

Information Documents

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Final Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan on Protecting
Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe
(2021-2025)

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Executive summary

1. This final report provides an overview of progress and achievements in the implementation of the Council of Europe [Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe \(2021–2025\)](#) (Action Plan), during the period 1 May 2024 to 31 December 2025. It is prepared for the attention of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and complements the [first](#) and [second](#) interim reports of 10 February 2023 and of 19 June 2024, respectively.
2. The present report details the further substantial advancements made by the Council of Europe in enhancing safeguards for vulnerable persons in the context of migration and asylum, paying also special attention to the impact of the Russian Federation's full-scale aggression against Ukraine since 24 February 2022, which has resulted in the forced internal and external displacement of millions of people.
3. During the implementation of the Action Plan in the reporting period, the former Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees (SRSG) ensured a co-ordination role, a transversal approach, and streamlined internal and external co-operation based on the relevant Council of Europe conventions and standards. From 1 February 2025 until the end of the Action Plan's implementation, the new Division on Migration and Refugees (DMR), established in the Directorate of Human Rights at the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI) in order to consolidate and intensify the Organisation's work in this area, continued these co-ordination tasks, ensuring an uninterrupted continuation of the activities outlined in the Action Plan.
4. The Action Plan's implementation during the reporting period focused particularly on protecting women and children, including unaccompanied and separated children, from abuse, exploitation and human trafficking; ensuring access to healthcare, including psychological support; promoting education, linguistic integration and the recognition of refugees' qualifications; enhancing the capacity of legal professionals in the field of migration and asylum (notably through the migration-related courses of the Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals Programme ([HELP](#))); strengthening the resilience of local and regional authorities in hosting war-displaced persons from Ukraine and addressing their needs; and promoting intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and integration of migrants and refugees.
5. These actions, along with the Council of Europe [Network of Focal Points on Migration](#) and the inter-secretariat Co-ordination Group on Migration, which are managed and steered by the DMR, contributed to further strengthening inter-secretariat co-ordination, and to consolidating and reinforcing communication with member states.
6. Co-operation with key international organisations continued throughout the reporting period, while further enhancing awareness of the Council of Europe's role in protecting the human rights of vulnerable persons in the context of migration and asylum. The Action Plan complemented the work carried out by other international organisations on the ground, and contributed to the objectives of the [UN Global Compact on Refugees](#), the [UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#), and the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).

As regards the 28 lines of action directly referenced in the Action Plan, major new achievements under each of the four pillars (more information is provided below in Chapter 3) in the reporting period included:

7. **Pillar 1 – Ensuring protection and promoting safeguards by identifying and responding to vulnerability (human rights):** Thematic Paper “[Vulnerability of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees: Council of Europe and European Union standards](#)”, published by the DMR; CDCJ [Guide for practitioners on the administrative detention of migrants and asylum seekers](#) now available in [10 languages](#); CDBIO [Guide to Health Literacy](#) now made available in [11 languages](#); [White paper on Equitable and timely access to appropriate innovative treatments and technologies in healthcare](#), published by CDBIO; [Evaluation Report on the Guardianship System for Children in the Context of Migration in Türkiye](#) and [Legislation Guide on the Protection of Migrant Children in Türkiye](#), prepared by DGI; CDENF’s [Implementation Review of Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on effective guardianship](#) for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration; studies and reports concerning the protection of displaced Ukrainian children by the Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU).
8. **Pillar 2 – Ensuring access to law and justice (human rights and rule of law):** [Compendium of promising practices on access to nationality for stateless children](#), issued by CDCJ; [2nd](#) and [3rd](#) International Conferences on Migrant Smuggling; the Gender Equality Division’s [Practical guide for public authorities to support the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls](#); DMR’s Thematic Paper [on Ensuring a Human Rights-Compliant End to Refugeehood through Integration, Naturalisation or Voluntary Repatriation](#); the Youth Department’s [first Review of the Implementation](#) of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on supporting young refugees in their transition to adulthood. In addition, the Council of Europe joined the [Global Alliance to End Statelessness](#) in 2024, while the activities under the Action Plan contributed to the Council of Europe pledges 1 and 2 under the UNHCR [Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014-2024](#).
9. **Pillar 3 – Fostering democratic participation and enhancing inclusion (human rights and democracy):** [Recommendation CM/Rec \(2025\)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on qualifications and linguistic competences of refugees in Europe](#) was adopted in July 2025; HELP Programme developed a comprehensive package of online training courses with translations, and related national seminars carried out in co-operation with various Council of Europe entities and international partners; the multilateral [European Qualifications Passport for Refugees \(EQPR\)](#) received growing acceptance among member states’ authorities and higher education institutions with over 1 000 passports issued; the Intercultural Cities Programme enhanced its support to cities in Poland and the Baltic countries to respond to refugees and migrants reception and longer-term integration challenge, notably through the Academy on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees; CDADI’s [Feasibility study on preventing and combating intersectional discrimination in Europe](#) in view of preparing a draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation on the topic.

