Progress Review and Final Evaluation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020

Framework contract ref 2018/AO/60

EVALUATION REPORT

(final report)

Submitted by: Heidrun Ferrari and Britta Schweighöfer

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Contact:
Heidrun Ferrari
Independent Consultant
Turnerstr. 102 – 69126 Heidelberg – Germany
Email: heidrun.ferrari@gmx.de
Mobile: 49-163-4272700

Abbreviations

AP	Action Plan
ARIC	Assessment of Reintegration, Intervention and Conclusion
CCET	Centre for Continuous Electoral Training
CEC	Central Electoral Commission
CoE	Council of Europe
CCPE	Consultative Council of European Prosecutors
CEPEJ	Council of Europe European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
CFJ	Child-friendly justice
CNCAP	National Centre for Child Abuse Prevention
CPTI	Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EU	European Union
GRECO	Group of States against Corruption
GPI	General Police Inspectorate
GPO	General Prosecution Office
HELP	Council of Europe Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLHSP	Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Protection
NAP	National Administration of Penitentiary
NIJ	National Institute of Justice
NPM	National Prevention Mechanism
OCSEA	Online child sexual exploitation and abuse
ODGP	Council of Europe Office of DG Programmes
PAO	People's Advocate Ombudsman
PGG	Partnership for Good Governance
RNA	Risk and Needs Assessment
SC	Steering Committee
SCJ	Supreme Court of Justice
SCM	Superior Council of Magistracy
SCP	Superior Council of Prosecutors
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
URSO	Useful, Relevant, Sustainable, Owned, for electoral co-operation

Content

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Council of Europe (CoE), by means of country-specific Action Plans (APs), provides technical co-operation to its member States in areas of CoE expertise, including human rights, the rule of law and democracy. The APs, as strategic documents, define priorities largely on the basis of findings and recommendations from CoE's monitoring and expert advisory bodies, and aim to support national reform agendas.

The evaluators were contracted by the Office of the Directorate of General Programmes (ODGP) to carry out an evaluation of the 2017-2020 Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to assess the outcomes achieved by the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan; identify to what extent they have helped the Republic of Moldova to move towards necessary reforms; identify lessons learned; and make any necessary recommendations. The evaluation was guided by the DAC/OECD criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. The evaluation was also expected to include a number of transversal issues and to address the added value of the CoE. The evaluation focussed on the performance of a sample of ten selected projects representing the three priority areas of the 2017-2020 AP. Data was gathered in line with the evaluation matrix through an in-depth document review and key stakeholder interviews. Due to Covid-19-related restrictions the evaluators were not able to travel to Chisinau and interviews were conducted at distance.

Findings

RELEVANCE: The evaluation confirms that the focus and priorities of the AP remain relevant to the context and needs in the Republic of Moldova. Both the development and implementation of the AP has been based on extensive stakeholder consultation and negotiation. This has contributed to a high level of ownership of project objectives and activities by partners, which is indispensable to the projects' success. CoE standard setting, advisory and monitoring bodies such as ECRI, the Venice Commission, the CPT and GRECO set the way to operationalize priorities and design respective projects. Analysis gaps have been addressed through a number of (thematic) baseline studies. The AP has demonstrated flexibility to respond to changes of context, emerging issues or windows of opportunity. Partners confirmed that the needs of their institutions, especially their capacity building needs, have been incorporated on an ongoing basis.

COHERENCE: AP project interventions are directly linked to, or in line with, current or planned relevant sectoral policies, strategies or action plans. Projects are also, on the whole, in line with relevant planning and implementation cycles of partner institutions. There is evidence of considerable knowledge exchange taking place beyond the AP project level. Established CoE programmes, such as HELP, offer great added value in this regard. At the same time, the AP projects contribute to the further development of capacity-building approaches that benefit CoE as a whole and that can be disseminated to other member states.

EFFECTIVENESS: Overall, the AP interventions show a high degree of effectiveness. The evaluator concludes that out of the 10 AP sample projects of this evaluation: 3 projects have made "good to very good progress"; 4 projects have made "good progress"; 3 projects have made "some progress".

I. HUMAN RIGHTS	
Protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the Republic of Moldova (VC 1841) / Combating violence against children in the Republic of Moldova (VC 2617)	**Good progress**
Strengthening the access to justice through non-judiciary redress mechanisms for victims of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Eastern Partnership countries JP 2354 (PGG II REGIONAL)	**Good progress**
II. RULE OF LAW	
Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova (JP 2349 PGG II)	**Some progress**
Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova, component 1 (VC 1346)	**Good progress**
Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova, component 2 (VC 1976)	**Good - Very good progress**
Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova (VC 2727)	**Some progress**
Action against corruption in the Republic of Moldova (VC 2744)	**Some progress**
III. DEMOCRACY	
Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova (VC 1784)	**Good - Very good progress**
Education for democracy in the Republic of Moldova (VC 1794)	**Good - Very good progress**

Most activities were implemented in a timely fashion and achieved specific results in terms of legislation and policies; strengthening of institutions; adaptation of practice; and, in some cases, increased public awareness. Some projects led to the introduction of new and sometimes mandatory training cycles; improvements in existing training programmes; increased commitment and awareness of relevant stakeholders; and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogues that have fed into various processes. The evaluators consider that end beneficiaries have benefited from the achievements of three projects (*Education for democracy, Electoral practice and Criminal justice 2*), though an impact evaluation is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

In summary, the implementation of the AP has been satisfactory despite some unfavourable external factors such as an unstable political environment, and the COVID-19-pandemic in 2020. All projects have responded well to the COVID-19 related constraints. In several cases, projects focused on the types of activities that were easier to transfer to online-formats. As a result, priorities were sometimes based on the feasibility of activities rather than their urgency and importance. When interviewees were asked about positive and negative aspects of these adaptations they referred to a surprisingly high number of positive effects. The pandemic was thus experienced not only as a stress factor but as an impulse that triggered or accelerated innovation, especially in the area of IT-based

solutions. When adaptative solutions were not possible some projects were required to postpone some planned activities.

EFFICIENCY: Partners generally perceive the management of AP projects to be efficient and responsive to a changing context or needs. All partners highlighted the trusting and solid working relationships they had with CoE staff. A number of partners noted in particular the flexibility and commitment of CoE staff to find alternative e.g. online solutions, to implement activities as the COVID-19-pandemic unfolded. Partners also perceive the project steering committees to be an efficient tool in providing multi-stakeholder project oversight. The management and steering of regional projects under the PGG II is more challenging. This may be a project design rather than a management issue i.e. due to these projects being too ambitious in their design for the resources available, especially when objectives at national and regional level are intertwined. There is evidence that project reports would benefit from a more analytical, evidence-based approach to results reporting, rather than focusing on describing processes.

SUSTAINABILITY: AP achievements are likely to be sustained, with particular reference to strengthening partner institutions, where a critical mass of staff trained increases the likelihood of newly acquired skills and knowledge being integrated into work routines. Strengthened training in sectoral institutions has led to new training modules being incorporated into their curricula. Tools and processes for partner institutions to strengthen their organizational capacity and mandates are likely to remain in place, as is IT infrastructure. A number of factors contribute to the likelihood of changes being sustained over time e.g. partner ownership of projects due to a participatory approach; the use of both local and external expertise; the use of innovative pilots; the timeliness of project outputs; and the long-term commitment of the CoE. Challenges to project achievements being sustained include an unstable political context and political party involvement in and influence on projects. Broader societal transformation such as changes in culture and attitudes will require a longer-term time frame consisting of a number of AP life cycles. Specific institutional challenges such as staff turn-over and staff shortages, will require a broader approach and greater policy coherence that will need to be addressed at a higher political level.

ADDED VALUE: Partners and donors recognize the added value of the CoE as a standard-setting and monitoring institution. The CoE gives credibility, in particular with regard to sensitive issues. The Action Plan guides concrete project development and provides a strategic longer-term commitment which is recognized by partner institutions.

TRANSVERSAL ISSUES: The management of transversal tasks has been complicated by restrictions related to the COVID-19-pandemic as working from home can undermine working on cross-sectional functions and mainstreaming. However, sample projects provide clear, traceable contributions both to SDG 16 and SDG 5. Project contributions to SDG 16 are evident in terms of legislative and policy reform; various guidelines in line with international standards; and, in particular, in institutional strengthening. Project contributions to SDG 5 are less pronounced, but nevertheless clearly exist. The quality of gender analysis and its incorporation in project design varies considerably between projects, as does the quality of gender-related reporting.

The visibility and promotion of CoE activities in the Romanian language, in particular, has considerably improved. In quantitative terms, the broadest coverage of AP activities has been achieved through larger events or conferences and on anniversaries. However, at the time of writing, there is no systematic data available on the visibility work and coverage of target groups.

Recommendations

Relevance and Coherence

- CoE to continue standard practice of following a participatory approach to keep the sound and trustful working relationship the CoE Office has established with all relevant stakeholders.

- CoE to emphasize to donors that project designs and budgets need to allow for a certain level of flexibility to respond changing context or upcoming windows of opportunity.

- CoE to consider whether there is a specific contribution they can make to better coordination within the international community. This could include at project/sector level an assessment of challenges preventing systematic coordination and seeking ways reviving existing processes.

Effectiveness

- CoE to explore systematically how training can be profitably combined with complementary forms of support such as coaching or job shadowing. This includes an assessment of the completion rate of online trainings and possibly the strengthening of blended learning formats.

- CoE to consider reallocating savings/underspent from e.g. travel to equipment in cases when this facilitates synergies with other CoE projects, contributes to projects sustainability prospects (e.g. putting pilot measures in place) or strengthens partner institutions operational capacity under COVID-related restrictions, e.g. provision/upgrade of IT.

Efficiency

- CoE should reassess whether project goals have been set realistically in light of the political environment and other external factors and, based on this, take the available budgetary resources into consideration.
- In view of the point above, longer project time-frames should also be considered as some of the projects are relatively short with ambitious immediate and intermediate outcomes.

- CoE should aim to strengthen the evidence base of reported AP results and achievements, e.g. by supporting partners in assessing the mid- to long-term outcomes of trainings as part of their human resource management.

- Governmental actors of the Republic of Moldova should contribute to the evidence base of AP project results by defining and tracking their mid- to long-term capacity building goals from their respective institutional perspective.

Sustainability and Added Value

- In addition to legislative reform and institution strengthening the CoE should integrate a distinctive third component of citizens awareness and involvement. This can contribute to support broader societal change, thus ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes. This could be operationalised at project level, for example, including linkages with the Education for democracy project and/or by means of partnerships with other actors with campaigning expertise.

Transversal Issues

- CoE should continue its efforts to facilitate gender mainstreaming through the recently established gender focal point in Chisinau office. This cross-cutting responsibility could e.g. foster the thematic exchange between the project officers; or the presentation of the gender mainstreaming of individual projects within the framework of team meetings e.g. once a month for rotating projects.

- CoE should reconsider how contributions to gender equality can be integrated at the level of project objectives in addition to the level of analysis and activities (via mainstreaming). Results of gender mainstreaming activities will be monitored more systematically if they correspond to project objectives and indicators.

- CoE should continue its efforts to develop and strengthen the AP and project communications strategies in order to focus on more strategic messaging in addition to promoting its visibility. To this end, a form of standardised reporting could be introduced that compiles some key figures on users of the various communication tools as well as highlights and opportunities. The reporting should be designed as a practical working tool to promote the further development of visibility.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and context

By means of country-specific Action Plans, (APs) the Council of Europe (CoE) engages in technical co-operation with its member States in areas of CoE expertise, including human rights, the rule of law and democracy. As strategic documents, the APs define priorities largely on the basis of findings and recommendations from Council of Europe's monitoring and expert advisory bodies and aim to support national reform agendas. They are adopted by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, based on consultations between the CoE and the national authorities of the respective member States.

The present 2017-2020 Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova succeeds the first 2013-2016 Action Plan and is intended to build on its results. The 2017-2020 AP document states that its goal is "to support the reforms of the Republic of Moldova which will bring Moldovan legislation, institutions and practice further in line with European standards in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and democracy and therefore supports its efforts in meeting its obligations as a Council of Europe member state."[1]

In support of this goal, the CoE has defined distinctive **areas for actions** to work towards implementing projects under the 2017-2020 AP:

I. HUMAN RIGHTS: (1) Protecting Human Rights; (2) Promoting Human Rights and Dignity;

II. RULE OF LAW: (1) Ensuring Justice; (2) Strengthening the Rule of Law; (3) Countering threats to the rule of law;

III. DEMOCRACY: (1) Strengthening democratic governance and fostering innovation; (2) Promoting participation and diversity.

According to the 2017-2020 AP document the approximate budget was estimated to be at 17.8 million EUR. At the time of the AP approval in November 2016, 28% of the total budget (4.9 million EUR) had been secured. As of 1 September 2020, the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020 had secured a total of funding volume of €14.1 million (79% of the total initial budget of €17.8 million). The European Union (EU) provided €5.5 million, representing 39% of total funding. Voluntary contributions by Council of Europe member States amounted to €7.6 million, corresponding to 54% of funding. The remaining 7% was funded by the Council of Europe's own contribution from the ordinary budget.[2]

1.2 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

Following a call for tender for the establishment of a framework contract for Action Plan evaluations (2018/AO/60) the evaluator was contracted in October 2020 by the CoE Office of DG Programmes (ODGP) Programming Department to carry out an evaluation of the 2017-2020 Action Plan for Moldova.

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[1] Council of Europe (2017): Council of Europe Action Plan for Moldova 2017-2020, p.9.
[2] Terms of Reference – Progress Review and Final Evaluation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020.

In line with the ToR for this assignment, the *purpose* for this evaluation is

(1) to assess the outcomes achieved by the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan, and identify to what extent they have helped the Republic of Moldova to move towards necessary reforms in line with the Council of Europe's standards;

(2) to provide a picture on the way the Council of Europe has implemented the projects (working/implementation methods) in the framework of the Action Plan, as well as on the obstacles faced, if any;

(3) to learn lessons from the way in which the Council of Europe managed the implementation of the projects in the framework of the Action Plan.

The *objective* of the evaluation is to assess this progress in line with the following DAC/OECD evaluation criteria: a) Relevance: i.e. of the project sample to sector and country context; b) Coherence with relevant national legislation and policies; c) Efficiency: i.e. of the implementation of sample projects; d) Effectiveness: i.e. the main results of the sample projects in relation to the Action Plans sectoral priorities; e) Sustainability: i.e. the likely sustainability of the achievements of sample projects.

In addition, the evaluation focuses on the added value of CoE interventions and on mainstreaming gender and visibility as relevant transversal issues. The evaluation also assesses linkages and contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), namely SDG 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" and SDG 16: "Promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".

The scope of the evaluation is on the performance of the 10 selected sample projects representing the three areas for action (human rights, rule of law, democracy) project portfolio of the 2017-2020 AP. Accordingly, findings and conclusions are focussed on the 10 sample projects taken from the overall project portfolio. (For a list of sample projects see annex 1)

The evaluation results are expected to inform the new projects yet to be developed as well as the projects carried over from the ongoing AP. The evaluator understands that findings may be utilized at AP level by AP management as well as by project managers as most priority areas are likely to continue to be worked on under the next AP. As a result, the evaluator has sought to ensure a utilization-focused approach to this evaluation.

1.3 Methodology

Sample project selection

A total of 10 sample projects were selected from a list of ongoing and recently completed projects provided by the CoE Manager. The sampling criteria were:

- The inclusion of all priority sectors of the Action Plan;

- The availability of institutional memory in the projects including CoE staff and project partners;

- The assurance that the projects provide the widest possible coverage of the financial volume of the Action Plan. The 10 selected projects (see table below) have a total financial volume of EUR 6,207,425 and thus cover about 62,9% of the total volume of the projects specified in the pre-selection list (which have a total volume of EUR 9,873,577);

With regard to Action Plan Chapter II – Rule of Law (ensuring justice), it was important to include those two projects which have a substantial financial volume (1346/1976). As impact assessment is specifically not part of this evaluation, the sample projects include also those that have not yet been completed or have just completed its first year of implementation.

Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation is based on a clearly defined evaluation matrix, which outlines the evaluation questions and data gathering means and sources (see annex 2). The evaluation questions were grouped around the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria.

The evaluators' assessment of effectiveness is based on progress definitions as used in CoE Action-Plan-level reports for donors by CoE (chart 1).

Chart 1: CoE progress level

CoE Progress Levels
Action-Plan-level reports use labels to describe progress regarding the implementation of the Action Plan in each area.

Very good progress indicates that legislative amendments and/or institution building led to changes in the socio-economic situation of end beneficiaries/target populations.

Good progress indicates that activities continued at a good pace with concrete results (legislative amendments, institution building incl. capacity building) having already been achieved during the period of reference.

Some progress indicates that activities are being implemented as planned and have good prospects of bringing concrete results (outputs achieved, signs of outcomes)

No progress indicates that either the project did not progress, and therefore activities were not implemented, or that the activities with an expected result are planned for a later implementation stage.

Data gathering

Data was gathered in line with the evaluation matrix through the following data gathering tools:

An in-depth *document review* was based on simple review templates following the lead questions of the evaluation matrix (see Annex 3). The evaluator drew upon two main document sources:

a) AP and sample project documents including the AP document and project descriptions, AP reports to donors and the Council of Ministers and project reports as well as additional project related documentation such as baseline studies or surveys; and

b) relevant CoE and external monitoring reports documenting current developments and issues related to the AP priorities and projects.

Key stakeholder interviews were carried out *with* relevant staff of the CoE country office in Chisinau as well as in Strasbourg; with project partner institutions; and with relevant international

stakeholders (see annex 4). Due to COVID-19-pandemic travel restrictions the evaluator carried out all data collection remotely, utilizing online communication tools such as e.g. Bluejeans, Zoom and Skype. A total of 85 persons were interviewed, of whom a majority were government partners. The evidence from the majority of interviews demonstrated some clear trends although the evaluator has included in this report some divergent individual comments to reflect the range of opinion and enable learning.

Chart 2: Stakeholder consultation distribution
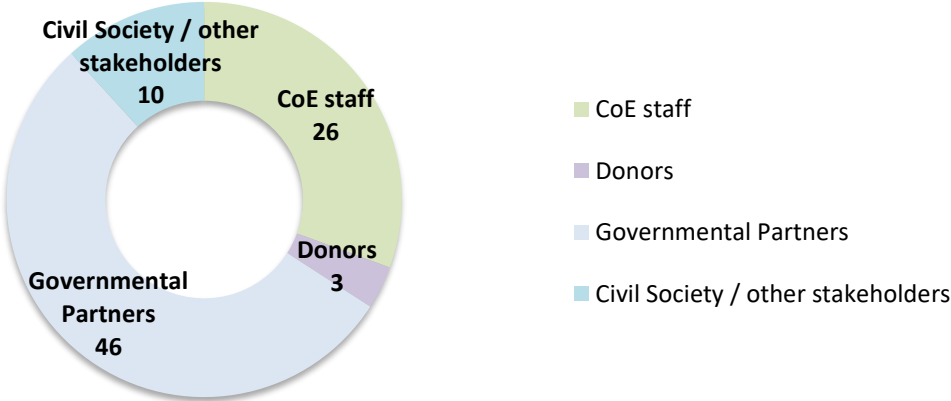
1.4 Limitations

All in all, the evaluation process has gone smoothly despite COVID-19-pandemic travel restrictions and the remote data collection. The evaluation was well supported by the CoE person responsible for the management of the evaluation and the CoE office in Chisinau. However, it should be recognised that at distance interviews constitute the main body of primary data in the evaluation due to the inability to make a field visit to the Republic of Moldova and conduct face-to-face interviews or focus group discussions.

