



## NEWSLETTER

### DG Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI)

#### May 2023

#### CPT

The CPT carried out 3 periodic visits in May - to [Albania](#) from 4 to 15 May 2023, to [Cyprus](#) from 9 to 17 May 2023, and to [Hungary](#) from 16 to 26 May 2023.

On 11 May, the Committee published the report of its ad hoc visit to [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) of September 2021, along with the response of the authorities.

#### Venice Commission



As part of an official visit to **Ukraine** on 4 and 5 May 2023 to discuss the reform of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, legislation on de-oligarchisation and on national minorities, a delegation led by the President of the Venice Commission, Ms Claire Bazy Malaurie, met, *inter alia*, with the President of Ukraine, Mr Volodymyr **Zelenskyy**. President Bazy Malaurie participated in the **4<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Council of Europe** (Reykjavik, 16-17/05/2023).

In May the Commission received / started working on the following **requests for opinion**:

- **Republic of Moldova** - Follow-up opinion to the opinion on the draft Law on the external assessment of Judges and Prosecutors - Minister of Justice – 15/05/2023;
- **Kyrgyzstan** - Opinion on the Draft Law "On the Mass Media" – Minister of Justice – 19/05/2023;
- **Ukraine** - Follow-up opinion on draft law no. 9322 of 25 May 2023 "On Amending Some Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding Improving the Procedure for Selecting Candidate Judges of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine on a Competitive Basis" – Speaker – 26/05/2023.

The Commission's rapporteurs held country meetings with the authorities and other stakeholders concerning the following forthcoming opinions on:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina / Republika Srpska** - the Special Registry and Publicity of the Work of Non-Profit Organisations (25/5/2023, online);
- **France** - Article 49.3 of the Constitution, and the established practice of allowing the government to force the adoption of a bill without a vote of the National Assembly, unless the latter adopts a motion of censure; Article 65 of the Constitution on the composition of the Superior Council of Magistracy and the status of the magistrates (24-25/05/2023);

- **Georgia** - draft law "on de-oligarchisation" (18-19/05/2023);
- **Germany** - [amendments of the German Federal Election Act and their compliance with Council of Europe standards](#) (23/05/2023);
- **Ukraine** - Constitutional Court judges' selection; legislation on "de-oligarchisation" ; national minorities (communities) (4-5/05/2023).

The Commission organised / participated in the following events:

- "EUROPEAN CONSTITUTIONAL HERITAGE: between progression and regression" - international conference (Strasbourg, **France**, 4-5/05/2023);
- "ELECTIONS IN TIMES OF CRISIS – challenges and opportunities" – international conference (Bern, **Switzerland**, 9-10/05/2023);
- "CYBERSECURITY AND ELECTIONS: Guarantees against information disorders in the digital arena - Democracy, rights and elections" - III<sup>rd</sup> International conference (Madrid, **Spain**, 10-12/05/2023);
- LEGAL ASSISTANCE to the PACE election observation mission of the presidential and parliamentary elections in **Türkiye** (Ankara, 14 and 28/05/2023);
- MODELS OF CONSTITUTIONAL COMPLAINTS IN CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES - International conference (Samarkand, **Uzbekistan**, 25-26/05/2023).

## Implementation of Human Rights, Justice and Legal Co-operation Standards

CEPEJ's ad hoc Working Group met for the fourth time and finalised the draft backlog reduction tool. CEPEJ contributed to **Albania's** Justice Day, during which CEPEJ tools were presented to the justice sector and a court coaching assessment was held. A new project in **Georgia** was officially launched with court coaching and visits to Supreme Court and Rustavi City Court. The CEPEJ was invited to present CEPEJ tools to the judicial authorities of **Belgium**, especially regarding the collection of judicial data.

[Nine HELP courses](#) were launched for **Italian** legal professionals, as part of the **EU-CoE** project "Judicial Training on Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights. The HELP course on Judicial Reasoning and Human Rights was launched in **Montenegro** and the one on The Environment and Human Rights for lawyers in **Belgium and Luxembourg**. The HELP courses on Violence against Women and Fighting Racism, Xenophobia, Homophobia and Transphobia were delivered as compulsory initial training of Prosecutors in **Spain**. The HELP Report/Statistical Balance 2015-2022 is available [here](#).