10. The cost of the Action Plan's implementation varied, as policy and standard-setting work was covered from the ordinary budget, while the technical co-operation was mostly funded through extra-budgetary resources. The implementation of the Action Plan led to the development of a growing number of impactful tools and instruments, which required effective promotion, dissemination, and sustained application. To this end, securing additional funding has remained a key challenge, in view of the need to sustain the efforts and investments already made by the entire Organisation.
11. Close co-operation and sustained communication with member states made it possible to better adapt Action Plan activities to their specific needs, thereby fostering ownership and ensuring a lasting impact.

1. Introduction

12. On 5 May 2021, at its 1403rd Meeting, the Committee of Ministers [adopted the Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe](#) (2021-2025). The Committee of Ministers indicated the need to receive regular updates on progress and ongoing results of the Action Plan through interim reports and the final report. The [first interim report](#) of 10 February 2023 covered the first 20 months of implementation of the Action Plan, from 5 May 2021 to 31 December 2022. The [second interim report](#) of 19 June 2024 covered the period from 1 January 2023 to 30 April 2024. The present final report summarises progress, achievements and lessons learnt during the Action Plan implementation from 1 May 2024 to 31 December 2025.
13. During implementation of the Action Plan, the unprecedented number of people fleeing the consequences of the Russian Federation's full-scale aggression against Ukraine – predominantly women, children, and older persons – significantly increased the demands placed on Council of Europe member states. This situation required the Council of Europe to rapidly adapt and reinforce its tools, standards and operational responses to address emerging protection needs, prevent human rights violations, and ensure effective safeguarding of persons in vulnerable situations.
14. The report is organised as follows: Chapter 2 presents the implementation modalities, transversal approach and communication on the Action Plan; Chapter 3 provides an overview of the progress and major achievements in the implementation of actions across the four priority areas; Chapter 4 highlights additional activities and initiatives undertaken by the Organisation ensuring complementarity with the Action Plan; Chapter 5 addresses multilateral co-operation. A brief financial overview is presented in Chapter 6. Lastly, Chapter 7 draws conclusions, highlights key insights, in view also of possible future action.

2. Protection of Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration – Priority Action for the Council of Europe

2.1 Implementation modalities and a transversal approach

15. During the reporting period, from 1 May 2024 to 31 January 2025, the former Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees (SRSG) ensured a co-ordinating role for the implementation of the Action Plan, securing fluid communication within the Organisation and with member states, maintaining effective engagement with key external partners, and leading the preparation of Action Plan reports and reviews.

