



Centre of Expertise for Good Governance

CEGG



2021 Activity Report

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** All references to Kosovo, whether 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.*

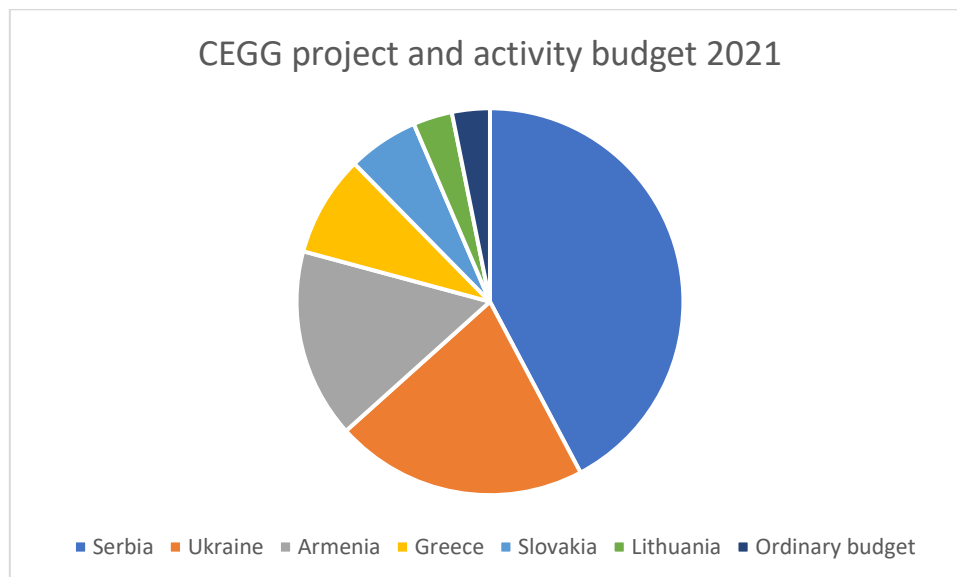
Executive summary

The mission of the [Centre of Expertise for Good Governance](#) (CEGG) is to promote respect for the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance by building governance capacities of actors at all levels and delivering legal and policy advice in line with the European standards and best practice.

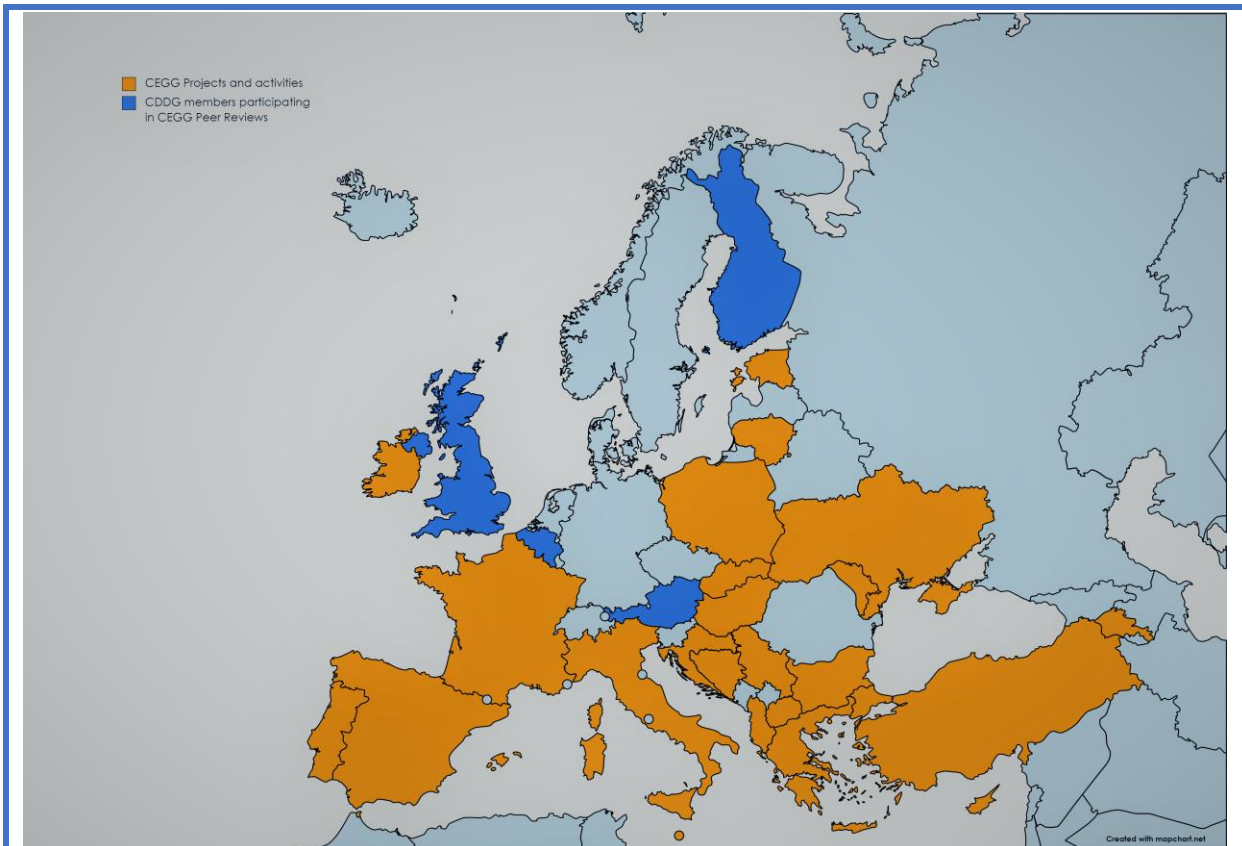
The CEGG designs and implements good governance cooperation projects based on best practice, tools, and standards. Through its links to the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG), it benefits from a multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue, awareness-raising, and peer exchange. By mobilising an extensive pool of experts and building a repository of good practice, the CEGG has developed a wide range of capacity-building tools and serves as an incubator of ideas for better governance.

Key facts and figures

In 2021, the Centre of Expertise was responsible for managing the implementation of projects and activities for a total budget of over €9 million, in over 20 Council of Europe member states. The biggest projects include:



- Serbia (total budget: € 4 M)
- Ukraine (total budget: € 2 M);
- Armenia (total budget: € 1.5 M)
- Greece (total budget: € 800.000)
- Slovakia (total budget: € 560.000)
- Lithuania (total budget: € 310.000)



Smaller but nevertheless high-impact projects and activities were implemented in several other member states, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Moldova, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey. These were funded or co-funded through the ordinary budget and amounted to about € 300.000.

Peers, experts, and public authorities from about 30 member states contributed to the implementation of the projects; many of the CDDG members participated in peer reviews and other activities of the CEGG.

Most activities resulted in new or improved legislation, better implementation of reforms, and strengthened capacities of public authorities at all levels.

Policy and legal assistance

In 2021, the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance provided policy and legal advice on public administration and local government reform to about 10 Council of Europe member states, with an emphasis on decentralisation (including fiscal decentralisation and financial equalisation), territorial reforms, status of municipalities, civil service, national training and capacity-building strategies.

