoE and the Inter-ministerial Task Force for Human Rights (DIDH) held a round table on the fight against trafficking in human beings as part of the Casablanca International Publishing and Book Fair. The aim of this initiative, which was taken following the recent enactment by Morocco of Law No. 27-14 on combating trafficking in human beings, was to present the Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the new compendium by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA). This compendium gives examples of good practice implemented by CoE member states in this area on which the Moroccan authorities and civil society representatives, researchers and students can draw heavily in the general context of the implementation of the new legislation. In March, activities organised with the Hassan II University in Casablanca sought to set up training on the fight against trafficking suitable for lecturers and PhD students.

Other activities

- Freedom of expression and media freedom: in January and February, two training workshops organised for the High Authority for Audio-visual Communication (HACA) focused on structural pluralism in the media and the issue of reconciling freedom of expression with other rights and interests. This training enabled the participants to acquaint themselves more thoroughly with the way some European audio-visual regulators operate and to clarify the definitions and regulations on media pluralism. Specific examples from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights in this field, regarding freedom of expression and its limits, were studied in this context. At the end of March, a Moroccan delegation from the HACA and the Ministry of Communication also attended the meetings of the Committee of Experts on Media Pluralism and Transparency of Media Ownership (MSI-MED) and the Committee of Experts on Internet Intermediaries (MSI-NET).
- Combating violence against children: the Moroccan authorities have asked the CoE to help draw up of a National Programme for the Protection of Children on the Internet, based in part on the CoE Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021). Several activities were organised in January, February and March in order to finalise this contribution which will be presented at an official launch. In February, at a workshop on "Internet and Children" organised by the CoE as part of the Casablanca International Publishing and Book Fair, children, parents and educators were made particularly aware of the need to use the internet and social networks in a safe and sensible manner.

Tunis

Situation of the Office

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

The Office implements country-related activities of 4 regional programmes, of which one is funded by the EU for the period 2015-2017 (Towards a strengthened democratic reform in the Southern Mediterranean ("South Programme II")), and 4 are funded by Norway (Schools of political studies; Combatting violence against women; Promotion of freedom of expression, independence of the media and public access to information; local democracy).

State of implementation of programmes

- South Programme II "Constitutional processes/Justice": The Council of Europe co-organised with the Tunisian High Independent Authority for Elections and the UNDP an international conference on "The financing of political life during the election period" on 28 March in Tunis. It was followed by a workshop entitled "International perspectives on techniques of control of the financing of election campaigns" on 29 March. GRECO and Venice Commission experts participated in the events.
- South Programme II "Human Trafficking": On 8 and 9 February, a conference on the prevention of and the fight against human trafficking was organised by the Ministry of Justice and the Council of Europe. In recognition of the important role played by the Council of Europe in this field in Tunisia, the conference was the opportunity for the Minister to announce officially the establishment of the National Commission on the fight against human trafficking and to introduce its president and members. The event brought together more than one hundred participants, including government officials and public institutions, parliamentarians, international experts, representatives of diplomatic missions and international organisations, the media and civil society and academic organisations.
- South Programme II "Fight against corruption": The Council of Europe, the Ministry of Public Service and Governance and the National Anti-Corruption Independent Authority (INLUCC) jointly organised a conference in Tunis on 1 February to present the results of the diagnosis of Tunisia's anti-corruption legislative and institutional framework. Approximately 70 recommendations were made by the team of the Council of Europe's national and international experts. The diagnosis aims to strengthen Tunisia's anti-corruption system and covers a wide range of issues, following GRECO's evaluation cycles. Confirming the close cooperation established in this field since 2012, a request for accession to GRECO was notified to the Secretary General by the Tunisian authorities in February.
- VC Norway "Combatting violence against women and girls": As part of the celebration of World Women's Day on 8 March, the Council of Europe organised, in partnership with the Ministry of Relations with the Constitutional Bodies, Civil Society and Human Rights, a workshop on "Women and Media: the participation and representation of women in the media". The workshop provided a forum for debate and dialogue between the various actors, such as the deputies of the Assembly of People's Representatives, representatives of ministries and public bodies, Representatives of the Independent Authorities, representatives of civil society, professionals and media experts on how to combat the stereotypical image of women in the media.

Other Relevant activities

- In the field of prevention and the fight against sexual abuse against children, the request for accession to the Lanzarote convention constituted a major step forward in the cooperation between Tunisia and the Council of Europe. A training of trainers was organised in Hammamet on 23-24 March in cooperation with the Ministry of Woman, Child and family affairs. In addition,

as part of the Tunis International Book Fair, the Council of Europe organised, in cooperation with the National Observatory for the Rights of the Child and civil society organisations, an awareness workshop on the Prevention and the fight against sexual abuse against children. This public event was targeting the larger public - parents, representatives of civil society, child protection delegates – and provided an opportunity for question and answer session with Council of Europe's experts;

- Two training sessions were organised with the INLUCC in January, on lean management and accounting investigation techniques.

Council of Europe high-level visits and other official delegations

- 8-9 February: The President of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, Gianni Buquicchio, paid a visit to Tunisia;
- 27-30 March: As part of the preparation for a PACE report on the democratic transition in Tunisia, the Rapporteur, Gorge Loucaides (Cyprus, EUL) visited Tunis.
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