16. As of 1 February 2025, the co-ordination role has been carried out by the Division on Migration and Refugees (DMR), newly created upon decision of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe within the Directorate of Human Rights at the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI), in line with his decision to consolidate and intensify the Organisation's efforts in the field of migration and refugees.
17. Throughout the reporting period, the implementation of the Action Plan continued to be affected by the Russian Federation's full-scale aggression against Ukraine, which started on 24 February 2022. [Over 5 million refugees](#)¹ from Ukraine were recorded in European states. This high number of refugees, largely composed of women, children and older persons, required rapid response by hosting countries to ensure their reception and accommodation. In this context, the member states placed strong emphasis on the protection of persons in particularly vulnerable situations fleeing Ukraine from abuse, exploitation and human trafficking; on providing them with psychological support to those fleeing the war; on promoting language integration for both adults and children; on ensuring access to education and the labour market; and on addressing housing needs as well as social inclusion and integration.
18. To address these challenges and in line with the relevant mandates, the Office of the former SRSG and subsequently the DMR consistently made use of the established working methods, namely regular exchanges through the inter-secretariat Council of Europe Co-ordination Group on Migration (Co-ordination Group on Migration) and the Network of Focal Points on Migration. In addition, fact-finding and country missions were conducted to provide direct, practical support to member states through further co-operation with the Council of Europe.
19. Six meetings of the Co-ordination Group on Migration were organised, bringing together all relevant Council of Europe entities engaged in the implementation of the Action Plan. The Co-ordination Group on Migration kept the implementation modalities of the Action Plan under close review and worked jointly on internal procedures for its programmatic and financial management.
20. Through the work of the Co-ordination Group on Migration, strong relationships and regular information exchanges were maintained with the Council of Europe's Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (Conference of INGOs) and its [Committee on Migration Issues](#).
21. Enhanced internal co-ordination fostered connections and synergies across various programmes. During the reporting period, this was particularly evident in the links between activities carried out by the Human Rights, Justice and Legal Co-operation Standard-Setting Activities Department; Human Rights and Justice Co-operation Department; Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department (Children's Rights Division, Gender Equality Division, Violence against Women Division, Division on Trafficking in Human Beings); Youth Department; Anti-Discrimination Department; Education Department; Human Rights and Biomedicine Division; Directorate of Political Affairs and External Relations; Council of Europe external offices, Parliamentary Assembly, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, addressing the inclusion and protection of persons in vulnerable situations in the context of migration.

1. As of 31 December 2025.

22. The implementation of the Action Plan was regularly discussed with the member states through the Network of Focal Points on Migration, which held four meetings during the reporting period. In connection with the Action Plan, the Network served not only as a forum for consultations and exchanging good practices, but also as a platform for co-ordinating various multidisciplinary interventions through direct dialogue with national authorities.
23. The Action Plan supported the implementation of the Council of Europe [Strategy for the Rights of the Child \(2022-2027\)](#) by tackling situations of vulnerability of migrant and refugee children. Furthermore, the Action Plan supported the implementation of the [Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029](#),² by specifically looking at the protection of the rights of migrant and refugee women and girls (Strategic Objective 1). Furthermore, the activities of the Action Plan looking at the equity of access to healthcare in the context of the pandemic and health literacy supported priorities of the [Strategic Action Plan on Human Rights and Technologies in Biomedicine \(2020-2025\)](#). The implementation of the [Action Plan on Fostering International Co-operation and Investigative Strategies in Fighting the Smuggling of Migrants](#) was further supported, among others, through the work of the Network of Prosecutors on Migrant Smuggling.³
24. The transversal approach of the Action Plan also aimed to strengthen the connection between the work of the Council of Europe and the activities carried out by the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). The CEB's [Strategic Framework 2023-2027](#) provided a roadmap for initiating activities assisting authorities in Ukraine, continuing support for migrants and their host communities, and addressing broader social challenges across Europe.
25. Further information on other activities undertaken by the Organisation, which were not directly linked to the Action Plan but contributed to its implementation, is provided in Chapter 4 of this report.

2.2 Communication on the Action Plan

26. During the reporting period, communication on the Action Plan continued both internally and externally during activities carried out by the Office of the former SRSG, by the DMR, specialist departments, monitoring bodies and intergovernmental committees such as the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ), the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF), the Council of Europe Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU), the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO), the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the PACE Parliamentary Network on the Situation of the Children of Ukraine, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. Progress on the Action Plan was presented at regular meetings of the Council of Europe's Network of Focal Points on Migration to representatives of member states dealing with migration issues at a national level, as well as in the meetings of the Co-ordination Group on Migration.

