

Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Republic of Azerbaijan



20 YEARS
OF PARTNERSHIP

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

The Republic of Azerbaijan became the 43rd member State of the Council of Europe on 25 January 2001. To date, the country has ratified 65 Council of Europe treaties (and signed seven more), most importantly the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Protocols, European Social Charter, European Cultural Convention, conventions in the fields of the fight against terrorism, combatting money-laundering and corruption, protection of children against sexual abuse, prevention of torture, cybercrime, anti-doping, higher education, protection of national minorities, cross-border co-operation, sport and many others.



Address of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Heydar Aliyev on the occasion of the accession of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 25 January 2001)

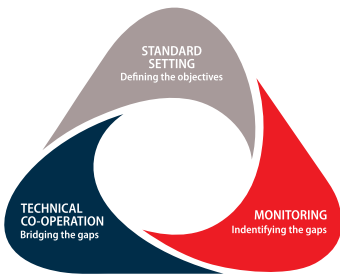


President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Heydar Aliyev, signing the Golden Book of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, January 2001)



Address of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev on the occasion of the Azerbaijan's Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, June 2014)

Over the course of 20 years of membership, the Council of Europe and the Republic of Azerbaijan have developed technical co-operation programmes which are an integral part of the Organization's unique strategic triangle of standard-setting, monitoring and co-operation; meaning that the development of legally binding standards is linked to their monitoring by independent mechanisms and supplemented by technical co-operation to facilitate their implementation.



Council of Europe strategic triangle

Since 2014, co-operation activities have been guided by successive Council of Europe Action Plans for Azerbaijan, which are prepared jointly with the national authorities, and which are strategic programming instruments aimed at bringing the national legislation and practice further into line with European and international standards, and ultimately contributing the reforms in the relevant fields.

The current Action Plan for 2022-2025 was launched in Baku on 5 April 2022 by Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić, Council of Europe Secretary General, and Mr. Fikrat Mammadov, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Under this Action Plan, the Council of Europe and the Azerbaijani authorities continue co-operation programmes with a view to:

- improve the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case law and judgments,
- improve the criminal justice system,
- further build the capacities of the media,
- enhance data protection,
- promote gender equality and combat violence against women and domestic violence,
- promote children's rights,
- ensure social rights,
- further increase the effectiveness, accountability and transparency of the judiciary, including constitutional justice,
- step up the fight against corruption and money laundering,
- combat cybercrime,
- further advance reform of the prison system,
- conduct electoral reform,
- enhance dialogue between the national authorities and civil society organisations,
- contribute to environmental protection,
- promote human rights education for young people and develop a democratic and inclusive climate in schools.

The Action Plan has also identified new areas for co-operation, namely anti-discrimination, freedom of expression and the media, artificial intelligence, combating drug abuse and illicit trafficking and combating trafficking in human beings.



Launching ceremony of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Azerbaijan (2022-2025) in presence of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Fikrat Mammadov and the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Baku, Mr. Zoltan Hernyes (Baku, 5 April 2022)



Meeting of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić with the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev (Baku, 4 April 2022)

The Action Plan will also contribute to supporting the national implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The overall funding foreseen for this Action Plan is € 9.6 million. Action Plans are funded from multiple sources, including Joint Programmes with the European Union, voluntary contributions from Council of Europe member states, as well as the Organisation's ordinary budget and the Council of Europe Human Rights Trust Fund.

The European Union and the Council of Europe launched a joint initiative – the Partnership for Good Governance¹ to provide support for Eastern Partnership countries in bringing legislation and practice closer to European standards in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy.

The implementation of co-operation activities is supported and co-ordinated by the Office of the Council of Europe in Baku.



Open Day in the Council of Europe Office in Baku on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the Council of Europe (Baku, 5 May 2019)



Promoting Council of Europe standards at the "EuroVillage 2022" (Baku, 14 May 2022)

^{*1} - The Partnership for Good Governance is funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe

MAIN AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

■ HUMAN RIGHTS

Enhancing the effectiveness of the European Convention on Human Rights at national level

Training of legal professionals is one of the priorities under the successive Action Plans for Azerbaijan. The Council of Europe provided assistance to national training institutions, such as the Justice Academy. Under the Council of Europe Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals Programme (HELP), 50 lawyers were awarded HELP certificates for the courses on European Court of Human Rights procedures and admissibility criteria. A new project on “Support for the Improvement of the Execution of the ECtHR Judgements by Azerbaijan” was launched on 21 October 2022.



Launching event of the project on Support for the Improvement of the Execution of the European Court Judgments by Azerbaijan (Baku, 21 October 2022)



Certificate award ceremony at the Training of Trainers of the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) (Baku, 20 February 2019)



Training of Trainers on Combating Discrimination with participation of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Ombudsperson), Ms. Sabina Aliyeva (Baku, 19-21 June 2022)

Non-discrimination

As part of the EU/Council of Europe joint Partnership for Good Governance project on fighting discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Eastern Partnership countries, the need for a structured dialogue between civil society and government agencies on combating discrimination was promoted at meetings between civil society actors and the Ombudsperson's Office, facilitated by the Council of Europe.

Promoting media professionalism



Training for regional social media activists on Mitigation of Hate Speech in the Media (Qabala, 9-10 April 2022)

Under the previous Action Plans, journalists and social media representatives from Baku and various regions of Azerbaijan were trained on gender equality and sensitive reporting as well as on ethical standards related to media coverage of elections, pandemics and gender-based violence cases. Additionally, lawyers, judges and prosecutors were trained in international legal standards on data protection and privacy, and access to information. After the successful completion of the project on “Reinforcing Gender Equality and other Ethical Standards in Azerbaijani Media” in June 2022, a new project on “Promoting Media Professionalism and Freedom of Information in Azerbaijan” is being implemented since July 2022.

