

The Bureau of the Congress

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

Developments between 19 May 2021 and 18 October 2021

Action required : for information

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Introduction

This document provides a **brief update on the main results** attained by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (the Congress) through its co-operation activities in member states and neighbouring regions of the Council of Europe between **May 2021 and October 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.¹ The Congress will develop a full report of its co-operation activities in March 2022² based on its *Guidelines for co-operation activities*.³

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 development.

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.⁴

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-Open⁵ 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 has been expanded with new chapters, examples, and practical advice. The tool is being implemented in Albania, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and Kosovo*.⁶ The content of the tool is also consultable through the domestic versions of the Handbook on Open Local Government and Public Ethics, which are widely used as a source for capacity development throughout the implementation of the co-operation projects.

Recent developments

During the reporting period, the Congress had eight ongoing bilateral projects in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar), Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine as well as in Kosovo*, Morocco and Tunisia. A new project was launched in Ukraine in October 2021 as well as a regional initiative for the MENA region in the framework of the Council of Europe South Programme IV and Congress' South-Med Partnership. In addition, project proposals have been submitted for funding under relevant action plans and co-operation documents for all these countries as well as for Belarus. ⁷

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** (CoP) acts since its establishment in March 2020 as the focal group for adopting national integrity and anti-corruption policies and measures at the local level. It is composed of representatives of local and central authorities and aims to increase their awareness on corruption and conflicts of interest, and to empower them to foster a culture of integrity thereby contributing to an increase in confidence in political institutions. Two meetings of the CoP were organised on 23 June and 30 September to identify concrete steps for further targeted project support to local authorities in preventing corruption. In this framework, documents are developed and disseminated such as a **Model code of conduct for municipal civil servants** as well as a **Model anti-corruption action plan for local self-government**.

Further steps are being undertaken to support the implementation of the National Anti-corruption Strategy and Action Plan for 2019-2022. This includes a **corruption risk self-assessment electronic tool** which is being developed in close co-operation with MTAI, as well as a model for the introduction of e-government environment with regards to **document flow in local administrations**, namely in view of the registry of normative legal acts adopted by local self-government bodies.

A series of four thematic workshops were organised from June to September 2021 on the principles of open government, fight against corruption and transparent public procurement procedures. These included presentations of relevant European standards and Congress recommendations, examples of good practices, as well as peer exchanges between Armenian municipalities and Congress members.

The Communities Association of Armenia (CAA) is also supported within this project and a number of **position papers and opinions on amendments to laws related to local self-government** were developed in particular on the extension of powers of mayors and local councils during emergency situations, martial law, or impossibility to hold elections. With the support of the Congress, the Association also carried out a **legal analysis of the current state of local self-government in Armenia**, focusing on the new electoral system, as well as a strategy on decentralisation of powers of state bodies and equalisation of financial resources.

An **assessment of the CAA Strategic Plan 2016-2020** was finalised in May 2021 and it identifies the implementation gaps and provides tailored recommendations to the Association's leadership with recommended priorities for the new strategy (2021-2025).

A grant provided to the Association to strengthen the institutional and organisational capacities of its Secretariat was successfully finalised in May 2021.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar)

Project title	Building Democratic Participation in the City of Mostar
Dates	February 2020 – December 2021
Budget	€ 500 000
Funding	Norway and the Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021 ⁸
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.

The **first Citizens' Assembly** in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place in July 2021 and was inaugurated by the President of the Chamber of Local Authorities Bernd Vöhringer (Germany, EPP/CCE). It brought together a representative group of 47 randomly selected citizens who met during four consecutive weekends to deliberate upon and make recommendations on the cleanliness of the city and maintenance of public spaces.

The Assembly was organised on a basis of a tailored, inclusive and transparent process, which included the setting up of a governance structure of the deliberative process, the development of a specific website dedicated to the Citizens' Assembly,⁹ as well as the selection of the topic for deliberation and Citizens Assembly participants. The topic of the cleanliness and maintenance of public spaces was chosen following online consultations with citizens and two workshops with civil society, academic community and representatives of the City Council and administration, organised in May 2021.