2. The [Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029](#) notes that negative narratives on migration have exacerbated existing obstacles in the achievement of gender equality and human rights for all women and girls. The implementation of this Strategy is co-ordinated alongside existing other Council of Europe strategies and action plans, including safeguards concerning vulnerable persons in the context of migration and asylum.

3. In the light of the existing Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025), the scope of the present action plan did not include this group of people.

27. The Action Plan was also presented to partners in the EU institutions (European Commission, EEAS, European Parliament) and agencies (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), European Border and Coast Guard Agency ([Frontex](#)) and European Migration Network (EMN)). In addition, it was presented to other international partners such as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR), National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), civil society organisations and the Council of Europe's Conference of INGOs.
28. A dedicated web page provided updates to illustrate the [implementation of the Action Plan](#) in real time and to reflect new activities and events. In addition, new resources were published on the [thematic page on migrant children's transition to adulthood](#). As of February 2025, the DMR has further developed and ensured the regular updating of its website providing easy access by all stakeholders to information on the ongoing work and considerable legal *acquis* of the Council of Europe in the area of migration and asylum. In particular, the DMR has developed new user-friendly webpages on its website, disseminating Action Plan-related information, such as the [webpage on migration law reference documents](#) of the Council of Europe, and the webpage related to the Council of Europe's action concerning [forced displacement from and in Ukraine](#).
29. During the reporting period, more than 150 awareness-raising activities were carried out, 13 newsletters on migration mentioned the Action Plan, and more than 40 news items on the web had references to the Action Plan. Furthermore, 11 articles were published in mainstream media outlets, shedding light on the activities of the Office of the former SRSG, the DMR and the Action Plan. To enhance communication channels, social media presence was regularly maintained, with 81 postings on X (formerly Twitter) garnering more than 120 000 views and almost 4 000 followers, while the DMR LinkedIn account, launched in March 2025, rapidly received wide public attention, reaching over 7 600 followers by the end of 2025.

3. Progress report on the implementation of actions in the four priority areas

30. The overall implementation of the Action Plan has been carried out in conformity with the implementation modalities approved by the Committee of Ministers. The activities of the Action Plan are structured around four pillars, and a brief overview of the progress achieved under each pillar is provided below.

Pillar 1 – Ensuring protection and promoting safeguards by identifying and responding to vulnerability (human rights)

31. In line with the Council of Europe standards on protecting persons in vulnerable situations from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence, as well as ensuring their identification and support throughout asylum and migration procedures, activities focused on strengthening member states' protection frameworks by promoting the effective implementation of the Organisation's standards, providing practical guidance and conducting capacity-building activities. As outlined below, particular emphasis was placed on improving procedures and systems for the protection of migrant and refugee women and children, including unaccompanied and separated minors, as well as on access to healthcare. Furthermore, effective alternatives to immigration detention were promoted and procedural safeguards were improved, including enhanced access to services such as healthcare.

