

*The Bureau of the Congress*

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## **Co-operation activities of the Congress in member States and neighbouring regions**

Developments between 19 November 2020 and 19 May 2021

*Document submitted for information to the Bureau of the Congress on 26 May 2021*

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<sup>1</sup> This document is classified confidential until it has been examined by the Bureau of the Congress.

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Recent developments .....	3
I. Bilateral projects implemented in the Council of Europe member states .....	4
Ongoing projects .....	4
Armenia .....	4
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar) .....	5
Georgia .....	5
Republic of Moldova .....	6
Ukraine .....	7
II. Cooperation activities in Kosovo* .....	9
Kosovo* .....	9
III. Co-operation activities as part of the Council of Europe's policy towards neighbouring countries .....	9
Morocco .....	9
Tunisia .....	10

## Introduction

This document provides a **brief update on the main results** attained by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (the Congress) through its cooperation activities in member states and neighbouring regions of the Council of Europe between **November 2020 and May 2021**. Co-operation projects take place in the framework of bilateral agreements through country-specific Action Plans and other co-operation documents or within the policy towards neighbouring regions.<sup>1</sup> The Congress develops a full report of its co-operation activities every year in October<sup>2</sup> based on its *Guidelines for co-operation activities*.<sup>3</sup>

Through co-operation projects the Congress provides **practical support** to address shortcomings of local democracy identified by various monitoring bodies of the Council of Europe and Congress thematic and monitoring recommendations on the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

Through its widely recognised **expertise and experience in local and regional democracy**, the Congress is in a key position to support local and regional authorities and their associations in strengthening their institutional capacities and acquiring new skills and knowledge. The Congress provides a valuable platform for local and regional authorities to come together and share innovative best practices and lessons learnt. The rich expertise of Congress members is employed in **peer-to-peer learning** to support effective capacity-building.

**Thematic priorities for co-operation** include:

- empowering local and regional authorities by fostering dialogue with the central government, and strengthening their associations;
- reinforcing the capacities of local and regional elected representatives as agents of change;
- raising young people's awareness of the principles of local democracy, and engaging them at local level;
- learning by doing through involvement in local initiatives aimed at improving governance, including through citizen participation.

The co-operation activities of the Congress include a human rights approach with a focus on gender equality and the integration and protection of internally displaced persons and minorities. The aim is to strengthen the capacities of local and regional authorities in mainstreaming and protecting human rights at local level in line with the Priorities of the Congress.<sup>4</sup>

In the context of the public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Congress adapted its working methods with partners. The importance of using open government tools became even more evident during the pandemic times, to keep citizens informed, enable public participation and ensure access to open data.

In this regard, the Congress developed the bE-Open<sup>5</sup> online tool, which provides easy access to relevant international standards and domestic context, legislation, case law, guidelines and good practices relating to four main areas of focus, public ethics and accountability, preventing corruption, transparency, and citizen participation. Launched in March 2021 the tool is being implemented in Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine, and will be extended to include Albania. and Kosovo\*

## Recent developments

The Congress has eight ongoing projects in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar), Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Kosovo\*<sup>6</sup>, and within the South-Med Partnership in Morocco and Tunisia. The most recent project was launched in Georgia in December 2020 with a focus on strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level.

In addition to the project proposal submitted for funding under the Council of Europe Action Plan for Belarus 2019-2021<sup>7</sup>, seven additional project proposals have been submitted for funding under the Council of Europe Action Plans and documents for co-operation in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and Kosovo\* and within the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnerships in Morocco and Tunisia.

## I. Bilateral projects implemented in the Council of Europe member states

### Ongoing projects

#### Armenia

Project title	Strengthening the Communities Association of Armenia and transparent, participatory local governance in Armenia
Dates	July 2019 – June 2022
Budget	€ 900 000
Funding	Switzerland - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Project summary	The project aims to enhance the quality of local democracy in Armenia and improve citizen trust in local authorities. It supports the Communities Association of Armenia in the execution of its mandate and in representing the interests of local authorities towards the Government. The project also works to improve the transparency and accountability of local government and to support it in applying citizen participation mechanisms.

A **Community of practice on political integrity in local governance** was established to act as the focal group for adopting national integrity and anti-corruption policies and measures at the local level. The Community of practice allowed its members to increase their awareness of local democracy and ethical standards. They were able, with support from experts, to translate it into practical guides and models, such as: a) Model code of conduct for municipal civil servants; b) Model anti-corruption action plan for local self-government; c) corruption risk assessment methodology and action plan; d) capacity development needs assessment; e) training of trainers programme focusing on the fight against corruption at local level; f) roadmap for the involvement of local authorities in the development of the National Action Plan on Open Government.