Two Peer Review exercises were carried out involving members of the CDDG. In Armenia, Peers shared the knowledge and experience on the subject of [fiscal autonomy and fiscal capacity of local authorities](#). In the Slovak Republic, members of the CDDG shared expertise and best practice on [amalgamation and territorial consolidation](#).

Capacity building tools and activities

In adopting urgent measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, public authorities have also faced challenges to ensure the effectiveness and continuity of public administration in respect of principles of good democratic governance. Based on examples of good practice, and inspired by recent trends in policy-making towards a more pro-active approach to building strategies that reduce risk, enhance resilience, and focus on recovery and functionality, the CEGG developed a new Toolkit: [ReBuS - Resilience Building Strategies - toolkit](#). A piloting of this toolkit was recently launched in [Armenia](#).

As a further contribution to the COVID-19 response, and in light of information and good practice gathered following a survey of CDDG members, the CEGG published its toolkit [TPA - Toolkit on Teleworking in Public Administration](#). The Toolkit offers templates, resources, and key success factors to ensure effective implementation of teleworking practice in public administration. At the request of the Venice Commission, it was translated into Arabic and presented to the public authorities of the Southern Mediterranean countries.

The pandemic has driven more and more of the CEGG's activities online. The pioneering e-tool on the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance has been translated and adapted to the [Armenian](#), Slovakian, and Serbian contexts. To ensure sustainability and greater visibility for the original course, it has been transferred to the [Council of Europe HELP Platform](#). Specific COVID-related case studies were added to [E-DEN](#) – an online tool and a database on cross-border cooperation, which is also being expanded to serve as a repository of good practice and platform for networking on toolkits such as [ELoGE](#), [ReBuS - Resilience Building Strategies](#), and Leadership Academy Programme (LAP).

ELoGE and new or updated toolkits

2021 confirmed the recent trend of increased interest in the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance and the [European Label of Governance Excellence](#) (ELoGE). Several new or renewed requests have been prepared or submitted to the ELoGE Accreditation Platform. As a further demonstration of the value of the ELoGE process, several additional requests are currently under preparation in the context of externally funded, independent projects.

In response to the increased demand for information regarding ELoGE, the dedicated ELoGE webpage has been further updated to give greater prominence to the revised regulations, new communication materials (infographic and promotional video), and information on ELoGE activities and award ceremonies. Most recent ELoGE activities have taken place in [Bosnia-Herzegovina](#), Croatia, [Greece](#), [Hungary](#), [Italy](#), [Lithuania](#), [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Spain](#) and [Turkey](#).

The toolkits revised and updated in 2021 include Performance Management, Strategic Municipal Planning, and Human Resource Management. There was also a consistently strong demand from the public authorities for the Best Practice Programmes (Hungary, Turkey, Ukraine), Cross-Border Cooperation (Bosnia-Herzegovina study series with Ireland/Northern Ireland, Bulgaria and Serbia, Greece and North Macedonia, Poland and Ukraine, Ukraine and Hungary), Leadership Academy Programme (Bulgaria, Lithuania, Slovak Republic, Ukraine, Serbia), Training and Capacity Needs Analysis, National Training Strategy and URSO – Toolkit for evaluation and monitoring of training programmes (Estonia, Cyprus, Poland, Slovak Republic).

Looking ahead

The Centre of Expertise has prepared its own **Strategic Plan for 2022-25**, in line with the new priorities. In **2022**, the Centre of Expertise will continue to implement most of the large-scale projects mentioned above. Although some of these will come to an end over the course of the next year, others will include new components relating to digitalisation, dealing with emergencies and enhancing leadership and good governance in times of crises.

There are encouraging prospects for several new projects in states such as Armenia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Hungary and Malta, with proposals submitted or funding already approved. Other project proposals are being discussed with the authorities of Albania, Republic of Moldova, Turkey and other member states.

Going forward, the Centre of Expertise will continue to mobilise and involve stakeholders from all levels of governance and its broad network of national and international partners in programme design and implementation. This will help improve the impact of its programmes; reinforce commitment to the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance across Europe; and help adapt tools to the domestic contexts and emerging needs, as identified in the [Secretary's General 2021 Annual Report](#), and in the [Strategic Framework of the Council of Europe for 2022-25](#).

The **emerging challenges** to be addressed include backsliding of democracy and need to strengthen democratic governance, digitalisation of governance and public administration, delivering governance which is environmentally sustainable, tackling the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath in line with fundamental principles of democratic governance, social issues and inequalities, and strengthening of democratic resilience and preparedness in the face of new emergencies.

The **priorities** of the Centre of Expertise are also aligned with the new [2022-25 Terms of Reference of the CDDG](#), which include drafting a Recommendation on the 12 Principles applicable to all levels of government, development of recommendations and guidelines on multilevel governance, deliberative democracy, green public administration, use of technology, as well as on delivering social services at local level.

As the UN's Agenda 2030 comes into focus over the coming years, the activities of the Centre of Expertise will also be geared towards meeting those goals. Its projects strive to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels based on inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making. By addressing the environmental sustainability of public action and disseminating good practice and guidance on the greening of public administration, it will also contribute to sustainable urbanisation.

2021 Activity Report

1. Introduction

The mission of the [Centre of Expertise for Good Governance](#) is to promote respect for the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance by building capacities of governance actors of all levels and delivering legal and policy advice in line with European standards and best practice, for the benefit of citizens and civil society at large. In its work, the Centre of Expertise contributes to attaining the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) by helping to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels based on inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making.

In the 15 years since it was established following the 3rd Summit of the Council of Europe in Warsaw in 2005, the Centre of Expertise has been promoting good democratic governance in Europe:

- through continuous investment in research and expertise;
- by creating and developing partnerships and networks with national and international stakeholders;
- by developing impact-oriented practical tools;
- and by implementing country-specific programmes.

The work of the CEGG takes inspiration from best European practice and is shaped by the guidelines and recommendations elaborated by the Council of Europe's [European Committee on Democracy and Governance](#) (CDDG). Country-specific projects, initiated at the request of member states, are implemented in cooperation with local, regional, national, and international stakeholders. These cooperation projects and targeted interventions are designed to promote Council of Europe standards; address issues and fill gaps that have emerged through monitoring; and support on-going processes of public administration and local government reforms and the modernisation of democratic institutions in member states.

The Centre of Expertise is inherently linked to the Council of Europe's intergovernmental dimension: working with the CDDG and its members, it translates the standards prepared by the CDDG and adopted by the Committee of Ministers into practical toolkits; it develops new toolkits or updates existing ones; provides policy advice; organises peer reviews and international conferences. The Centre of Expertise also cooperates with the Parliamentary

Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Venice Commission, the Group of States Against Corruption, the Council of Europe Development Bank, and other bodies of the Council of Europe.

The CEGG Secretariat is part of the Democratic Governance Division of the Directorate General of Democracy (DG II) and consists of a small team of staff based in Strasbourg and several field offices. It relies on an extensive network of qualified national and international experts, institutions as well as senior CDDG officials to provide policy and legal advice, capacity-building, training and expertise.