1.1 Promoting effective vulnerability screening and safeguards

32. The DMR published a Thematic Paper entitled "[Vulnerability of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees: Council of Europe and European Union standards](#)" in November 2025, which offers a concise overview of the main Council of Europe and European Union legal instruments, as well as relevant case law from the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union, concerning vulnerability in migration and asylum. It aims to assist member states in further aligning their laws and practices with European standards and highlights the responsibility of national authorities to assess individual circumstances and to ensure that migrants and asylum seekers in vulnerable situations receive the assistance and safeguards required under national and international law.
33. During the reporting period, the Council of Europe Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU) developed into an important regional multilateral co-operation, co-ordination and peer-review platform, enabling representatives from Council of Europe member states, key international partners (including EU and UN Agencies), and multifaceted civil society organisations, independent experts, including from academia, to discuss and respond rapidly to acute legal and political challenges related to the children of Ukraine. The CGU has enabled the timely exchange of information and good practices, as well as the provision of expert advice on transnational procedures and guardianship, trauma-informed psychological support and care, risks of trafficking in relation to children of Ukraine, access to (quality) education, preconditions for safe return from Council of Europe member states to Ukraine, the impact of war on children with disabilities, and reform of Ukraine's child protection system, among other topics. On 19 September 2025, the CGU officially [launched its second mandate](#), planned to run until 31 December 2026, continuing to focus on key topics from the first phase, such as the impact of war on children with disabilities, the pre-conditions for the safe return of children from host countries to Ukraine, as well as psychological support and trauma-informed care. It will also explore new priority areas, including the role of children in the accountability process and access to justice, conflict-related sexual violence against children, online safety and emerging risks from AI-generated content in the context of war, and bullying and harassment of children of Ukraine within educational settings.
34. Moreover, the CGU produced a number of studies and reports concerning vulnerable children in the context of migration and asylum: a [Mapping study](#) on children of Ukraine's access to education in Council of Europe member states (November 2024); a Mapping study on the impact of war on children with disabilities: risks, challenges and ways to mitigate harm, [Special hearing report](#) on understanding the risks of trafficking of children of Ukraine, including for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation, prepared in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA); [Information notes](#) on adoption during the war and in emergency situations. Following CGU's Special thematic hearing on [the pre-conditions for the safe return](#) of children of Ukraine from Council of Europe member states, the CGU produced: a co-ordination information form; checklist for host states; and a Mapping study on the practice of establishing focal points co-ordinating all actions and decisions concerning the children of Ukraine.

35. The Gender Equality Division (GED) supported further awareness raising about [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls](#), which provides a comprehensive reference framework for all member states and affirms the collective European commitment to gender-sensitive migration and asylum policies. The Recommendation was presented during numerous events, including in the PACE, at the Network of Focal Points on Migration, in the CGU, and at international conferences on combating violence against women. A [Practical guide for public authorities to support the implementation of the Recommendation](#) was produced in October 2025. The Guide assists various authorities dealing with migration, integration or asylum in translating international standards into concrete national action.
36. GED co-operation projects in Armenia, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and [Türkiye](#) focusing on combating violence against women included components covering the needs of asylum-seeking and refugee women and girls, and further contributed to the implementation of [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)17](#) by strengthening civil society capacity, promoting gender-sensitive journalism, and supporting the socio-economic empowerment of refugee women.
37. In particular, in [Armenia 21 civil society organisations](#) strengthened their advocacy, co-ordination, and communication capacities related to the protection of refugee women's rights, supporting approximately 250 refugee women, most of whom secured employment or engaged in self or home-based work. Gender-sensitive reporting on refugee women and girls was reinforced through the development of [Guidance on Gender-Sensitive Journalism](#) and dedicated training for media professionals, contributing to more accurate, rights-based, and non-discriminatory public discourse.
38. Co-operation projects in [Ukraine](#) and the [Republic of Moldova](#) on awareness-raising in combating violence against women (COVAW) were adapted to reflect the needs of asylum-seeking and refugee women and girls in the context of Russian Federation's full-scale aggression against Ukraine, including IDPs and refugees. In 2024-2025 the project in Ukraine "Combating Violence against Women in Ukraine – Phase II" ([COVAW-II](#) project) focused, among other things, on capacity-building and training for mental health and emergency response professionals, based on a 2022 [Manual for Ukrainian mental health and emergency response professionals](#) on addressing sexual violence during armed conflict. As part of the COVAW-II project and in co-operation with Ukrainian CSOs, including those working at borders, a [Guide to the implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation on Protecting the rights of Migrant, Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Women and Girls](#) was published in May 2024. The Guide, focused on the Ukrainian context, provides practical support to authorities on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls, through the development of accessible, easy-to-implement tools. A study "[After ratification: promising practices on implementation of the Istanbul Convention](#)" was published with regard to Ukraine. The publication "[Safe and dignified: gender-sensitive voluntary return strategies for Ukraine, anchored in Council of Europe standards](#)" was finalised in December 2025.