Promoting Gender Equality and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

Under the current Action Plan for 2022-2025, co-operation in the area of gender equality and combating violence against women and domestic violence builds on the progress achieved under the previous Action Plan 2018-2021. The gap analysis of Azerbaijani legislative and policy frameworks in line with Council of Europe and other international standards in the field of violence against women and domestic violence, was developed and presented to the national authorities highlighting ways in which Azerbaijan could

amend domestic laws and policies to better align national instruments with these standards. In 2020, the Council of Europe launched the project on “Raising Awareness on the Istanbul Convention and other Gender Equality Standards in Azerbaijan” as part of the EU/Council of Europe Partnership for Good Governance and more than 50 000 people were reached through publications, the media, and social media campaigns. Furthermore, nearly 300 officials and representatives of civil society organisations were trained on the topic.



Workshop on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Shaki, 1 December 2021)



Event on the Role of National Parliaments in Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Baku, 19 May 2022)

Independence and efficiency of justice

As a result of the work under the Action Plans and in particular the EU/Council of Europe Partnership for Good Governance project on Strengthening the Efficiency and Quality of the Judicial System, capacities of the national institutions were improved in court management-related areas, a road map was established for the dissemination of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) tools among the Azerbaijani courts, tools on access to courts for vulnerable groups and on the communication strategy for the judiciary were developed and support for reform of the judgements enforcement system was launched.



Study visit to explore private enforcement system in France and the Netherlands (Paris, 16-19 September 2019)

Fight against corruption and money laundering

Under the Action Plans and in particular the EU/Council of Europe Partnership for Good Governance project on Strengthening Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery, a total of 615 representative of the Financial Monitoring Service, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary and other relevant government institutions, including some private sector entities (banks, investment companies), non-governmental organisations and religious entities increased their knowledge and skills in various topics concerning Anti-Money Laundering /Countering Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) and asset recovery. The support also consisted of advice on the adoption of legislation on AML/CFT, strengthening the legislation on targeted financial sanctions and the setting-up of beneficial ownership register. The Council of Europe also contributed to enhancing the asset recovery regime.

The co-operation takes into account the recommendations of the Groups of States against Corruption (GRECO) and the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (Moneyval) which conduct regular visits to Azerbaijan.



Workshop on Good practices in International Co-operation and Mutual Legal Assistance for Asset Recovery (Baku, 16-17 June 2022)



National workshop on Cybercrime Reporting (Assessment), Use of Cyber Taxonomies and Coordinated iOCTA reporting (Baku, 26-27 September 2022)

Cybercrime

Azerbaijan and the Council of Europe worked together to counter cybercrime in the framework of Action Plans through EU/Council of Europe joint programmes funded by both institutions and implemented by the Council of Europe. Under the present Action Plan, the Council of Europe will continue providing assistance to the Azerbaijani national authorities with the aim of bringing the domestic legislation on cybercrime further into line with the Council of Europe Budapest Convention on Cybercrime that Azerbaijan ratified in 2010. Current priorities also include the adoption of a national strategy on fighting cybercrime; improved interagency, international and public-private co-operation; and improving the skills of investigators, prosecutors and judges in relation to cybercrime and electronic evidence.



Training on Standards of Processing and Respect for Detainees' Rights for a Better Detention Service organised by the Council of Europe in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Baku, 26-27 April 2022)

**2 - This project funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe*

■ DEMOCRACY

Youth for democracy

Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan is pursued under successive Action Plans. Youth activists and leaders living in remote areas of Azerbaijan were introduced to the Council of Europe's approaches and educational resources on youth participation and human rights education at regional training seminars, drawing on the expertise of an informal network of youth trainers created in 2017-2018. Azerbaijan participates in the Council of Europe Youth Co-operation programme, that provides training and capacity building for young people and youth organisations and facilitates their participation in decision making. A project on "Supporting the Development of the Participative and Rights-Based Youth Policies and Values-Based Youth Work" concentrates on promoting human rights education and access of young people to social rights, supporting non-formal education and development of network of young trainers and youth centres.



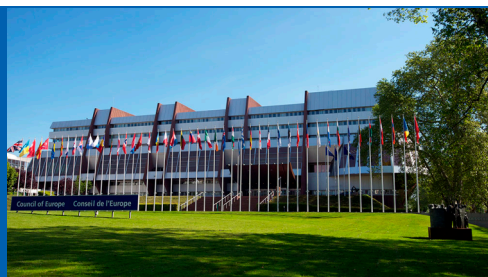
Seminar for trainers and youth workers involved in non-formal education in Azerbaijan (Baku, 28-30 September 2022)

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.
www.coe.int

Prisons and police

Under the Action Plans, the Council of Europe supported the Azerbaijani authorities in reforming the prison management system as well as health promotion in line with European standards and best practices. A gender sensitive approach is applied all through the expected outcomes in order to ensure effectiveness of implementation. The EU/Council of Europe joint project on "Further Support to the Penitentiary Reform"^{*2} was successfully completed in 2021 with involvement of local NGOs. A total of 16 released persons from Azerbaijani prisons started their small family businesses, 122 released persons enhanced their professional skills through vocational training, 342 released persons received legal aid, and 398 released persons received psycho-social support.