On 4 May, a [conference](#) was held under the Icelandic Presidency of the CM to discuss the principle of subsidiarity, as well as showcase some of the CoE projects aimed at supporting in domestic implementation of that principle and the process of execution. A new multilateral project to support member states in the execution of judgment was launched. As part of a study visit by the Moroccan NPM to the Italian NPM last February, an agreement was reached to cooperate bilaterally on forced returns of Moroccan nationals. Within the joint EU/CoE project "European NPM Forum", the Project team finalised the joint [Guidance Document on the European Prison Rules](#) (free download on CoE main website). Under the TJENI project, representatives of judiciaries from **Cyprus, France, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Romania** and the ECtHR took part in the test of AI tools used for summarising judicial decisions. A working group meeting was held with the **Polish** Ministry of Justice on technical solutions for case law databases and the early identification of human rights issues

Projects organised different high-level visits to Strasbourg: [high-level delegation of the Interagency Committee of Armenia](#) for oversight over the execution of ECtHR judgments, [high-level delegation](#) of the members of the Parliament of Ukraine; Turkish judges - within the Visiting Professionals Scheme of the ECtHR Superior Courts Network. Key activities: as to **Armenia** - launching of the [user interface of HUDOC-ECHR](#) in the Armenian language; in

**Albania** – a [conference](#) on aligning the national judicial practice with the ECtHR standards; in **Azerbaijan** – training for judges on ECHR articles 3, 5, 6 and reasoning of judgments; in **Georgia** – a Justice Coordination Council meeting on implementation of the Juvenile Justice Code; a meeting of the [Multi-Agency Working Group on the prevention and combatting torture and ill-treatment](#); in **Serbia** – [high-level discussions](#) on the *Kacapor* group of cases and effectiveness of the national execution; in **Ukraine** - meetings with the Security Service on war-related crimes; [round tables](#) on the role of the prosecutorial disciplinary and self-governing bodies.

## Execution of Judgments of the ECtHR

The Department for the Execution of Judgments issued a new [Thematic Factsheet on Life Imprisonment](#). The factsheet summarises steps taken by nine member states on this issue in response to 20 different judgments from the European Court. It covers a number of specific issues relating to life sentences, including review mechanisms, conditions of detention and the risk of irreducible life sentences in extradition cases.

The Director of Human Rights and the Department carried out a mission to **Brussels** to discuss certain Belgian cases under supervision by the Committee of Ministers, in particular those revealing structural problems and concern conditions in prisons (*Vasilescu* case), including inmates in psychiatric wings (*L.B.* group and *W.D.* pilot judgment), and the excessive length of judicial proceedings (Bell group). These topics were discussed with the competent authorities and it was agreed to strengthen cooperation with the Council of Europe on the establishment of an effective preventive remedy against poor conditions of detention.

The Department met online with the **Norwegian Government Agent** and the Ministry for Families and Children to discuss the upcoming action plan in the *Strand Lobben* group of cases, and later on with the **Finnish Government Agent** to discuss pending cases against Finland. Also, the Department gave a presentation in Strasbourg to the Norwegian Supreme Court on the system of execution of judgments from the European Court and the working methods of the Committee of Ministers and the Department.

The Director of Human Rights and the Department carried out a mission to **Serbia** to discuss with the Minister of Justice and other competent national authorities the execution of ECHR judgments relating to the non-enforcement or delayed enforcement of domestic judicial decisions given against socially/State-owned companies (*Kačapor* group). They also participated in a roundtable gathering competent courts and prosecutors, focusing on the implementation of the 2020 law adopted in response to the ECHR judgment concerning 'missing babies' (*Zorica Jovanović* case).

The Department participated in a meeting with MPs of **Ukraine** to discuss, in particular, recent legislative developments related to the implementation of the Court's judgments. In addition, the Department joined several online meetings organised by the Sub-Committee of the Parliament on the execution of the Court's judgments concerning the reform of the system of implementation. The Department also took part in a Roundtable dedicated to the state of execution of the *Zhovner / Yuriy Nikolayevich Ivanov / Burmych and Others* group against **Ukraine** concerning the non-enforcement of domestic court judgments.