2. Main activities in 2021

As mentioned above, the most important CEGG projects were funded by the European Union and a number of Council of Europe member states through external contributions. These were implemented in Armenia (funded by Austria), Greece, Lithuania, Slovak Republic, Serbia (all funded by the EU), and Ukraine (funded by member states in the framework of the Council of Europe Action Plan 2018-2021). In addition, several smaller activities were implemented through the ordinary budget in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey.

Overall, the projects resulted in better legislation, reforms, and more competent public authorities. The projects also contributed to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities and Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. They were also aligned with the European Commission's goals which include, among others, strengthening institutions and governance and improving the participation of civil society in decision-making. The details on each project are described below.

The implementation of the projects and the overall work of the Centre of Expertise were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the activities have been delayed, postponed, or had to change their initial format. The pandemic, however, was also an opportunity for innovation: new online working methods were developed, many activities were digitalised, several toolkits were updated to include the emergency dimension, and new toolkits on emergency resilience and teleworking were developed. The online and social media presence of the Centre of Expertise was enhanced, allowing for greater visibility of its toolkits and activities through the [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) platforms. A new webpage on the [response to COVID-19](#) was added to the website. A new, more diverse pool of 25 experts was established through a competitive Call for Experts in the beginning of the year.

The Secretariat of the Centre of Expertise was actively engaged in fund-raising and proposal-writing to ensure follow-up to projects that ended and to respond to growing demands for advice and capacity-building projects which are highly valued by beneficiary countries. In order to ensure sustainability and local ownership of project results, the CEGG cooperated in project design and implementation with national actors, primarily governments, associations of local and regional authorities and institutions such as schools of public administration. Furthermore, it paid particular attention to coordination with donors, to ensure complementarity of action.

3. Activities by country

Albania

A new project proposal designed to build on the previous [Strengthening Local Government Structures in Albania](#) project achievements, has been prepared at the request of the government. The proposal includes addressing aspects of metropolitan governance, introducing Resilience Building Strategies at local level, and further promotion of the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance at central and local level in Albania.

Armenia

The [“Democratic Development, Decentralisation and Good Governance in Armenia”](#) project is being implemented in the context of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenia 2019-2022. It seeks to contribute to improving legal frameworks in line with European standards; encouraging inclusive participatory mechanisms for civil participation in political decision-making; and building the capacities of consolidated local authorities.

In light of the impact of the pandemic and the outbreak of hostilities in the area of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the project was granted a short no-cost extension to 31 May 2022. The extension also allowed for project activities to be slightly adapted, including the first piloting of the new Resilience Building Strategies Toolkit, which was launched in June 2021.

A constant strand throughout the project has been the provision of legal and policy advice to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MTAI) to further implementation of the decentralisation roadmap and help ensure that the legislative, institutional and fiscal framework for local democracy is improved in line with European standards.

On 24 September 2021, the Armenian Parliament adopted amendments to the laws “On Administrative-territorial Division of the Republic of Armenia” and “On Local Self-Government” thereby completing the amalgamation reform, encompassing the full territory of the state. The CEGG’s Project made a significant contribution to this process, undertaking a comprehensive analysis of legal frameworks for local government and preparing amendments to the legislative and fiscal frameworks for the reform based on Council of Europe [standards](#).

Key highlights from project activities in 2021 include:

- A **Peer Review** with senior members of the [European Committee of Democracy and Governance \(CDDG\)](#) on the subject of fiscal autonomy and financial decentralisation, including necessary constitutional and legislative amendments. It included also a [roundtable discussion](#) on *Increasing fiscal autonomy and fiscal capacity of local authorities in Armenia* open to all stakeholders. Following the Peer Review, public consultations were organised so that local officials and civil society could contribute to discussions on measures to improve the fiscal capacity of local authorities. A draft law on a local hotel tax is now under preparation and training activities on public accounting have been organised for local financial officers.
- Three **Community Consultation** initiative meetings (in March, June, and October) organised to discuss draft methodological guidelines on “Organising and Implementing Community Economic Activities”; multi-level governance issues in the relationships between *marzpetarans* (regional) and local authorities, as well as concept of forming local tax administration in Armenia; and the distribution of competences between regional and local levels of government, as well as in terms of the concept and measures to promote fiscal independence of local authorities.
- A **public roundtable** discussion on *Pilot baseline assessment of standard expenditure needs of amalgamated communities* (June). Participants discussed how the calculation of standard expenditure needs for local authorities based on geographical features and socio-demographic characteristics of the local population can improve local public services and make local governance more efficient.
- A second tutored session of the **e-learning course on the 12 Principles** of Good Democratic Governance with participants from central and local authorities, civil society, and the international donor community. The course will be operational soon and will allow to raise awareness of good democratic governance throughout the country.
- With a view to strengthening consolidated communities in Armenia and helping them recover from the recent crises, the project launched adaptation and piloting of the [Resilience Building Strategies \(ReBuS\) toolkit](#).



A ReBuS workshop in Armenia: the municipalities prepare the Resilience Building Strategies

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Centre of Expertise has continued to support implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan 2018-2021 for Bosnia and Herzegovina with the continuation of the [virtual study series](#) on cross-border cooperation with partners from the North West City Region of Ireland / Northern Ireland.

The CEGG also supported the launch of a piloting of ELoGE through an EU-funded project implemented by the [Local Democracy Agency of Mostar](#). A series of training activities for local experts was organised in October-December 2021 and a local platform will submit a request for the **ELoGE** accreditation in early 2022.

Bulgaria

The Centre of Expertise has been cooperating with the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives Balkans (CESCI Balkans) and Euroregion Nišava to build cross-border capacities, including through implementation of the Leadership Academy for Cross-Border Cooperation in the Bulgaria-Serbia Euroregion Nišava. A key objective of this cooperation is the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding between partner authorities on each side of the border at the conclusion of the process in Spring 2022.

Strengthening leadership skills, developing effective communication, building effective organisations, and promoting inclusive education were key objectives of the [Good Governance Academy](#) organised by the National Association of Municipal Clerks in Bulgaria (NAMCB), with the support of the Centre of Expertise. Local officials, civil society actors, and school teachers from Greece and Bulgaria participated in the Academy, which took place in Bankso, in October.

Croatia

The Centre of Expertise continued its cooperation with ALDA - the European Association for Local Democracy - and the Ethics and Compliance consultancy Ravecon. Further trainings to build on the Public Ethics Benchmarking and National Scorecard on Public Ethics activities were carried out for the municipalities to continue awareness raising on public ethics, developing ethical infrastructure, and mechanisms to prevent corruption at local level. The Croatian partners have also participated in the launch and trainings under the **ELOGE** programme implemented by ALDA in Zagreb in November 2021.