2. Findings

This Section sets out the key findings of the evaluation according to OECD/DAC criteria relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, followed by findings on the added value of the CoE and the Action Plan and transversal issues, including the AP contribution to SDG 16 and 5, mainstreaming of gender and CoE visibility and communication work.

2.1 Relevance

2.1.1 Stakeholder input into the development of the Action Plan and sample projects

Government partners generally expressed satisfaction with the consultation process and with the development of the AP although this required the CoE to prioritise actions and manage the expectations of key stakeholders.

2017-2020 Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova as well as sample projects have been developed on the findings and recommendations of CoE's monitoring and expert advisory bodies including, amongst others, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the Lanzarote Committee, ECtHR case law, the Venice Commission, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) and GRECO. On the basis of these recommendations the Action Plan was prepared with extensive consultation and negotiation with relevant authorities of the Republic of Moldova, and also took into account the achievements and lessons learned of the preceding 2013-2016 Action Plan.[3]

For the CoE, one challenge in the development of the AP was the prioritisation of proposed areas for action submitted by the Moldovan authorities and the need to manage respective expectations. This has affected the degree of focus of the Action Plan. In-country discussions about the geopolitical orientation of the country constitute a further difficulty to develop clear foci. Although the recommendations of the CoE monitoring bodies formed the conceptual basis of the AP projects, partner interviews confirm that emerging issues and developments were also taken into account in the design and implementation of the sample projects. The sample projects addressed analytical gaps e.g. through baseline studies. Civil society participation is complementary in the development of deliverables for all sample projects either through informal consultations or direct engagement.

2.1.2 Correspondence of sample projects to needs and priorities of the country and its stakeholders

The *Child protection project* had been initiated upon request of the Moldovan authorities. The Ministry of Health (MoH) underlined the relevance of the project with a 2020 survey it conducted in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The survey revealed that about one in seven girls (14.4%) and one in twenty boys (5.3%) experienced sexual violence before age 18. Of those only 3.6% of girls and 0.7% of boys received help.[4] Although the Republic of Moldova had been one of the first countries to ratify the Lanzarote Convention in 2012 stakeholder commitment to its implementation was fragmented, and lacked consensus and coordination. The People's Advocate Office (PAO) 2020 thematic report on the efficiency and effectiveness of intersectoral cooperation mechanisms in the field of child rights protection confirmed that these are

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[3] Including the Steering Committee meeting in September 2016, the examination of the final report on the implementation of the 2013-2016 Action Plan by the Committee of Ministers on November 2016.
[4] https://msmps.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/OIM_MoldovaVACS2019_EN_interactive3-1.pdf

"implemented in part or not at all".[5] To that end interviews confirm that the project focus on building a common framework by bringing relevant stakeholder to the table was key. The CoE addressed the lack of consensus through the provision of a neutral assessment. The mapping study involved relevant stakeholder input which provided the basis for consensus on key issues, including the strengthening of the coordination mechanism, especially at Parliamentary and governmental level, and awareness raising amongst the general population. Both elements are subsequently reinforced in the ongoing second phase of the project.

Concerning the *Anti-discrimination project*, partners confirmed the relevance of CoE support to legislative processes. Proposed amendments to the legislative framework concerning the Equality Council are seen as vital to the effective execution of the Council's mandate.[6] Equally relevant is CoE support to CSO partners advocating for the adoption of draft law no 301. Several partners highlighted that only with the adoption of this law can hate speech be qualified as a crime, which is a necessary prerequisite for law enforcement to act.[7] The Equality Council confirmed the relevance of strengthening their capacity as it is difficult to find staff with a specific human rights background.

Partners emphasised relevance of the *Judicial system efficiency project* especially with regard to the high number of cases to be processed by an understaffed number of judges.[8] Here the CEPEJ methodology is essential to support the quality of court decisions and contributes to accountability of judges. Enforcement services indicated that despite the liberalisation of the bailiff profession ten years ago, the number of enforcement agents remains low which requires more efficient processes including the usage of new technologies and cyberjustice tools. Partners also pointed out that CEPEJ performance indicators are an important support to the reorganization of degrees of jurisdiction (2016 Law No 76) which concerns the merging of first level courts.

Partners of both components of the *Criminal justice project (1 and 2)* confirmed that the project comprehensively addresses the implications of the retribution-based legal system, including the excessive use of the pre-trial detention; over-reliance on the use of custodial sanctions; and the absence of mediation in criminal law[9]. This, in turn, leads to overcrowded penitentiary institutions and increased levels of violence within the institutions, which hampers prospects for resocialisation. Interviewees pointed out that also, from a taxpayer's point of view, the penitentiary system needs to see prisoners as citizens and develop them as functional actors of society. Amongst other factors the approach requires an adequate recognition of the probation service within the overall penitentiary system and the reduction of the caseload for probation counsellors.[10] The projects are also relevant with regard to the strengthening of partner institutions. The time frame of the project harmonises

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[5] The evaluation looked at three relevant Government Decisions: 1). Government Decision no. 143 of 12.02.2018 for the approval of the Instruction on the intersectoral cooperation mechanism for the primary prevention of child welfare risks; 2) Government Decision no.1182 of 22.10.2010 on the approval of the Regulation on the intersectoral collaboration mechanism in the medical and social field in order to prevent and reduce the maternal, infant and child mortality rate up to 5 years old at home; and 3) Government Decision no. 270 of 08.04.2014 on the approval of the Instructions on the intersectoral cooperation mechanism for the identification, assessment, referral, assistance and monitoring of child victims and potential victims of violence, neglect, exploitation and trafficking. See: https://www.unicef.org/moldova/media/5211/file/Intersectorial Report.pdf

[6] The Equality Council referred in particular to the examination of complaints, the application of sanctions, a clarification of deadlines on complaints, clarification with regard to the Equality Councils monitoring tasks, the establishment of an advisory board, an increase in staff to cope with the growing number of complaints, financial independence, the ability to notify the constitutional court, and the inclusion of additional criteria e.g. intersectional discrimination, instigation to discrimination.

[7] The draft Law No 301 represents a set of legislative amendments of the Criminal and Contravention Codes, defining the ground of prejudice, reviewing crimes and hatred- and prejudice-motivated acts.

[8] In 2019 around 450.000 cases were processed by 440 judges. Not all of total of 507 positions, including Transnistria are filled. Data collected during an interview.

[9] In 2019 there were around 700 cases of mediation under private law but only 6 cases under criminal law according to the Mediation Council. Data collected during the interview.

[10] In 2019 there was a ratio of 120 clients per probation counsellor, 2020 it was 85, the goal in line with international standards is 20-25. Data collected during the interview.

with that of the mandate of the members of the Superior Council of Prosecutors, which is viewed as extremely helpful.[11] For the People's Advocate Office the project support to its reorganization, in particular the creation of sub-divisions, was essential. The strengthening of its capacities was also seen as relevant in light of the challenge of understaffing.[12]

Interviews confirm that the *Audio-visual regulation project* is of relevance as the CoE holds a unique niche in supporting the public broadcaster.[13] The vast majority of journalism does not follow journalistic principles but is rather driven by economic imperatives that require content to be produced swiftly and at a low cost. According to interviewees the media is also seen to be dominated by the influence of a few oligarchs and by political parties. The project addresses some of these challenges, such as the role of the Public Broadcaster, the quality of produced content and interaction between the Public Broadcaster and the public through the instrument of the Ombudsperson.

The design of the *Anti-corruption project* is based on GRECO recommendations and their rather poor implementation rate. The latest international indexes on corruption in the judiciary indicate that Republic of Moldova continues to face endemic corruption. According to a 2019 survey conducted by the Legal Resources Centre from the Republic of Moldova, 81% of lawyers reported that judges are not independent. Among the most frequent reasons invoked by the lawyers are the political affiliation of judges and high corruption levels.[14] Freedom House's Nations in Transition 2020 Report rates the Republic of Moldova at 2.25, the same score as in 2019.[15] The timing of the project is coherent with the forthcoming GRECO report scheduled for September 2021.

Both partners and the CoE confirm that the *Electoral practice project* is in line with their needs due to the high number of elections during the implementation phase[16] and recurrent changes in the electoral system.[17] Hence the project was implemented under severe time pressure as all key stakeholders e.g. the Central Electoral Commission and the Central Electoral Commission of Gagauzia and the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training, had to catch up with the latest regulations. For the Center for Continuous Electoral Training an election year roughly triples the number of persons trained (from approx. 5000 in non-election years to 17,000/18,000 in election years). The project focus on polling stations abroad corresponds to the quantitative importance of this group of voters[18] and to the political sensitivity of the issue, since the establishment, layout and allocation of sufficient ballots to these polling stations has long been controversial.

All stakeholders interviewed emphasised the relevance of the *Education for democracy project* in the context of the Republic of Moldova's low civic participation, political culture and its broader socio-economic problems. For example, mass migration results in many children being brought up by their grandparents so that schools play a central role in nurturing schoolchildren's competences for active and responsible citizenship. Against this backdrop, the 2016 Education Code identified a set of new social and civic competences, believed to be needed by today's citizens in the Republic of Moldova.[19]

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[11] Their 4-year mandate ends by the end of 2021.
[12] According to the People's Advocate Ombudsoffice out of a total of 65 positions a total of 45 are currently filled. Data collected during the interview.
[13] It was pointed out that other international actors, including USAID, Internews or the Open Society Foundation focus on alternative media and civil society.
[14] Coe: Action against Corruption in the Republic of Moldova – Situation Report, page 6.
[15] The scores range from 1 (best) to 7 (worst). https://freedomhouse.org/country/moldova/nations-transit/2020
[16] Including Parliamentary elections, local elections and Bashkan (Head) of the ATUG elections.
[17] In 2018 the proportional electoral system was replaced with a mixed one for parliamentary elections. On the eve of the October 2019 general local elections, the mixed system was abandoned and Moldova returned to the proportional representation system for parliamentary elections. Also a range of other provisions were amended.
[18] The 2020 presidential election saw over 250.000 votes from abroad, a high rate in relation to the overall voter population.
[19] https://rm.coe.int/1680703cf8

These include a sense of initiative, capacity for self-development, the knowledge and skills needed for independent opinion and action, and openness to intercultural dialogue in the context of national and universal values. The *Education for democracy project* addresses all these competences.

2.2 Coherence

2.2.1 Coherence with governmental policies and alignment with governmental implementation cycles

All in all, the AP demonstrates strong coherence with relevant governmental policies, strategies and action plans. The sample projects also show that this is also the case for ongoing legislative and policy processes. For example, recommendations of a pre-trial detention study carried out as part of the *Criminal justice 1 and 2 projects* are reflected in the 2021-2024 justice sector reform Strategy and Action Plan which was approved by Parliament in November 2020. A more detailed overview on the coherence of sample projects with legislation and policies can be found in annex 5.

Projects are in line with relevant planning and implementation cycles of partner institutions. A number of partners highlighted in particular the timeliness of project activities in view of relevant legislative reform processes. In particular, the partners of the Election Project, who had to implement an unusually high number of elections, described CoE's engagement as timely, significant, flexible and fast. Capacity building is on the whole coherent with the mandate cycles of the partner institutions. In individual cases coordination could have been optimized. For example, activities of the Criminal justice project 1 could have been better adjusted to the mandate cycle of the Council for the Prevention of Torture, preferably having had training for its current members taken place in the first year of the mandate in 2018. Interviews suggest that members would have benefited more from training at the beginning of their mandate.

2.2.2 Coherence with other actors and donors

All sample projects have documented that they have **coordinated with other actors and donors** in the needs assessment and planning phase and adapted activities where necessary. Examples include:

- *Education for democracy project:* the project co-ordinates, exchanges or co-operates with UNFPA (focus on Youth Work, close co-operation as both projects are interlinked under one programmatic approach funded by one donor), the Zurich University of Teacher Education (PHZH), the OSCE (Holocaust Education), the Children's Rights Information Centre (which promotes EDC/HRE principles in education), the project „Scoala Mea" (My School, working on participatory and inclusive decision making in schools).

- *Electoral practice project:* to avoid duplication of activities consultations were held with OSCE PCU, OSCE/ODIHR, IDEA, IFES etc. and the project team remained in close contact with UNDP Moldova, IDEA and others.

However, several interviewees also noted that coordination within the international community in the Republic of Moldova is mediocre and needs to be improved.

2.2.3 Coherence of AP projects and CoE instruments

The evaluation concludes that AP projects generate inter-linkages between projects and CoE instruments and are able to create synergies with CoE projects and initiatives.

Inter-linkages between projects and CoE instruments: there is strong evidence that the CoE has been able to create inter-linkages between projects and CoE instruments during the implementation of the AP. Knowledge and approaches are systematically exchanged through established training programmes of the CoE using training material already produced, tested and widely applied in the

CoE member states, such as the CoE Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) training modules or the CoE European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ). Training material developed as part of the sample projects are in turn adapted to other country contexts. As a number of institutions are direct partner or key stakeholder of various AP projects, such as the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), there is close coordination among project managers at Chisinau office level to ensure the creation of synergies and avoid overlap.

All in all, **sample projects create synergies with other CoE projects and initiatives**, both, within the Republic of Moldova as well as at regional level. Examples include:

- *Child protection projects:* As the first project phase revealed a capacity gap with regard to combatting online abuse of children, the issue was subsequently taken up by a regional project EndOCSEA@Europe, also managed by the CoE Children's Rights Division.[20] The regional project now provides respective training for law enforcement, judges and prosecutors.

- *Anti-discrimination project:* Has synergies with the regional EU/CoE PGG II project "Strengthening the capacities of the justice sector actors to deliver justice in line with European standards, in particular to fight discrimination in the Republic of Moldova".[21] Provision of joint support e.g. through experts' opinion on the Moldovan non-discrimination laws.

- *Synergies between the Anti-discrimination and Audio-visual regulation project:* Audio-visual Council received training on anti-discrimination.

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[20] VC 1840: End online child sexual exploitation and abuse@Europe (REGIONAL). 1/07/2018-30/06/2021.
[21] JP 2350 PGG II: Strengthening the capacities of the justice sector actors to deliver justice in line with European standards, in particular to fight discrimination, in the Republic of Moldova. 01/04/2019-31/12/2021.

2.3 Effectiveness

This section summarizes the main achievements of each of the sample projects in relation to the Action Plan's sectoral priorities and it examines the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the sample projects and how they have responded to these. The complementary annex 6 describes the individual projects in more detail and reflects more on the process that led to the project results as well as the factors that have supported or hindered progress in each case.

2.3.1 Project contribution to the Action Plan

The evaluator concludes that **out of the 10 AP sample projects of this evaluation**

- **3 projects have made "good to very good progress";**
- **4 projects have made "good progress"**;
- **3 projects have made "some progress".**

The evaluators' assessment is based on progress definitions as used in CoE Action-Plan-level reports for donors by CoE (see methodology).[22]

Overall, the AP interventions show a high degree of effectiveness. Most activities continued with a good pace and produced concrete results in terms of legislation and policies, strengthening of institutions, adaptation of practice and in some cases to increased public awareness.

For some projects, the initiation or support of **multi-stakeholder dialogues** is also listed as an outcome. Dialogue processes are often a means to an end rather than a project outcome in the narrow sense. For some projects, however, the evaluators have concluded that these processes have made a decisive contribution to project outcomes and have enabled a qualitative leap. Furthermore, they show potential to have a sustainable impact (see chapter 2.5 on Sustainability).

This is especially true for socially sensitive topics, e.g. in the *child protection project* it was a central task to address the taboo of the topic, which could only be implemented in a broad interaction of many actors; in the *Criminal justice project*, the study on pre-trial detention enabled a comparatively broadly accepted approach to a politically explosive topic. In the *anti-discrimination project*, a broad cooperation in data collection (and a harmonisation in methodology) is a necessary basis to achieve a visibility of hate crimes (as a first step); in the *Electoral practice project*, the professional exchange between the Central Electoral Commission and the Central Electoral Commission Gagauzia also has a political dimension that can possibly radiate.

All projects rated good/very good show concrete results in the areas of legislation/policies and strengthening institutions. With regard to **legislation/policies**, the results are anchored at various levels and range from guidelines (which still tend to remain at the working level) to strategies (which bundle entire areas) to draft laws to actually passed laws. The CoE can only influence to a very limited extent the timeframe by which, for example, a concrete recommendation of one of the CoE monitoring bodies translates into amended legislation or the reform of an entire field of work.

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[22] It is important to note, that as this evaluation does not explicitly evaluate impact in the sense that legislative amendments and/or institution building led to changes in the socio-economic situation of end beneficiaries or target populations, "good progress" is methodically the best this evaluation can possibly label. However, in some cases the evaluators did label "good to very good progress" believing that concrete benefits to end beneficiaries are most likely in place. Here the limitation remains that data collection did not include in a systematic way this level of end beneficiaries.

Changing majorities and governments are one of the external factors that can lead to delays as well as setbacks.

All projects have made contributions with regard to the **strengthening of institutions**. Projects that are rated good/very good either have a sufficient breadth (training approaches that have reached relevant shares of the employees of a sector or an institution) or they have been institutionalised and thus stabilised, e.g. when new training cycles were made mandatory.[23]

A total of 3 projects were **rated good to very good** because the evaluators consider that these projects have had a **concrete impact and improvement for specific groups of the population** beyond legislative or institutional outcomes. The evaluators assume that the *Criminal justice project 2* has improved medical care for detainees, that the *Electoral practice project* has improved voter access, especially in polling stations abroad, and that the *Education for democracy project* has led to a large number of pupils being able to better develop their personal potential and critical thinking.

A total of 3 projects were classified with **some progress** for various reasons. As the implementation phase of these projects is not yet long enough to reach expected results in line with their implementation plan (*Anti-corruption project*, parts of the *Audio-visual regulation project*, *Judicial efficiency project*). At times one of the hindering factors here is, among other things, a low level of local ownership (and thus the will and mobilisation of resources to drive innovations forward).

Table 1 below provides an overview of the main results of the sample projects in relation to AP priorities. These were highlighted by a number of interview partners, who consolidated and/or confirmed the reported main results both in the respective CoE project and AP reports. From this analysis the evaluators conclude that there is consistency between AP sector objectives and the sample projects main achievements and that these achievements are relevant in scope.

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[23] See also chapter 2.7 Transversal on SDG16, which systematises the contributions to strengthening institutions differently in order to establish the references to the SDG targets.