The second meeting of the Community of practice was held on 30 March 2021 to identify challenges faced by national and local authorities with regard to preventing corruption and promoting public ethics, transparent governance and citizen participation in decision making processes, discuss the achievements of the Community of practice and reach consensus on further support to national and local authorities.

The project is also supporting the Communities Association of Armenia (CAA). A **decentralisation strategy and a strategy on consultation mechanism** were developed, adopted by the CAA governing bodies, and submitted for consideration to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure. The CAA expressed openness and readiness for the dialogue with national authorities, thus underpinning the need for regular consultation of local authorities by higher levels of government.

An **assessment of the CAA Strategic Plan 2016-2020** was launched in January 2021 to identify the implementation gaps and to provide tailored recommendations to the Association's decision-making bodies for the elaboration of a new strategy and action plan, and identification of priority areas and needs of Association members.

The project supported the CAA with a grant to strengthen the institutional and organisational capacities of the CAA Secretariat. Additional expert support and "on-the-job" coaching was provided to staff members employed under the grant, to improve the overall efficiency of the CAA Secretariat.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar)**

Project title	Building Democratic Participation in the City of Mostar
Dates	February 2020 – December 2021
Budget	€ 500 000
Funding	Norway - Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021 <sup>8</sup>
Project summary	Following a decade with no local elections in the City of Mostar, the project creates opportunities for citizens to engage in the deliberative process and participate in local decision making, with the aim of restoring citizens' confidence and trust in public authorities. In parallel, the project seeks to develop the skills and knowledge of local stakeholders in democratic approaches.

In view of the first deliberative process to be held in Mostar and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a **specific methodology** was developed for the Citizens' Assembly that is planned for July 2021.

Following the local elections held in 20 December 2020, the project engaged with the newly elected city authorities, including the Mayor, the President of the City Council, and the City Councillors to introduce the project and the concept of deliberative process, which they strongly supported.

The **Governance structure for the deliberative process** was set up, including the Oversight team which will be monitoring the Citizens' Assembly. Representatives of the Mayor's Office, the City Council and two universities from the City of Mostar were invited to delegate their members for the Oversight team, during the meeting held on 26 March 2021.

A **process for the selection of the topic of deliberation** was launched in an inclusive manner. As a first step, an online survey launched in April 2021 for the citizens of Mostar to propose a topic of interest. As a result, 1068 citizens of Mostar responded to the survey proposing a list of 20 topics. Subsequently, two workshops, one with representatives from civil society, informal groups and universities and the second one with the City administration and the City Council of Mostar, were organised on 4 and 10 May 2021, respectively, to narrow down the proposed topics to six (with civil society, informal groups and universities) and then to the final three (City administration and City Council of Mostar) that will be included in the deliberation.

A **programme for capacity development activities** for local councillors is being developed, with the first series of workshops planned for the second half of May 2021.

**Georgia**

Project title	Strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level in Georgia
Dates	December 2020 – November 2023
Budget	€ 1 800 000 (of which € 900 000 for the Congress component <sup>9</sup> )
Funding	Action Plan for Georgia 2020 – 2023 <sup>10</sup> and the Government of Austria
Project summary	The project aims to strengthen human rights protection and democratic public participation at local level in Georgia by ensuring that civil society organisations and citizens have a real impact on decision-making processes. The project also helps consolidating institutional frameworks and strengthening the capacities

of local authorities and the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG) to protect and embed human rights standards and practices in their policies and strategies, to incorporate a gender perspective and to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

The project started in this reporting period with the recruitment of the project team, meeting with partners, and all preparatory work for the development of activities. This includes the selection of municipalities in specific regions (namely Tbilisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, as well as regions defined as priority by the Georgian Government by adopting the Pilot Integrated Regional Development Program 2020-2022, ie. Kakheti, Imereti, Guri, and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti) and devising ways of engaging with the targeted groups of citizens – local elected representatives and municipal staff (as duty bearers), civil society actors including women, youth, minorities, IDPs and other vulnerable groups and residents from the participating municipalities.

In order to tailor the project activities to identified needs and challenges of local authorities and the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG) for the realisation of human rights, the **revision of the 2020 Assessment report on Human Rights at Local Level in Georgia** was launched to provide an up-to-date mapping of the human rights situation at local level. It will make reference to the new Law on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Code on the rights of the child, which add delegated responsibilities to local authorities, as well as draw attention to the new National Human Rights Strategy as of 2021 and the National Youth Policy Concept for 2020-2030.