Lastly, the Department met online with the **UK Ministry of Justice** to discuss certain pending cases against the United Kingdom as well as to debrief on the outcome of the mission to London in March 2023. The Department also met online with the secretariat of the UK Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights to discuss certain aspects as regards the implementation of the case *Big Brother Watch and Others*, the *McKerr* group of cases and the case of *V.C.L. and A.N.*

## Social Rights

The [Governmental Committee](#) of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security held its 146th meeting from **9 to 12 May 2023**. Among other issues, the Committee adopted amendments to its internal rules of procedure in order to implement the Committee of Ministers decisions on the reform of the monitoring system of the European Social Charter. It also adopted the draft resolutions on the application of the European Code of Social Security and its protocol and started considering situations of non-conformity with regard to the thematic group 3 on "Labour rights" relating to conclusions XXII-2 (2022) - European Social Charter (CES) 1961 and conclusions 2022 - Revised European Social Charter (RESC). An updated list of INGOs entitled to present collective complaints was also adopted.

On **17 May 2023**, the **Council of Europe** and the **Austrian Development Agency** launched a project focusing on enhancing the observance of social labour rights in the Republic of Moldova aiming to ensure the implementation of international standards and facilitate the access of persons from vulnerable groups to vocational education and training and their subsequent employment. The project "[Enhancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova](#)", is part of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova and is co-funded by the Austrian Development Agency and the Council of Europe. It will be carried out from 2023 to 2025.

The [European Committee of Social Rights](#) held its 334th session from **22 to 26 May 2022**. During this session, the Committee examined state reports and also deliberated on a number of collective complaints. It took stock of the situation related to the procedure provided for by Article 22 of the European Social Charter on "non-accepted provisions". The countries concerned by this exercise in 2023 were Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latvia, Sweden (Revised Charter), Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Iceland (1961 Charter). The Committee also examined a draft report in respect of Albania with a view to its adoption. Also, the Committee resumed discussion on strengthening the Council of Europe's social rights framework in the light of the Reykjavik Summit.

## Police, Detention, Drugs and Addictions

### Pompidou Group

On 4-5 May 2023, the Pompidou Group, in partnership with the City of Strasbourg, the Ithaque association and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), organised the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Symposium of Drug Consumption Rooms in Strasbourg. The Mayor of Strasbourg, the Council of Europe Director General for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, the Director of the EMCDDA and the President of Ithaque provided opening speeches. The Minister of State for Public health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy of Ireland, Hildegard Naughton, made a video intervention. Some 250 participants from 25 countries attended the event and more than 100 followed it online.

The Expert Group 'Online addictions' (comprised of 14 nominated experts from member states and a representative of the WHO) held its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting on 10 and 11 May in **Paris** and agreed on a plan of work to prepare (1) a comprehensive report with an analysis of risks and harms associated with online gaming and gambling and overview of current responses to be delivered by November 2023, and (2) a guidance document with strategy options for decision makers and policy managers to be delivered by June 2024.

The publication on the use of school surveys in policy and prevention planning and evaluation: results of the 2022 ESPAD-MedSPAD Bridge project was issued. It shows that school surveys are frequently used not only for monitoring and research, but also for informing health decision making and public opinion. On 22 May 2023, the Deputy Executive



Secretary participated in a hearing by the PACE Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development which is preparing an introductory memorandum on Detention of the 'socially maladjusted' based on Article 5 (1) (e) of the ECHR, which excludes certain groups from the full enjoyment of the right to liberty including 'alcoholics' and 'drug addicts'.

### **Co-operation in Police and Deprivation of Liberty**

The [Council of Europe Police Network](#) annual international conference on 24 and 25 May in Strasbourg was dedicated to the police activities in a context of violence and use of force. Its participants – representatives of police services of countries-members of the Police Network (44 member States), academia, Independent Police Complaints Authorities' Network (IPCAN), and the European Council of Police Trade Unions (CESP) delegates – reaffirmed the need for the police to use force only when strictly necessary and in a proportionate manner. The Conference adopted a set of conclusions also confirming the importance of independent and impartial investigation into any excessive use of force or violence by the police. The participants acknowledged the Network as an important forum for collecting good policing practices and promoting European standards in relation to the police.

Following the enlargement of the pool of trainers for the **Albanian** Training Centre for prison staff from 2 to 12, a training-of-trainers was organized on 10 to 12 May in Vlora on the management and treatment of sex offenders and convicts with a history of family violence. As a result, the participants put forward a ten-point plan of action for identifying, treating, and managing such offenders. Another training-of-trainers – on 16 to 18 May in **Romania** – targeted medical personnel of the penitentiary and was focused on a better recording of injuries and screening of detainees upon admission, in particular to identify incidents of torture.