The Assembly meetings included a learning phase with sharing of experience with other cities in the region, and discussion with experts and local stakeholders, as well as representatives of the City Administration and the City Council. The Citizens' Assembly recommendations were shared with the Mayor and the City Council and will be discussed at a regular City Council session in November with the participation of citizens representing the Assembly.

The deliberative process in Mostar attracted the media attention, with more than 75 media appearances (articles, TV show, interviews) in July and August 2021.

The first series of **capacity development activities** for Mostar City Councillors was organised in June 2021, through peer-to-peer exchanges with the members of the Congress. These aimed to discuss the roles and responsibilities of local councillors as well as share good practices to ensure increased citizen engagement and improved trust towards authorities.

The programme for the second series of capacity development activities for the City Councillors is under development. These activities will focus on provision of municipal services, transparency, openness, and accountability in work, and are planned for November 2021.

A **Memorandum of co-operation** between the Council of Europe and the City of Mostar was signed by the Mayor and the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo in July 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 ¹⁰)
Funding	Government of Austria and the Action Plan for Georgia 2020 – 2023 ¹¹
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 on strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level in Georgia is being implemented in co-ordination with the Directorate General of Democracy and in close co-operation with the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG) and the Public Defender of Georgia. In the first months of the project's inception, regular partner meetings supported the co-creation of the project as well as further engagement of local and international stakeholders.

The project was presented in June 2021 at the Kutaisi Second International Forum on "Cities' challenges and way forward", with the participation of Nino Kavtaradze (EPP/CCE), Deputy Head of the Georgian Delegation to the Council of Europe.

The 2020 assessment report on Human **rights at local level in Georgia** was updated with the active involvement of members of the NALAG during a consultation meeting held in July 2021. The report reflects on the new developments regarding relevant legislation for human rights protection and implementation at the local level and provides an overview of the challenges encountered by local authorities in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as expert recommendations. The report will be widely used throughout the project to tailor its activities to the identified needs of local authorities and NALAG.

Ahead of local elections to be held in Georgia in October 2021, a **guide for women and men in local politics on "preventing and combatting sexism at local level in Georgia"** was developed and disseminated through an online workshop with the participation of Jelena Drenjanin, (Sweden, L, EPP/CCE), Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Gender Equality. The workshop was attended by more than 20 municipalities, as well as representatives from the Parliament of Georgia, the Public Defender's Office, and civil society organisations. The e-course on gender mainstreaming under construction will include a module on the prevention of sexism.

A call for municipalities to participate in the project activities was prepared with the support of the project partners and will close after the results of the local elections to ensure the engagement of the newly elected mayors.

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 – June 2021
Budget	€ 175 000
Funding	Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020 ¹²
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 ambition of the Republic of Moldova to strengthen local self-government has been supported through the Congress co-operation project “Reinforcing the culture of dialogue and consultation of local authorities” implemented over one year until June 2021. Thanks to the project, significant steps were made towards strengthening the institutional position of the association of local authorities in the country vis-à-vis central authorities, development partners, mayors and citizens.

On 10 June 2021, CALM adopted its **Strategic Plan for 2021-2027** which is the result of an inclusive and participatory process that involved extensive consultations across the country, bringing together more than 200 local leaders from the Northern, Central and Southern regions. The Strategic Plan takes into account the European principles of Local Self-Government and in particular Congress Recommendation 436 (2019) on local and regional democracy in the Republic of Moldova, as well as the Roadmap for its implementation signed in April 2021.

The Congress supported CALM with the review of the **concept for local government reform**, providing expertise on the best practices and European standards in local self-government. Expertise was also provided with regards to a **platform for dialogue**, developed by CALM as a proposal for enhancing dialogue and consultation with the central authorities.