Cyprus

Following the preparation and adoption of the National Training and Capacity-Building Strategy (NTS), the Centre of Expertise continued to support the Ministry of Interior in its implementation. A series of workshops and trainings were organised in cooperation with the main stakeholders (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, UCM - Union of Cypriot Municipalities, UCC – Union of Communities, and CAPA – Cypriot Academy of Public Administration). Specifically, the Centre of Expertise provided training of trainers for the Cypriot experts on Good Governance and [Resilience Building Strategies](#). The Cypriot experts will now be able to train the local authorities on how to use these tools.

Furthermore, a project developed, in collaboration with the CEGG under the National Resilience Plan, has been approved for funding through the EC's Recovery and Resilience Facility. It will support implementation of the local government reform programme and strengthen capacities of local authorities to deliver good governance.

Estonia

The Centre of Expertise has cooperated with the Ministry of Finance to develop a National Training Strategy for local authorities of Estonia. A series of workshop with experts and local authorities were held, and the final Strategy was prepared. The implementation of the Strategy should begin in 2022, also in cooperation with CEGG.

France

The Centre of Expertise has developed close ties with the French National Institute of Local Government Studies (INET), based in Strasbourg. The Institute trains senior officials from French local authorities and is part of the French National Centre of Local Public Service (CNFPT). Throughout the year, staff from the CEGG delivered presentations to groups of students from the INET on the work of the CEGG, the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance, and the ELoGE programme. Following successful piloting of ELoGE in France in 2019, and due to a pandemic-related postponement of implementation in 2020, CNFPT launched the 2nd round of **ELoGE** in France on 1 December 2021.

Greece

The "[Technical Assistance Project on Delivering Good Governance in Greece](#)", co-funded by the European Commission's DG REFORM and implemented by the CEGG, was launched in March 2019 and completed in May 2021.

The project was divided into two components and implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the National Transparency Authority:

- Strengthening the capacity of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection to provide emergency sheltering services to populations affected by natural and human-made disasters;
- Strengthening inter-municipal cooperation (IMC).

Under the first component, an Upgraded Technical and Economic Study on emergency sheltering needs was prepared, accompanied by Action Plans defining the steps for developing, deploying and maintaining emergency sheltering capacities throughout the country. The study and action plans will enable the Greek government to develop informed policies to reform the country's emergency sheltering system.

Under the second component, the Centre of Expertise supported the creation of the IMC Network "AIGEIS", composed of the island municipalities of Agathonisi, Astypalaia, Kalymnos, Leipsoi, Leros, Patmos and Tilos. The project also promoted the signature of a Programmatic Agreement to support Internal Audit activities among the municipalities of Agia, Elassona, Farsala, Kileler and Larissa, in the Thessaly region. Over 25 representatives of these municipalities were involved in different capacity-building activities, for a total of more than 10 different workshops organised by the project.



Workshop on Inter-Municipal Cooperation in Athens

Taking stock of these experiences, a Handbook on IMC for Greece was developed and disseminated to all Greek municipalities and relevant stakeholders. The Handbook provides user-friendly guidance on IMC, thus contributing to the sustainability of the project. It was presented through a webinar held in February 2021, and published in a dedicated section of the website of the Ministry of Interior, accompanied by explanatory videos.

Sustainability was further ensured through the Training of Trainers on the Council of Europe Leadership Academy Programme. 16 Greek trainers from the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government can now lead trainings on leadership and IMC in Greece.

In addition, upon request of the Ministry of Interior, the Centre of Expertise conducted a Study on the participation of women in political life at the local level, analysing how it could be strengthened through IMC. The main outcomes were presented at a final conference, during which the Minister of Interior, Makis Vouridis, noted that the development of IMC is a key goal of the Ministry, as through it "participants gain mutual benefits and use economies of scale, improving the allocation of resources and adopting good practices."

The CEGG has also provided support to the implementation of the second round of ELoGE.. The project was carried out in cooperation with the Institute of Local Administration of the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE-ITA). The 15 municipalities which demonstrated compliance with the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance were awarded the Label during an [ELoGE Ceremony](#) held on 23 June 2021.

Hungary

A [Conference on Cross-Border Cooperation \(CBC\)](#) was organised in Budapest under the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The COVID-19 pandemic and other current challenges such as the environmental emergency, and the backsliding of democracy, have served to highlight the importance of cross-border cooperation, especially in areas such as emergency response, health, labour market, transportation and institutional cooperation. The Conference, co-organised by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives, and the Centre of Expertise acknowledged the pioneering role of the Council of Europe in promoting cross-border co-operation between local and regional authorities across political and geographical boundaries, among others by providing four conventions, several recommendations and practical tools aimed at making cooperation between communities legally feasible and practically sustainable.

Centre of Expertise's cooperation with TOOSZ, the Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities, dates back to 2008 with the annual organisation of the Best Practice Programme (BPP). In 2021, building on the sustained success of the BPP programme, [ELoGE was launched](#) in Hungary for the first time. Both the [BPP and the ELoGE ceremonies](#) were held on 10 November in Budapest, under the banner of the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Six municipalities were awarded the Label at the Ceremony.

The CEGG has also worked in close cooperation with TOOSZ to prepare a project proposal for EU funding. The proposed project would aim to support legislative reform at central level in Hungary while building capacities at local level based on CEGG Toolkits.

Italy



27.08.2021
PROGRAMMA ELoGE IN FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA
CERIMONIA FINALE DI PREMIAZIONE
THE ELoGE PROGRAMME IN FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA (ITALY)
AWARD CEREMONY

ELoGE Ceremony in Trieste

The CEGG has supported implementation of ELoGE in the Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) region, in cooperation with AICCRES - the Italian chapter of CEMR – Council of European Municipalities and Regions, and ISIG - International Sociology Institute in Gorizia. Despite the challenges due to the pandemic, the participating authorities acknowledged the validity of ELoGE as a valuable tool to improve good democratic governance and encourage citizen participation in local democratic life. An [award ceremony held in Trieste in July 2021](#) saw 10 municipalities awarded with the dodecahedron symbolising the 12 Principles.

In addition, a Leadership Academy Programme was launched for the Italian mayors in FVG, based on the training materials developed by the Centre of Expertise. The toolkits on Cross-Border Cooperation, Resilience Building Strategies, Inter-Municipal Cooperation, and Civil Participation were incorporated into the training for the municipalities in FVG and Piedmont.

The AICCRES, an accredited body for delivering ELoGE in Italy, has indicated its intention to roll out ELoGE to cover all of Italy in the context of the Italian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers in 2022.

Lithuania

A new project "[Establishment of legal, institutional and financial framework at regional \(county\) level, capacity-building to enhance quality of regional public administration in Lithuania](#)", co-funded by the Council of Europe and the European Union, was launched in February 2021. It aims to support the Lithuanian government with advice on the institutional set up and performance of the Lithuanian regions, including on specific topics such as: programming and planning process, fiscal decentralisation, territorial and regional development strategies. The project also aims to strengthen the capacities of the local and newly established regional authorities on strategic regional and municipal planning, local finance and human resources management.



A workshop for local authorities in Lithuania

A series of capacity building activities have already been implemented, ensuring that the staff of the local and regional public administrations receives support tailored to their specific needs. For example, representatives of all regional councils are taking part in an on-going sequence of training workshops on human resources management (HRM), delivered by local and international experts. The feedback collected from the participants will allow for a Lithuanian HRM tool to be prepared at the end of the training programme. This tool will then be rolled out to other local and regional authorities, thus ensuring a strong sustainability of the project's results.

