



## Key highlights

The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers adopted the Action Plan for Armenia 2023-2026 at its 1447th meeting on 3 November 2022, to accompany Armenia on a path toward deeper democratic governance, stronger human rights protections and more resilient institutions.

Developed and implemented in close partnership with the Armenian authorities, the Action Plan has delivered **substantial, measurable outcomes** across six thematic areas — from justice reform and anti-corruption to child protection and cybersecurity. When Armenia faced an unexpected humanitarian challenge in 2023, the Council of Europe responded swiftly, developing a dedicated **Refugee Response Package** as part of the Action Plan to protect the rights of newly arrived displaced people and support their longer-term integration.

The Action Plan mobilised **€19.2 million in secured funding**, covering 89% of total identified needs, and has proven that targeted, well-coordinated technical cooperation delivers real change for people in Armenia.

### 1. Securing human rights and fundamental freedoms



#### **Effective implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights:**

One of the Action Plan's most tangible contributions has been helping Armenia translate its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights into concrete legal and institutional reform. Thanks to the support delivered, Armenia advanced the execution of several judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and achieved meaningful progress in addressing identified patterns of repeated violations:

- A **new Law on Enforcement Proceedings**, developed with expert support under the Action Plan and adopted in April 2024, streamlines procedures and ensures compensation in cases of non-execution — a structural reform with direct implications for compliance with Articles 6 and 13 of the Convention.
- The **Law on Police Guard**, alongside implementation tools, brought police practices into alignment with the right to peaceful assembly, ensuring proportional and lawful use of force and thereby contributing to the implementation of related Court judgments (*Mushegh Saghatelyan* group of cases).
- In the armed forces, new **Rules of Conduct** were developed, setting higher standards for ethical behaviour, tackling discrimination and sexual harassment, and strengthening mechanisms to detect and investigate rights violations. Relevant professionals built new skills in mental health, suicide prevention and the investigation of non-combat deaths, thereby addressing the general measures indicated in the *Nana Muradyan* group of cases.



#### **Safeguarding the Rights of Displaced People:**

When over 100,000 displaced people arrived in Armenia in 2023, the Council of Europe was among the first to respond. The Council of Europe supported the Armenian authorities in addressing urgent needs, safeguarding human rights while fostering integration.

The Action Plan supported local communities in hosting refugees, improved access to social housing, promoted women's economic empowerment and helped integrate approximately 200 displaced healthcare professionals into the Armenian health system.

The Migration and Citizenship Service received targeted support to ensure human-rights-compliant service delivery, efficiently processing over 31,000 citizenship applications since 2024. A newly launched dedicated call centre gave refugees and migrants direct access to information on their rights, legal status and available services. Lawyers, human rights defenders and civil society organisations enhanced their knowledge of migration management, integration practices and procedural safeguards — strengthening their ability to engage with the Convention system through structured and evidence-based Rule 9 and 39 submissions. A dedicated civil society platform was established to provide structured feedback on refugee-related state policies.

## 2. Advancing social justice, good health, and a sustainable environment



**Human Rights and Biomedicine:** Armenia's ratification of the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (Oviedo Convention) in October 2025 marked a major step forward for human rights in healthcare. The Action Plan combined legislative support with extensive capacity building for healthcare and legal professionals, reinforcing ethical oversight and trust, strengthening patient-centred care and improving the overall quality of healthcare services provided to the population. The Council of Europe accompanied the development of a new comprehensive health insurance system, informed decision-making standards on the transplantation of organs and tissues and stronger procedural safeguards for persons with mental health problems.



**Ensuring Social Rights:** The Action Plan assisted the national authorities in aligning legislation, policies and practices with European standards on social rights, supporting the development of a draft Law on Trade Unions and a Strategy on Social Housing, also raising awareness among social partners and civil society. Notable progress was achieved towards the acceptance by Armenia of additional provisions under the revised Social Charter, with the initiation of the

ratification process of Article 11 (right to the protection of health). The Action Plan further deepened Armenia's engagement with the Social Charters' monitoring mechanism, illustrated by the submission of a first alternative report to the European Committee of Social Rights, representing a new commitment to accountability and pluralistic social dialogue.

## 3. Acting for equality, diversity and respect



**Gender equality, violence against women and domestic violence:** The Action Plan strengthened Armenia's responsiveness to violence against women and domestic violence and paved the way for the adoption of a National Gender Policy Implementation Strategy 2025-2028 as a framework for co-ordinated gender equality actions, pending the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Targeted assistance assessed regulatory gaps and established new protocols for the use of electronic bracelets, also preparing the ground for the roll-out of a national programme for perpetrators of domestic violence. Legal professionals strengthened their skills to provide gender-responsive and victim-centred support improving women's access to justice. Parallel capacity development of law enforcement led to increased levels of trust, reflected in a growing number of violence cases reported and investigated. Civil society played a critical role throughout, empowering women through initiatives favouring their economic independence, social inclusion and psychological resilience.



**Anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion:** The Action Plan facilitated extensive public consultation on a draft Law on National Minorities. It furthermore built the capacities of the Human Rights Defender's Office, law enforcement, academia, students and media professionals to address discrimination and counter the spread of hatred in the public domain, including online, enhancing overall awareness and understanding of European standards.