TABLE 1: Contribution of sample projects towards Action Plan sector outcomes

ACTION PLAN SECTOR OUTCOMES	SECTOR INDICATORS
I.2. Promoting Human Rights and Dignity National authorities align Human Rights legislative and regulatory frameworks with European standards to eliminate all forms of discrimination; improve capacity to provide coherent statistical data on racism and racial discrimination; improve identification of victims of trafficking in human beings and investigation of relevant cases; protect and assist the victims of human trafficking especially children; enhance women access to justice; enhance capacity of authorities to support local national minority languages; adopt and implement strategies to protect human rights of Roma.	• Extent to which national legislation is in place and/or amended in line with European Human Rights standards (criminal justice, non-discrimination, data protection). • Level of knowledge about human rights standards and extent of their application by relevant professional groups in their work. • Relevant national training organisations have strengthened capacity to sustainably train their target groups on human rights standards

SAMPLE PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS: Protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the Republic of Moldova (VC 1841) 15/10/2018-31/03/2020**/ Combating violence against children in the Republic of Moldova (VC 2617)** 01/04/2020-31/12/2021	**Progress by CoE Definition**
Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue • **Coordination platform** initiated/contributed to: (a) counteracting the social taboo of sexual violence against children; (b) mobilization of relevant stakeholders; (c) increased governmental responsibility; (d) inter-ministerial co-operation; (e) inclusion of the technical level (Social Services). Legislation and Policies • Recommendations of the baseline study entered the **law on free legal assistance guaranteed by the state** and a **government decision on the approval of the draft law for amending some normative acts (ensuring the rights of victims in the case of sexual offenses)** submitted to Parliament in 11/2020. Strengthening of institutions • Kiko and the Hand training module: 60 pre-school educators from 25 Kindergartens in 12 districts trained on addressing sexual violence when working with young children and interacting with parents. **Participants gained confidence and have increasingly started to address the issue with parents.** • Ministry of Education will **include Kiko training module as part of the national curricula for teachers.** Increased public awareness • **Growing interest and awareness of the general public, teachers, pupil etc.:** Exhibition on online sexual abuse of children covering 12 districts reached 10,000 people on site and 72,000 people online. • Schools integrated the exhibition into mandatory personal development courses; requests to expand the exhibition to other districts. • TV launch of Kiko and the Hand video generated **2,678,365 views** including an estimated **41,358 children aged 4 to 7** and **31,870 children aged 8 to 14.** Contribution to changed attitude and practice • **Growing of number of registered cases of sexual abuse and exploitation**, reflecting increased recognition and reporting	**Good progress**

SAMPLE PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS: Strengthening the access to justice through non-judiciary redress mechanisms for victims of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Eastern Partnership countries JP 2354 (PGG II REGIONAL) 01/01/2019-31/12/2021	Progress by CoE Definition
Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder dialogue • Working group on data collection brought all relevant actors to the table and led to a **joint understanding of the importance of data collection** in the field of hate crime. Willingness by law enforcement to address relevant capacity gaps and develop key indicators and harmonized procedures. Legislation and Policies • Two legislative reviews on the draft law no 121 on ensuring equality and on draft law no 298 on the activity of the Council for Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality: **understanding and will of the MoJ** to take CoE expert opinion into account and defend changes in Parliament Strengthening institutions • Equality Council gained **increased capacity to review and analyse more complex cases**, e.g., those relating to the European Charter for Economic Rights. • **HELP trainings resulted in the identification of further actions** that go beyond hate speech/hate crime monitoring (Promo-LEX) • Promo-LEX established a youth trainer programme on the basis of the HELP methodology and **involved trained youth in hate speech monitoring** • Hate speech and hate crimes curriculum for the GPI a **first step towards building capacities of 1950 police and criminal investigation officers in 2021.** Adopting Practice • Ethical Code seen as good practice by other countries (Poland) • Guide on the preparation of *amicus curiae* opinions had been essential **to improve the quality of opinions and are reflected in court decisions.**	**Good progress**

ACTION PLAN SECTOR OUTCOMES	SECTOR INDICATORS
II.1. Ensuring Justice National authorities enhance and optimise legal and institutional frameworks in line with European and international standards. Promote rehabilitative approach in the criminal justice system; improve provision of health care in prison. (….)	• Extent to which national legislation is in place and/or amended in line with relevant European standards. • Institutional mechanisms and structures are in place and/or operational • Level of knowledge about legislation and European standards and extent of their application by professional groups in their work.

SAMPLE PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS: Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova (JP 2349 PGG II) 01/04/2020-30/09/2021	Progress by CoE Definition
Strengthening Institutions • Development of CEPEJ ToT contributed to **strengthened methodological competences of the National Institute of Justice.** • **Six pilot courts report to have increased their efficiency** following the application of CEPEJ tools. • Integrated filing system and objectively verifiable CEPEJ indicators expected to lead to **strengthened monitoring capacities of the Agency for Court Administration** to derive corrective measures if needed. • **Increased understanding of pilot courts on the purpose of monitoring user satisfaction** to increase transparency and trust into the judicial system.	**Some progress**

SAMPLE PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS: Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova, component 1 (VC 1346) 01/01/2018- 28/02/2021	Progress by CoE Definition
Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue • **A joint understanding of the status quo of pre-trial detention** achieved through participatory process of research (for both components) • **Engagement of partner institutions with relevant CoE advisory bodies,** e.g., Venice Commission, CCPE. Strengthening Institutions • **1375 legal professionals benefitted from HELP training courses and other workshops;** achieved to reach a critical mass. • **Secured continuous building of capacities** through integration of HELP courses into NIJ curricula • **Superior Council of Prosecutors capacity has been strengthened,** e.g., through CCPE Opinion concerning the independence of prosecutors, GRECO expertise on the publication of disciplinary board decisions. • **Council for Mediation widened mediators' knowledge and skills to apply mediation in the criminal justice field.** • **Strengthened PAO leadership and management capacities** covering 19 staff in middle management positions • **Strengthened capacities of PAO and the NPM on the monitoring of places of detention,** reporting and development of recommendations Adopting practice • **Provision of stronger evidence by prosecutors with increasingly direct reference to international standards** incl. ECHR, evidenced by case documentation • Judges and prosecutors gained a **better understanding of the purpose and functioning of mediation** and displayed increased **openness on applying mediation in the criminal justice sector,** evident by a training request from GPO and an agreement of increased cooperation. • Joint training contributed to the **consolidation of PAO and NPM monitoring activities.**	**Good progress**

SAMPLE PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS: Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova, component 2 (VC 1976) 01/01/2018-28/02/2021	Progress by CoE Definition
Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue • Study on pre-trial detention providing for some common ground of multiple stakeholders on a sensitive issue Legislation & Policies (selection) • **Legislation:** Amendments to Law No. 300/2017 on Penitentiary Administration System drafted and considered „ambitious and progressive" by NAP. Endorsement by Ministry of Justice outstanding. • **Health:** Recommendations to amend to the Regulation on the provision of health care to persons in detention (Ministry of Justice Order No. 478/2006) ensuring its compatibility with European standards. Strengthening Institutions • **Prison Training Centre:** Revised Draft **"Curriculum for Induction Training of Prison Staff within the Prison System of the Republic of Moldova"**. Curriculum is in use and Training Centre is confident to be able to use it in the coming academic year, incl. adaptations to online version. • **Prison Management:** Draft Human Resources Development Strategy for the Prison System 2020-2023. As part of the strategy **Improved Prison Management** piloted in 3 prisons (covering male and female prisons and detention centre for children and youth).	**Good to very good progress** Some concrete benefits to end beneficiaries likely to be in place.

- **Probation Service:** Analysis of four options for the reorganisation of the structure of the central and regional probation offices. Followed by **piloting the reorganisation in 6 probation offices** (out of a total of 38). Concept includes a division of labour requiring a minimum number of staff to be applicable. the re-organisation of the territorial probation subdivision by the Probation Service.
- **Probation System/Methods:** RNA tool – ARIC (Assessment of Reintegration, Intervention and Conclusion) developed and 12 prison employees (social assistants and psychologists) and 11 probation councillors trained on the use of RNA. **Tool piloted in 3 prisons.**
- **Probation System/Methods:** 16 trainers trained on training probation councillors in drafting presentence reports, cascade training for 45 counsellors. Further 10 trainers trained on motivational interviews. NAP understands these components as already sufficiently institutionalized and believes that quality of reports has already increased.

Adopting practice
- **Health:** 16 Primary health care units and the Prison Hospital supplied with equipment. Intervention **relevant in scope (entire system) and quality** as it enables NAP to seek accreditation according to National Health Standards and equalize health care standards in detention with community health care standards.
- **Health:** Equipment facilitates **improved health services** for offenders, incl. drug dependent offenders.
- **Health:** Equipment contributes to **improved working conditions** of medical staff in prisons with potential to improve the staffing situation.
- **Probation System/Case load**: According to NAP considerable **reduction in caseload** from 120 clients per probation counsellor in 2019 to 85 in 2020.

ACTION PLAN SECTOR OUTCOMES	SECTOR INDICATORS	
II.2. Strengthening the Rule of Law Improve the regulatory framework related to media pluralism and Internet in line with the European standards; enhance the independence and transparency of the public service broadcasters. The public broadcasters' capacity is increased to provide unbiased and trustworthy coverage of the events. Public awareness and respect for freedom of expression and private life are raised.	Extent to which national legislation and media regulation are in compliance with European standards, notably in the following areas: • public-service broadcasting; • independence of broadcasting regulators; • concentration and transparency of media ownership; • freedom of expression, including on the Internet.	
SAMPLE PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS: **Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova (VC 2727)** 01/03/2020 - 30/04/2021		**Progress by CoE Definition**
Legislation & Policies • **Analysis of legal normative acts of the audio-visual council of the Republic of Moldova** from January 2019 to July 2020 made available to relevant stakeholders. Strengthening Institutions • An assessment and **recommendations how to strengthen the Ombudsperson Service within the National Public Broadcaster** is available and contributed to some extent to the **visibility of the issue** within the institution. • **Assessments/Knowledge products with a potential to contribute to an enhanced professionalism of the public service broadcaster** are available to the institution (analysis of audience, convergence strategy, children's programme).		**Some progress**

ACTION PLAN SECTOR OUTCOMES	SECTOR INDICATORS
II.3. Countering Threats to the Rule of Law National authorities reform the legal and regulatory frameworks to fight corruption, money-laundering and terrorism financing in line with European and international standards.	• Existing legislative and institutional frameworks to fight corruption, money laundering and terrorism financing are in line with the European and international standards. • Appropriate reporting on public finance. • Extent to which public administration has capacity to plan, to allocate resources and to carry out complex actions, while combating mismanagement and corruption. • Extent to which accountability of public officials is reinforced through legal and reporting framework, organisational structure, strategy, procedures and actions.

SAMPLE PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS: Action against corruption in the Republic of Moldova (VC 2744)	01/06/20 – 30/11/2021	**Progress by CoE Definition**
Strengthened Institutions • Ensured on-going dialogue with governmental stakeholders on institutionalized follow-up on GRECO recommendations.		**Some progress**

ACTION PLAN SECTOR OUTCOMES	SECTOR INDICATORS
III.1. Strengthening Democratic Governance and Fostering Innovation Electoral stakeholders conduct elections in a transparent and impartial manner with election results fully accepted by citizens and politicians (...) Capacity of the authorities in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia to take legislative and policy initiatives as well as to provide effective public service is further developed.	• Extent to which adopted legislation related to elections and political parties is in line with the European and international standards. • Level to which electoral process is improved through introduction of the electronic vote, increased participation of women and other groups, increased transparency of political party funding, and enhanced internal democratic functioning of political parties.

SAMPLE PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS: Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova (VC 1784)	14/04/2018 - 31/12/2020	**Progress by CoE Definition**
Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue • **Quality of communication and cooperation** between Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova and the Central Electoral Commission of Gagauzia credibly improved. • There is a certain degree of mutual recognition of each other's roles and established channels of communication between state and civil society actors. • Respectful working relationship established with the Central Election Commission of Gagauzia. Legislation & Policies • **SWOT analysis and strategic plans** developed and used by the CEC, the Center for Continuous Electoral Training and CEC of Gagauzia. • "Statement of conduct" and handbook for **appropriate use of administrative resources** developed Strengthening Institutions • Central Electoral Commission and Central Electoral Commission of Gagauzia have **developed, piloted or already deployed a variety of technical innovations and are strengthened in IT capacity** (e.g., accreditation processes for observers, preliminary registration for voters residing abroad and documentation).		**Good to very good progress** Some concrete benefits to end beneficiaries likely to be in place.

- Center for Continuous Electoral Training **makes use of 2 new training tools**, adapted Curricula to specific needs of Gagauzia and established the use of the electronic registry of trained of trained and certified experts
- **Central Electoral Commission of Gagauzia:** used first time opportunities to participate in trainings and events and among other things translated the support into the development of legislative proposals.
- **Central Electoral Commission of Gagauzia:** co-operation with CoE paved the way to other co-operations with international partners.

Adopting practice
- **Observers presence at polling stations abroad** realized
- **Increased number of ballots in polling stations abroad**

ACTION PLAN SECTOR OUTCOMES	SECTOR INDICATORS
III.2. Promoting participation and diversity Promoting democratic values, student self-governance and prevention of all forms of discrimination in schools. Similar initiatives are introduced in the youth sector to prevent forms of discrimination.	• Increased number of educational programmes (formal and informal) introduced in the selected institutions and regions in line with Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) standards. • Increased awareness of youth on the need to prevent all forms of discrimination.

SAMPLE PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS: Education for democracy in the Republic of Moldova (VC 1794) 01/01/2019-31/12/2022	Progress by CoE Definition
Legislation & Policies • **Complete reconceptualization of civic education as a subject,** including revised concepts on content (curricula), teaching methodology and practice, assessment methodology (a competence-based approach), a draft monitoring methodology for these elements and an approach to democratic school governance. Content and methodology are in line with the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. • **Curriculum adopted by the Republic of Moldova.** Strengthening Institutions • **In-service training facilitated relevant in scope and depth and institutionalized** (all civic education teachers reached, Training for Teachers Trainers realized, Network of Teachers Trainers expanded, Russian language training made available, core group of national experts initiated). Adopting practice • **Piloting** of grades 5, 6, 10 and 11 in full swing. • **First signs of spill-over effects and systemic changes visible**.	**Good to very good progress** Some concrete benefits to end beneficiaries likely to be in place.

2.3.2 COVID-19 related restrictions and project responses

Overall, all projects have responded well to the COVID-19 related constraints. The main strategies/ adjustments to pandemic-related restrictions can be summarized as follows:

1) Technical solutions: Transferring activities such as meetings, consultancies or trainings to online-formats (all sample projects). This includes e.g. online monitoring of learning progress of end-line beneficiaries, e.g. pre-school teachers (Child protection projects) and the production of online-specific support material (all sample projects);

2) Programming adaptations: Setting a focus on the types of activities easier to transfer to online-formats and/or using the lockdown for specific online focused activities (e.g. training of trainers in the Elections practice project).

CoE estimates that about 95% of activities could be adapted following these two approaches.

However, **putting these strategies into practice met with a number of challenge**s, such as:

1) Lack of technical equipment and software services: Limited technical resources (web conferencing platforms) for simultaneous interpretation were available on the part of CoE and this shortage could not be overcome. So in many cases consecutive interpretation had to be used. On the part of some partners there was a lack of end devices, but this mainly played a role in the beginning of the Pandemic.

2) Lack of technical skills: Some partners lacked the necessary technical skills (rather in the beginning of the pandemic) to take advantage of on-line activities.

3) Reluctance to switch to online activities: There was different acceptance of online formats by the different partner institutions. This included e.g. reluctance to switch to online meeting formats and/or lack of experience of some trainers to deliver online training (NIJ for various projects). However, some interviewees indicated that what looks like a lack of flexibility by some institutions might rather be an indicator of weak institutions. In some areas the pandemic did constitute an additional stressor; e.g. for the electoral system it came on top of already unusually frequent elections and hence put additional stress on the entire system.

4) Staff illness: To a certain degree staff absence in partner organisations due to illness played a role and this factor could not be countered by any of the strategies above. However, according to interviews this particular factor did not constitute a major problem though it might have accounted for some delays in activities.

Interviewees were asked about **positive and negative aspects of these adaptations** and found a surprisingly high number of positive effects. Annex 7 gives a more detailed overview of positive and negative areas and activities identified by interviewees. It can be concluded that the pandemic not only introduced stress in project implementation but also triggered or accelerated various innovations, especially in the area of IT-based solutions. In some activities, reservations about online solutions/alternatives were overcome. On the other hand, for some activities, especially study trips, some training activities and politically sensitive areas such as penitentiary monitoring, no adequate alternative solutions were found. Despite the creativity in dealing with the restrictions so far, **challenges therefore remain in the following areas**, which the projects must continue to address:

1) Realization of some postponed and/or reduced activities is still pending.

2) Quality and impact of some online-processes (meetings, trainings) still needs to be evaluated/reflected. While some activities could be converted relatively easily to online implementation, there remains a doubt whether the same quality can be maintained. This requires follow-up.

3) Some budgets are underspent and adjustments in terms of no-cost extensions might have to be sought.

4) The budgetary relation between staff costs and activity costs has changed in some cases: Arithmetically, the personnel cost share is increasing. However, the implementation of less cost-intensive activities is not possible without the use of personnel and is sometimes even associated with higher personnel input. As a consequence, it might be necessary to work with a greater number of partners and/or to realize some additional/larger activities (e.g. larger studies).

In terms of **impact on the vulnerable populations** the following was highlighted:

The *Child protection projects* noted that as children stayed at home, they were potentially at higher risk to be abused due to increased use of the internet. In this regard CoE pointed out that statistical data by the prosecution indicates an **increase of online sexual abuse against children** during the pandemic. Hence, certain activities such as the grant to NGO La Strada for actions on the prevention of risky online behaviour became even more important. The Cybercrime Investigation Department of the MoIA tried to reach parents and educators and organized training for regional police units (outside the CoE project). The Department also noted a rise of distribution of images and grooming (around 30% increase over the previous year). According to the Department the national helpline for children reported a higher number of calls. The government has requested CoE to provide assistance with the development of guidelines on child protection in crisis situations, which cannot be followed up upon by the project due to capacity constraints (to the regret of CoE staff). The Children's Rights Division of the CoE has pulled together a few resources, which have recently been published by different organisations to better protect children and to best explain COVID-19 to them.[24]

In the context of the *Anti-discrimination project,* the CoE as well as equality body and civil society representatives, highlighted that the **pandemic caused increased discrimination and hate speech** against groups who have never been really a target, labelling diaspora Moldovans returning to the country as well as to persons who were COVID-19 positive *as "potential spreaders".*

In June 2020 the People's Advocate Office (PAO) produced a report on the **effects of the pandemic on the human rights situation of prisoners**[25] *(not part of, but related to the Criminal justice project).* This highlighted that hardships linked to the pandemic affect different people differently and the vulnerable are usually more affected, including those in detention. It also highlighted the importance of not overcrowding prisons and of health care in prisons. The Criminal justice project could contribute to the protection of detainees and prison staff through the provision of some protective supplies, however the long-term project goal – non-overcrowding – is the more relevant factor underlining the adequacy of the project goal.

Concerning the Presidential **elections** in November 2020 observers noted some **violations of health protection protocols**[26] exposing people to unnecessary risks. It remains unclear if there was an impact in terms of additional infections. According to PROMOLEX there were also some unclear regulations on voting in quarantine, which might have limited voting rights by not visiting those under quarantine. To some extent, the *Electoral practice project* has helped discourage bad practice at polling stations by supporting election observation.

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[24] https://www.coe.int/en/web/chisinau/-/coronavirus-and-children
[25] http://ombudsman.md/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/en-rezumat_situa%C8%9Bia-covid19_pe-site.pdf
[26] ODIHR limited election observation mission Republic of Moldova, Presidential Election, 1 November 2020, Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions.

2.4 Efficiency

2.4.1 Management of sample projects

Overall **partners perceive** CoE **management of sample projects as efficient and responsive** to changing context or needs. Project oversight lies with the respective project coordinators in the DGs in Strasbourg and is based on communication between the Strasbourg coordinators and CoE office field teams as appropriate. CoE staff noted a clear division of tasks and efficient coordination between staff of both locations. This has been confirmed by most partner institutions. Concerning the *Anti-discrimination project*, partners noted that the current vacancy of a local coordinator based in Chisinau did not affect efficient management of the project.[27] The CoE Project Management Methodology (PMM) is in place and being used on a day-to-day basis, in particular its online tool.

All partners pointed out to trustful and solid working relationships with CoE staff. Several partners emphasised that CoE staff behave sensitively, openly and productively. Analyses or studies often point out different options, not only one possible solution and the specifics of the partner country are perceived. Interview partners interpret this as an expression of the democratic attitude of the institution. This is appreciated and one interviewee emphasised that without this attitude, the results of the cooperation would not have been possible.

