

RESULTS FACTSHEET

Partnership for Good Governance in Armenia

January 2022

Key figures

- Two successive phases since 2015
- 14 projects under the PGG II
- 2 country-specific projects for Armenia with a budget of EUR 2,638,000
- 4 regional projects covering Armenia

What is the Partnership for Good Governance?

Through the Partnership for Good Governance (PGG) the European Union and the Council of Europe are working together to strengthen governance in the Eastern Partnership region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus).

The PGG provides tailor-made support to Eastern Partnership countries to bring legislation and practice closer to European standards in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy.

Project: Strengthening institutional capacities to fight and prevent corruption (Jan 2019-Feb 2023)

*The PGG II is closely accompanying and supporting the Armenian government in its efforts to **set up a strong legislative and institutional framework to tackle corruption.***

Legislative/policy framework improved

- The **Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan for 2019-2022** were adopted, as well as key amendments to the Law on the Corruption Prevention Commission (in October 2019), incorporating most of the Council of Europe's key recommendations, significantly expanding the role and mandate of the **Corruption Prevention Commission**.
- The **Law on Making Amendments to the Public Service Law** was adopted on 19 January 2021, considering Council of Europe recommendations on providing information on expenditures incurred.
- The **new Law on Civil Forfeiture of Illegal Assets**, a major step towards strengthening the Armenian national framework for asset recovery, was adopted in April 2020, taking into account 21 out of 40 recommendations provided by the Council of Europe.

- After assessment of the Armenian legal framework and with recommendations from all stakeholders, a **template for asset declarations was developed and used by the Corruption Prevention Commission** to collect declarations from public officials for analysis.
- Armenian Parliamentarians progressed towards the adoption of **enhanced internal corruption prevention mechanisms, including a Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament (MPs) and legal amendments on the formation and work procedures of the Ethics Commission**, which addresses both national priorities and GRECO's strong recommendations from its Fourth Round Evaluation. The Code is pending adoption.
- A model **Code of Conduct for Public Servants and a Code of Conduct** for specific categories of public officials were prepared after raising awareness of multiple stakeholders on integrity systems and corruption prevention for civil servants. They are expected to be adopted early 2022 following public consultations.

Institutional frameworks/capacities strengthened

- The **Corruption Prevention Commission (CPC)**, a new anti-corruption body, was established in November 2019 with the Programme's support, including an Expert Opinion delivered on the Republic of Armenia's draft Law on "Making Amendments and Addenda to the Law on the Corruption Prevention Commission".
- **The Anti-corruption Committee** - a specialised anti-corruption investigative body - was **established in 2021**, to increase the effectiveness of the investigation of corruption-related crimes.
- The National Assembly adopted a legislative package in 2021 **establishing a specialised Anti-Corruption Court and creating a separate division within the General Prosecutor's Office** to exercise control over the legality of pre-trial criminal proceedings of corruption-related cases.
- Following adoption and application of the methodology for Integrity checking of judicial nominees, the CPC **endorsed and adopted a new version of the integrity checking methodology**, based on the lessons learnt during the first year of implementation and best international practices. The CPC also **endorsed and adopted the methodologies and manuals for the verification and analysis of asset and interest declarations of public officials** and is using them in practice to perform its duties.
- Further to the adoption of the Law on Making Amendments to the Public Service Law (19 January 2021), obliging officials to provide information on their expenditures, an **additional module on expenditures was added to the methodology for analysis and verification of public officials' declarations**.
- **Capacities of national authorities were enhanced in using international co-operation means during the investigation of economic crimes**, in particular towards more effective asset recovery. Investigators and prosecutors improved their knowledge and skills through training and a handbook on investigation and prosecution of Money Laundering and terrorism financing cases.

Public awareness raised

- The participatory consultative process leading to the **amendment and adoption of the Law on Civil Forfeiture of Legal Assets encouraged the public debate on asset recovery** in Armenia.

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- The **outcomes of the PGG II activities** such as the support to the Corruption Prevention Commission were **relayed in certain local media** covering corruption as a “hot” topic.