On 10-11 May, the Deputy Public Defender and representatives of the Public Defender's Office of **Georgia** discussed the newly developed Concise Tools for PDO/NPM Monitoring of Mental Healthcare in Georgian penitentiary institutions. The participants also improved, among other, their understanding of different types of mental disorders, importance of psychosocial treatments, legal procedures and safeguards regarding a patient's informed consent, and various techniques for interviewing of detainees, thus better preparing them to apply the new Tools.

The first Steering Committee meeting of the **Regional Action** "[Enhancing co-operation in the Western Balkans in managing violent extremism in prisons and preventing further radicalisation after release](#)" and a Co-ordination meeting with international partners were held on 11 May 2023 in Podgorica, Montenegro; the Action beneficiaries used the occasion to reaffirm their determination to further improve regional security by addressing radicalisation in prisons and enhancing the post-penal support for violent extremist prisoners, among others, by helping their full and safe reintegration into local communities.

## **Human Rights, Justice and Legal Co-operation Standard-Setting activities**

**Human Rights Intergovernmental Co-operation:** The CDDH's Drafting Group on human rights and the environment ([CDDH-ENV](#)) held its [7th meeting](#) from 2-5 May, when it continued work on the draft CDDH report on the need for and feasibility of a new Council of Europe instrument(s) on human rights and the environment. On 3 May, CDDH-ENV members participated in a [High-level Conference](#) on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in practice, organised by the Icelandic Presidency of the Committee of Ministers with the support of the CDDH-ENV secretariat.

The CDDH's Drafting Group on issues relating to judges of the European Court of Human Rights ([DH-SYSC-JC](#)), at its [3rd meeting](#) on 15-17 May, when it exchanged views with Tim EICKE and Lado CHANTURIA, judges of the Court, and continued work on the draft CDDH report evaluating the effectiveness of the system for the selection and election of the Court's judges and the means to ensure due recognition for judges' status and service on the Court and to provide additional safeguards to preserve their independence and impartiality.

**Legal Co-operation:** The CCPE Bureau and Working Group met on 11-12 May to discuss the draft opinion on the Councils of Prosecutors as key bodies of prosecutorial self-governance, to be submitted to the CCPE for examination and adoption at its next plenary meeting in October.

The CDCJ held its 100th plenary meeting from 30 May to 1 June, starting with a celebration event marking the 60th anniversary of the committee. The CDCJ adopted a practical guide for practitioners on administrative detention of migrants and asylum seekers, a practical guide on gender mainstreaming in public and private law reform processes, and a roadmap for developing tools to promote the implementation of the European Convention on Information on Foreign Law and its Additional Protocol. It also discussed the ongoing elaboration of a new legal instrument for the protection of lawyers and decided that this instrument should take the form of a Convention.

**Human Rights and Biomedicine:** Following a [request by the Committee of Ministers](#) to the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the Fields of Biomedicine and Health ([CDBIO](#)), a research [report on the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights on "The rights of persons subject to non-consensual placement and treatment in mental health facilities"](#) has just been published.

## Information Society – Action against crime

### Media



On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, Patrick Penninckx, Head of the Information Society Department, represented the Council of Europe in meetings in New York to strengthen international cooperation on media freedom and the safety of journalists, including the [Media Freedom Coalition](#) events, the Global event "[Shaping a Future of Rights: Freedom of Expression as a Driver for all other Human Rights](#)" and the UNESCO/[Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize](#) ceremony. He presented the upcoming [Council of Europe Campaign for the Safety of Journalists](#) and informed about the launch of the [Campaign's dedicated webpage](#). The Campaign was also presented in Brussels at the final conference [Safety4Journalists](#), organised by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ). A representative of the Media and Information Society Department also participated in the [EDMO \(European Digital Media Observatory\) 2023 Annual Conference](#), held in Brussels on 25 May, and in the [57th EPRA \(European platform of regulatory authorities\) meeting](#), taking place in Oslo from 31 May to 2 June 2023.

### Cooperation on Freedom of Expression

The first Steering Committee meeting of the EU and Council of Europe joint action "Protecting freedom of expression and of the media in **North Macedonia**" (PRO-FREX) was organised in Skopje. A Council of Europe delegation headed by Patrick Penninckx undertook a [working mission](#) to Sarajevo to reinforce cooperation in the information society field; the second Steering Committee meeting of the project 'Enhancing institutional capacities on freedom of expression and information in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (EFEX)' was held in Sarajevo. During the Ukrainian [Communication Forum](#), the Head of the Information Society Department outlined the co-operation priorities under the 3R Action Plan for **Ukraine** and in the frames of the new Project "Safeguarding Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Media in Ukraine".