Technical co-operation also equipped law enforcement officials with tools to better address hate crimes against LGBTI persons, proving instrumental in the implementation of the *Oganezova v. Armenia* judgment.



**Protecting Children's Rights:** The Council of Europe tangibly contributed to strengthening Armenia's child-protection system, putting particular focus on effective guardianship of unaccompanied and separated children and psychosocial support for trauma-affected children. Informed by Council of Europe evidence-based recommendations, a package of Laws adopted in October 2025 marked a significant step towards establishing a comprehensive legal framework for

child protection mechanisms. Support extended to protecting children against sexual abuse and exploitation in line with the Lanzarote Convention, preparing the ground of a sustainable institutional response. The Action Plan increased children's awareness of risks, dangers and complaint mechanisms available, simultaneously improving the capacity of parents and relevant frontline professionals to prevent, detect and address violence against children, including in the digital environment.

### 3. Building trust in public institutions



**Independence and efficiency of justice:** The Action Plan played a key role in the implementation of Armenia's Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy for 2022-2026 and advanced the harmonisation of legislation with European standards, including amendments to the draft Code of Administrative Offences. The country's civil courts caseload was reduced by 80% thanks to the institutionalisation of alternative dispute resolution – including the creation of a pool of 125 certified mediators – and the transfer of jurisdiction over small monetary claims to notaries. Targeted support furthermore streamlined Armenia's judicial training system and promoted digital transformation, illustrated by the modern electronic search and citation system operating at the Court of Cassation. The Action Plan moreover reinforced the Constitutional Court's role as the guardian of the constitutional order, facilitating structured dialogue with key domestic stakeholders and improved tracking of its rulings.

In addition, the Council of Europe supported Armenia's criminal justice reform, facilitating efficiency gains and building capacities to ensure the consistent application of the new Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes. Targeted assistance accompanied the alignment of domestic legislation with the Rome Statute and prepared Armenia's landmark ratification in 2023 of Protocol No. 13 to the Convention, abolishing the death penalty in all circumstances.



**Prisons, police, deprivation of liberty:** The Action Plan brought tangible improvements to Armenia's penitentiary. In line with the recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), Armenia strengthened safeguards against ill-treatment in places of deprivation of liberty and improved the healthcare access for inmates while consolidating a prison system based on rehabilitation.

Telemedicine services expanded to six out of 10 prisons, backed by a dedicated state reimbursement scheme. Prison health-care staff boosted their professional skills following the transfer of an empowered Penitentiary Medicine Centre (PMC) to the Ministry of Health. The Action Plan also considerably enlarged reintegration opportunities for inmates, strengthening resocialisation pathways and employability by equipping three prisons to offer vocational training.

In parallel, the probation service increased its efficiency through upgraded case-management tools and a modernised e-probation system, with related capacity building improving pre-release assessments and sustainable alternatives to incarceration.

## 5. Upholding safety, security and integrity of society and persons



**Fight against corruption, money laundering:** The Action Plan actively contributed to improving Armenia's regulatory and institutional architecture to tackle corruption and money laundering and to ensure effective enforcement of applicable frameworks. Fruitful technical co-operation led to the adoption of a Law on Corruption, a revised Law on Whistleblowing and a standard Code of Conduct for public servants. Targeted support also strengthened mechanisms for asset verification, boosted financial intelligence and improved institutional capacities to assess corruption risks in line with international and European standards, empowering public authorities and private actors to better mitigate vulnerabilities in high-risk sectors. Expertise was provided to the Ministry of Justice to strengthen monitoring of the National Anti-Corruption strategy, ensuring meaningful measurement of progress and impact.



**Cybercrime:** In an increasingly digital world, the Council of Europe supported Armenia's alignment with the **Budapest Convention on Cybercrime** — and the results are tangible. In 2023, Armenia signed the **Second Additional Protocol** to the Convention, enhancing cross-border cooperation on electronic evidence.

Judicial and law enforcement authorities built new skills to investigate and prosecute cybercrime, handle electronic evidence and engage in **interagency and public-private cooperation** while enabling interagency, international and public/private co-operation between professional cybersecurity communities.

## 6. Anchoring democratic values in European societies



**Promoting good governance and participatory democracy at local level:** The Action Plan accompanied Armenia's decentralisation reform through legal and policy expertise feeding into a draft Law on Local Self-Government, completed by broad public consultations with relevant stakeholders, including civil society. Targeted co-operation furthermore supported horizontal and cross-border inter-municipal collaboration, enhancing peer learning opportunities and expanding the role of local authorities in socio-economic development. Particular attention was paid to increasing the democratic participation of women and youth at local level. Municipalities are now empowered to address the needs of refugees while bolstering their crisis preparedness frameworks, demonstrating that local democracy and humanitarian response are mutually reinforcing.

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*The Action Plan for Armenia 2023-2026 demonstrates what is possible when political will, targeted expertise and reliable funding come together.*

*From the courtroom to the prison cell, from the healthcare ward to the municipal council, the Council of Europe's support has delivered changes that improve the daily lives of people in Armenia – strengthening the foundations of a democratic, rights-respecting society.*

*The work is not finished. Sustained engagement will be essential to consolidate and build on these gains. The next Action Plan for 2027-2030 represents an opportunity to continue this journey – and your support will make the difference.*

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