39. In [Türkiye](#), the action “Fostering women’s access to justice in Türkiye” (WA2J Türkiye) contributed to enhancing accessibility and quality of legal aid services for women and supporting key stakeholders, including civil society, as well as to increase legal awareness and literacy among women. It was implemented within the joint programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe “[Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye](#)” (2023-2025). The action provided support to local organisations assisting Syrian refugee women. More than 700 migrant and refugee women and girls from communities affected by the 2023 earthquake benefited from awareness-raising activities about their rights and about issues of violence against women and domestic violence.
40. Under the Council of Europe project “[Supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova](#)”, in October 2024 a training for 26 officers (8 men and 18 women) from the General Inspectorate for migration and the border police of the Republic of Moldova was conducted with a focus on Articles 60 and 61 of the [Istanbul Convention](#), which enshrine the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women to protection from violence. The training was a follow-up to a [study](#) carried out by the Council of Europe and helped participants understand the dynamics of violence against women and the challenges faced by migrant and asylum-seeking women. Participants engaged in practical exercises on gender-sensitive persecution and non-refoulement, while promoting collaboration among various agencies.
41. As part of its capacity-building activities, the Unit on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics Unit (SOGIESC), within the project “[Promoting human rights and equality for LGBTI persons](#)” organised in September 2024 a two-day legal capacity building seminar in Dublin, Ireland in partnership with UNHCR Ireland. 58 representatives from Irish asylum institutions, national human rights institutions and practitioners enhanced their understanding of the protection needs of LGBTI persons from violence, harassment and discrimination based on their SOGIESC identities, and of the effective application of human rights and refugee law standards in these cases.

1.2 Enhancing special assistance, protection and support services

42. The [Guide for Practitioners on the Administrative Detention of Migrants and Asylum Seekers](#), adopted by the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) in 2023 as a practical tool for professionals working in the field of migration to promote the application of existing international and European standards in this area, was further promoted and disseminated, and translated into further languages: in addition to [English](#) and [French](#), the Guide was made available in [Arabic](#), [Armenian](#),⁴ [German](#), [Greek](#), [Italian](#), [Portuguese](#), [Turkish](#)⁵ and [Spanish](#). The Guide was presented to the National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs) during a workshop of the European NPM Forum in June 2024.

4. Translation of the Guide into Armenian was carried out under the project [Strengthening Human Rights Safeguards for the Displaced Population in Armenia](#).

5. Turkish translation of the Guide was carried out under the project [Strengthening the human rights protection in the context of migration in Türkiye](#) (2025), implemented within the joint programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe [Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye](#).

43. With regard to co-operation activities, various capacity-building and awareness-raising activities on alternatives to immigration detention were organised or supported in several member states by the DGI's Human Rights and Justice Co-operation Department. In particular, within the action "[Strengthening the Human Rights Protection in the Context of Migration in Türkiye](#)" – part of the European Union and Council of Europe joint programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye"⁶ – over 200 lawyers from eight local bar associations across Türkiye gained expertise in European and international human rights standards, focusing on immigration detention and procedural safeguards, through a series of cascade training sessions in 2024.
44. In December 2025 in Sofia, Bulgaria, the DMR, in co-operation with UNHCR, co-organised two [seminars to address issues related to the protection of unaccompanied migrant children and other vulnerable asylum seekers](#). The events, supported by Bulgaria's [National Institute of Justice](#) and the [National Bureau for Legal Aid](#), brought together judges, lawyers, policymakers, and international organisations' representatives to share expertise and discuss best practices.
45. The Council of Europe Steering Committee on the Rights of the Child (CDENF) conducted and adopted, in December 2024, the [implementation review of the Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)11](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration. In addition, a consultation of children and young persons was carried out during the review, and its report was adopted as an [Appendix to the Implementation Review of Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)11](#).
46. With regard to related co-operation activities, the Children's Rights Division continued to implement the project "[Protecting the rights of children in Armenia](#)" (2024-2026), aimed at strengthening national child protection frameworks, including effective guardianship systems for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration. The project supported legislative and policy reforms, capacity-building for relevant professionals, and alignment with Council of Europe standards on children's rights and protection in post-conflict contexts. The project supported the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration and produced: educational and methodical manual on "[Effective Guardianship for Unaccompanied and Separated Children in the Context of Migration in Armenia](#)"; [a new Council of Europe HELP course](#) on Refugee and Migrant Children, adapted to the Armenian context and [launched](#) in Yerevan in July 2024 in co-operation with UNHCR and Yerevan State University, strengthening professionals' knowledge of the rights and needs of refugee and migrant children. Further, a [multi-stakeholder roundtable discussion](#) was organised in July 2024 to support deinstitutionalisation reform and enhance the protection of the rights of unaccompanied and separated children, identifying gaps in the child protection system and proposing targeted recommendations.