## **Artificial Intelligence**



The 6th Plenary meeting of the CAI was held on 31 May-2 June. A webinar on the topic of "[AI Sandboxes: striking a balance between regulation and innovation](#)" was organised on the margins of the meeting. The event was moderated by Patrick Penninckx, Head of Information Society Department of the Council of Europe and brought together national and international experts from across the world to draw on the experiences of already

functioning AI sandboxes in different countries and input from industry with a view to exploring various advantages they offer, consider risks and costs associated with those advantages and propose best practices that policymakers could use to mitigate them.

## **Data Protection**

Convention 108+ registered a 24th ratification this month, that of Liechtenstein, on 17 May in Reykjavik, on the occasion of the 4<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe Summit.

During the opening session of the [31st European Conference of Data Protection Authorities, \(Spring Conference\)](#) in Budapest, the Head of the Data Protection Unit stressed the unique and remarkable place of Convention 108 in safeguarding individuals in the digital age while enabling a more intensive exchange of data including in a cross-border context. Furthermore, on 24 May in Brussels, at the [2023 Computers, Privacy and Data Protection International Conference \("CPDP"\)](#) the Unit moderated a panel dedicated to the changes that Convention 108+ will bring when in force, which is expected sometime in 2024. Finally, the Unit took part in a study visit to Tunis by the Algerian data protection authority (ANPDP), on 18 and 19 May, in the framework of the South V Programme.

## **Cybercrime**

Mauritius became the 36th State to sign the [Second Additional Protocol to the Cybercrime Convention on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence](#), not yet followed by ratification (up to date the Protocol was ratified by 1 State).

[Save the date](#) to the [Octopus Conference](#), one of the biggest and finest platforms of exchange on cybercrime gathering experts from more than 100 countries, international organisations, private sector and academia, was published. The conference will take place in Bucharest, Romania between 13-15 December 2023.

The Cybercrime Programme Office ([C-PROC](#)) focused on strengthening the capacities and knowledge of national trainers in [Ukraine \(CyberEast Project\)](#), Tunisia, [Algeria \(CyberSouth Project\)](#), Nigeria, [Peru](#) and [Chile \(GLACY+ Project\)](#). [Timor Leste was added as priority country](#) for [GLACY+ Project](#). C-PROC extended its support to the legislative reforms in Nigeria and [Timor Leste](#). Experiences and good practices in combating cybercrime and in obtaining electronic evidence were shared during the International Conference on Budapest Convention and Second Additional Protocol, held in Brazil, back-to-back with the meetings of the Networks of cybercrime prosecutors from Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries. organized by [Octopus](#) and [GLACY+](#) projects.

## **GRECO**

GRECO published two new reports concerning the 4<sup>th</sup> round on the prevention of corruption and promotion of integrity in respect of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors: the Addendum to the Second Compliance Report on [Switzerland](#) and the Second Interim Compliance Report on the [Republic of Moldova](#). GRECO carried out three **evaluation visits** to [Italy](#), the [Republic of Moldova](#), and the [United States of America](#) under its 5th Evaluation Round concerning corruption among persons with top executive functions and law enforcement. The GRECO Secretariat participated in and intervened at the Europol

Conference on Law Enforcement Corruption (The Hague, 4-5 May) and at the 2023 OECD Global Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum (Paris, 24-25 May). The Executive Secretary spoke at a hearing of the EP Special Committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the EU on 30 May.



## **MONEYVAL**

MONEYVAL held its 65th Plenary meeting from 24 to 26 May 2023, where the 5<sup>th</sup> round mutual evaluation reports of **North Macedonia** and **Romania**, and the enhanced follow-up reports of **Albania** and **Slovenia** were approved. MONEYVAL also adopted a typologies report on “Money laundering risks in the world of virtual assets and their service providers”. All reports will be made public in the following weeks.