Malta

The Centre of Expertise has been supporting the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Maltese Ministry for National Heritage, Arts, and Local Government, in the implementation of ELoGE. Following Covid-related delays in 2020, the second round of ELoGE in Malta was launched with an [online workshop organised to present ELoGE](#) to representatives of Maltese local councils in July. The Award Ceremony is foreseen at the end of 2021. The CEGG has also been working closely with the Ministry and the Local Councils Association to prepare a project proposal for the EU funding, to promote good democratic governance at local level in Malta.

Republic of Moldova

The Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul", with the support of the Centre of Expertise, has been implementing the Best Practice Programme (BPP) since 2007 to identify, promote and disseminate good practice among local public authorities. An anthology of best practices is regularly uploaded onto the IDIS "Viitorul" website and shared with all municipalities.

Best Practices of Moldovan local governments in 2019 and 2020 will be recognised at a national award ceremony in Chisinau on 21 December 2021, organised by (IDIS) "Viitorul" with financial support from the CEGG.

North Macedonia

The CEGG contributed to the launch of the ELoGE project in Skopje in November 2021. It will continue to provide support to ALDA, in cooperation with local democracy agencies, to implement ELoGE in North Macedonia in 2022.

Poland



In Poland, the Centre of Expertise has been cooperating with the Polish Foundation in Support of Local Democracy ([FSLD](#)) on the implementation of three projects in recent years: Leadership for Cross-Border Cooperation, ELoGE, and Training Needs Analysis. In September 2021, Centre of Expertise toolkits and standards such as the [12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance](#); the [European Label of Governance Excellence \(ELoGE\)](#); and the new [Resilience Building Strategies toolkit](#) featured prominently on the agenda of the [5th National Congress of Executive Secretaries of Poland](#). The Congress also served as the award ceremony for the second round of **ELoGE** in Poland.

Portugal



[ELoGE](#) was launched for the first time in Portugal in cooperation with UDITE – the European Federation of Local Government Chief Executives, and ATAM – the Portuguese Association of employees of local administrations. Although the pandemic affected the project, a broad

cross-section of Portuguese municipalities from North and South, coastal plains and mountain valleys, urban and rural areas participated in a series of workshops and awareness-raising activities related to ELoGE and the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from all participants attested to the interest in and value of ensuring a sustainable and annual implementation of the ELoGE Benchmark in Portugal. 7 Portuguese municipalities were awarded ELoGE at a ceremony in [Loule in June 2021](#).

Serbia



Conference on Overview of the Human Resource Management System in Local Self-Governments (21.9.2021, Hotel Metropol) participation of DEU, SCTM, MPALSG, Council of Europe, and LSG representatives.

In 2021, the Council of Europe continued to be the main partner of the Serbian government and the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-government in the implementation of the public administration reform at the local level in the Republic of Serbia, through the Programme [“Human Resource Management in Local Self-Government – Phase 2”](#).

The Centre of Expertise provided expertise and technical support to the Ministry in the development of a new Strategy for Public Administration Reform (2021-30) and its accompanying Action Plan (2021-25). Support included the preparation of several legal and policy advice documents (analyses, opinions, expertise, reports and proposals to improve legislation), key among them being amendments to the Law on Employees of Autonomous Provinces and Local Self-governments. These new provisions, adopted in November 2021, became a landmark in human resource management reform at local level, since the amendments introduce a competency-based system for local government employees as of 2022. The Centre of Expertise played a central role in this reform, supporting the Ministry of Public Administration in designing and developing the competencies system for local government employees.

An ex-post analysis of the Law on Employees of Autonomous Provinces and Local Self-Governments related to professional development, which will serve as the basis for key future reforms in this area, was also launched in the framework of the project.

In addition to the legal and policy advice component, the project also includes a significant capacity-building dimension based on several toolkits of the Centre of Expertise, including:

- Leadership Academy Programme;
- National Training Strategy and Training Needs Analysis;
- Human Resource Management;
- URSO: Monitoring and Evaluation of Training for Professional Development;
- E-learning tool on the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance.

46 Local Assemblies in Serbia affirmed their commitment to improving good local governance based on Council of Europe standards by adopting an HRM Declaration based on the 12 Principle of Good Democratic Governance.

Project support contributed to the development of a National Management Training Programme for LSGs, aligned with the CEGG's Leadership Academy Programme, was developed with support from the Centre of Expertise and adopted by the Serbian Government. To ensure sustainability and effective local ownership of the outputs, a comprehensive training on the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance was organised for a group of national trainers in Serbia.

The National Methodology for monitoring and evaluation of trainings at local level was revised in line with the Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluation of Training Programmes for Professional Development of Local Government (URSO) toolkit and adapted to the national context. This methodology was then applied in cooperation with the National academy for public administration (NAPA) with positive results, including an average overall rating of 3.62 out of 4 for the training programmes evaluated.

The e-learning course on the 12 Principles was translated and adopted to the Serbian context and will be integrated into the National Academy's e-learning platform. A micro-grant scheme implemented under the project offered LSGs support (up to €2 500) to develop training capacities and implement special training programmes.

The CEGG continued to work on building capacities of local authorities directly through several activities. Most impactful was the implementation of Municipal Support Packages (MSP) in 50 Serbian LSGs. The HRM Performance Measurement Index, developed by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, (tool for measuring capacities for HRM)

showed a much greater improvement of capacities of LSGs, supported through MSP programme compared to the control group:

Year	50 LSGs supported by Programme through MSP		20 Control LSGs which were not part of SP	
	Points	%	Points	%
2020 (before MSP support)	73.9	53.1	63.4	45.6
2021 (after MSP support)	101.3	72.9	74.4	53.6

The project will continue throughout 2022 subject to formal approval of a short no-cost extension of the implementation period.

Slovak Republic

The Council of Europe-EU funded project "[Delivering Good Governance in Slovakia](#)", launched in July 2019, was completed in March. Key 2021 achievements included:

- **Strategy for strengthening local governance in Slovakia**, prepared following a series of discussions with a wide range of stakeholders. The Strategy offers the Slovak authorities several different possible scenarios that could be adopted to address current challenges at the local level.
- **Policy advice on territorial consolidation in Slovakia**, prepared following a peer review with participation of the members of the [European Committee on Democracy and Governance \(CDDG\)](#). The Policy advice, containing the most relevant European practice, examines possibilities for amalgamation of Slovak municipalities as a means to combat problems caused by the high territorial fragmentation of the country.
- **Policy advice on the improvement of the structure and competences of local governments in Slovakia**, aimed to help the Slovak authorities in their potential plans for redistribution of competences in the municipalities according to different criteria such as size and number of inhabitants.
- **First [European Label of Governance Excellence \(ELoGE\)](#) award ceremony**, organised in January 2021. Of the fifteen municipalities participating in the ELoGE Programme, five have been able to demonstrate respect of the [12 Principles of Good Governance](#), measured against the national benchmark set at the beginning of the Programme. The awarded, best performing local authorities received the ELoGE to attest their compliance with the 12 Principles, and shared their experience with peers.