6. The European Union and Council of Europe's joint action on [Strengthening the Human Rights Protection in the Context of Migration in Türkiye](#) ran from 1 January 2023 until 31 December 2025.

47. Under the European Union – Council of Europe joint project “[Ensuring child-friendly justice through the effective operation of the Barnahus-units in Finland](#)”, a grant was awarded to the NGO Pesäpuu to develop materials for children in context of migration to raise awareness on child sexual abuse. The three documents developed were: a Safety book for children in migration who might be victims or witnesses of child sexual violence (in [Finnish](#)); Guidelines for professionals who work in direct contact with children in migration who might be victims or witnesses of child sexual violence (in [Finnish](#)), which train professionals on how to help a child fill in the Safety Book; and a Leaflet promoting the Safety book (in [Finnish](#)).
48. The European Union and Council of Europe joint action on [Strengthening the Human Rights Protection in the Context of Migration in Türkiye](#) ran from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025. Particular focus was placed on enhancing safeguards for the identification, protection, and referral of individuals in vulnerable situations. The project aimed to enhance the protection of vulnerable migrants and refugees, especially children, through targeted capacity-building activities and key publications. These included an [Evaluation Report on the Guardianship System for Children in the Context of Migration in Türkiye](#) (December 2024) (in [Turkish](#)), analysing the country’s guardianship system and proposing 11 recommendations for improvement; a [Legislation Guide on the Protection of Migrant Children in Türkiye](#), outlining key concepts, international conventions, domestic laws and regulations; and an Evaluation Report on [Alternative Care Arrangements](#) (June 2025) (in [Turkish](#)), assessing the current system and proposing concrete recommendations for improvement. All of these have been developed to strengthen the protection of unaccompanied migrant children in Türkiye.

1.3 Enhancing access to healthcare, involvement in disaster risk reduction and emergency measures

49. The [Guide to Health Literacy](#), produced in January 2023 by the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO) with the involvement of the former SRSG Office to support decision-makers, health professionals and healthcare providers in identifying the needs of individuals in accessing healthcare and in undertaking corresponding responsibilities in healthcare, disease prevention and health promotion, was further promoted, translated and published in 11 languages. In addition to [English](#) and [French](#), the Guide was released in [Greek](#), [Italian](#), [Serbian](#), [Lithuanian](#), [Hungarian](#), [Romanian](#), [Romani](#), [Latvian](#), [Armenian](#). The Guide was promoted also at the [conference on Health Literacy and Human Rights in Rome](#), organised in December 2024 by the CDBIO and the National Office Against Racial Discrimination of Italy.
50. In September 2025 the CDBIO published the [White paper on Equitable and timely access to appropriate innovative treatments and technologies in healthcare](#).
51. The manual for professionals “[Mental health and psycho-social support for children in crisis and emergency situations](#)” was developed by the CGU jointly with the project “Protecting the rights of Ukrainian children and ensuring child-friendly justice”.⁷ The Arabic translation of the manual is planned for 2026.

7. Implemented within the framework of the [Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine “Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction”](#) (2023-2026) by the Council of Europe Children’s Rights Division and in close co-operation with the Council of Europe Office in Kyiv during 2025-2026.