Ms Elżbieta Frankow-Jaśkiewicz, Chair of MONEYVAL, spoke at the Private sector Consultative Forum held in Vienna on 8-9 May 2023, organised by the FATF and hosted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). In May 2023, the MONEYVAL Secretariat took part in several meetings of the FATF and its working bodies and contributed to the processes related to the revision of the FATF standards (notably with respect to non-profit organisations), and those of the International Co-operation Review Group (**ICRG**), in respect of MONEYVAL members and territories which are currently subject to the ICRG processes or under observation period. On 22 May, a high-level delegation from Albania met with the MONEYVAL Chair and Secretariat confirming their commitment in addressing FATF and MONEYVAL’s concerns under the ICRG process.

## **Economic Crime and Cooperation**

**Albanian** authorities benefited from advice and guidance on improving the AML legislation in view of ensuring compliance with FATF recommendation no. 15 on “New Technologies”.

The working group on the assessment of risks of money laundering and terrorist financing associated with virtual assets and virtual assets service providers in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** benefited from advice on the application of the CoE sectorial risk assessment methodology.

Within the framework of the Central Asia Rule of Law programme a roadmap for the establishment of the beneficial ownership register was provided to the authorities in **Kazakhstan**.

Competent authorities in **Kosovo**\*<sup>i</sup> benefited from advice on how to further strengthen the implementation of the standards for the prevention and suppression of terrorist financing, including in the Non-Profit Organisations’ (NPOs) sector, including through conducting the sectorial risk assessment.

The Department for Investigations of Economic Crime and Corruption of the **Kosovo**\* Police, the Special Prosecution Office and the Basic Court of Pristina benefited from peer-to-peer mentoring activities which focused on enhancing operational capacities to carry out money laundering investigations, prosecution and adjudication.

**Slovak** representatives of law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities including national practitioners dealing with financial intelligence, investigation and prosecution of proceeds-generating crimes were trained on financial investigations and the application of specific investigative techniques based on concrete case studies and international good practice.

Two training sessions on international judicial cooperation in criminal matters for **Turkish** judges and prosecutors were held in Ankara. The events marked the commencement of a series of cascade training sessions to be organised throughout Türkiye under the project.



Justices of the Supreme Court of Ukraine (Cassation Criminal Court) were trained on "Application of extradition proceedings in criminal matters related to money laundering cases".

### **Criminal Law**

The Committee of Experts on the Operation of European Conventions on Co-operation in Criminal Matters (PC-OC) held its 83<sup>rd</sup> meeting on 2-4 May 2023 in Strasbourg. Main items on the agenda included the application of the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters to co-operation with the European Public Prosecutor's Office, a 3<sup>rd</sup> Additional Protocol which will update this Convention, the development of guidance regarding the post-surrender phase in extradition proceedings, as well as practical experiences and difficulties encountered by States in extradition and mutual legal assistance cases.

On 17 May the PC-CP Vice-Chair, Ms Annie Devos and its Secretary, Ms Iлина Taneva were auditioned by the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE) of the Social and Healthcare Committee of the French National Assembly (via a video link) on questions related to prison overcrowding, prison statistics and possible measures to be taken to reduce the number of prisoners.

### **MEDICRIME, Trafficking in Human Organs and Cultural property**

The Committee of the Parties to the [MEDICRIME Convention](#) organised its 6th Plenary meeting (10-12 May) in which 19 Parties out of 21 took part. The Chair (**France**) the Vice-Chair (**Bosnia and Herzegovina**) and the Gender Equality Rapporteur (**Republic of Moldova**) were elected. The 1st monitoring report, which is devoted to the protection of public health in times of pandemic, was discussed. The MEDICRIME Convention was introduced both at a side-event in the framework of the **UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)** (25 May) and to the national authorities of **Senegal** (30 May – 2 June).

### **Counter-Terrorism**

On 9 May the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group assigned to follow-up on the Recommendation on the use of information collected in conflict zones as evidence in criminal proceedings related to terrorist offences took place in Paris. The Group decided to proceed with producing a compilation of Good/Comparative practices regarding the use of such information and identified the main substantive aspects that the compilation is expected to cover.

The Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT) held its 10th plenary meeting on 23-25 May 2023. In addition to discussing starting activities under the new [Council of Europe Counter-Terrorism Strategy \(2023 – 2027\)](#), the meeting saw the start of formal negotiations on the pan-European definition of terrorism that should be incorporated into the Council of Europe counter-terrorism legal framework. The CDCT also approved the Report on good practices with regard to deradicalisation, disengagement and social reintegration prepared under the previous Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

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<sup>i</sup> \* All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.