A follow up, Council of Europe-EU joint Project "[Delivering Good Governance in Slovakia – II phase](#)" was launched in December 2020 to build on the results of the first project. It aims to provide further suggestions in several areas related to the local and regional level,

in order to support the planned reform in Slovakia in line with the European standards on good democratic governance. For example, following in-depth discussions with the relevant local authorities and other stakeholders, a **Policy advice on the special status of the Capital City of Bratislava and metropolitan governance in Košice** is currently being prepared. It will help the national authorities in updating the regulatory framework to reflect the improved status of both cities. Toolkits of the Centre of Expertise, such as [Strategic Municipal Planning](#), [Public Ethics Benchmarking](#), and [Local Finance Benchmarking](#) are also being implemented to strengthen the capacities of the local/regional authorities. **The Slovak online tools on Public Ethics and Good Governance at local level** will be available soon to the public administration professionals and to a wider audience, to help raise awareness, develop better understanding of these topics, and to improve the quality of governance.

Spain

After three successful rounds of European Label of Governance Excellence (ELOGE) run by the Association of Basque Local Authorities (EUDEL) in the **Basque** region, the Centre of Expertise provided further support to launch the [fourth round for the Basque municipalities](#) with a population over 5000, during a ceremony held in Bilbao and online on 17 September. In the future, EUDEL is planning to further adapt the Benchmark for smaller municipalities. In addition, the Chair for Good Governance and Public Integrity of the University of Murcia has applied and received accreditation in order to implement ELOGE in the region of Murcia. The Catalan Association of Municipalities (ACM) is currently preparing an application to implement ELOGE in Catalonia.

The ELOGE Benchmark and implementation methodology has also been adapted for use by municipalities of less than 5000 inhabitants.

Turkey

The Centre of Expertise has agreed to support the Marmara Municipalities Union (MMU) and the [Arguden Governance Academy](#) in adapting the ELOGE Benchmark to the Turkish context and piloting it in Turkey, as a part of the MATRA-Dutch-funded project. The 12-months project is called "**Integrated Municipal Good Governance Model.**" It intends to operationalise the twelve principles at every stage of municipal governing processes. The Argüden Governance Academy and Marmara Municipalities Union will apply to become accrediting bodies. If successfully implemented, the project will act as an instrument to introduce ELOGE in Turkey.

The CEGG also contributed to the [Marmara Urban Forum](#) (MARUF) which is a biennial international urban forum organised by the Marmara Municipalities Union to discuss challenges faced by cities. Mobilising participants from over 25 states as a means of sharing best practice and finding common solutions to Urban Governance, MARUF21 was organised under the theme “Cities Developing Solutions.” Participants at [MARUF21](#) learned how the [12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance](#) offer municipalities a holistic and integrated way to demonstrate good governance practice. They also recognised that using the ELoGE benchmark to measure performance is an important first step on the path to promoting good democratic governance at local level.

Ukraine



Local Self-Government Forum in Ukraine: a key annual event

The Centre of Expertise continued the 27-months project “[Enhancing decentralisation and public administration reform in Ukraine](#)” scheduled to run until 31 December 2021, with a total budget of €1.560.000.

The CEGG remained the main advisor to the Government and Parliament on the implementation of the decentralisation reform in Ukraine. It continued to be involved in the conception, negotiation and preparation of key legislative amendments, and in supporting capacity development of national, regional and local authorities.

The key **achievements in 2021** included:

1. Preparation of **10 legal and policy advice documents** on request of the national partners, including a policy advice on legal personality at local level – an issue widely debated in Ukraine¹.
2. In response to request from the [Specialised Parliamentary Committee on Local Self-Government](#) the CEGG took the lead to advise the Committee in elaborating its legal position relating to **legal personality** at local level, organising a number of

¹ This reform has been recommended by some international partners, as well called for in the [Resolution](#) of the European Parliament of February 2021.

activities: it was coordinating and moderating thematic discussions in camera (with participation of high-level national officials), analysed the national legal framework and coordinated preparation and collection of 20 country cases². These activities were implemented in co-operation with the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG). The overall effort translated into the policy advice which was appreciated by the national partners and taken on board for further law-making process.

3. As a follow up to the legal analysis and policy advice, national partners took on board and incorporated Council of Europe recommendations into numerous legal acts, for example: (i) out of ten key [conclusions](#) on the fundamental legal initiatives relating to the local State administrations, 60% of recommendations were addressed (including 40% completely addressed and 20% partially addressed); (ii) the Specialised Parliamentary Committee incorporated a new provision to the law (already adopted) "On Starosta institution" relating to ethnic factors to be taken into account when planning the territory of the *starosta* (village mayor) "county"³; National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service incorporated the recommendations into the three adopted regulations.
4. The Centre of Expertise worked to enhance capacities of newly (after elections) formed local authorities in settling emerging issues in the process of their reorganisation following the territorial reform: jointly with the national partners it produced three methodological recommendations relating to [transition](#) from voluntary amalgamation to administrative, [human resources management](#) at local level and ["starosta" institution](#). Together with five other methodological recommendations produced in 2020 and disseminated in 2021, they all were in high demand by the national partners and the number of online readers in 2021 reached an outstanding number – above 100.000 – resulting in more coherent transition process at local level.
5. **The CEGG implemented its capacity building toolkits:**

² 11 detailed country reports were prepared by the Council of Europe with contribution of other international partners, such as GIZ, EU-funded U-Lead project and SALAR, SIDA-funded Decentralisation support project; in addition, two overviews covering legal framework and practices of 20 countries were developed.

³ This initiative was based on recommendations of the Assessment report on the impact of the decentralisation reform on national minorities produced in 2020 jointly with the Anti-Discrimination Department.

FEEDBACK from Ukraine

1. *"Our Parliamentary Committee has a long-standing and literally exemplary co-operation history with the Council of Europe. We highly appreciate this Organisation's legal expertise and consultative support."*

Mr Andriy KLOCHKO, MP, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on State Building, Local Governance, Regional and Urban Development

2. *"We appreciate the Council of Europe's support throughout the decentralisation reform process and also in the period before it was launched... immediately after Ukraine ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government."*

Mr Viacheslav NEHODA, Deputy Minister for Territorial Development of Ukraine

3. *"The Council of Europe programme offers platforms for co-operation of all the national stakeholders, it enables to consolidate efforts and ideas."*

Ms Valentyna POLTAVETS, Executive Director of the Association of Amalgamated Communities

conducted opinion polls.

7. The **best practices** of local self-government, identified in 2020 according to the Council of Europe methodology, were widely disseminated in 2021 among the target audience of local authorities and relevant professional networks, as well as to general public. The 10th national best practice contest was successfully organised based on the [Best Practice in Local Government](#) toolkit. In addition, three other national contests inspired by this toolkit were implemented: 6th National Media Contest on Decentralisation (number of applications increased by 25% compared to the previous one); 2nd [Contest on Best Training Innovations](#) in professional training system or training service providers and 2nd [Contest for Youth dedicated to the Public Service Day](#).