CoE engagement goes beyond the mere implementation of project activities. Staff support institutions in very practical terms, e.g., facilitation of contact with potential donor agencies or advise on the drafting of reports. A number of partners highlighted that cooperation with CoE as an institution was based on a long history of subsequent projects. Sometimes the CoE has accompanied and supported institutions since their establishment, e.g. the Equality Council from its beginnings in 2013. CoE is able to demonstrate flexibility wherever possible also in response to upcoming opportunities and changing context such as, bring forward or postponing activities, or expanding to new training themes. A number of partners particularly noted the flexibility and commitment of CoE staff in response to the pandemic to find alternative and online solutions to implement activities. CoE is able to find within partner institutions contacts who commit to the project even in cases where political issues are standing in the way. CoE sees interpersonal relations between partner institutions as a factor over which it can have little influence, such as between the PAO and the NPM. Here, CoE can only play a mediating role.

2.4.2 Oversight of sample projects

The project steering committees which bring together all project partner institutions provide a forum to validate activities and formally agree on expected results. Partners perceive the oversight of the project steering committees as generally efficient. Project steering meetings are usually held once a year, sometimes twice per year (e.g. *Judicial system efficiency project*). At the time of writing this report the *Electoral reform project* does not have a steering committee in place, while the *Audio-visual regulation project plans for the first steering committee meeting in February 2021.*

Both, partners and CoE highlighted additional advantages of the steering committee approach:

- It fosters exchange, cooperation and synergies between partner institutions;

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[27] The position was not initially included in the project. It was introduced at a later stage in response to the strong involvement of the Moldovan authorities in the project. The coordinator started its work in January 2021.

- Chairing of project steering committee by a key ministry (e.g., for the *Education for democracy* project it is led by the MoE) ensures ownership;

- Attendance by indirectly impacted stakeholders provides an opportunity to develop the project further and/or expand the scope;

- Participation of technical personnel ensures continuity and balances out political instability or changes;

- CoE is better able to detect any points of disagreement and can act as mediator; as e.g., between the MoJ and National Union of Enforcement Agents on the upgrading of a national register.

Management and steering of regional projects under the **PGG II are somewhat more challenging**. Projects subsumed under such a programme are generally of smaller financial volume but objectives remain equally ambitious. Regional project committees are for practical reasons limited on the number of representatives per country. It was pointed out that this, in turn, can lead to the exclusion of stakeholders and partners whose buy-in is seen as important. Interviews further suggest that to a certain extent partners are challenged with the double layer of steering at national and regional level. The preceding PGG I phase required steering at project level. With the PGG II an additional, regional-level layer had been added.

2.4.3 Oversight at AP level

The Office of the Directorate General of Programmes (ODGP) oversees the AP implementation. AP Steering Committee meetings take place annually, functioning as a joint oversight mechanism and including representatives of Moldovan institutions. Rather than going into technical details these meetings add value through their high-level representation of Moldovan institutions, e.g., at Minister or State Secretary level, and the reaffirmation of commitment to the sectoral and strategic goals. However, the political function of the AP meetings does not necessarily coincide with the accountability and coordination needs of donor countries. To that end separate coordination at AP level also takes place with key donor countries; e.g., with SIDA due to its similar portfolio and overlap of institutional partners.

Interviews suggest that for donor agencies reporting not only at AP but also at project level is important. Further, it was noted that at times the structure of AP reports does not make it easy for an external reader to follow progress. Moreover, it was sometimes not clear how concrete results were measured. In this context the importance of communicating results to donors, e.g., via a digital platform for development partners was noted. Broader communication of AP results and the engagement of the CoE who, one of the donors suggested, was less visible than the EU, is seen as essential.

2.5 Sustainability

2.5.1 Sustainability of sample projects achievements

The evaluator concludes that there is evidence that a number of **sample projects achievements are likely to be sustained.** Contributions to sustainable change were identified in a number of dimensions i.e.

- Changes to legislation and policies;
- Strengthened stakeholder cooperation;
- Strengthened institutional capacities;
- Improved implementation capacity;
- Improved IT infrastructure and capacity; and
- Training modules embedded in partner institutions.
- Changes in knowledge, attitude and competences of specific population groups

Sample projects achieved sustainable change of **legislation and policies**. The *Criminal justice project* saw recommendations of the study on pre-trial detention reflected in the newly approved 2021-2024 justice sector reform Strategy and Action Plan. The new curriculum for civic education was adopted by the Republic of Moldova and the subject is mandatory. Having achieved this status interviewees believe the curriculum will stay in place for years to come *(Education for democracy project).* The strategy development for both Electoral Commissions directly influenced the priority setting and the course of action of the respective institutions *(Electoral practice project).* Recommendations of the *Child protection project* baseline study subsequently entered the law on free legal assistance guaranteed by the state, modified in July 2020. On the other hand, a number of legislative initiatives are held up by lengthy parliamentary processes to approve draft laws, e.g. the sustainability of the alignment of anti-discrimination policies is not yet secured. The legal framework as it stands does not allow equality bodies and law enforcement to follow-up on hate speech incidences.

Several partners cited strengthened **multi-stakeholder cooperation** facilitated by the CoE as a key contribution to sustainability. With regard to the Child protection projects all partners highlighted that the initiation of cooperation has been essential for all further action. The CoE expects that the working group on the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention will be managed by the government and continue to be functional. (*Child protection project*). Partners have indicated that cooperation with international initiatives such as CEPEJ will continue beyond the project timeframe and is seen as essential to secure achievements with regard to the efficiency of the justice system (*Judicial system efficiency project*). Likewise, partners and CoE highlighted the improved co-operation between the Central Electoral Commission and the Central Electoral Commission of Gagauzia as a break-through in the field of electoral practice (*Electoral practice project*)

Sustainable strengthening of organizational capacities was achieved through the introduction or improvement of **tools and processes on management, leadership and communication** that remain with the partner institutions after completion of the project. Interviews confirm that these tools/processes are still in place e.g. in the *Anti-discrimination project*; e.g., the communication strategy and action plan developed with the Equality Council; the *Criminal justice 1 project*, e.g., development of internal rules and guidelines for the People's Advocate Office (PAO) and the *Criminal justice 2 project*, e.g. the Draft Human Resources Development Strategy for the Prison System 2020-

2023 and the analysis and subsequent piloting of one of the options for the reorganisation of the structure of the central and regional probation offices. As knowledge products, partners describe these approaches as practical and in line with needs. The high level of participation in the development of these concepts anchors them well in the relevant institutions. However, these reorganisation processes cannot be immediately implemented across the board if the corresponding resources are not secured.

Partners also confirm that the project made **sustainable contributions to the improved execution of the institutional mandates**; e.g.; a guide on the drafting *amicus curiae* opinions for the Equality Council (*Anti-discrimination project*); CEPEJ Stat software, a register for enforcement agents which enables future online processing and a new commentary to the enforcement code. (*Judicial system efficiency project*);[28] monitoring guidelines for preventive visits of PAO and the NPM (*Criminal justice project*).

CoE support to IT infrastructure is seen as a sustainable measure, e.g., supporting respective sectoral efforts such as the switch of the judicial system to electronic reporting in November 2020. Overall, partners indicated that IT infrastructure outputs will stay and be maintained by the institutions without further support. CoE support to the upgrading or setting-up of institutional websites e.g., such as for the Superior Council of Prosecutor has been essential for visibility and contributes to bringing institutions closer to citizens.

Almost all sample projects have **integrated training modules,** either by means of integrating training modules into formal state curricula or into internal training schemes of partner institutions through TOT components and availability of training material. Examples include:

- *Judicial efficiency and Criminal justice 1 and 2 project*: Training programmes were updated and are available with the NIJ, e.g. as part of their national curricula for initial and continuous mandatory training. Sustainability ensured also through staff stability within the NIJ (most staff have worked for the NIJ for over 15 years). The NIJ invests into a pool of trainers who are practitioners in various legal fields. Around 7000 legal professionals are trained per year.

- *Education for democracy project*: the in-service training facilitated has been institutionalized. All civic education teachers were trained; the existing network of Teachers Trainers was expanded; and a core group of national experts was initiated. Younger Teacher Trainers participants were prioritized to optimise their potential retention in the sector.

Finally, **awareness raising and educational interventions** are likely to contribute to sustainable change:

- Through its campaigning activities the *child protection project* generated interest and awareness in schools through which the project reached a relatively high number of educators, children and parents. In this sense schools will serve as multipliers.

- The *Education for democracy project* is an example of the successful implementation of a new approach in practice. The breadth of the roll-out in combination with the institutional support by the Ministry, the firm anchoring of the curriculum in legislation and the broad investment in human resources through trainings make sustainable effects very likely.

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[28] The new enforcement code updates the current document which had been produced with CoE support ten years earlier.

2.5.2 Factors challenging and enabling sustainability of project achievements

There are a number of **factors, which challenge sustainability** of the project outcomes. For partners and the CoE this includes:

- A **political context** that still reflects in-country controversies about the geopolitical orientation of the country. This is partly reflected in institutions down to the working level and can lead to rather sudden strategy and policy changes.

- **Political party involvement and influence over partner institutions** was also cited as an impediment. For example, members of the Central Electoral Commission are nominated by political parties; once they enter the Commission members are bound to act independent of party interests. However, this independence is disputed. In other sectors, interviewees referred to the inertia of established in-groups. For example, in the justice sector, staying and advancing in institutions often depends on the evaluation of superiors, which leads to a self-replicating system, not independent actors. One interviewee expressed the view that this form of "institutional renewal" can only take place through political debate within the country and can only be promoted to a very limited extent through international influence.

- **Staff turnover within institutions** due to low salary levels such as the People's Advocate Office and sectors such as education. This requires constant re-training of new staff. Especially on the topic of competitive salaries, partners have emphasised that they see little room for manoeuvre. In the education sector, for example, reference was made to initiatives making the teaching profession more attractive, especially in rural areas. These can only have an effect if the rural area as a whole is upgraded and labour migration becomes less attractive. Ultimately, this touches on questions of policy coherence that need to be addressed at a higher political level. Other partners have highlighted that donors are generally more willing to fund activities than salaries. Some donors exclude salaries from top-ups as a matter of principle. At the same time, no other longer-term strategies were mentioned in interviews to enhance the image of certain institutional functions through higher salaries e.g. in Prison Health Services, the Central Election Commission, the Public Broadcaster or the Probation Service.

Partners also highlighted a number of **favourable factors contributing to the sustainability of project outputs and outcomes**, including:

- **A long-term commitment** is a basic prerequisite for the factors listed above, such as ownership and participation, as well as for the development of an institutional memory.

- Similarly, to achieve sustainable attitude change, a long-term approach to campaigning is indispensable. This has been particularly highlighted by partners of the *Child protection project*.

- **Ownership**, which is expressed through the direct initiative of the responsible state actors. This was the case, for example, in the *Education for democracy* project, where CoE interviewees said, that the Ministry rather found CoE as a partner for something they wanted to do than the other way around. Numerous partners stressed that CoE's participatory approach during design and implementation phases of sample projects fostered ownership.

- The **use of both local and regional knowledge** from the academic and practitioner spheres including from other countries of transition were particularly highlighted by *both regional projects*;

- **The use of pilot projects** e.g., in the prison management system (*Criminal justice 2 project*) or the court system (predecessor project of the *Judicial efficiency project*) which enables evidence-based roll-out;

- **Timeliness of project outputs** which enabled immediate applicability; e.g., the *Electoral reform project* was able to put e-tools for documentation, observers and preliminary registration straight into use for the presidential elections in November 2020 which partners reported as leading to an immense reduction of workload.

Finally, partners expect that **various forms of CoE support continues to be required**, ranging from generating high-level support at policy level for specific interventions, facilitating consensus on disputed issues amongst partners or support in practical terms e.g. expertise in specific areas, development of further tools. With regard to elections, one interviewee also emphasised that the practical deployment of international election observers has an added value, as their presence creates a higher threshold for incorrect behaviour. The CoE and partners predict an increased need of support when new legislation is adopted. Here one example is the currently pending parliamentary adoption of draft laws relevant to hate crime and hate speech.

2.6 Added value

The evaluation concludes that the **CoE gives added value in a number of dimensions**. In particular, partners and donors highlighted the following points:

Importance of political standing: CoE has a unique role as a key standard setter, which has a positive impact on cooperation. This is supported by the shared ownership of the standards, which can also positively influence project ownership by the government (although it does not necessarily do so in all cases). In particular the Committee of Ministers, but also instruments such as GRECO or the Venice Commission, were highlighted in the interviews as bodies and instruments that enjoy a high reputation and give political weight to the work. Involvement in international mechanisms is also described as a factor that not only challenges but also motivates the government to engage in certain reform processes such as the Lanzarote Convention.

The specific role of CoE as enabler: Various interviewees pointed out that CoE can in some cases initiate processes or debates because they take on a (neutral) outsider role. For example, when government decisions or bills are contradictory, it is easier for CoE to analyse and address this than for internal actors. Similarly, it is easier for CoE to put or keep socially sensitive issues on the agenda. An example of this is child protection, especially protection from sexual violence. CoE is also perceived as a force that, by working with government, also keeps the behaviour of government institutions within a certain (internationally accepted) framework. For example, direct political influence on more technical/functional institutions is contained, according to one interviewee. CoE also contributes to keeping issues on the agenda and to achieving sustainable results when there is a change of government, according to the assessment of interview partners. Justice reform and child protection were mentioned as examples of this.

Action Plan: Partners recognize the Action Plan as an overarching commitment, including to work towards the improvement of legislation in line with European standards. For the CoE the AP systematises cooperation; allows for strategic planning; and guides project development in coordination with other donors. However, one of the interviewees also mentioned that, as the AP is covering all sectors in a broad description, there is limited use of the document for co-ordinating purposes, which needs to be facilitated by complementary tools.

Specific expertise, methodological approaches and thematic strengths: Partners noted the overall very professional work of the CoE highlighting specific methods or instruments such as the URSO methodology for the preparation of strategic planning for the electoral process; the distinctive know-how in the field of Education for Democratic Societies; and the good access to experts. For the youth sector, it was emphasised that CoE is one of the few international institutions that have a comprehensive and long-standing sectoral understanding of the sector. Youth and young adults are not only perceived as a group to be considered when dealing with topics such as education or employment, but as real stakeholders who (co-)determine the present and future of a country. The CoE's expertise in this area is considered to be very high.

2.7 Transversal Issues

2.7.1 Sample project contributions to SDG 16

The sample projects **address eight of the targets of SDG 16 and contribute to their achievement**. In most cases, the CoE contribution can be traced at the target level, in some cases the contribution corresponds directly to the indicator level. CoE projects are not evaluated on the basis of SDG indicators, which is usually not methodologically possible, as individual projects are rarely reflected in national indicators. The Voluntary National Review Progress Report 2020 of the Republic of Moldova does not directly refer to CoE activities. Nevertheless, it is clear that the CoE activities address a large number of the issues that are the subject of SDG 16, namely the reduction of violence, in particular all forms of violence against children, the promotion of the rule of law and equal access to justice, the reduction of all forms of corruption; the development and strengthening of effective, accountable and transparent institutions; public access to information; and the promotion of anti-discrimination and anti-discriminatory laws and policies.

Besides its contributions to legislation, policies and various guidelines in line with international standards, CoEs contribution is particular relevant in institution building. A wide range of institutions are partners to various projects, such as (list is not exhaustive).

- The Ministry of Education, a majority of schools, some kindergartens, the Educational Community with a focus on child rights and citizenship education
- The Ministry of Justice, various specialized bodies of the Justice Sector such as the Superior Council of Magistracy and of Prosecutors, the Equality Council, the Mediation Council, the Ombudspersons Office, the legal professions,
- The National Administration for the Penitentiary, the Probation Service and the Community of Counsellors
- The Audio-Visual Council and the Public Broadcaster,
- The Central Electoral Commission and the Central Electoral Commission of Gagauzia,
- Various governmental training institutions in particular in the fields of Justice and Elections.

More details on the related SDG targets are summarised in annex 5.

2.7.2 Sample project contribution to SDG 5 by mainstreaming gender

All sample projects have integrated **gender mainstreaming components**, but show great differences in the depth of the anchoring of the topic in analysis, objectives, corresponding activities and monitoring of possible results.

One of the strong projects is e.g. the *Anti-Discrimination Project,* which integrated a gender analysis in its initial stages. This concluded that women are the primary category of victims of hate speech in the Republic of Moldova, followed by politicians, persons with disabilities and LGBT persons, while men make up for around three quarters of the offenders. Consequently, partner institutions collect relevant data using a gender disaggregated methodology and gender is a key area of engagement for the equality bodies. Also the legislative review for the Republic of Moldova, as well as the capacity building measures, included a gender perspective e.g. webinars and training courses addressed intersectional discrimination; ethnicity/disability and gender and a guide produced for the Audio-visual Council contains a specific chapter on sexism. Also, the *Child Protection project* considered gender mainstreaming in a number of activities such as carrying out research and analysis; when planning and organizing events, including the Children's Day event at the library; and in Training of Trainers. The *Education for democracy project* has a strong gender component and promotes gender

equity as part of the basic project concept. However, the path from the classroom to a possible societal change is too long to be meaningfully captured and demonstrated in a project evaluation. In the *Electoral Process project* enhancing women's representation and participation is one of four pillars; likewise the educational sector it is methodologically rather hard to trace the projects contribution to SDG 5.

Some other project descriptions contain a fairly detailed gender analysis, e.g. the impact of the media sector on gender stereotypes, but do not contain corresponding activities. **Many project designs do not show a focus on gender equality** and therefore it would be unrealistic to expect measurable success and contributions in this area. For some projects the utilization of international standards can make it difficult to mainstream gender, e.g. the *Anti-corruption project* is designed to follow-up on the outstanding GRECO recommendations. These do not suggest any gender specific course of action and there is hardly any analysis available if and how corruption in a society might affect men and women in different ways.

In all projects, CoE staff ensure that the **participation of men and women is as balanced as possible**. This is also documented, although interviews with CoE staff show that this is considered a relatively superficial measure of mainstreaming. In many sectors covered by sample projects there is a considerable gender imbalance e.g. prosecutors predominantly male, teachers or probation councillors predominantly female. For most projects addressing this imbalance is not the focus of the project. Therefore, although CoE staff try to promote a certain balance at the activity level e.g. selection of male participants when increasing the number of teacher trainers in the *Education for democracy project*, this is not visible at the outcome level of the project reports.

Likewise interviews have shown that all **projects work in a gender-conscious way when creating materials**. Content is checked so it does not reinforce existing prejudices and stereotypes. Teaching material developed within the *Education for democracy project* promotes a gender equality approach and values such as diversity, tolerance, knowledge and understanding of the self and the others.

The mechanism to consult on gender mainstreaming issues with the **Gender Advisor in Kyiv** works well and is utilized by staff. However, the large differences in how gender is addressed in the project descriptions and reports suggest that so far there is little harmonisation in this area within the CoE office in Chisinau. Recently CoE started a process to develop a network of persons promoting gender issues in all offices. These so called 'gender equality focal points' have just been appointed and are meant to echo the work of the 'gender advisor' in the country offices.

In terms of reporting on gender mainstreaming one interviewee expressed that while he found CoE to be very competent on the topic of gender justice, the reporting was often too abstract. In his opinion, general terms such as "taking gender into account" are used too often, while one rarely learns what this means in a concrete (project) context.

Nonetheless, the projects **contribute to four targets of SDG 5** to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls in the **thematic fields** of anti-discrimination; violence against women and girls; women's participation and equal opportunities at all levels of decision-making in political life; and the strengthening of policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.[29] For more details see annex 6 on SDG5.

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[29] Furthermore one interviewee indicated a contribution in the field of access to sexual and reproductive health stating that specific medical needs of women were accounted for during revisions of regulations on health care in prison. However the respective regulation was not yet enacted.