Taking into account the favourable elements in the political climate and regional context, the Congress is preparing a 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 – September 2021
Budget	€ 1 600 000
Funding	Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2022 ¹³
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 “Strengthening democracy and building trust at local level in Ukraine” launched in July 2018 was successfully finalised in September 2021.

The experience of Ukrainian municipalities in **fostering co-creation and open government** was promoted during the online marathon organised as part of the 2021 edition of the Open Gov Week held in May under the motto “Respond. Recover. Renew.” Representatives of more than 20 Ukrainian municipalities shared best practices with their peers from all regions in Ukraine, demonstrating progress and innovations in the sphere of open government through inclusive, diverse and gender-balanced initiatives.

The consultation process on the **legal status of associations of local and regional authorities** in Ukraine and the new draft law on local self-government in Ukraine were supported with the contribution of Gunn-Marit Helgesen (Norway, EPP/CCE), Vice-President of the Congress, and members of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government (GIE), during two round tables held with the Parliament of Ukraine in June 2021.

The XVI Ukrainian Municipal Forum was organised in July 2021 jointly with the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) and international partners with the participation of 500 mayors. New governance approaches of Ukrainian municipalities aimed at fostering open government and the protection of human rights at local level, as well as higher representation of women in politics were promoted. This event was used as an opportunity to present the results of the Congress three-years project. On this occasion, Congress Secretary General Andreas Kiefer participated in the meeting of the AUC Management Board and held high level bilateral meetings with representatives of the national and local authorities.

The co-operation with the AUC resulted in the **creation of tools for gender-sensitive policymaking**, including a new e-learning module on preventing and combatting sexism at the local level, which was launched to complement the e-course on “Gender mainstreaming at local level in Ukraine”. In addition, the need to adopt appropriate strategies and solutions at all levels of governance was also underlined during the 5th Ukrainian Women’s Congress held in Kyiv on 16 September 2021.

A **baseline report on open government at local level in Ukraine** was developed to map the landscape of open government practices at local level in Ukraine, identify synergies and explore the dynamics of different approaches to open government practices applied by 126 local authorities who took part in the assessment. The report analyses the needs of local authorities in introducing open government policies and practices and is a basis for the Congress support in the new project to be launched in October 2021.

Similarly, an assessment report on the level of respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights standards at local level in Ukraine was conducted covering five regions (Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lviv and Odesa). It analyses the existing practices and initiatives of local authorities with a view of promotion and inclusion of human rights dimension and standards in their policies and overall management of their communities.

Project title	Strengthening local democratic governance in Ukraine
Dates	October 2021 – December 2022
Budget	€ 700 000
Funding	Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2022
Project summary	The project aims to improve the quality of local democracy by creating conditions for ethical decision-making and more citizen-oriented, responsive and transparent local governance, as well as for enhanced promotion of human rights at local level. It represents a demand-driven proposal based on the needs and recommendations voiced by the relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries within the previous project.

Building on the local initiatives implemented by Ukrainian local authorities and supported by the Congress, an Assessment of youth policies at local level is being conducted.

To launch the process a focus group meeting gathering 20 local authorities members is organised jointly with the AUC to discuss the needs and challenges faces. On this occasion, the manual on Youth empowerment will be presented. It addresses human rights, local democracy and civic participation education, and is a tool for local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, youth trainers and educators for improving youth participation in their villages, towns and cities.

The Manual provides practical guidelines for the organisation and implementation of relevant training courses for local elected representatives and municipality staff, as well as for youth trainers.

II. Co-operation activities in Kosovo*

Kosovo*

Project title	Promoting local democracy in Kosovo*
Dates	July 2020 – December 2021
Budget	€ 400 000
Funding	Multiple donors funding of the Overview of co-operation activities in Kosovo* (2019) ¹⁴
Project summary	The aim is to improve local self-government and the quality of local democracy by fostering multilevel dialogue and strengthening the capacities of local authorities on political integrity, public ethics and open government principles.