- more than 20 official short-term training programmes based on the Council of Europe toolkits on [Human Resources Management](#) and [Leadership](#) were developed and approved by the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service and Regional Training Centres;
 - in co-operation with the national partners (Ministry for Communities and Territories Development and National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service) a [Training Marathon on Good Governance](#) was organised for about 3000 local and civil officials;
 - the 3rd National Training Needs Assessments of local authorities was launched (based on the [Training Needs Analysis toolkit](#)).
6. With the overall goal to improve **metropolitan governance in Ukraine**, the CEGG supported dialogue platform for co-operation between communities in Kyiv and Lviv sub-regions: organised thematic consultations, supported development of legal initiatives, assisted in initiating the IMC agreements,

8. Many high level policy development discussions with participation of senior officials, local authorities and other stakeholders were organised, such as the annual (6th) Local Self-Government Forum, the [Round Table discussion](#) on metropolitan governance in Kyiv sub-region, [Round table "Administrative-territorial set-up: new realities and rules"](#), [Richelieu Forum 2021](#) on modern public service in Ukraine, and many others. They all brought together about 500 face-to-face and above 1700 online participants, as well as above 5000 engaged viewers through online platforms.

Close collaboration was maintained with many international partners (EU Delegation to Ukraine, GIZ U-LEAD, USAID DOBRE and HOVERLA projects, SKL International Decentralisation project, OSCE Project Coordinator and others)

In 2022, the programme will continue focusing on (i) improving legislative framework on local self-government in line with the European standards and good practice (with the Constitutional reform on decentralisation as priority), (ii) enhancing capacities of local and regional authorities to deliver efficient and service oriented public administration (with special attention to officials of reformed local State administrations) and raising awareness of the results and impact of reform among general population.

Kosovo*

ALDA was granted accreditation to implement ELoGE in Kosovo*. The CEGG provided support in the preparation and will help with the implementation of the first ELoGE project in 2022, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior.

* All references to Kosovo, whether 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.

4. Capacity-building tools

The development and promotion of innovative capacity-building tools are among the priorities of the Centre of Expertise. These tools take inspiration from the best of European practice and enable the reinforcement and evaluation of local authorities' capacities in a variety of areas. The tools are regularly revised and updated and new tools are developed in response to emerging needs.

All relevant organisations are encouraged to use the tools provided that the copyright is respected, qualified experts are used, and the Centre of Expertise is informed. The CEGG can provide assistance in the adaptation and implementation of the tools and in the training of national experts.

In 2021, the Centre of Expertise principally invested in updating existing toolkits, with a current repertoire of 24 toolkits, all available on the CEGG [website](#). The updated and new editions include toolkits on Performance Management, Human Resource Management, and Strategic Municipal Planning. The e-learning [Course: 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance \(coe.int\)](#) was also revised and put on the Council of Europe HELP platform. The ELoGE benchmark is currently being revised in line with comments and suggestions from the CDDG and the accredited organisations from all over Europe. The current toolkits are:

Democratic participation

CLEAR – Citizen Participation

► A self-assessment tool to help local authorities develop effective policy responses to promote citizen participation based on the premise that participation is most effective where citizens **C**an do, **L**ike to, are **E**nabled to, **A**sks to, and **R**esponds to.

Civil Participation in Decision-Making

► An integrated framework that uses community evaluation and stakeholder mapping to guide local authorities in designing and implementing strategies to increase civil participation.

Good Governance

ELoGE – European Label of Governance Excellence

► The Label is awarded to local authorities who can demonstrate respect for the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance through self-assessment and benchmarking.

E-learning course on Good Democratic Governance

► The course contains a learning module for each of the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance based on standards and case studies enabling participants to develop a deeper understanding of good democratic governance.

Human Resources and Leadership

TNA – Training and Capacity Needs Analysis and NTS - National Training and Capacity-Building Strategy

► The TNA toolkit sets out four steps in training and capacity needs analysis and offers guidance in developing national training and capacity building strategies for local administration.

HRM – Human Resources Management

► Modern and effective human resource management is key to good governance at the local level. This toolkit offers guidance on job descriptions, appraisals, performance management, and gender mainstreaming based on standards and case studies.

URSO – Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology

► Containing a methodology and a training agenda for monitoring and evaluation of training programmes, this tool can be used in tandem with the HRM, TNA, SMP and other toolkits to create outputs that are **U**seful **R**elevant **S**ustainable and **O**wned.

LAP – Leadership Academy Programme

► An interactive training programme for senior officials that serves to develop leadership for organisations, leadership for strategy, and leadership for capacity building over 3 stages.

TPA – Teleworking in Public Administration

► Of use to all levels of public administrations and designed to guide human resources managers, senior management, line managers and trade unions in designing and rolling out teleworking for their employees and membership.

Institutional Capacity and Quality Public Services

SMP – Strategic Municipal Planning

► A 5-stage approach to long-term strategic local development planning, promoting citizen participation based on case studies and best practice from several Council of Europe member states.

PMP – Performance Management Programme

► Providing an overview of the concepts of performance management, risk management and internal audit and offering practical guidance on how they can be applied in public sector to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of public services.

BPP – Best Practice in Local Government Programme

► The BPP toolkit provides municipalities with ideas and guidance to promote successful, transparent, adequate, replicable, and sustainable practice.

LGA – Strengthening Capacity of Local Government Associations

► Analysing and transforming the capacities of LGAs can enable them to better represent local government interests and become strategic partners for central government.

PEB – Public Ethics Benchmarking

► Contains 2 separate toolkits – for central and local level, which are designed to help committed public authorities assess corruption risks, improve public ethics standards, and develop ethical infrastructure passed on the relevant Council of Europe standards.

ReBuS – Resilience Building Strategies

Designed to help public authorities build resilience by identifying the relevant actions needed to reduce risk; focus on recovery and functionality; and strengthen governance.

Local Finance

LFB – Local Finance Benchmark for Local Authorities

► The toolkit supports evidence-based decision-making by local officials helping them make the best use of available resources.

LFB – Local Finance Benchmark for Central Authorities

► An analytical instrument for policymakers designed to help them develop accountable and efficient local finance systems.

Territorial and Cross-Border Cooperation

IMC – Inter-Municipal Cooperation

► A step-by-step approach to the processes for creating, establishing, implementing, and evaluating IMC arrangements.

TAT – Territorial Amalgamation Tool

► Guidance to decision-makers contemplating municipal amalgamation as a policy response to overcoming problems stemming from territorial fragmentation.

CBC – Cross-Border Cooperation

► The toolkit offers a step-by-step guide to designing and implementing cross-border projects based on Council of Europe standards.

C2C – City to City Cooperation

► This toolkit offers practical guidance and an operational framework for city-to-city cooperation on common themes

LAP for CBC – Leadership for Cross-Border Cooperation

► Building on LAP, the training material have been specifically designed and adapted to improve the leadership capacity of mayors and senior officials involved in developing or implementing cross-border cooperation initiatives.