2.7.3 CoE visibility and facilitation of communication work

CoE consistently uses the usual **communication channels** such as its own website, social media and specific project websites, including the joint pages of the regional projects. Furthermore, project partners report on project-specific activities on their websites. In some cases programme specific newsletters were produced and distributed e.g. Programme for Good Governance with roughly 250 recipients, and print products such as project leaflets were used.

However, in the period evaluated, the communication position in the Chisinau Office was only **staffed by a specialist from May 2020 onwards**. Project-related communication work was done before but, due to lack of resources, little systematic evaluation of the communication approaches and results. With the establishment of the post, more content was posted more regularly, especially on the web, and new tools were used. E.g., the Facebook site was launched, which is updated at least once a day and currently reaches about 850 subscribers; a new newsletter was launched. Priority is to make information available in the Romanian language. Another objective is producing at least one press release a day, reaching about 200 media professionals.

Quantitatively, best coverage has been achieved in the context of larger events and on anniversaries. Examples are a television talk-show on the public TV channel, where the importance of the subject "Education for democratic societies" was discussed (and the assistance of the Council of Europe and SDC displayed), which reached an audience of approx. 100,000 people. Also, the European Day for the protection of children against sexual exploitation on 18.11.2020 was a success. William Massolin, Head of the CoE Office in Chisinau participated in the TV show "Dimensiunea Europeană", where an audience of approx. 60,000 persons was reached.[30] Further occasions like ECRI's 25th anniversary conference, Anti-corruption Day on 9th of December and the 25th anniversary of Republic of Moldova accessing the Council of Europe were used to further visibility.

To some extent, the communication work was also **complicated by the conditions of the pandemic**. For example, it was often not possible to distribute print products or give-aways at events. Some of these products are now being given away as a symbolic prize to participants in a children's competition for contributions on social rights (of children). In one project, savings from the budget line for events were also reallocated to visibility materials.

At the time of the evaluation, no systematic evaluation of the visibility work was available and there is still a need for clarification on the division of labour between project and communication staff. It should be noted, however, that the position was established when teleworking had already been introduced for the most part. This is a challenge, especially for a position with a cross-sectional function, as it has to coordinate with many others on an on-going basis.

Another aspect of visibility and communication is anchored in the content of the project work. CoE has supported the development of a **communication strategy in some institutions** (e.g. General Prosecutors Office, Centre for Continuous Electoral Training) and publishes **specialised publications**, some of which deal with sensitive issues such as e.g. pre-trial detention. Other contributions are aimed at a broader public, such as the series of human rights documentaries in the framework of the project on audio-visual regulation. This part of public relations supports professional communication within specific communities as well as the transparency of institutions and their communication with civil society and citizens.

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[30] In this regard one interviewee underlined the importance of the Head of Office also in regards to the visibility of the CoE as an institution: „I tend to have the impression it is often difficult to find Head of Offices, e.g. in Ukraine this positions was vacant for 1.5 years. It should be more promoted for member states to second people as Head of Offices. These people give a face to the CoE and create more visibility this way."

3. Concluding remarks, key lessons and recommendations

3.1 Relevance and coherence

The evaluation confirms that the AP's focus and priorities remain relevant to the context and needs in the Republic of Moldova. Both its development, as well as its on-going implementation, is based on extensive stakeholder consultation and negotiation. This, in turn, has contributed to a high level of ownership of project objectives and activities by partners which is indispensable to the projects' success. CoE standard setting, advisory and monitoring bodies such as ECRI, the Venice Commission, the CPT and GRECO set the way to operationalize priorities and design respective projects. Analysis gaps have been addressed through a number of (thematic) baseline studies. The AP demonstrates sufficient flexibility to address changes of context, emerging issues or windows of opportunity. Partners confirmed that the needs of their institutions especially with regard to capacity building needs is well incorporated on an ongoing basis.

AP project interventions are directly linked or very much in line with current or planned relevant sectoral policies, strategies or action plans. Projects are on the whole in line with relevant planning and implementation cycles of partner institutions. There is evidence of considerable knowledge exchange taking place beyond the AP project level. Established CoE programmes, such as HELP, offer great added value. At the same time, the AP projects contribute to the further development of capacity-building approaches that benefit CoE as a whole and can be disseminated to other member states.

Key lessons

- Stakeholder consultation and flexibility are essential to ensure the continuous relevance of the AP throughout the three-year implementation cycle, and partner ownership of AP project objectives and activities.

Recommendations

- CoE to continue standard practice of following a participatory approach to keep the sound and trustful working relationship the CoE Office has established with all relevant stakeholders.

- CoE to emphasize to donors that project designs and budgets need to allow for a certain level of flexibility to respond changing context or upcoming windows of opportunity.

- CoE to consider whether there is a specific contribution they can make to better coordination within the international community. This could include at project/sector level an assessment of challenges preventing systematic coordination and seeking ways reviving existing processes.

3.2 Effectiveness

Overall, the AP interventions show a high degree of effectiveness. Most activities continued with a good pace and produced concrete results in terms of legislation and policies, strengthening of institutions, adaptation of practice and in some cases to increased public awareness. Some projects led to the introduction of new and sometimes mandatory training cycles, improvements in existing training routines and the raising of commitment and awareness of relevant stakeholders and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogues, which feed into various processes. For three projects

(*Education for democracy, Electoral practice and Criminal justice 2*) the evaluators believe it to be likely that concrete benefits to end beneficiaries are in place, though an impact evaluation is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

In summary, the implementation of the AP has been satisfactory despite some unfavourable external factors such as an unstable political environment (in 2019, the Republic of Moldova had three Governments, three different parliamentary coalitions and the parliamentary elections of February 2019 led to a political crisis); and the COVID-19-pandemic in 2020.

Overall, all projects have responded well to the COVID-19 related constraints. Quite a number of activities were transferred to online-formats. In some cases a focus was set on types of activities, easier to transfer to online-formats. The latter implied that in some cases priorities were set based on the feasibility of activities, not always on urgency and importance. When interviewees were asked about positive and negative aspects of these adaptations they referred to a surprisingly high number of positive effects. The pandemic was thus not only experienced as a stressor, but also as an impulse that triggered or accelerated various innovations; especially in the area of IT-based solutions. In some activities, reservations about online solutions/alternatives were overcome. On the other hand, for some activities, especially study trips, some training activities and politically sensitive areas such as penitentiary monitoring, no adequate alternative solutions were found. Despite the creativity in dealing with the restrictions some challenges remain in place, incl. the realization of postponed activities.

Key lessons

- Political ownership and will are key factors influencing the effectiveness and sustainability of all interventions.

- Desired changes and reforms are often long-term and need either an uninterrupted sequence of projects over a longer time or at least sufficient resources for CoE to follow-up on key processes even when there are gaps between succeeding project interventions.

- Likewise, partners need sufficient resources to act not only at prime times, but also in a longer-term strategic sense e.g. developing the electoral system in between the actual elections.

- The pandemic-related restrictions triggered or accelerated innovation in some fields. Experience gained can be transferred to future implementation practice.

- Holistic learning processes have more impact than isolated training, especially if they are conducted alone and online under the given conditions

Recommendations

- CoE to explore systematically how training can be profitably combined with complementary forms of support such as coaching or job shadowing. This includes an assessment of the completion rate of online trainings and possibly the strengthening of blended learning formats.

- CoE to consider reallocating underspent from e.g. travel to equipment in cases when this facilitates synergies with other CoE projects, contributes to projects sustainability prospects (e.g. putting pilot measures in place) or strengthens partner institutions operational capacity under COVID-related restrictions, e.g. provision/upgrade of IT.

- CoE to consider an increased focus on working with potential change agents amongst new stakeholders, e.g. amongst newly founded associations of judges, prosecutor and lawyers.

3.3 Efficiency

Overall, partners perceive the management of AP projects to be efficient and responsive to changing context or needs. All partners highlighted a trusting and solid working relationships with CoE staff. A number of partners particularly noted the flexibility and commitment of CoE staff, as the COVID-19-pandemic advanced, to find alternative and online solutions to implement activities. Project steering committees are valued as an efficient tool providing for a multi-stakeholder project oversight. Management and steering of regional projects under the PGG II are somewhat more challenging. However, this could also be due to the fact that these projects are too ambitious in design for the resources available, especially when objectives at national and regional level are intertwined. This may be a project design rather than a management issue. There is evidence that project reports would benefit from a more analytical, evidence-based approach to results reporting, rather than focusing on describing processes.

Key lessons

- Donors expect a more result-oriented and "easier to read" reporting, at both project and AP level.

Recommendations

- CoE should reassess whether project goals have been set realistically in light of the political environment and other external factors and, based on this, take the available budgetary resources into consideration.

- In view of the point above, longer project time-frames should also be considered as some of the projects are relatively short with ambitious immediate and intermediate outcomes.

- CoE should aim to strengthen the evidence base of reported AP results and achievements, e.g. by supporting partners in assessing the mid- to long-term outcomes of trainings as part of their human resource management.

- Governmental actors of the Republic of Moldova should contribute to the evidence base of AP project results by defining and tracking their mid- to long-term capacity building goals from their respective institutional perspective.

3.4 Sustainability and Added Value

It can be concluded that AP achievements are likely to be sustained, in particular in terms of support to strengthening partner institutions, where a critical mass of staff trained increases the likelihood of newly acquired skills and knowledge being integrated into work routines. Strengthened training in sectoral institutions has led to new training modules being incorporated into their curricula. Equally, tools and processes for partner institutions to strengthen their organizational capacity and their mandates are likely to remain in place, as is IT infrastructure. A number of favourable factors have contributed to sustainability prospects, including ownership through the application of a participatory approach; use of both local and external expertise; use of innovative pilots; timeliness of project outputs; and the long-term commitment of the CoE. There are equally challenges that

relate to the overall political context and political party involvement and influence. These go beyond the AP scope on legislation and institutions. Broader societal transformation and changes in culture and attitudes can only be addressed over a longer-term time frame consisting of a number of AP life cycles. To this end projects such as the Education for democracy project is a valuable complementary approach to other AP projects as it reaches citizens in relevant numbers. Institution specific challenges such as staff turn-over and staff shortages also require a broader approach e.g. staff shortages in the education sector, in particular in rural areas, can only be tackled through an broader strategy to upgrade rural areas and make labour migration less attractive. Ultimately, this touches on questions of policy coherence that need to be addressed at a higher political level.

Partners and donors recognize the added value of the CoE as a standard setting and monitoring institution. The CoE gives credibility, in particular with regard to sensitive issues. The Action Plan guides concrete project development and provides a strategic longer-term commitment which is recognized by partner institutions. All sample projects have documented that they have coordinated with other actors and donors in the needs assessment and planning phase and adapted activities where necessary. However, a number of interviewees also noted that coordination within the international community in Moldova is mediocre and could be improved.

Key lessons

- Sustainable societal change requires societal acceptance of the values conveyed in European standards in addition to legislative or policy reform and strengthened institutions.

Recommendations

- In addition to legislative reform and institution strengthening the CoE should integrate a distinctive third component of citizens awareness and involvement. This can contribute to support broader societal change, thus ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes. This could be operationalised at project level, for example, including linkages with the Education for democracy project and/or by means of partnerships with other actors with campaigning expertise.

3.5 Transversal Issues

Sample projects show clear and traceable contributions both to SDG 16 and SDG 5. Contributions to SDG 16 are visible in terms of legislative and policy reform; various guidelines in line with international standards; and in particular in institutional strengthening. Contributions to SDG 5 are somewhat less pronounced, but nevertheless clearly exist. All interviewed CoE staff show consciousness and competence on gender issues and gender mainstreaming; the mechanism to consult with the Gender Advisor in Kyiv works satisfactorily. Depth of gender relevant analysis and subsequent project design varies considerably between different projects, as does the strength of the respective reporting.

The visibility and, in particular, the promotion of CoE activities in Romanian language has considerably improved with the introduction of a communication officer from May 2020 onwards. Quantitatively, the broadest coverage so far has been achieved in the context of larger events or conferences and on anniversaries. However, at the time of the evaluation, no comprehensive and systematic data on the visibility work and coverage of target groups was available, and there is still some need for clarification on the division of labour between the project staff and the communication staff in order to develop the work further.

The management of transversal tasks has been complicated by restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic as working from home can undermine working on cross-sectional functions and mainstreaming as these need on-going communication and harmonisation of approaches within the team in Chisinau.

Key lesson:

- Transversal issues including gender and visibility require follow-up and coordination at country management level and on operational DGs level in Strasbourg.

Recommendations

- CoE should continue its efforts to facilitate gender mainstreaming through the recently established gender focal point in Chisinau office. This cross-cutting responsibility could e.g. foster the thematic exchange between the project officers; or the presentation of the gender mainstreaming of individual projects within the framework of team meetings e.g. once a month for rotating projects.

- CoE should reconsider how contributions to gender equality can be integrated at the level of project objectives in addition to the level of analysis and activities (via mainstreaming). Results of gender mainstreaming activities will be monitored more systematically if they correspond to project objectives and indicators.

- CoE should continue its efforts to develop and strengthen the AP and project communications strategies in order to focus on more strategic messaging in addition to promoting its visibility. To this end, a form of standardised reporting could be introduced that compiles some key figures on users of the various communication tools as well as highlights and opportunities. The reporting should be designed as a practical working tool to promote the further development of visibility.

Annexes

Annex 1 Selected sample projects for the AP Moldova evaluation

Id	Name	Status	Funding Type	Start Date	End Date	Project Duration	Total Amount
Action Plan Chapter I – Human Rights I.2. Promoting Human Rights and Dignity							
1841	Protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the Republic of Moldova	Finalized	VC	15/10/2018	31/03/2020	18	400,000
2617	Combating violence against children in the Republic of Moldova	Ongoing	VC	01/04/2020	31/12/2021	21	400,000
2354	Strengthening the access to justice through non-judiciary redress mechanisms for victims of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Eastern Partnership countries	Ongoing	JP PGG II REGIONAL	01/01/2019	31/12/2021	36	105,425
Action Plan Chapter II – Rule of Law II.1. Ensuring Justice							
2349	Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova	Ongoing	JP PGG II	01/12/2019	30/09/2021	35	420,000
1346	Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova, component 1	Ongoing	VC	01/01/2018	28/02/2021	38	1,642,284
1976	Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova, component 2	Ongoing	VC	01/01/2018	28/02/2021	36	1,196,716
II.2. Strengthening the rule of law							
2727	Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova	Ongoing	VC	01/03/2020	30/04/2021	14	310,000
II.3. Countering threats to the rule of law							
2744	Action against corruption in the Republic of Moldova	Ongoing	VC	01/06/2020	30/11/2021	10	250,000
III. Democracy II.1. Strengthening democratic governance and fostering innovation							
1784	Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova	Ongoing	VC	14/04/2018	31/12/2020	33	403,000
III.2. Promoting participation and diversity							
1794	Education for democracy in the Republic of Moldova	Ongoing	VC	01/01/2019	31/12/2022	48	1,080,000

List of Council of Europe Action Plan for Moldova 2017-2020 funded country-specific and regional projects

Action Plan Chapter I – Human Rights	
I.1. Protecting Human Rights	
I.2. Promoting Human Rights and Dignity	
VC 2641 Mapping study of national responses to address hate speech in Republic of Moldova	01/11/2019-31/03/2021
VC 1840 End online child sexual exploitation and abuse@Europe- REGIONAL	1/07/2018-30/06/2021
VC 2692 Awareness-raising activities on the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova	13/01/2020-12/10/2020
VC 1841 Protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the Republic of Moldova	15/10/2018-31/03/2020
VC 2617 Combating violence against children in the Republic of Moldova	01/04/2020-31/12/2021
VC 2739 Framing cooperation for social rights development in the Republic of Moldova	01/06/2020- 31/12/2020
JP 2354 PGG II REGIONAL: Strengthening the access to justice through non-judiciary redress mechanisms for victims of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Eastern Partnership countries	01/01/2019-31/12/2021
JP 2073 PGG II REGIONAL: Women's Access to Justice: delivering on the Istanbul Convention and other European gender equality standards in the Eastern Partnership countries	01/01/2019-31/12/2021
Action Plan Chapter II – Rule of Law	
II.1. Ensuring Justice	
JP 2349 PGG II- Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova	01/04/2019-30/11/2021
JP 2350 PGG II- Strengthening the capacities of the justice sector actors to deliver justice in line with European standards, in particular to fight discrimination, in the Republic of Moldova	01/04/2019-31/12/2021
VC 1346 Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova, component 1	01/01/2018- 28/02/2021
VC 1976 Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova, component 2	01/01/2018- 28/02/2021
II.2. Strengthening the rule of law	
VC 2727 Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova	01/03/2020 - 30/04/2021
II.3. Countering threats to the rule of law	
JP 293 Controlling corruption through law enforcement and prevention (CLEP) – Moldova	01/06/2017-31/05/2020
VC 2523 Strengthening human-rights based responses to substance use disorders in prisons	01/05/2019 – 30/04/2021
VC 2744 Action against corruption in the Republic of Moldova	01/06/20 – 30/11/2021
JP 2352 Strengthening measures to prevent and combat economic crime- REGIONAL	01/01/2019-31/12/2021
JP 2350 PGG II REGIONAL: Strengthening the profession of lawyer in line with European standards	01/07/2019-31/12/2021
JP 2088 CyberEast - Action on Cybercrime for Cyber Resilience in the Eastern Partnership region- REGIONAL	20/06/2019 - 20/06/2022
Action Plan Chapter III – Democracy	
III.1. Strengthening democratic governance and fostering innovation	
VC 1784 Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova	14/04/2018- 28/02/2021
VC 2742 Reinforcing the culture of dialogue and consultation of local authorities in the Republic of Moldova – Phase I	01/06/2020-31/05/2021
VC 2033 Confidence building measures across the river Nistru/Dniester	14/05/2018-31/12/2020
III.2. Promoting participation and diversity	
VC 1794 Education for democracy in the Republic of Moldova	01/01/2019-31/12/2022

Annex 2 Evaluation matrix

LEAD QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	MEASURES/INDICATORS	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT(S)	DATA SOURCES
EVALUATION CRIERIA: RELEVANCE				
1. To what extent are the Council of Europe's projects in line with the needs and priorities of the Republic of Moldova?	1. Do the sample projects correspond to real problems, needs and priorities of the country and its stakeholders?	• Extent to which the sample projects correspond to real problems, needs and priorities of the country and its stakeholders • Nature and extent of stakeholder input into analysis	• Document review • Key informant interviews	• Project documents, relevant external documentation • Project partners, Chisinau project staff
EVALUATION CRITERIA: COHERENCE				
2. Is the AP coherent to relevant governmental strategies and policies?	2. Are the sample projects coherent to governmental policies, strategies and action plans and aligned to planning and implementation cycles?	• Extent to which the sample projects refer to existing policies, strategies, action plans • Extent to which implementation of the sample project is aligned to governmental planning and implementation cycles	• Document review • Key informant interviews	• Project documents • Chisinau project staff; project partners
3. To what extent has the Council of Europe been able to put its comparative advantage and expertise into action and create inter-linkages between projects and Council of Europe instruments during the implementation of the Action Plan?	3. Do sample projects coordinate with other relevant AP projects e.g. to share knowledge and approaches, implement joint activities?	• Extent to which there are formal or informal processes in place and used to facilitate coordination between relevant projects e.g. to share knowledge • Evidence of coordination facilitating synergy between sample projects and other projects	• Document review • Key informant interviews	• Project reports • AP Manager, Chisinau project staff
EVALUATION CRITERIA: EFFECTIVENESS AND ADDED VALUE				
4. To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan achieved their objectives?	4. To what extent have the sample projects achieved their expected results and contributed to the AP sector objectives and priorities?	• Extent to there is evidence of progress to project objectives and results as stated in project descriptions/logical frameworks • Extent of sample project contribution to AP sectoral objectives/result	• Document review • Key informant interviews	• AP, project reports • Chisinau project staff, project partners
5. Which factors have supported and hindered the effectiveness of the projects?	5. Which internal and external factors enhanced or hindered the performance of and results achieved by the sample projects?	• Project reporting identifies contributory factors to project performance; • Extent to which project management responds effectively to positive and negative factors affecting performance.	• Document review • Key informant interviews	• AP, project reports • AP Manager, Chisinau project staff, project partners