Within the project, a **study** was conducted to evaluate to what degree the local self-government framework in Kosovo* conforms to the European local democracy standards and the principles enshrined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Consultation meetings were held in July 2021 with local authorities and the Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKM), as well as representatives from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Local Government Administration and the Parliament. The study includes the challenges and ways to overcome or mitigate them.

On 8 and 12 July 2021, elected and appointed representatives of local authorities in Kosovo* participated in **capacity development activities** on the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

At the end of September, two **workshops on open local government, political integrity and public ethics** were organised for Chairpersons of Local Assemblies and municipal officers of Kosovo*. Participants learned about innovative approaches to citizens' engagement and shared experiences in addressing challenges on questions of transparency and ethics. They also exchanged experiences with representatives from Albanian municipalities and Congress member Anne Colgan (Ireland, L, ILDG). As a result of the workshops, training modules and a training manual on political integrity, public ethics and open government were developed and shared with the AKM to ensure sustainability of knowledge sharing with local authorities through the AKM Training Center.

In addition, in the framework of the project, Jelena Drenjanin, (Sweden, L, EPP), Chair of the Congress Governance Committee and Thematic Spokesperson on Gender Equality, participated in the **International Conference on Combatting Sexism** which took place in Pristina on 4 October 2021. The Congress thematic priorities of reducing inequalities, upholding gender equality and ending sexist behaviour were presented as well as the Congress works together with local authorities through its resolutions, recommendations, guidelines and co-operation activities to eliminate any form of harassment and sexism at the local level.

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 – December 2021
Budget	€ 234 000
Funding	Multiple donors funding the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership with Morocco (2018-2021) ¹⁵
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.

The **implementation of the law on regionalisation** was supported through regular meetings of the steering committee including representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the three national associations, the Head of the CoE Rabat Office. The project support focuses on the tools of decentralised governance.

In March 2021, a national meeting on "The reform of the legislative framework relating to the Prefectures and Provinces, competences and implementation" was jointly organised with the AMPCPP to prepare draft amendments to the organic law n° 112-14 in the framework of the legislative reform undertaken by the Ministry of Interior and recommendations. Further legislative support will be provided until the end of the year on the institutional architecture of decentralisation, local finances, the mechanisms of participatory democracy and the status of elected representatives.

Capacity building and peer exchanges between Moroccan elected representatives and their European counterparts were strengthened within the framework of the status of Partner for Local Democracy granted to Morocco in April 2019. The Moroccan delegation participated online in all the Congress' statutory activities.

In partnership the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF), the Congress is organising an activity to reinforce capacities of newly elected women, following elections at all levels of governance in Morocco in September 2021. This online training will be held in November-December 2021 in the framework the Council of Europe South programme IV, with the participation of locally elected women from MENA region and Europe. This activity follows up on the results and needs identified during a webinar on enhancing women participation and addressing challenges to women's engagement in local politics held in June 2021.

Consultation mechanisms was the subject of a webinar organised jointly with the project in Tunisia on 24 November 2020 as part of the efforts to foster dialogue between central and territorial authorities, with the participation of members of the Congress, Moroccan and Tunisian associations of territorial authorities, as well as government representatives.

Communication capacities of the associations were strengthened through the development of the website for the Moroccan Association of Presidents of Communal Councils (AMPCC) and of an online training platform for the Moroccan Association of Presidents of Prefectural and Provincial Councils (AMPCPP).

Co-operation activities helped **raise awareness on the Council of Europe and Congress' work** through the dissemination of the Arab version of the Congress Collection on public ethics, a brochure on the South-Med Partnership and materials on the European Local Democracy Week.