EDEN – E-Database Empowering Network

► A comprehensive repository of case-studies, best practice, and networking opportunities from across the Council of Europe area comprising examples of cross-border cooperation, intermunicipal cooperation and ELoGE.

5. Partners

The Centre of Expertise for Good Governance cooperates with many associations and organisations. This section concerns European and international organisations; national organisations are mentioned in the respective country sections of this report.

European Union and its institutions

The European Commission is an important partner of the Council of Europe. The Centre of Expertise liaises with the EU Delegations in the countries where it implements cooperation projects. The European Commission currently co-finances some of the biggest projects implemented by the Centre of Expertise, notably in Greece, Lithuania, Slovak Republic and Serbia. Very good cooperation with the DG REFORM of the European Commission has continued, with several new projects currently being discussed.

OECD

The Centre of Expertise has been cooperating with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development for a number of years. It participates in the OECD Network on Fiscal Relations, where it contributes based on Council of Europe standards, tools and expertise on local finance and capacity-building for public authorities.

World Bank

The Centre of Expertise maintains dialogue with the PEFA Secretariat of the World Bank. [PEFA](#) is a Public Finance Management diagnostic tool used in 152 countries since 2006. The revised Council of Europe Local Finance Benchmarks have been used to update the PEFA tool.

UN and UNDP

The Council of Europe and UNDP have a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of local democracy. UNDP country missions are regularly involved in the implementation of the cooperation projects of the Centre of Expertise, in particular in Armenia and Ukraine. The Centre of Expertise also contributes to implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through its cooperation projects.

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

The CEMR (which is part of UCLG) has been a long-standing partner and provides a good platform for sharing experience and expertise as well as for promoting the capacity-building tools of the Centre of Expertise. The Italian branch of CEMR-AICCRE – was accredited to implement ELoGE in Italy.

European Federation of Local Government Chief Executives (UDiTE)

UDiTE is a federation of professional associations which today represents local government in 14 European countries: Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. Promoting the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance has been a part of its workplan for the past several years. In 2021, it has implemented the ELoGE project in Portugal, in cooperation with the Centre of Expertise.

European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA)

ALDA is an international non-governmental organisation dedicated to the promotion of good governance and citizen participation at the local level. ALDA focuses in particular on activities that facilitate cooperation between local authorities and civil society. It is the umbrella organisation of the Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) which are locally registered non-governmental organisations that promote good governance and local self-government. The Head of the Democratic Governance Division represents the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in the Governing Board of ALDA. In 2021, ALDA was accredited to implement ELoGE in North Macedonia, Croatia, and Kosovo*.

CESCI - Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives

CESCI promotes cross-border cooperation through applied research, strategic planning, development activities in border regions and networking between the local, national and European levels. The Centre of Expertise works with CESCI on capacity-building to strengthen CBC in Central and Eastern Europe and in the Balkans. In 2021, the Centre of Expertise has worked with CESCI-Balkans on the Leadership Academy for Cross-Border Cooperation for the local authorities of Serbia and Bulgaria.

The Innovation in Politics Institute

The Centre of Expertise has supported [the Innovation in Politics Institute](#) in the implementation of the [European Capital of Democracy](#) initiative, to develop the legal basis for the application process and the Europe-wide call. Each application must include a self-evaluation of their democratic track record, based on the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance, and an outline for a year-long programme aimed at strengthening and broadening democratic practice. The Initiative is being implemented under a special patronage of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

The Association of European Border Regions

The [Association of European Border Regions](#) (AEBR) strives to promote cross-border cooperation and territorial development throughout Europe. The Centre of Expertise for Good Governance contributes to the AEBR Task Force on External Borders and participated in a workshop on CBC at the EU's external borders during the 50th Annual Conference of the AEBR in October 2022.

6. Prospects for 2022

The CEGG has prepared a new Strategic Plan for 2022-25. The priorities of the Centre of Expertise are fully aligned with those identified in the Secretary's General 2021 Annual Report, in the Strategic Framework of the Council of Europe for 2022-25, and in the new 2022-2025 Terms of Reference of the CDDG. The latter is of particular relevance as it will include the drafting of a Recommendation on the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance applicable to all levels of government, developing Recommendations and guidelines on multilevel governance, and publishing reports on green public administration, the use of technology, including artificial intelligence in the public sector, and delivering social services at local level.

The Centre of Expertise will support this work by developing tools and projects that will contribute to the collection of best practice and support practical implementation of standards developed by the CDDG. The main priority of the CEGG will be to continue to respond to the needs of member States in the area of good governance. The main new areas in which member states would like to be supported include digital transformation of public administration, use of technologies and new working methods to deliver better quality of governance, building resilience at all levels of government, crisis management, public ethics.

As outlined above, several large, externally funded projects will continue in 2021 in Armenia, Lithuania, Slovak Republic, Serbia and Ukraine. New projects are being discussed and negotiated with donors and member states, e.g., with Albania, Cyprus, Finland, Hungary, and Malta. The ordinary budget of the Centre of Expertise will be dedicated to providing support to the Council of Europe member states that submit requests for legal or policy advice and capacity-building in the area of good governance. The implementation of various toolkits is foreseen in Belgium, Croatia, Italy, North Macedonia, Poland, Spain and other member states. More toolkits will be updated, including the current ELoGE benchmark.

Cooperation with international partners will continue, especially in the areas of digitalisation and modernisation of public administration, pandemic-related responses, good governance, cross-border cooperation, public ethics and local finance. Supporting the UN 2030 Agenda and implementation of SDGs will also remain among the priorities.

List of abbreviations

ADA: Austrian Development Agency
 AEBR: Association of European Border Regions
 ALDA: European Association for Local Democracy
 BPP: Best Practice Programme
 C2C: City to City Cooperation
 CBC: Cross-border Cooperation
 CDDG: European Committee for Democracy and Governance
 CEMR: Council of European Municipalities and Regions
 CESCO: Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives
 CLEAR: Can do, Like to, Enabled to, Asked to, Responded to
 ELoGE: European Label of Governance Excellence
 ENA: French National School of Administration (Ecole Nationale d'Administration)
 EU: European Union
 EUDEL: Association of Basque local authorities
 FRDL: Polish Foundation to Support Local Democracy
 GIZ: German Society for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)
 HRM: Human Resources Management
 IMC: Inter-municipal Cooperation
 INET: French National Institute for Territorial Studies (Institut National des Etudes Territoriales)
 ISIG: Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia
 LAP: Leadership Academy Programme
 LFB: Local Finance Benchmark
 NTS: National Training Strategy
 OSCE: Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
 PEB: Public Ethics Benchmarking Programme
 PMP: Performance Management Programme
 SDC: Swiss Development Cooperation
 SMP: Strategic Municipal Planning
 SRSS: Structural Reform Support Service of the European Commission
 TMC: Top Management Corps
 TNA: Training Needs Assessment
 ToT: Training of Trainers
 UDITE: European Federation of Local Government Chief Executives
 UNDP: United Nations Development Programme