6. What was/is have COVID-19 related restrictions affected the effectiveness of the Action Plan implementation?	6. To what extent has the implementation of sample project been affected by pandemic-related restrictions?	• Evidence of pandemic-related impact on the sample projects in such areas as: minimising negative impact on the vulnerable populations; comprehensive information flow; safety of actions to the Council of Europe staff, experts and population; respect of government response plans/recommendations	• Document review • Key informant interviews	• Any relevant 2020 documents, response plans etc. • Chisinau project staff; project partners
7. To what extent has the Council of Europe been able to adapt the way its projects work to ensure continuity of its activities in view of the restrictions related to the global health crisis?	7. In what way has the implementation of sample projects been adjusted to pandemic-related limitations?	• Evidence/examples of adjustment measures of sample projects	• Document review • Key informant interviews	• Any relevant 2020 documents, response plans etc. • Chisinau project staff; project partners, donors
8. To what extent did the fact that projects were/are part of the Action Plan contribute to the achievement of project objectives?		• Evidence of AP added value to the sample project achievements	• Document review • Key informant interviews	• AP, project reports • AP Manager, Chisinau HoM, donors
EVALUATION CRITERIA: EFFICIENCY				
9. Is the AP implemented efficiently?	9. Is the management and oversight of the sample projects and AP appropriate for the project purpose and the country context? How might this be improved?	• Management of sample projects perceived as responsive and efficient by primary stakeholders • Oversight of sample projects e.g. through Steering Committee perceived as efficient by primary stakeholders	• Document review • Key informant interviews	• Project reports • AP Manager, Chisinau project staff; relevant CoE staff in Strasbourg; Steering Committee Members, project partners
EVALUATION CRITERIA: SUSTAINABILITY				
10. To what extent has the Council of Europe contributed to the sustainability of reforms and capacities in The Republic of Moldova?	10. To what extent are the achievements of the sample projects likely to be sustainable over time?	• Extent to which results of the sample projects are likely to be without further financial support. • Evidence of CoE sample project contribution • Evidence of alternative contributions (e.g. by other stakeholders)	• Key informant interviews	• Chisinau project staff; project partners
EVALUATION CRITERIA: TRANSVERSAL ISSUES				
11. In what way have the projects contributed to gender equality (by mainstreaming gender)?	11. Do the sample projects mainstream gender? In what way?	• Extent to which the sample projects mainstream gender into planning, implementation and monitoring	• Document review • Key informant interviews	• Project reports • Chisinau project staff; partner organisations

	11.1 Were there different outcomes for men and women?	• Extent to which there is evidence of differing outcomes for women and men		
12. To which extent does the Action Plan contribute to SDG 5 and SDG 16?	12. Do sample projects contribute to SDG 5 and SDG 16?	• Extent to which a contribution by the sample projects to any of the 12 targets of SDG16 or the 9 targets of SDG 5 could be established.	• Document review	• Project reports; SDG related documents
13. To which extent has the Council of Europe visibility been ensured in the Action Plan implementation?	13. Do the sample projects ensure visibility?	• Communication plans with clear aims; communication channels and target audiences in place • Projects communicate effectively e.g. through online and electronic media, information campaigns, press; • Projects monitor visibility results	• Document review • Key informant interviews	• Project reports, any additional relevant documentation • Chisinau project staff; partner organisations

Annex 3 Document list

Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020; Progress Review Report (1 January 2017 – 31 October 2019).

Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020, Action Plan-level Annual Report for donors; period covered: 01/01/2017 to 31/12/2017.

Council of Europe Action Plan for Moldova 2017-2020, Action Plan-level Annual Report for donors, period covered: 01/01/2018 to 31/12/2018.

Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020, Action Plan-level Annual Report for donors, period covered: 01/01/2019 to 31/12/2019.

VC/1841: Protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the Republic of Moldova: Project summary.

VC/1841: Protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the Republic of Moldova: Logframe and workplan.

VC/1841: Protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the Republic of Moldova: Annual Report 2019.

VC/2617: Combatting violence against children in the Republic of Moldova: Draft progress report 2020 (01/04/2020 – 31/12/2020).

2354-PGGII: 17. Strengthening the Access to Justice through Non-Judicial Redress Mechanisms for Victims of Discrimination, Hate Crime and Hate Speech in Eastern Partnership Countries: Draft project description.

2354-PGGII: 17. Strengthening the Access to Justice through Non-Judicial Redress Mechanisms for Victims of Discrimination, Hate Crime and Hate Speech in Eastern Partnership Countries: Annual Report 2019.

2354-PGGII: 17. Strengthening the Access to Justice through Non-Judicial Redress Mechanisms for Victims of Discrimination, Hate Crime and Hate Speech in Eastern Partnership Countries: Six-Monthly Report January-June 2020 (01/01/2020-30/06/2020).

2354-PGGII: 17. Strengthening the Access to Justice through Non-Judicial Redress Mechanisms for Victims of Discrimination, Hate Crime and Hate Speech in Eastern Partnership Countries: Bi-Monthly Report July-September 2020 (01/07/2020-30/09/2020).

2354-PGGII: 17. Strengthening the Access to Justice through Non-Judicial Redress Mechanisms for Victims of Discrimination, Hate Crime and Hate Speech in Eastern Partnership Countries: Looking back and looking ahead: enhancing equality in the Eastern Partnership. Working document for the Technical Project Committee of the PGG regional project "Strengthening access to justice, through non-judicial redress mechanisms, for victims of discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech in the Eastern Partnership countries", 17 September 2020.

JP 2349 PGG II: Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova: Project description.

Promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova: Extrabudgetary proposal.

VC/1346: Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova (Component 1): Project description.

VC/1346: Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova (Component 1): Draft progress report 2020.

VC/1346 an VC/1976: Promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova: Project report 2018.

VC/1346 an VC/1976: Promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova: Project report 2019.

VC/1976: Promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova: Progress report under component II of the Programme, January-June 2020.

VC/1976: Promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova: Activities Work Plan for the period from July to September 2020 under component II of the Programme

Council of Europe: Report on the research on the application of pre-trial detention in the Republic of Moldova

VC/2727: Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova, project description

VC/2727: Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova, work plans March – Dec. 2020

VC/2727: Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova, Analysis of the national audience, web consumption and market trends, in the framework of a children's radio development for the National Public Broadcaster "Teleradio-Moldova"

VC/2727: Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova, Assessment Report Key assessments, findings and recommendations to strengthen the Ombudsperson Service within the National Public Broadcaster, TeleradioMoldova

VC/2727: Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova, Analysis of legal normative acts of the audiovisual council of the Republic of Moldova (January 2019 – July 2020)

VC/2727: Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova, Technical paper. Roadmap of the design and development of a children's radio station within the national public broadcaster Teleradio-Moldova.

VC/2727: Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova, Newsroom Convergence Strategy Public Service Broadcaster "Teleradio-Moldova"

VC/2744: Action against corruption in the Republic of Moldova, situation report June – Aug. 2020

VC/2744: Action against corruption in the Republic of Moldova, project inception, Sept. 2020

VC/2744: Action against corruption in the Republic of Moldova, workplan

VC/1784: Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova, project description

VC/1784: Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova, project report 2028

VC/1784: Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova, project report 2019

CoE, Division of elections and civil society, activity report 2020

CoE, Division of elections and civil society: Useful Relevant Sustainable Owned For electoral co-operation. Toolkit for strategic planning and prioritisation of electoral co-operation

VC/1794: Education for democracy in the Republic of Moldova, project description

VC/1794: Education for democracy in the Republic of Moldova, project report 2019

Coe: Reference Framework of competences for democratic cultures. Volumes 1-3.

Magenta Consulting: Baseline study of the FACE (Fostering Active Civic engagement) program, Jan. 2020

Annex 4 Interview list

Council of Europe
1. Shahin Abbasov
2. Zahra Ahmadova, Senior Project Officer, Economic Crime and Cooperation Division (ECCD) DG I - Directorate general of Human rights and Rule of Law
3. Leonid Antohi, Project Coordinator, CEPEJ Cooperation Programmes
4. Sergei Bazarya, Co-ordinator, the EU Eastern Partnership's countries
5. Nelea Bugaevski, Senior Project Officer, CoE Office in Chisinau
6. Ana Chiriac
7. Violeta Frunze, Senior Project Officer, CoE Office Chisinau
8. Zaruhi Gasparyan, Project Coordinator, Children's Rights Division, DG II - Directorate of Human Dignity and Equality
9. Mara Georgescu, Senior Project Officer, Directorate General of Democracy, Anti-Discrimination Department, No Hate Speech and Co-operation programmes Unit
10. Ruslan Grebencea, Project Coordinator, CEPEJ Cooperation Programmes
11. Mirka Honko, Senior Project Officer, Children's Rights Division, DG II - Directorate of Human Dignity and Equality
12. Tigran Karapetyan, Project Coordinator in Strasbourg, Head of the Unit, Eastern Partnership
13. Sarah Keating, Head, Division of Co-operation and Capacity Building Education Department - DG II Democracy
14. Gennadiy Kosyak, Deputy Head of Electoral Assistance and Civil Society Division Good Governance Department, DG II – Democracy, Strasbourg
15. Dumitru Lazur, Senior Project Officer, Chisinau
16. William Massolin, Head of Office in Chisinau
17. Natalia Moghilda, Communication Officer, Chisinau
18. Nadejda Plamadeala, Senior Project Officer, Council of Europe Office in Chisinau
19. Margareta Platon
20. Lucia Popescu, Project Officer, CoE Office in Chisinau
21. Ivan Raluca
22. Tanja Rakusic-Hadzic, Head of the Criminal Law Cooperation Unit, Strasbourg
23. Giulia Re, Deputy Head of Office in Chisinau
24. Anastasiia Saliuk, Programme Manager, CoE Office in Chisinau
25. Sergiu Tatarov, Senior Project Officer
26. Guray Vural, Advisor, Resource Mobilisation and Donor Relations Division, Strasbourg

Donor Agencies and International Stakeholders
27. Ms Liv Maren Røste, Senior adviser, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
28. Daniela Vidaicu, Programme Officer, Embassy of Sweden, SIDA
29. Radu Danii National Program Officer Swiss Cooperation Office, Representation of the Embassy of Switzerland to Moldova
30. Ion Donea, Project Manager, UNFPA

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Agency for Court Administration
31. Victoria Palanciuc, Director

Centre for Continuous Electoral Training
32. Doina BORDEIANU, Head of the Centre
33. Marcela Rosca, Civic Education

Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova
34. Rodica Sirbu, Head of IT
35. Alexandru Balmos, Voter Lists Department

Education district level implementation
36. Galina Gumen, Briceni Education Department

Equality Council
37. Ian Feldman, Head of the Equality Council
38. Olga Bulmaga, Head of Administrative Office

General Police Inspectorate
39. Galina Pleșca, Deputy Head, International Relations and European Affairs Directorate

General Prosecutors Office
40. Gheorghe Bors, Policies, Reforms and Project Management Division

Mediation Council
41. Felicia Chifa, President of the Mediation Council
42. Elena Damaschin, Secretary of the Mediation Council

Ministry of Education, Culture and Research
43. Corina Lungu, Senior Adviser
44. Maria Vrinceanu, Main consultant, General Education Department
45. Lilia Parhomenco, Adviser, National in-service teacher training and University component

Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection
46. Anastasia Gruzin, Head of the Department for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and Families with Children Policies

Ministry of Internal Affairs
47. Artur Degteariov, Head of Section 3, Cybercrime Investigation Department

Ministry of Justice
48. Radu Foltea, State Secretary
49. Lilia Rusu, Chief of Policy Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation Department

National Administration of Penitentiaries
50. Cojocaru Vladimir, Director a.i. of the National Administration of Penitentiaries (NAP)
51. Jubea Vasile, Head a.i. of Directorate General of Institutional Management, NAP
52. Bușmachiu Vladislav, Deputy Head a.i of Directorate General of Institutional Management, NAP
53. Dohotaru Varvara, Head of Social Reintegration Direction / Detention Directorate, NAP
54. Crudu Alexandru, Head of Legal Directorate
55. Irina Barbîroș, Head of Medical Directorate
56. Ciutac Ludmila, Head of External cooperation and programmes
57. Ermurachi Elena, Deputy Head of the NAP Training Centre
58. Boțaniuc Svetlana, Head of Penitentiary theory and practice of the NAP Training Centre
59. Victor Murat, NAP
60. Tatjana Bruma, NAP

National Centre for Child Abuse Prevention (CNPAC)
61. Daniela Simboteanu
62. Iulia Gheorghies

National Council for the Prevention of Torture
63. Ceslav Panico
64. Mihail Gorincioi

National Institute of Justice
65. Ms. Diana Scobioala, Director
66. Valentin Rosca, Continuous Training Head
67. Ecaterina Popa, Training Reseach Head

National Public Broadcaster Company, TeleRadio Moldova
68. Natalia Beregoi

National Probation Inspectorate
69. Andrei Iavorschi, Director
70. Vitalie Renita (Legal Department)
71. Bogheau Rodica (Human Resources Department)
72. Alla Soroceau (Probation Department)
73. Iurie Mahu (Analytical Department)

National Union of Enforcement Agents
74. Valeriu Devderea, Chair
75. Oxana Novicov, General Secretary

People's Advocate Ombudsperson Office
76. Svetlana Rusu, Head of the Investigation and Monitoring Direction
77. Olga Vacarciuc, Secretary General
78. Alexandru Zubco, Head of Torture Prevention Division

Promo-LEX
79. Nicolae Panfil, Programme Coordinator
80. Irina Corobcenco, Education Programme Manager

Representative of the core group of 20 national experts for teacher training
81. Iosif Moldovanu, education expert

Superior Council of Magistracy
82. Victor Micu, Member Judge and former Chair

Superior Council of Prosecutors
83. Angela Motuzoc, President of the SCP
84. Eugeniu Rosca, Head of the Protocol Service

Supreme Court of Justice
85. Liliana Catana, Judge, Head of the Criminal Board

Annex 5 Coherency with policies, strategies and action plans

Child protection projects:

- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection (MoHLSP) is completing the final year of its 2014-2020 Child Protection Strategy and is now in the process to develop the new 2021-2025 strategy and corresponding action plan with support of UNICEF. The new strategy will include reference to sexual and online abuse.
- The project focus on stakeholder coordination is in line with the current revision of Government Decision 270 on intersectoral cooperation. The Mechanism was designed to enable specialists at community level tow work together including social workers, teachers and doctors.
- Prevention of abuse is part of the current Education Sector Plan 2014-2020 as well as in the succeeding strategy, the latter introducing also parental education.
- A new action plan for online child safety currently being developed by the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure.

Anti-discrimination project:

- Coherent with the new police development strategy effective from 2021 onwards which includes a specific objective to revise GPI data collection in terms of hate crime.

Anti-discrimination project/Judicial efficiency project/Criminal justice projects (components 1 and 2)/ Anti-corruption project:

- Recommendations of the study on pre-trial detention are reflected in the newly approved 2021-2024 justice sector reform Strategy and Action Plan, e.g., the mainstreaming and simplification of criminal prosecution. The Strategy directly refers to improved quality of judicial statistics including reference to anti-discrimination and human rights as a cross-cutting issue. All anti-corruption activities are in line with the Strategy.

Audio-visual regulation project:

- Project in line with Audio-visual Media Service Code adopted in 2018 and with the Media Development Strategy 2018-2025.

Electoral practice project:

- Project enhances the capacities of national electoral bodies at all levels to realize transparent, fair and inclusive elections in the Republic of Moldova in line with the respective legislation in place at the time of elections (the electoral system was changed from the proportional system to a mixed electoral system and later on changed back to a proportional system).
- Respective strategies were developed as part of the project activities.

Education for democracy project:

- The 2016 Education Code provides for the development of social and civic competences as core competences and sets out new requirements for democratic rule in schools.
- This is further emphasized in the Education-2020 Strategy.
- The National Human Rights Action Plan for the period 2018-2020 includes education for human rights a national priority, and provides for the modernization of curricula, provision of teaching materials and teacher training.

Annex 6 Project specific processes and results

Protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the Republic of Moldova (VC 1841) / Combating violence against children in the Republic of Moldova (VC 2617)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: VC 1841 was implemented from October 2018 to March 2020, and was followed immediately by VC 2617 in April 2020. Both projects follow a similar intervention logic which aims to ensure the implementation of relevant CoE conventions and international standards, in particular the Lanzarote Convention; to strengthen capacities of stakeholders to respond to violence and abuse against children; and to increase public awareness. Since various pilot activities from the first project are being rolled out or followed up in the second project, the evaluation does not differentiate between the results achieved in the first and follow up projects.

RESULTS:
- The recommendations of a "Baseline study on systemic issues affecting the child protection system's response to child sexual exploitation and abuse"[31]were incorporated into the law on free legal assistance guaranteed by the state, modified in July 2020[32] as well as in a draft government decision to approve the draft law, due to be approved by Parliament in 2021, to amend some normative acts ensuring the rights of victims in the case of sexual offenses.
- Various governmental and CSO partners highlighted as a project achievement the initiation of a coordination platform to address previous low levels of involvement and coordination, leading to: (a) the ability to discuss sexual violence against children in a wider circle and thus to counteract the widespread social taboo surrounding the topic; (b) the mobilization of all relevant stakeholders, including relevant Ministries, social services, and CSOs; (c) increased governmental responsibility. For example, the government is now committed to initiate a formal Working Group to help coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the Lanzarote Convention, an obligation under Art. 10 of the Convention. The MoHLSP issued a decision to create a working group to develop the new Strategy for child rights protection which would include areas that are currently covered only by CSOs, e.g., assistance for child victims; (d) increased inter-ministerial cooperation, e.g. the Cybercrime Investigation Department of the MoIA cooperated with the MoE on the development of online educational classes on internet safety; (e) a focus of Social Services on sexual abuse of children, in addition to family violence or neglect of children.
- The project has strengthened the capacities of both legal and education sector professionals. In the education sector, the project also introduced the *Kiko and the Hand* training module and manual based on material within its ONE in FIVE Campaign to Stop Sexual Violence Against Children. The initial piloting included 60 early education teachers from 25 Kindergartens in 12 districts.[33] The Ministry of Education will include this tool as part of the national curriculum for teachers.[34] Legal sector professionals have been trained through HELP online courses on child-friendly justice (CFJ) and on family law and human rights collaboration with the NIJ.
- The project campaign has contributed to increased public awareness of the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse. An exhibition on online sexual abuse against children launched in November 2019 covered 12 districts and included an online version which reached c.10,000 people on site and c.72.000 people online.[35] The National Centre for Child Abuse Prevention (CNCAP) noted a good level of response to the campaign e.g. schools integrated the exhibition into mandatory personal development courses and requested it be rolled out to other districts.
- The Kiko and the Hand video was launched on six TV Channels, generating 2,678,365 views including an estimated 41,358 children aged 4 to 7 and 31,870 children aged 8 to 14.[36] Campaign activities generated increased media interest on the online abuse of children, as witnessed by increased interview and statement requests to the MoIA Cybercrime Investigation Department. Interviews suggest that the projects contributed to change of attitude and practice, as is evident through the growing number of reported and registered cases of sexual abuse and exploitation.