The development of the Handbook on Open Local Government and Public Ethics in Georgia<sup>11</sup> will not only include new elements relating to open government principles but also serve as a reference for the implementation of local initiatives in the selected municipalities, in terms of domestic legislation, guidelines, and examples of good practices.

## Republic of Moldova

Project title	Reinforcing the culture of dialogue and consultation of local authorities in the Republic of Moldova – Phase I
Dates	June 2020 – May 2021
Budget	€ 175 000
Funding	Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020 <sup>12</sup>
Project summary	The project contributes to reinforcing dialogue and consultation between the local and central levels of government and strengthening the institutional position and organisational capacities of the Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova (CALM) in areas such as policy dialogue, advocacy, good governance, and provision of quality services to members.

The project contributed to strengthening of the institutional capacities of CALM by supporting the association in developing its strategic vision, effectively engaging in discussions on the potential local government reform, and enhancing the skills and knowledge of its members on advocacy and policy influencing.

CALM was supported in the development of its **Preliminary Draft Midterm Strategic Plan** for the upcoming six years. The Draft Plan is the product of a collaborative and co-creative process that was led by a Working Group appointed by the Executive Bureau of CALM. The Working Group consisted of CALM's vice-presidents, representatives of CALM's networks, mayors from several municipalities and CALM's staff leadership. In parallel to the development of the draft strategic plan, the Secretariat developed CALM's Theory of Change. This was CALM's first attempt in using this tool; the process helped to increase the capacity of the Secretariat

in strategic planning and provided an important opportunity for Secretariat staff to contribute to the strategic planning process.

The strategic planning process built on the findings and recommendations from the **Baseline Assessment of the institutional position of CALM**, which was finalised in December 2020. The baseline assessment was based on interviews with key stakeholders, including CALM members, representatives of central authorities, development partners working on local governance in Moldova, and local civil society. The recommendations spanned the areas of organisational culture and structure, management systems, financing sources, services to members, communication with members, advocacy and external engagement, performance monitoring and operating infrastructure.

Support was provided to the association to **fine-tune its vision for the potential local government reform** to effectively engage in discussions with the central level of government. Two-members of the Council of Europe Group of Independent Experts supported CALM in aligning its perspective with Congress recommendations and good practice based on the experience of other European countries.

Moreover, members of the CALM Executive Bureau, Administrative Council and Secretariat improved their **advocacy and policy-influencing skills and their understanding of ways to achieve the SDGs at local level** through a capacity development path. This consisted of online interactive workshops, a webinar for exchange with peers from local government associations from other European countries with the participation of Gunn Marit Helgesen (Norway, EPP/CCE), Congress Rapporteur on the Republic of Moldova. In addition, a working group of mayors developed a Draft Action Plan on Advocacy for Local Finances for effective contribution to discussions on the Draft Fiscal Policy for 2021, particularly on the capping of local taxes. CALM members also benefitted from resources such as infographics explaining the association's processes in the areas of advocacy and public procurement and the Congress Public Ethics collection translated into Romanian.

Following the election of Maia Sandu as the President of the Republic of Moldova in December 2020, a number of important political commitments were made in the area of local self-government. In March 2021, CALM signed a Cooperation Agreement with the President's Office and in April 2021 the Congress signed a Post-monitoring Roadmap on Local Democracy with the Moldovan authorities, which was followed by a meeting between the President of the Congress, Leendert Verbeek (Netherlands, SOC/G/PD), and the President of the Republic of Moldova, Maia Sandu, highlighting the importance of strengthening local democracy in Moldova. In addition, it is worth noting that CALM holds the Presidency of the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS) in 2021, and that it renewed its Executive Bureau and Administrative Council in December 2020.

Taking into account the favourable elements in the political climate and regional context, the Congress has submitted for funding the proposal for Phase II of the co-operation project in support of CALM and local authorities in the Republic of Moldova.

## Ukraine

Project title	Strengthening democracy and building trust at local level in Ukraine
Dates	July 2018 – June 2021
Budget	€ 1 600 000
Funding	Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2022 <sup>13</sup>
Project summary	The project aims to improve the quality of local democracy in Ukraine by strengthening institutional frameworks and by supporting local authorities and their national associations to promote ethical decision-making and build more citizen-oriented, inclusive and transparent local governance.

