



HORIZONTAL FACILITY FOR WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

Fighting bullying and extremism in the education system in Albania

The Council of Europe assists in enhancing the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups by applying anti-discriminatory approaches in the formal education system in Albania based on Council of Europe standards and practices. This project is being implemented in close cooperation and partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sport. It will also include a broader group of national partners and stakeholders, including education policy and research institutes, selected pilot schools, local communities, media and NGOs, teacher training and youth organisations.

The Project is co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe as a part of the European Union – Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey and is implemented by the Council of Europe Education Department in cooperation with the Council of Europe Office in Tirana. The duration of the project is set at 32 months and it is expected to be completed by 31 January 2019, with an overall budget of 600,000 Euros.

Expected project results

The **overall objective** of the project is to find effective means to fight bullying and extremism in the education system in Albania, in line with Council of Europe standards.

The **first specific objective** is to support relevant institutions in creating a safe learning environment through fighting bullying and extremism in the education system. This specific objective shall be accomplished through the achievement of the following results:

- Pilot schools have developed and started putting in place mechanisms to prevent bullying and to respond to the ideological challenge of extremism.
- Pupils experience a safe and supportive learning atmosphere.
- Moral values of inclusion and respect are taught as a part of the school culture.

The **second specific objective** is to improve educational professionals' skills by increasing their knowledge and competencies on how to prevent and to deal with cases of bullying and extremism. This specific objective shall be accomplished through the achievement of the following results:

- Knowledge on bullying is improved through the development of resources for schools based on data from studies and best practices.
- The capacity of teachers and school management to deal with controversial issues, bullying and extremism is enhanced through the creation of resource packs.
- Educational professionals are conscious of the issue as a result of the organisation of training sessions, roundtables, workshops, conferences, awareness-raising activities and a peer to peer study visit.

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The **third specific objective** is to raise awareness on what bullying is, how it impacts children, what the consequences of bullying are, and how to prevent it. This specific objective shall be accomplished through the achievement of the following results:

- Increased awareness and improved knowledge at school, community and central level of the consequences of bullying and extremism in the education system.

Background information

On 11 April 2016, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, and the European Union's Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, announced a new co-operation initiative of the two organisations aimed at supporting South-East Europe and Turkey in their efforts to comply with European standards. The initiative is called the European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey (Horizontal Facility). It is a three-year programme (May 2016 – May 2019), focusing on three themes: ensuring justice, fighting economic crime as well as combating discrimination and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups. It has a budget of €25 million, of which €20 million has been provided by the European Union and €5 million by the Council of Europe. Through the Horizontal Facility, the European Union and the Council of Europe will assist beneficiaries in South-East Europe and Turkey to comply with Council of Europe standards and the European Union *acquis*, through a complementary two-fold approach of technical co-operation and the provision of expertise. The Horizontal Facility relies on the Council of Europe's unique working methods, whereby tailor-made technical co-operation activities are based on conclusions and recommendations of the Council of Europe's monitoring bodies, which highlight areas where improvements are needed in legislation and policies of the beneficiaries to comply with the Organisation's standards.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organization. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 democratic European countries. Its aims are peace, prosperity and freedom for its 500 million citizens – in a fairer, safer world. To make things happen, EU countries set up bodies to run the EU and adopt its legislation. The main ones are the European Parliament (representing the people of Europe), the Council of the European Union (representing national governments) and the European Commission (representing the common EU interest).

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