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[31] https://rm.coe.int/baseline-study-on-systemic-issues-aff-ecting-the-child-protection-syst/16809fa8f1
[32] Law on amending certain legislative acts no 113 of 09.07.20.
[33] Figures provided from the Ministry of Education during the interview.
[34]"Kiko and the Hand" is a children's book that explains "The Underwear Rule" to children. See: https://edoc.coe.int/en/6-10-years/5536-brochure-kiko-and-the-hand.html
[35] Figures provided by CNAP.
[36] Data taken from 2020 annual project report.

Strengthening the access to justice through non-judiciary redress mechanisms for victims of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech (PGGII)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The regional project is part of the CoE EU Partnership for Good Governance 2019-2021 (PGGII). It aims to increase the access of victims of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech to non-judicial redress mechanisms. To that end, the project aims to align anti-discrimination policies to European standards; to strengthen the capacities of equality bodies and NGOs; and to increase the awareness of the general population on the work of equality bodies.

RESULTS:
- The CoE provided two legislative reviews for the Ministry of Justice of the draft laws no 121 on ensuring equality and no 298 on the activity of the Council for Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality.[37] The preparedness of the MoJ to take CoE expert opinion into account and to defend changes in Parliament is a key interim result for the CoE. The CoE also supported partner institutions in their work on the Parliamentary adoption of draft law no 301, e.g.by arranging ECRI support for the Promo-LEX online advocacy campaign on the draft law.
- Partners identified the following achievements in relation to the increased harmonisation of data collection on discrimination, hate crime and hate speech: (a) the initiation of a working group on data collection brought relevant actors to the table and the equality bodies confirmed increased ownership by public authorities especially the MoIA and the Prosecutors Office; (b) a joint understanding of the importance of data collection e.g. as a policy tool, and the willingness of law enforcement to address relevant capacity gaps; (c) an agreement to move the process forward at technical level e.g. partners highlighted the development of disaggregated indicators on victims as an important step towards a more victim-centred approach[38]; (d) concrete steps towards effective data collection, e.g. the Ombudsoffice confirms that CoE recommendations on hate crime indicators feed into their intranet system. Data will be collected by the beginning of 2021.
- There is evidence of progress in the capacity strengthening of equality bodies and NGOs. The Equality Council confirmed increased capacity to review and analyse more complex cases, e.g., those relating to the European Charter for Economic Rights. The newly developed Ethical Code of the Equality Council is seen by other countries as good practice, e.g., Polish equality body representatives have requested the document to use as an example. The development of a guide to prepare *amicus curiae* opinions has been key to improving the quality of opinions increasingly reflected in court decisions. The regional four-month HELP training has generated learning progress as evidenced by training reports in which participants have specifically asked for follow-up courses. The Equality bodies stressed that new knowledge has been directly applied into work routines.
- The NGO Promo-LEX confirmed that HELP trainings resulted in the identification of further actions, e.g. addressing perpetrators of hate speech and drafting of law assessments. The NGO has established a trainer programme for youth on the basis of the HELP methodology and subsequently involved training participants in hate speech monitoring. The newly formed coalition on inclusion and non-discrimination gained knowledge on anti-discrimination through the project's webinars.[39]
- The project plans to assists building GPI capacity on hate speech/hate crime. A ToT for approx. 18 trainers should ensure coverage of around 1950 police and criminal investigators.
- CoE research on hate crime justified the inclusion of hate speech in the PGG project, and led to a two-month training course, the mid-term on which indicates learning progress.
- The CoE included Audio-visual Council as the only institution with a clear mandate to act on hate speech but that has somehow remained inactive.[40] This has been viewed by partners as a good strategic move. In Sept. 2020 the project supported equality bodies in a public call to electoral candidates and the media to refrain from hate speech during the electoral campaign. The effect of the campaign appears to remain limited. Promo-LEX observed a surge in hate speech by candidates and politicians during the run up of the presidential elections on November 1st, 2020.[41]

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[37] https://rm.coe.int/opinion-2019-final/16809a6265
[38] According to the GPI a legal basis to add specifically aggregated categories is necessary. There has been an agreement with the Ministry of the Interior to allow for data collected on e.g., sexual orientation, age or ethnic background.
[39] The coalition consists of 14 NGOs and an individual activist. It includes larger organizations as well as NGOs working i.a. on LGBT, disability and youth. Its overall aim is to advocate for the further improvement of different laws related to anti-discrimination. The secretariat of coalition obtains financial support from the Eastern Europe Foundation by means of a 4-year project.
[40] E.g., at present the CoE is developing a guide on hate speech for the Audio-visual council. The drafting process is seen as a capacity building activity for the Audio-visual Council.
[41] https://promolex.md/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/RAPORT-nr.-4_MO-Promo-LEX_APr_2020_Eng.pdf

Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova (JP 2349 PGG II)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: This project builds upon recommendations developed under the 2015-2017 pilot project "Strengthening the efficiency of justice and support to lawyer's profession in the Republic of Moldova".[42] The project has completed its first year of implementation and aims to further roll out the CEPEJ methodology and CEPEJ-STAT judicial statistics. In addition, the current project aims to improve the enforcement of court decisions in civil and administrative cases. The project will run for one more year, with a possible extension of up to six months currently under discussion.

RESULTS:
- The previous project produced two reports with recommendations for the roll-out of CEPEJ tools which now form the basis of work in progress. This includes the development of a model for annual court performance reports; an updated version of a commentary for law enforcement; a methodology to measure access to justice for vulnerable groups on the basis of CoE and UN standards; and, jointly with the NIJ, an improved training programme on court management.
- Both, CoE and partners confirm that the project has established a common understanding on needs and the way forward, by bringing together relevant partners and establishing a good level of cooperation.
- The pilot phase of CEPEJ tools turned out to be time consuming which caused a certain level of frustration amongst staff in pilot courts. The Agency for Court Administration has now received feedback that CEPEJJ tools have increased the efficiency of the pilot courts. Partners now expect that the application of CEPEJ tools will increase efficiency of all courts, based on pilot phase results.
- Partners stressed that integrated file management, which electronically generates relevant statistics based on CEPEJ performance indicators, also strengthens the monitoring capacities of institutions. In particular the Audit Services of the Agency for Court Administration stressed that capacity previously spent on tedious manual data collection are now freed up and a greater focus can be placed on analysing and deriving necessary corrective measures.
- Interviews suggest that partners expect the project to contribute to increased transparency of the judicial system. A survey to measure court user satisfaction was repeatedly tested by the pilot courts and will now be rolled-out to all courts. The Agency for Court Administration stressed that data collected through the pilot survey gives a good picture of end user satisfaction. It has fostered an understanding amongst pilot courts on the need to obtain feedback from end users.
- The NIJ confirmed that the CEPEJ ToT strengthened the methodological competences of the training institute. For example, NIJ trainers were involved in the development of text books on the European Convention on Human Rights. In addition, the text books have provided added value for training participants.
- With regard to improved enforcement of court decisions, progress on the introduction of an updated electronic register for enforcement agents is hampered by differing views of the National Union of Enforcement Agents and the MoJ on whether the Union should be allowed to continue to use an updated version of its own or a MoJ run software for the registry.[43] This needs to be resolved before moving forward. The Union indicated that it sees the project as an opportunity for CoE to act as mediator on this issue.

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[42] The project had been part of the EU CoE Partnership for Good Governance (PGG I).

[43] An electronic register for enforcement agents had been planned for as part of a reform in 2010. As this had not been forthcoming the National Union of Enforcement Agents invested into an electronic register. Whereas the MoJ is of the opinion that this system should be state-run, the Union points out that they believe to have a more functional system which could be updated. According to the Union a number of enforcement agents are reluctant to fill register or fear the introduction of state register which they see as not fully functional.

Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova, comp. 1 (VC 1346)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project "Promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova" is funded by the Government of Norway.[44] Starting in September 2018, it is a three-year project. The project consists of two components: To enhance criminal justice administration through a coherent criminal justice policy and legislation and to work towards effective prevention of human rights violations within the criminal justice system through external monitoring and civil society involvement.

RESULTS:
- Crucial issues on the application of criminal justice are addressed through research on the application of pre-trial detention and on criminal sanctions, and a needs assessment on mediation in criminal cases. Participatory research processes have led to a joint understanding of stakeholders of the status quo of pre-trial detention.
- 1375 judges, prosecutors and other legal and relevant professionals benefitted from a large number of HELP training courses and other workshops.[45] Post-training evaluations in 2019 revealed a satisfaction level of 4.8 out of 5.0 by participants.[46] At times completion rates of HELP courses seem to be moderate. Partner interviews confirmed that training interventions enhanced knowledge and skills, and a critical mass of legal professionals in the country has been reached. According to the GPO the trainings, as well as the distribution of relevant publications, has resulted in the provision of stronger evidence by prosecutors with increasingly direct reference to the ECHR, evidenced by case documentation.[47] Training is integrated into the NIJ curricula, contributing to the mandatory continuous education of the judiciary and prosecution.[48]
- The SCP confirmed increased capacity to implement their mandate, such as on the selection of judges and disciplinary boards and the importance of GRECO expertise e.g., on the publication of disciplinary board decisions.
- The project fostered engagement of partner institutions with relevant CoE advisory bodies, e.g. the SCP's request of Venice Commission and CCPE. The SCP highlighted that the CCPE Opinion concerning the independence of prosecutors in the context of legislative changes [49] led to a better understanding of SCP members on their roles.
- The Council of Mediation confirmed that training had widened the skills of mediators in the criminal justice sector. Workshop participants highlighted a better understanding of the purpose and functioning of mediation. The Council of Mediation notes an increased openness to apply mediation, evident by a training request from GPO and an agreement to increase cooperation.[50]
- The project provided support to the PAO and the Council for the Prevention of Torture (National Prevention Mechanism). Achievements include strengthened leadership and management capacity with around 100 hours of training and additional individual coaching covering 19 staff in middle management positions. Both the PAO and the Council also confirm strengthened capacity to monitor places of detention, including reporting and development of recommendations. The PAO stressed their increased capacity to identify systemic issues in the various institutions.
- A key issue which needs urgent clarification is the make-up and the relationship between the PAO and Council for the Prevention of Torture.[51] The PAO and the Council usually liaise on their visit plans to avoid overlap but their visits and subsequent reporting have a differing focus.[52] Both institutions stated that joint training as part of this project consolidated their monitoring activities.

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[44] The programme builds on the Norwegian Mission of Rule of Law Advisers to Moldova (NORLAM) past 10-year action in the Republic of Moldova and aims to contribute to a wider reform of the criminal justice system.

[45] According to the annual reports a total of 370 legal professionals have been trained in 2018, 697 trained in 2019 and 308 trained in 2020.

[46] 2019 annual report.

[47] Two publications in 2019: On Article 6 (fair trial) of the ECHR and on Human Rights and Criminal Procedure.

[48] Judges should dedicate at least 40 hours annually to continuous education; prosecutors have a similar obligation.

[49] See https://rm.coe.int/ccpe-bureau-s-opinion/16809c9386.

[50] E:g. a list of qualified mediators has been placed on the GPO website. The NIJ includes a mediation module in their prosecutor training.

[51] The Council is now in its third mandate and the role and participation of civil society has been questioned repeatedly. Both institutions stated regret that the needs assessment did not contain recommendations the PAO and Council composition and roles. There are key issues that the Council struggles with: e.g., whether the Ombudsperson as chairperson of the Council is legally able to delegate responsibility of chairing to another PAO staff in case of his absence. The Council view is that it should benefit from PAO support. Both the PAO and the Council feel that they have not found a mode of dealing with these issues yet. Despite a good working relationship at technical level disagreement on issues concerning formal roles and responsibilities remain.

[52] An exception was touched upon during the interview: Following a visit to the penitentiary facilities in Bălți the Council formulated recommendations on health care referring to systemic challenges unaware of a preceding visit of PAO Regional Office which produced a led to differing conclusions. As a result, the penitentiary management was unsure of how to view both sets of recommendations.

Promoting human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova, comp. 2 (VC 1976)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Component 2 of the project focuses on the promotion of a rehabilitative approach in the criminal justice system and the improvement of the provision of health care in prisons. Both components are intended to go hand and in hand and reinforce each other's results. Component 2 is expected to deliver practical examples of how national authorities can enhance legal and institutional frameworks in line with European and international standards. In a long-term perspective this project component aims to address the overcrowding in prisons from which many other problems in the detention system stem.

RESULTS:
- The project has addressed quite a number of topics and developed studies, needs assessments, draft legislation, guidelines, strategies, work plans and specific tools on the following issues: the needs and policies of health care, including mental health, suicide prevention and psychological support in prison for long or lifelong sentences; human resources management and strategy, including prison management; the reorganisation of the central and regional probation offices; the review and further development of intervention tools of the probation service; the prevention of violence in prison and the concept of dynamic security; pre-trial detention and the feasibility of day-centres for minors/youth in conflict with the law and others. The project also supported curricula development and the implementation of enhanced training programmes for initial and continuous training of prison and probation staff.
- The project has enhanced the provision of health care in all 16 primary health care units in prison and in the prison hospital through the provision of equipment in line with national standards of primary community health care.
- The project has developed a large number of knowledge products and addressed new topics. These new standards and policies are at different stages: some are still in the early stages of discussion, such as suicide prevention or the violence prevention strategy; some are drafts. One of the centrepieces, the draft for the adaptation of legislation, has not yet been finally decided on by the legislator.
- Other measures are already applied in practice. For example, new curricula are being used in the training sector and new concepts for management and reorganisation are being piloted. In the health sector, it can be assumed that the equipment made available is already benefiting prisoners. COVID-19 prevention was facilitated through the provision of disinfectant and protective gloves. One interviewee also emphasised that the working conditions of the medical staff have improved.

Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova (VC1976)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project "Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova" aims to contribute to the legal and institutional guarantees for a pluralistic media landscape in the Republic of Moldova. The project aims for results in the field of new media legislation, in particular the implementation of the Audio-visual Media Services Code in line with European standards and the EU Audio-visual Media Services Directive. It also plans to contribute to furthering the professionalism of the public service broadcaster, e.g. through a diversification of content. This relatively short project started in March 2020 and builds on a more comprehensive predecessor project

RESULTS:
- The adoption of the new Audio-visual Media Service Code in October 2018 was a landmark outcome, supported by the previous project. The new code contributes to an enabling environment for media pluralism by creating the framework for implementing the EU Audio-visual Media Services Directive. The adoption of the Media Development Strategy 2018-2025 is also seen as an expression of the government's commitment to implementing the new Code. As a follow-up to these processes, the project supported an analysis of legal normative acts of the Audio-visual Council of the Republic of Moldova from January 2019 to July 2020. This concluded that "there are some areas where relevant modifications need to be considered" and that in some cases such modifications "may also need to take place at the level of the applicable legislative framework, particularly the Code."[53] In parallel, as one interviewee pointed out, one of the political parties had submitted amendments to the Code to the Parliamentary Committee for Audio Visual regulation, unknown to all other stakeholders and apparently unrelated to any of the findings of the above analysis. Furthermore, the Audio-visual Council is perceived as rather politicized and, as such in its current composition, unlikely to foster transparency and independence of the media sector. The current process seems to be politically stuck.
- There have been limited results to date in the second project component, aiming to professionalise the National Public Broadcaster. While the project has produced some key outputs in terms of analysis and strategy building, these knowledge products are not yet in use. This may in part be due to a lack of resources, e.g. for putting the strategy on newsroom convergence into practice. It may also be too early to judge e.g. the launch of the children's platform is planned for April 2021. Also, the assessment of the strengthening the Ombudsperson Service was finalised only in October 2020, which could explain why there has been little follow-up to date. However, although the position has existed for a number of years, the assessment concluded that there remains a lack of clarity on the mandate and scope of work of the Ombudsperson.[54] One interviewee stated even more broadly that neither the public nor the Broadcaster's staff really understands the function of this position. Interviews indicate that organisational resistance to change seems to play a role. A lack of ownership and political will to reform the institution are likely factors.
- In addition to this unfavourable setting, the project has suffered more than other projects from some of the pandemic-related restrictions. A number of activities had to be postponed and the project is running short of time to implement all outstanding activities. A no-cost extension might be proposed to the donor.

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[53] Analysis of legal normative acts of the audiovisual council of the Republic of Moldova (January 2019 – July 2020), page 17.
[54] Assessment Report Key assessments, findings and recommendations to strengthen the Ombudsperson Service within the National Public Broadcaster, Teleradio Moldova

Action against corruption in the Republic of Moldova (VC 2744)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project "Action against corruption in the Republic of Moldova" aims to contribute to a process in which national authorities reform the legal and regulatory frameworks to fight corruption, money-laundering and terrorism financing in line with European and international standards. The project started on 1st July 2020 and included an inception phase up to end of September 2020. Interviews for this evaluation took place in November and December 2020; hence the evaluation can assess its effectiveness only within this limited and initial timeframe.

RESULTS:
- The project design is very lean. All activities are directly related to the GRECO fourth evaluation round i.e. the prevention of corruption with respect to members of parliament, judges and prosecutors. From the total number of GRECO recommendations requiring additional action, nine had been partially implemented and five had not been implemented[55]. The project selected eight to be addressed, thus implementing one of the recommendations of the evaluation of the previous project i.e. the implementation of "more focused thematic projects on specific targets, rather than one big project addressing too many issues"[56].
- In this sense, the inception phase ensured a very targeted approach in terms of time span and content. In terms of content, the project set a focus on the legislative and regulatory frameworks regulating the functioning of the Superior Council of Magistracy and the Superior Council of Prosecutors, and on the mechanisms for integrity checking of candidates for appointment and promotion in the judiciary. The inception phase also emphasised co-ordination with other stakeholders and the avoidance of thematic duplications.
- The timeframe of the project is well-aligned with the GRECO reporting cycle, a fact which informed the activity planning and may facilitate some sense of urgency to deliver tangible results before the next GRECO report expected in September 2021.

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[55] Fourth Evaluation Round. Corruption prevention in respect of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors Second Compliance Report Republic of Moldova. adopted by GRECO at its 85th Plenary Meeting (Strasbourg, 21-25 September 2020).
[56] Final Evaluation Report: External Evaluation of the joint European Union / Council of Europe project "Controlling corruption through law enforcement and prevention (CLEP) – Republic of Moldova", 11/2020, page 6.

Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova (VC 1784)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project aimed to contribute to electoral stakeholders conducting elections in a transparent and impartial manner with election results fully accepted by citizens and politicians. The project started in April 2018 and finished at the end of 2020.

RESULTS:

- The project put a relatively strong focus on working with the Central Electoral Commission, the Central Electoral Commission of Gagauzia and the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training, as well as on strategic and legislative issues. The further development of electronic tools also had a large share of the project work. There was less focus on education work with voters; areas such as financing and possible corruption issues e.g. use of administrative resources, party funding etc., and specific measures aiming for increased participation of women and other groups such as first time voters). The focus was partly a consequence of the strategy development exercise with the Central Electoral Commission and the Central Electoral Commission of Gagauzia. It was also partly due to the working conditions under COVID-19. Within the field of election observation, the focus was on polling stations abroad. Interviewees indicated that the project was under-financed and hence had to set a limited number of priorities.

- The project was very successful in fostering cooperation with the Central Electoral Commission in Gagauzia i.e. in the promotion of a fruitful cooperation between both Electoral Commissions. The comprehensive strategy development and, in particular, the URSO methodology used was positively highlighted in interviews. Results from the analysis and strategy development have found their way into the practice of the institutions.