The project duration was extended by four months to provide continuous support until the upcoming project. After three years of implementation significant results were achieved, which are detailed below.

The **consultation of local authorities** on the legislative changes related to local self-government in Ukraine was enhanced with the expert support provided by members of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government, especially during the parliamentary round table on the new edition of the law "On local self-government in Ukraine" held on 1st March 2021. In February 2021, Andreas Kiefer, Secretary General of the Congress participated in the meeting held to establish the "Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Ukraine" which represents an additional platform for consultation and enhanced collaboration between central and local government.

The Grant to the AUC, awarded in January 2020 and finalised after 12 months, helped the Association to introduce a new internal communication management system. This ensured a more efficient information flow and exchange, including on the analysis of legislation, recommendations to local authorities and communication between staff members of all AUC regional branches and its members. The grant also allowed the AUC to develop a **new webpage on equal rights and opportunities for women and men**, with a compilation of best practices to support local elected representatives and civil servants in the implementation of gender-balanced policies and programmes at local level.

A **stronger gender perspective** was mainstreamed in all activities in Ukraine to promote the participation of women in local life and foster gender equality. An e-course on "Gender Mainstreaming at Local Level in Ukraine" was developed and launched at the end of 2020, jointly with the Association of Ukrainian Cities, which generated high demand. Almost 100 representatives of Ukrainian local authorities and AUC staff have completed the course in the past few months. **An additional module to the e-course** is under development on the topic of preventing and combatting sexism at local level based on the guide on the same theme.<sup>14</sup>

The findings of the Congress Information report on the local elections in Ukraine were presented and discussed in the framework of the Forum on "Efficient local government as a background of democratic and rule-of-law state" on 9 December 2020. This has contributed to initiation of **further improvements of the national electoral legislation** based on the results of local elections 2020 and in line with the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

As a result of the **promotion of open government principles** and the effective inclusion of local and regional authorities in the design and implementation of the National Open Government Partnership (OGP) Action Plan, the AUC became a permanent member of the Coordination Council on the Open Government Partnership initiative in Ukraine. Following the Congress support to the AUC and the Cabinet of Ministers in creating a **Platform for National-Local Dialogue on Open Government in Ukraine**, the first official meeting took place in April 2021. Furthermore, the existing **Handbook on Open Local Government and Public Ethics in Ukraine** is being updated to introduce relevant amendments considering the latest institutional and legislative changes in Ukraine in the field of anti-corruption, transparency, citizen participation, and open government, as well as examples of case-laws and best practices.

**Political dialogue and exchanges** were strengthened during a seminar for the new Ukrainian delegation to the Congress appointed in March 2021 with a view to enhance their involvement and cooperation in the Congress and the Council of Europe. The members of the Ukrainian delegation were provided with the tools to effectively take part in Congress statutory and co-operation work and build a sense of community within the delegation.



## II. Cooperation activities in Kosovo\*

### Kosovo\*

Project title	Promoting local democracy in Kosovo*
Dates	July 2020 – December 2021
Budget	€ 400 000
Funding	Multiple donors funding the projects part of the <a href="#">Overview of co-operation activities in Kosovo* (2019)</a> <sup>15</sup>
Project summary	The objective is to improve local self-government in Kosovo* and the quality of local democracy in accordance with the European standards on local and regional democracy. In addition, the project aims to strengthen the capacities of local authorities and elected representatives as drivers of change and addresses key elements of good local governance, including ways to prevent and combat corruption and to foster citizens' participation as a means of reinforcing the accountability of local public administration.

The process of **reviewing the conformity of the legal framework and practice in Kosovo\* with European standards** has been initiated with the support of a member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government and a local expert. The objective is to formulate recommendations for strengthening local democracy based on research, interviews and focus group meetings with local authorities and the Association of Kosovo Municipalities.

The draft Handbook on Open Local Government and Public Ethics in Kosovo\* has been developed together with the Kosova Democratic Institute with a view to initiate capacity development activities for members of the Association of Kosovo Municipalities and its inclusion in the [bE-Open](#) online tool launched by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in March 2021.

## III. Co-operation activities as part of the Council of Europe's policy towards neighbouring countries

### Morocco

Project title	Strengthening democratic governance at local and regional level in Morocco
Dates	April 2019 – July 2021
Budget	€ 234 000
Funding	Multiple donors funding the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership with Morocco (2018-2021) <sup>16</sup>
Project summary	The project aims to provide assistance with the regionalisation process, strengthen the institutional capacities and advocacy skills of the associations of local and regional authorities, raise awareness of the role and responsibilities of local and regional elected representatives, and promote participatory democracy at local and regional levels. Special attention is paid to cross-cutting aspects, such as the gender dimension and civil society involvement.