[A background information sheet on this project is available on the website.](#)

Project: Implementation of judicial reforms (Jan 2019-Feb 2023)

Component 1: Enhancing the independence and professionalism of the judiciary

The PGG II is supporting Armenia in **strengthening the integrity and effectiveness of the judiciary** to ensure Armenian citizens have access to and benefit from an independent and impartial judiciary.

Legislative/policy framework improved

- The “**Strategy on the Judicial and Legal Reforms of Armenia for 2019-2023**” and respective **Action Plans** were developed to strengthen the integrity of the judiciary, to improve the effectiveness of the judicial acts and as a result to ensure that Armenian citizens benefit from an independent and impartial judiciary.
- **The National Assembly adopted the Law on Amendments and Addenda to the Judicial Code and 13 related laws in March 2020** (entered into force in May 2020). Most of the Council of Europe recommendations were considered in the amended Law. As a result, accountability of the judiciary and building of public confidence was enhanced. The PGG provided 17 reviews on various pieces of Armenian legislation to support the authorities in the implementation of the committed judicial reform. Particularly, three reviews were provided on the Judicial Code and five legal acts deriving from the amended Judicial Code were developed.
- The **post-adoption review of the Judicial Code of Armenia** showed that **nine out of 16 most important recommendations of the Council of Europe were considered** by the national authorities in the law amended in 2020.
- The Armenian government took the recommendations into account **while initiating draft legislative amendments and developing a policy paper for alternative dispute resolution**, which is a strategic priority of the Judicial and Legal Reforms of the Government.
- **The Law on Mediation and several specific issues of the Law on Commercial Arbitration were reviewed** in line with the Council of Europe standards and best practices of Council of Europe member States.
- **The draft Law on amendments and addenda to the “Law on compulsory enforcement of judicial acts” was reviewed** and recommendations, envisaging amendments in around 15 related legislations for institutional reforms and practical solutions, were provided to establish more efficient and feasible enforcement of judicial acts. The package of amendments, accepted by the Ministry of Justice and published on the "e-draft.am" website for public discussion, is expected to be adopted in 2022.

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Institutional frameworks/capacities strengthened

- **Accountability of the judiciary and building of public confidence was supported** through the development and amendments of five legal acts deriving from the amended Judicial Code. Following the **establishment of the Institute of the performance evaluation of judges**, the first round of performance evaluation for 60 judges (23% of all judges) was done in compliance with European standards.
- The PGG II supported improving the quality of judicial decisions through developing a **Handbook on improving the quality of judicial decisions** with reference to the application of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights case law **and training for 17 judges and assistants to judges was conducted**.
- **Mediators and arbitrators are better aware of the new legal provisions of the Law on Mediation, the Law on Commercial Arbitration and the relatively new Civil Procedure Code**, thanks to the support of the PGG II which provided legal and practical solutions related to the establishment of the Arbitration Centre, as well as the improvement of the application of mediation in Armenia. A comparative analysis conducted by the Programme provided comprehensive data about best practices of alternative dispute resolution methods in Council of Europe member States. The legislative amendments and policy paper developments initiated by the Armenian authorities took the recommendations provided by the PGG II into account.
- A unified application of the law by the civil and administrative courts and legal professionals was ensured through publishing and disseminating 700 copies of the decisions passed in 2019 by the Civil and Administrative Chamber of the Court of Cassation of Armenia. Armenian authorities demonstrated their **commitment towards gender equality in the judiciary** and the percentage of women judges increased from 26,6% to 32% in 2021 (among 253 judges of Armenia 80 are women) and the increase of women judges in managerial positions from 11% to 25% in 2021 (four out of 16 presidents of courts are women). The PGG contributed to this process by conducting research on gender equality and improving leadership skills of 35 women judges (44% of all women judges) through training activities.