Tunisia

Project title	Promoting local governance in Tunisia
Dates	April 2019 – December 2021
Budget	€ 333 000
Funding	Multiple donors funding the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia (2018-2021) ¹⁶
Project summary	The project aims to contribute to implementing 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 FNCT were reinforced with the creation of a new thematic department and the recruitment of three employees (department director, advocacy and communication officers) through grants, allowing for the **development of the Federation's advocacy and communication strategies**. Support was also provided to the FNCT to organise a **national consultation** for municipalities to evaluate the implementation of the decentralisation process, the results of which were consolidated in a report with recommendations on improving decentralisation, which was presented during a press Conference in May 2021 and shared with relevant stakeholders at national level.

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. An **expert study** was prepared, at the request of Tunisian authorities, to propose recommendations for establishing a framework for regular consultations between local and central authorities. A draft memorandum on consultation is being discussed.

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 relevant main principles and provisions enshrined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Financial support was provided to improve the HIFL's **skills and expertise in information system and data collection**. The project will also provide expert support to revise **the Code on local taxation**.

Congress tools and good practices were disseminated through the "Public ethics collection" kit translated into Arabic and a webinar organised the National Authority Anti-Corruption (INLUCC), which allowed for the presentation of the Tunisian legal framework and initiatives. In December 2020, Congress Vice-President Xavier Cadoret presented the European e-governance tools to strengthen transparency and accountability at during the annual INLUCC Congress. Furthermore, a training was organised on 5-7 July 2021 for elected representatives and administration of 80 municipalities to help strengthen mechanisms of internal control.

Political dialogue and exchanges between the two shores of the Mediterranean were strengthened within the **framework of Partner for Local Democracy status** granted to Tunisia in October 2019. The Tunisian delegation participated online in the Congress' statutory activities and was renewed along national delegations at the March 2021 session. Regional networking between elected women from the Euro-Mediterranean basin was promoted during a webinar on women's political participation at territorial level in June 2021.

Regional activities in the Southern Mediterranean – South Programme IV

Building on the achievements and relations established through its bilateral co-operation projects in Morocco and Tunisia since 2017, and according to the objectives of reinforcing regional co-operation and building networks of the South Programme IV, the Congress has launched a regional activity in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)¹⁷ region. This initiative will initially be implemented between September and December 2021.

The objective of the proposed project will be to **reinforce decentralised democratic governance in the MENA region** by fostering exchanges and networking between relevant stakeholders in the region and providing expertise of the Council of Europe Congress and experience by Congress' members.

Two main activities will be implemented in this framework:

- Creation and support to the work of a community of practice, whose work will focus on priority topics identified: participatory democracy, local finances, and status and conditions of office of territorial elected representatives. These four topics will be complemented by two transversal dimensions: implementing the principles of open government and fostering dialogue and consultation between central and territorial authorities.
- Capacity development and support to women, newly elected territorial representatives in Morocco. This activity will combine theoretical inputs and peer exchanges and is organised in partnership with the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).

Notes

¹ 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-plans1>.

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>.

² 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>.

³ 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>.

⁴ 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>.

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

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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 2019-2021 is available at: <https://rm.coe.int/ap-belarus-2019-2021-web-en/168098f1bd>.

⁸ The Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021 is funded by the European Union, the Human Rights Trust Fund (which brings together seven contributors: Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Fund to End Violence Against Children. The Action Plan is available at: <https://rm.coe.int/bih-action-plan-2018-2021-en/16808b7563>.

⁹ Website available at: <https://mostargradimo.ba/>.

¹⁰ The project is jointly being implemented by the Congress and the Directorate General of Democracy, Division Elections and Civil Society.

¹¹ The Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2020-2023 is funded by 9 member States: Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden. The Action Plan is available at: <https://rm.coe.int/168098f179>.

¹² 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>.

¹³ 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>.

¹⁴ Council of Europe, Overview of co-operation activities in Kosovo* (2019). Available at: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=0900001680933ba2.

¹⁵ The Neighbourhood Partnership with Morocco 2018-2021 document is available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/morocco>.

¹⁶ The Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021 document is available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/tunisia>.

¹⁷ Targeted beneficiaries: Palestine*, Libya, Lebanon, Jordan. *This designation shall not be construed as a designation of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe member States on this issue.