The **implementation of the law on regionalisation** was supported through regular meetings of the steering committee including representatives of the Directorate General of Territorial Authorities (DGCT) of the Ministry of the Interior, the three national associations, the Head of the CoE Rabat Office and the Project Team to guide project support for the revision of the existing legislation. The project support for advanced regionalisation in Morocco focuses particularly on the tools of decentralised governance, the competences of the three levels of territorial governance and their finances, as well as the mechanisms of participatory democracy and the status of elected representatives.

In March 2021, the Congress organised jointly with the AMPCPP a national meeting on "The reform of the legislative framework relating to the Prefectures and Provinces, competences and implementation". The aim of this meeting was to agree on draft of amendments to the organic law n° 112-14 in the framework of the legislative reform undertaken by the Ministry of Interior; draft was amendments were finalised following the exchanges and recommendations made during the meeting, which completed the revision process launched in September 2020.

**Capacity-building and peer-to-peer exchanges** were strengthened between Moroccan elected representatives and their European counterparts within the institutional framework of the status of Partner for Local Democracy granted to the Kingdom of Morocco in April 2019. The Moroccan delegation participated online in all the Congress' statutory committees and Statutory Forum meetings as well as at the session in March 2021. The Congress, in partnership with the association Actions in the Mediterranean (AIM), is discussing, since April 2021, an activity on reinforcing women participation in political life at local level. Indeed, 2021 is the year of elections at all levels of governance in Morocco and one of the project's priorities is to support greater participation of women in elections both as candidates and voters.

Co-operation activities helped **raise awareness on the Council of Europe and Congress' work** through translation into Arabic, publication and dissemination of printed copies of the Congress Collection on public ethics, a brochure on the South-Med Partnership and Congress materials on the European Local Democracy Week. As part of efforts to foster dialogue and consultations between central and territorial authorities, a webinar on **consultation mechanisms** was organised jointly with the co-operation project in Tunisia on 24 November 2020, with the participation of representatives of European associations of local and regional authorities, members of the Congress, members of the Moroccan and Tunisian associations of territorial authorities and delegations to the Congress, as well as government representatives; discussions following the webinar resulted in an agreement in principle to establish a consultations platform between the associations and the national government.

**Communication capacities** of the associations were strengthened through the development of the website for the Moroccan Association of Presidents of Communal Councils (AMPCC) in four languages (Arabic, French, English and Spanish) and of an online training platform for the Moroccan Association of Presidents of Prefectural and Provincial Councils (AMPCPP), intended for its members. These activities complement the earlier development of websites for AMPCPP and the Association of Regions of Morocco (ARM) in September-December 2020.

## Tunisia

Project title	Promoting local governance in Tunisia
Dates	April 2019 – July 2021
Budget	€ 333 000
Funding	Multiple donors funding the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia (2018-2021) <sup>17</sup>
Project summary	The project aims to contribute to the implementation of the decentralisation reform in Tunisia. The focus is on supporting the legal framework for decentralisation, reinforcing the capacities and the advocacy role of the

National Federation of Tunisian Communities (FNCT) as a strong and legitimate representative of all municipalities; and providing support and tools for the establishment of fair, transparent and participatory democracy at local level.

The project support contributed to the significant **improvement of the administrative organisation, political leadership and general capacity of the FNCT**, in line with the recommendations contained in the **study and guidelines on functional organisation of local government associations** prepared by a Congress expert.

**Advocacy and communication activities within the Federation were reinforced** with the creation of a new thematic department and the recruitment of three employees (department director, advocacy and communication officers) through a grant from the Congress. This allowed for the **development of the Federation's advocacy and communication strategies**. Support was also provided to the FNCT to organise a **national consultation in order to evaluate, from the viewpoint of municipalities, the implementation of the decentralisation process**. The results will be presented in a report with recommendations to the national government.

These elements contributed to increasing the expertise and legitimacy of the Federation as a spokesperson for local authorities vis-à-vis the central government. **Consultation mechanisms and dialogue between central and local authorities was the topic of a webinar** organised in November 2020, jointly with the project in Morocco, with the participation of representatives of European associations of local and regional authorities, members of the Congress, members of the Moroccan and Tunisian associations of territorial authorities and delegations to the Congress, as well as and government representatives. Following the webinar, an **expert study** is currently being prepared, at the request of Tunisian authorities, to propose recommendations and accompany Tunisia in the establishment of a framework for regular consultations between local authorities and the national government.