Public awareness raised

- **The Arbitrators' Association of Armenia was supported in developing a website for the public** that provides all necessary information on arbitrators, legal acts, procedures etc. for those who seek information on arbitration but do not know where to start.
- **The PGG II raised awareness of the public**, especially in the times of pandemic lockdown, **on different aspects of arbitration and mediation by developing 17 videos** (a series of online talks) and publishing them on the Facebook page of the Council of Europe Office in Armenia, which had a reach of **over 15,000 views** as of the end of November 2021.
- **Public awareness was raised on the access to justice and the respect of their rights** during the pandemic lockdown by publishing information on the electronic platform about the steps to protect Human Rights and ensure the access to justice undertaken by the Compulsory Enforcement Service during the quarantine and the state of emergency.
- **Public awareness was raised on the alternative dispute resolution** methods by the development of a website for the Self-regulating Organisation of Mediators of Armenia.

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Component 2: Supporting the criminal justice reform and harmonising the application of European standards in Armenia

The PGG II is supporting Armenia in **implementing criminal justice reform** through legislative, methodological and capacity-building assistance.

Legislative/policy framework improved

- **The New Criminal Code (CC) and the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC)**, incorporating about 70% of the Council of Europe recommendations, **were adopted by the National Assembly of Armenia on 5 May and 30 June 2021 respectively**. Ten legal acts associated with the new CC and CPC were also reviewed to harmonise them with the new codes, the adoption of which is expected before the entry into force of the new CC and CPC in summer 2022. The preparation of implementing guides based on the new Codes has been initiated and legal professionals have started training on the new CC and CPC.

Institutional frameworks/capacities strengthened

- **The implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy for 2020-2022 was supported by the PGG II through a comparative analysis** of both international requirements and best practices, as well as national regulations on effective mechanisms to exercise the rights of victims of torture to psychological, social, and legal services. The overview is under the consideration of the national authorities and the improvements in the relevant legal framework and regulations are expected in 2022.
- The capacity of the **Justice Academy was strengthened through five new courses for judges, and a pool of 20 trainers in 2020**, based on the results of a thorough needs assessment conducted in 2019. As of the 2020-21 academic year, the new courses were integrated into the training programme of the Academy and **353 judges (95 women and 258 men) were trained in three semesters**.
- Another **pool of 20 trainers of the Justice Academy was formed** to continue the dissemination of knowledge **on the newly adopted CC and CPC** in line with the European human rights standards.
- **69 legal professionals** (20 women and 49 men), including judges, prosecutors and investigators successfully completed the **HELP distance learning courses translated into Armenian** and made available for self-learning on the HELP platform.
- **The professional capacity of the judiciary and the office of the Government Agent before the ECtHR was strengthened to improve the uniform application of European standards through the provision of access to the resources and training courses made available by the Programme**. The legal professionals' access both to decisions of the Court of Cassation, and to the case-law and publications of the ECtHR was increased.

Public awareness raised

- The inclusion of civil society was ensured through the **participation of several NGOs in a needs-assessment mission aimed at improving the uniform application of European standards in Armenia and developing new courses for the curricula of criminal law judges in the Justice Academy**. Civil society representatives also took part in public discussions on the draft CPC and CC.

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- An assessment was provided on **the provision of rehabilitation services to the victims of torture and ill-treatment in Armenia, including interviews with the representatives of civil society organisations** involved in activities supporting victims of torture. The awareness on the matter concerned was disseminated through the engagement of the Civil Society Organisations.
- A **gender analysis** was carried out under the Programme, aiming at assessing gender mainstreaming in training courses for the Justice Academy. The analysis showed that the content of the five training courses developed under the PGG II is fully gender mainstreamed and ensures the consideration of gender equality aspects.

[A background information sheet on both components of this project is available on the website.](#)

More information:

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pgg2/armenia>

Contact :

Ogdp_pgg@coe.int

 @partnershipgovernance

 @CoeEapPCF

Regional projects implemented in Armenia:

- ▶ Strengthening measures to prevent and combat economic crime
- ▶ Strengthening the profession of lawyer in line with European standards
- ▶ Strengthening the access to justice through non-judiciary redress mechanisms for victims of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech
- ▶ Women's Access to Justice: delivering on the Istanbul Convention and other European gender equality standards

For more information, consult the Factsheet on Regional projects

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