- All stakeholders emphasised the importance of developing electoral practice between the actual elections, and highlighted challenges to a sustainable process. The period of project implementation was characterised by a high number of elections under legal framework conditions that changed at relatively short notice in some cases. This fast pace challenged all stakeholders involved to focus on the practical implementation of the elections and less on democratic processes to be enhanced in-between elections.

- With regard to citizens' acceptance of the election results, two interview partners rather spontaneously pointed out that "people did not take to the streets", which they believe is an indication of at least some extent of credibility (although assessments of the extent may differ).

- Reflecting on measurable change one interviewee referred to a slight increase in first time voters from 6.6% in 2019 to 8.6% in 2020. S/he also pointed out that a 40% women quota had been introduced in 2019 for the first time in the Republic of Moldova, and the election of a female President took place in 2020. While the project may have contributed to these changes to a certain extent, no direct contribution can be cited by the evaluation. It seems plausible, if not measurable, that civil society observer missions at the polling stations abroad may have contributed to fairer, more transparent elections. In which case, the project will have made a contribution in an area not addressed by other actors.

- In general, the evaluators gained the impression, especially from the interviews, that the project has succeeded in building credible and fruitful working relationships with relevant governmental and non-governmental actors, which make a (political) impact beyond the project period possible and likely.

Education for democracy in the Republic of Moldova (VC 1794)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project "Education for democracy in the Republic of Moldova" aims to promote democratic values and student self-governance in schools. The overall aim is the prevention of all forms of discrimination in schools and the youth sector. The project focus is on the school sector; work in the youth sector is implemented by UNFPA. Both approaches are anchored under a joint umbrella with the donor SDC.

RESULTS:
- The project succeeded in developing and piloting a complete reconceptualization of civic education as a subject. This includes revised concepts on content, teaching, assessment and monitoring methodology and practice; an approach to democratic school governance in line with the CoE Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education[57]; and a framework of competences for democratic culture. The policy framework and implementation guidelines are in place and the teaching materials and lesson plans for grades 5, 6, 10 and 11 were piloted in the 2019/20 school year in all Moldovan schools. Interviews highlighted that the Ministry of Education agreed to the roll-out of the new curriculum and methodology without adopting the initial teacher training first. This enabled implementation on a rolling basis, which was seen as an opportunity.
- Measures to introduce teachers to the new curriculum and methods included training of a group of 20 national experts and the training of the Ministry's Teacher Trainers. Training measures were initially conceptualised as a cascade system (ToT). With the conversion to online formats additional teachers were reached and the quantitative targets were exceeded, incl. reach out to all all teachers of civic education; reach of 140 vocational school teachers; 300 teachers in Russian-language schools in Gagauzia, Taraclia, and in the North. Specific training in Russian language was developed with very positive feedback. The network of the Ministry's teacher trainers has been expanded to 70.
- The challenges faced by the project included starting without sufficient material and an assessment system based on descriptors of competences rather than (memorised) knowledge. In particular the descriptor-based assessment is described as a real change of paradigm by many interviewees. One interviewee pointed out that "the process as such (of teaching, learning and assessing in a different way) became the essence of the curriculum." Practice in schools has changed to varying degrees: "In some schools teachers managed to create a space of free expression, allowing a multitude of opinions and they are supported by the school management. In other schools the management does not understand what the teachers are doing. And there are cases in which children want to go further and the teachers don't understand what an authentic process is in which children take the lead. Then there are settings in which the school inspectors hamper the process." In other cases, colleagues are irritated by the teaching methodology, which involves outdoor or noisy activities.
- A number of interviewees pointed out that schools and communities are complex social settings. As one part begins to use an emancipatory approach, this radiates to other parts of the system and as many parts of the education system as possible should be included. While the project shows signs of a process towards "learning through human rights instead of learning about human rights", it also creates friction within a living system, which will need to be addressed as part of the process.
- Some interviews attributed spill-over effects and impact on students as a result of project activities: a) the MoECR had increasingly opened up to new concepts; b) other subject teachers started using teaching material because of the competency based approach; c) communication with difficult students has improved. Although it is too early to assess any trends in terms of impact, the baseline study will be able to trace change more specifically at impact level in 2-3 years.
- While the roll-out of the teaching of education for democratic societies is in full flow, other project components have either just started or need more time to show effects. The piloting of the democratic school governance approach was postponed to 2021. The initial teacher training component started in 2020, but until now has been limited to preparatory activities. Interviews highlighted key challenges such as the decentralised nature of the initial teacher training; the autonomy of the teaching staff to adopt or reject new features in their teaching; and the lack of curricula for other subjects than citizenship education. The interlinkage between activities in schools and in local Youth work is in its early stage. Nonetheless, stakeholders are well informed about each other's activities; have similar goals; and a common understanding of the interplay between both sectors, suggesting that good level of cooperation is likely.

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[57] As adopted in the framework of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers.

Annex 7 Effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on AP projects

Positive effects	Negative effects
Trainings	**Trainings**
1) Reached more participants than planned for in training activities *(Education for democracy project)*	1) Methodologically more difficult to conduct interactive and group work *(Education for democracy project)*
2) Lowered costs per participant *(Education for democracy project)*	2) Lack of realistic picture of real working environment of participants *(Criminal justice II project)*
3) Could deliver training directly to participants in the regions, therefore more participants had a chance to meet and work with experts (complementary to cascade-settings) *(Education for democracy project)*	3) Online monitoring of learning progress cannot fully replace site visits *(Child protection project)*
4) Participants saved time and gained flexibility which group to choose and when, improved participation rate *(Education for democracy project, Criminal justice II project)*	**Consultation / communication with stakeholders**
5) Could more easily identify experts for trainings *(Electoral practice project)*	4) Teams depend on the flexibility of their partner organisations and on their acceptance of online-formats *(Various projects)*
	5) Consecutive interpretation leads to lengthy meetings *(Various projects)*
Consultation / communication with stakeholders	6) At times people overwhelmed with the number of online-meetings leading to tiredness and lack of concentration *(Anti-discrimination project)*
6) Both, partners and CoE noted that good working relationship which had been already built enabled smooth online communication *(Various projects)*	7) Bilateral, more informal meetings missing / confidentiality decreased *(Anti-corruption project)*
7) Easier to reach high-level representatives of partner institutions as they do not need to travel etc. *(Various projects)*	**CoE internal factors**
8) Realized broad consultation with students from all regions. This would not have been feasible working off-line. *(Education for democracy project)*	8) Some staff members never met and work in online-co-operation only, affects effective team-building *(Criminal justice II project)*
9) Online meetings allow for broader inclusion of different stakeholders;	9) For some activities difficult to obtain CoE approval, e.g., work of journalists *(Audio-visual regulation project)*
10) Supports vertical communication: within regions, different institutions *(Education for democracy project),* e.g., creation of interlinkage with other institutions of the judicial system that signalled interest in a joint platform to transfer documents *(Judicial system efficiency project)*	**Postponement of activities / delays**
11) Communication with the public: Conducting awareness raising activities outdoors, e.g., flashmob *(Child protection projects)*	10) Conferences and study trips postponed *(Various projects)*
	11) Piloting the component on democratic school governance postponed to 2021 *(Education for democracy project)*
Impulse for innovation / Digitalisation/IT-based modernization of processes	12) Cancellation of some activities in March 2020 in order to adopt to new situation *(Electoral reform project)*
12) Blended learning approaches (online/on site) got more prominent *(Education for democracy project, Anti-discrimination project, Criminal justice I project)*	13) Delay in delivery of health equipment to the penitentiary system *(Criminal justice II project)*
E.g. the NIJ redesigned training plans and introduced online courses. As a result, only a few training activities were postponed. The NIJ is in its final year of its organizational strategy and currently developing a new five-year	14) Strategy starting date postponed by one year (from 2020 to 2021) *(Anti-corruption project)*
	15) Postponement of a number of training activities in initial months of the pandemic *(Anti-discrimination project)*
	16) Regional meetings and activities of CoE EU PGG II cannot take place *(Anti-discrimination project, judicial system efficiency project)*

strategy which reflects on the pandemic-related challenges and includes an online platform.[58] The anti-discrimination project expects to put hybrid training in place by 2021.

13) *Speeding up of the introduction of IT-based processes (Electoral reform project, Criminal justice I and II projects)*
14) Greater acceptance of IT based processes; e.g. enforcement agents are now able to issue online requests for the freezing of bank accounts to which the banking sector in the Republic of Moldova has now agreed *(Judicial system efficiency project)*
15) Faster distribution of knowledge products, e.g. guidelines *(Education for democracy project)*
16) *Showed that remote work is possible to some degree in election observation (Electoral reform project)*
17) Showed that hand-over of equipment can be monitored online while meeting all formal requirement (checking for completeness, etc.) *(Criminal justice II project)*
18) Introduced a "digital meeting room" for counsellors and detainees. Not for all, but for some meetings this can be continued. *(Criminal justice II project)*

Shifting priorities in programming / Reduction of activities / lower quality of activities
17) Information work with voters has suffered due to the focus on strategic and legislative questions for COVID-19 limitations *(Electoral reform project)*
18) *More difficult to do election observation abroad with people previously unknown to the organisation, who possibly have their own agenda (Electoral reform project)*
19) Activities in the sector of "confidence building" very difficult or impossible to implement.
20) *Visits of Ombudsoffice and NPM to penitentiary facilities reduced considerably[59] (Criminal justice I project)*

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[58] To that end the NIJ implements a UNDP run project supported by the US embassy that sets up a concept for virtual classrooms to simulate court proceedings.
[59] In 2019 the PAO carried out a total of 56 preventive visits. the Council for the Prevention of Torture carried out 25 preventive visits (data taken from 2019 PAO annual report). In 2020 the PAO and carried out 20 visits and the Council 11 visits. Visits had been completely suspended between 12 March and 1 June 2020 (data provided by PAO and the Council during the interview).

Annex 8 SDG Goal 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Targets	Sample projects contributing to the target within the evaluated time-frame
16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	Various projects address causes of physical, psychological and sexual violence against specific groups of the population: − The **Child protection projects** focus on the protection of children from sexual violence and abuse; − The **Anti-discrimination project** focuses on the protection of victims of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech; − The **Criminal justice project 2** contains one field of work aiming for the reduction of violence in prisons.
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	The **Child protection projects** focus on the protection of children from sexual violence and abuse and directly correspond to this target. Numbers on reported violence (incl. psychological aggression by caregivers/trafficking/ sexual violence) are indicators for this target and these are rising. However, most likely this is rather a sign of a raised awareness than a sign of a raised level of violence.
16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	The **Criminal justice project** (component 1 and 2) promotes the rule of law in various dimensions (legislation, policies, institutions, practice). It addresses explicitly the issue of pre-trial detention corresponding to one of the indicators of the target (unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population). The **Judicial system efficiency project** aims to optimise legal and institutional frameworks in line with European and international standards.
16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms	The **Anti-corruption project** directly addresses this target in line with GRECO recommendations pending their implementation.
16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	Contributing to the strengthening of more effective, accountable and transparent institutions is part of **all sample projects** and at the **core of CoEs mandate**. Examples are (list not exhaustive): - the *Ministry of Education*, a majority of schools, some kindergartens, the Educational Community with a focus on child rights and citizenship education; - The *Ministry of Justice*, various specialized bodies of the Justice Sector such as the *Superior Council of Magistracy, Superior Council of Prosecutors*, the Equality Council, the Mediation Council, the People's Advocate Ombudsman (PAO), the Council for the Prevention of Torture (National Prevention Mechanism), the *legal professions* including judges, prosecutors and lawyers; - *Law enforcement*, including enforcement agents and police;

	- the *National Administration for the Penitentiary, the Probation Service and the Community of Counsellors;* - the *Audio-visual Council* and the *Public Broadcaster;* - the *Central Electoral Commission* and the *Central Electoral Commission of Gagauzia;* - governmental training institutions, such as the *National Institute of Justice*, the *National Administration of Penitentiaries Training Centre* and the *Centre for Continuous Electoral Training*
16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	A key output of the ***Judicial system efficiency project*** aims for improved access to the database of judicial statistics, based on the CEPEJ-STAT database. The National Union of Enforcement Agents website is upgraded to achieve more user-friendliness which is particularly important in light of the 2016 legal amendments introducing the right a creditor to choose a bailiff. The website will also introduce a more transparent mode of public e-auction of seized goods. The ***Criminal justice 1 project*** included a number of deliverables to strengthen public access to information, such as the set-up of a website for the Superior Council of Prosecutors in 2019, particularly to make the distinction between the SCP and the General Prosecutors Office more transparent. The ***Audio-visual regulation project*** addresses some aspects public of access to information produced an analysis of legal normative acts of the audio-visual council of the Republic of Moldova from January 2019 to July 2020 made it available to relevant stakeholders. Further use of the expertise is not yet evidenced.
16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime	See contributions under 16.1. and 16.6
16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development	The ***Anti-discrimination project*** addresses the target and produced two legislative reviews on the draft law on ensuring equality and on draft law on the Council for Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality. The drafts have not yet been adopted by Parliament.

Annex 9 SDG Goal 5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Targets	Sample projects contributing to the target within the evaluated time-frame
5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	In particular the **Anti-Discrimination project** addresses discrimination against women and girls starting from the analysis that women are the primary category of victims of hate speech in the Republic of Moldova, followed by politicians, persons with disabilities and LGBT persons. On the other hand, men make up for around three quarters of the offenders. Consequently the legislative review for the Republic of Moldova and the projects capacity building measures included a gender perspective. **Other sample projects** address discrimination of women and girls through various gender mainstreaming measures, which are rather heterogeneous in depths.
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	The **Child Protection projects** contribute to the target, in particular with a baseline study constituting a roadmap for the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention. Further the Republic of Moldova has endorsed a draft law to protect victims of sexual abuse in criminal proceedings, which addresses issues of the mapping study. The project further contributes to a growing awareness on the issue of child abuse and is strengthening an institutionalized multi-stakeholder dialogue.
5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	Within the **Electoral practice project** enhancing women's representation and participation is one of four pillars of the project. However, this pillar was not a particular focus in the evaluated period and the respective activities were limited in number (e.g. chapter on gender balance in the strategic plan of the Central Electoral Commission, toolkit on "first-time-voters" contains gender relevant content). The Voluntary National Review Progress Report 2020 of the Republic of Moldova points out that due to measures adopted for the 2019 parliamentary elections (the minimum representation quota of 40 per cent) and for the 2019 local elections (the 40 per cent quota and list positioning), the proportion of women standing and being elected increased. The project may have contributed to a certain extent.
5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.	**All contributions listed above** include some working component on the development or strengthening of policies and enforceable legislation. Strengthened capacities of enforcement agents as part of the **Judicial efficiency project** will ultimately benefit to a large part women and children, as enforcement of court orders concern child and dependent adult allowances. According to National Union of Enforcement Agents data a total of 33,000 execution documents were issued which concerned 96-97% female creditors.

Annex 10 Partners and stakeholders specific lessons learned and recommendations

(interview compilation)

LESSONS LEARNED

Anti-discrimination project

- Election showed that a more strategic approach to hate speech is needed going beyond a supporting campaign of Ombudsman, Equality Council and NGO calls, as there was no significant reduction of hate speech.
- Equality bodies/public institutions need to be involved in public campaigns. The message cannot be delivered effectively by NGOs alone.

Child protection project

- In order to have impact in the education field a scale-up of the project is necessary in order to reach end-beneficiaries; e.g. kindergarten and school teachers and parents.
- Professionals need concrete tools to work with children. In light of the pandemic these tools need to be produced in a way that they can be applied online and offline.
- Project cycles are very short in relation to what aims to be achieved, especially with regard to legislative changes and changes of attitude/behaviour.

Judicial system efficiency

- It had been difficult to get an understanding from people involved that this project is necessary. More time is needed to convince future users of the electronic system on the benefit.

Electoral reform project

- Need to work also in-between elections, not only during campaigns. This is when a lot of strategic work is done. It is difficult to keep good staff and experts delivering good reports on board when nothing can be offered in-between campaigns. Last time the budget was tight, but we somehow made it (also due to the fact that nobody could travel), but in the future it would be better to again be able to send larger teams abroad. So more co-operation in between elections is appreciated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Anti-discrimination project:

- Recommendation to expand on the target group: Stepping up efforts to work with the media and political parties more systematically.
- A common platform to combat hate speech at regional level would be recommendable.
- Recommendation to address the periphery and work more with municipalities and community changers.

Child protection projects

- Recommendation to expand on the target group: Working with perpetrators as a preventive component addressing the high percentage of repeat offenders. The MoIA is interested to develop respective programmes which also correspond to the Lanzarote Convention.
- More support is needed to address the issue of sexual abuse of very small children (below kindergarten age) as there is very little expertise in the country.
- Recommendation to assess the extent to which case review can bring insights into strengthening prevention.
- Recommendation to increase the involvement of judges into situation analysis.

Criminal justice 1 project

- Project needs to continue to build staff capacity to address staff-turnover; e.g., ToT which sees experienced staff as trainers and training modules and material to stay with the institution.

- Human rights are not really covered in the higher education sector in the Republic of Moldova, except by the law faculty to a certain extent. Proposition for a survey to assess the extent and mode of delivery and provide respective recommendations.
- More specialized capacity building for the Superior Council of Prosecutors is needed regarding the vetting of prosecutors, selection procedures of prosecutors incl. chief prosecutor on anti-corruption and integrity standards.
- A roll-out training on mediation to district courts would be beneficial.
- Recommendation to focus on capacity building for NPM Council members in 2021 in a follow-up project for new members of the next Council. As in 2021 also PAO has to prepare for new mandate there is a need to have a new project starting in 2021. To that end it would be good to go through a lesson learned exercise and put key points on paper. The PAO asked for financial support from the Ministry of Justice for such an exercise and hopes to have this analysis done prior to restart the new mandate.
- Recommendation for a follow-up project to support the exchange of experience between current and new NPM Council members through coaching etc.
- Closer cooperation with neighbouring countries is recommended. These can be sustained better in the long-term, e.g., as they do not require extensive travel costs. Cooperation with border countries also important with regard to issues of forced return.
- Recommendation to expand PAO technical expertise and development of monitoring tools on psychiatric care; issues related border police, asylum for foreigners, other places of detention.

Criminal justice 2 project

- Recommendation to follow up with continuous medical staff training.
- Quality standards for health services are in place at the national level, but not in terms of the penitentiary system. An expert is needed to work on this issue.
- Mental health strategy cannot be implemented without external support incl. financial support
- Future training needs: For managers of prisons (starting with the penitentiary system) on-site shadow training would be useful. Seeing processes in various institutions (within and outside of the Republic of Moldova).
- Infrastructure of training centres including equipment needs upgrading.
- Within the probation service, the staff remuneration is a key problem that needs to be addressed by the Ministry.
- Procurement of complementary services from CSOs would be advisable, e.g. some are specialized on drugs or violence and work with former addicts or former inmates. They can convey messages with a different credibility.

Education for democracy project

- Recommendation to expand teacher trainings for other subject teachers and expand on the number of schools for the governing model.
- Recommendation to include new thematic areas: digital democratic citizenship, anti-corruption, integrity in the academic and education sectors.
- Recommendation to provide supervision and coaching of teachers and teacher trainers on a continuous basis.
- Recommendation to provide shadow trainings through observation in the classroom and provision of feedback to teachers.
- It is recommendable to include the 20 competencies for democratic culture in all other subjects. Curricula reform and development is currently in the process, so there is a window of opportunity for change in the teaching system.
- Recommendation to institutionalize co-operation between educational authorities and the youth sector at local level: Facilitation of joint school-youth work to make benefits for the communities more visible.