Co-operation was also established with the Higher Authority of Local Finance (HIFL), with the **Congress' contribution to the first review on local finances** highlighting the main principles and provisions on local financing enshrined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government. In addition, the HIFL institutional capacities were strengthened **through financial support to improve its skills and expertise in information system and data collection**. The project will also provide expert support for **a study on reforming local taxation** in Tunisia.

**Congress tools and good practices on promoting public ethics and fighting corruption were disseminated** through the "Public ethics collection" kit translated into Arabic and a webinar organised in co-operation with the National Body Anti-Corruption (INLUCC), which allowed for the presentation of the Tunisian legal framework and initiatives. In December 2020, Congress Vice-President Xavier Cadoret participated in the annual INLUCC Congress and shared the European e-governance tools developed to strengthen transparency and accountability at local level. Furthermore, the project co-operated with the INLUCC in providing expert support to strengthen mechanisms of internal control in municipalities, with a training course on the subject being organised for representatives of 80 municipalities (elected representatives and the administration) to enhance their capacities in this area..

**Political dialogue and exchanges** between the two shores of the Mediterranean were strengthened within the **institutional framework of the status of Partner for Local Democracy** granted to the Republic of Tunisia in October 2019. The Tunisian delegation participated online in all the Congress' statutory committees and Statutory Forum meetings and was renewed at the renewal session, along national delegations, in March 2021.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Council of Europe Action Plans and documents for co-operation in Europe and Framework documents for co-operation in the Neighbourhood region are available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/action-plans><sup>1</sup>.

Activities organised under the neighbourhood policy have been implemented following the creation by the Congress of the status of Partner for Local Democracy in 2014. For the policy see "Report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Policy towards neighbouring regions", CM(2017)27-final, Bureau of Ministers, 19 May 2017. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680712371>.

For the status see Resolution 376 (2014) Partner for Local Democracy status. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680719fb5>.

<sup>2</sup> The latest full report on "Co-operation activities of the Congress in member states and neighbouring regions", CG/BUR35(2020)INF54, Bureau of the Congress, 20 November 2020. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/co-operation-activities>.

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of the Congress, "Improving the impact of Congress recommendations: Guidelines for co-operation activities in Council of Europe member States", CG/BUR/2015(27)31, 23 March 2015. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/168071a684>.

<sup>4</sup> The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities at the Council of Europe, "The Priorities of the Congress 2017-2020" and "The Priorities of the Congress 2021-2026". Available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/priorities-of-the-congress>.

<sup>5</sup> bE-Open: Open Local Government - A tool for action. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/beopen>

<sup>6</sup> All reference 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.

<sup>7</sup> Projects within the Action Plan are to be funded from multiple sources, including Joint Programmes with the European Union, voluntary contributions from donor countries and international organisations, as well as the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe Action Plan for Belarus 2019-2022 is available at: <https://rm.coe.int/ap-belarus-2019-2021-web-en/168098f1bd>.

<sup>8</sup> Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/bih-action-plan-2018-2021-en/16808b7563>.

<sup>9</sup> The project is jointly being implemented by the Congress and the Directorate General of Democracy, Division Elections and Civil Society.

<sup>10</sup> Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia (2020-2023). Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/168098f179>.

<sup>11</sup> Previous editions are called Handbook on Transparency and Citizen Participation in Georgia, available at <https://rm.coe.int/handbook-georgia-eng/1680786b7d>.

<sup>12</sup> Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020 is funded by 7 member States: Bulgaria, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Norway, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland. The Action Plan is available at: <https://rm.coe.int/16806cd3a5>.

<sup>13</sup> The Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2022 is funded by 17 member States: Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey. The Action Plan is available at: <https://rm.coe.int/168078b606>.

<sup>14</sup> Council of Europe, "Preventing and Combatting Sexism at Local Level in Ukraine A Guide for Women and Men in Local Politics" (2020). Available at: <http://rm.coe.int/preventing-and-combatting-sexism-at-the-local-level-in-ukraine-eng-web/16809ee57f>.

<sup>15</sup> Council of Europe, Overview of co-operation activities in Kosovo\* (2019). Available at: [https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectID=0900001680933ba2](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=0900001680933ba2).

<sup>16</sup> The Neighbourhood Partnership with Morocco 2018-2021 document available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/morocco>.

<sup>17</sup> The Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021 document available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/tunisia>.