52. Regarding the related co-operation activities, within the framework of the European Union and Council of Europe joint action on [Strengthening the human rights protection in the context of migration in Türkiye](#), an [international conference “Human rights and migration in the context of natural disasters and emergency situations”](#) was held in June 2024 in Ankara in co-operation with the Union of Turkish Bar Associations and with the support of the Council of Europe Project on [Strengthening the human rights protection of refugees and migrants in the Republic of Moldova](#), with the aim of identifying challenges related to migration due to natural disasters, including the devastating earthquake of February 2023 in Türkiye and Syria. The meeting enhanced participants’ knowledge of international and European standards, and promoted good practices in facilitating access to justice, identity documents, registration, and protection of vulnerable displaced persons.

Pillar 2 – Ensuring access to law and justice (human rights and the rule of law)

53. Specific measures were implemented to strengthen special procedural safeguards and support services, enabling vulnerable groups such as children, women and others with specific needs, to participate effectively in the justice system. These actions focused on clarifying standards and exchanging good practices to prevent ill-treatment and violence, alongside promoting the implementation of child-friendly justice in the fields of administrative and migration law.

2.1 Strengthening procedures and improving decision-making

54. The CDCJ established a Limited working group on migration [CDCJ-MIG](#),⁸ for the period of January 2024 to December 2026, to assist the CDCJ in carrying out its mandate in relation to statelessness and access to nationality concerning specifically children, as a contribution to the Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025), and the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027). At its 103rd plenary meeting (November 2024), the CDCJ, based on a [feasibility study for a non-binding legal instrument on access to nationality for stateless children](#), decided to revise Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the nationality of children and complement it with a checklist for policy makers – this work is to be completed by the end of 2026. The CDCJ also prepared a [Compendium of promising practices on access to nationality for stateless children](#), and adopted it at its 105th plenary meeting (November 2025).
55. In June 2024, a [multistakeholder meeting on Statelessness and Children](#) was jointly organised by the CDCJ and the European Migration Network (EMN). The meeting served as an opportunity to share good practices and identify challenges in the prevention of child statelessness and access to nationality for stateless children. It brought together experienced stakeholders from both institutional and civil society backgrounds.
56. At the [75th Session of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#) in October 2024 in Geneva, the former SRSG addressed the High-Level Segment on Statelessness and participated in the launch by UNCHR of the [Global Alliance to End Statelessness](#). On this occasion the Council of Europe joined the Global Alliance, reflecting its experience in this area and its ongoing work on stateless children and their access to nationality. Several member states also joined the Global Alliance, demonstrating their resolve to reduce statelessness.

8. The CDCJ-MIG working group is made up of experts with specific knowledge of law, policy and practice in the field of statelessness and access to nationality, in particular in respect of children.

57. On 20 May 2025, the CDCJ, representing the Council of Europe and in the framework of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness, co-organised the first Inter-Regional Network Lab “Regional Action, Global Impact – Leveraging Regional Approaches and the Role of Inter-Governmental Organizations in Addressing Statelessness”, together with UNHCR, the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Latin American and Caribbean Council for Civil Registry, Identity and Vital Statistics (CLARCIEV).
58. The former SRSG continued to exchange with the [European Network on Statelessness](#) – a civil society alliance of organisations and individuals working to promote the right to a nationality in Europe, contributing to the work of the CDCJ.
59. With regard to related co-operation activities, the DGI co-operation project [Strengthening the human rights protection of refugees and migrants in the Republic of Moldova](#) carried out jointly with UNHCR [a Mapping Statelessness Exercise in the Republic of Moldova](#). This complex data collection exercise identified profiles of undocumented populations, analysed the causes of statelessness, and informed targeted policy and support measures in line with the National Programme on Migration and Asylum for 2026-2030. This activity also built on the Republic of Moldova’s accession in 2024 to the Global Alliance to End Statelessness and its commitment to implementing systematic and coherent measures to guarantee the right to citizenship for all persons without discrimination.
60. As part of the Council of Europe’s action in the field of countering migrant smuggling,⁹ the [2nd](#) and [3rd](#) International Conferences on Migrant Smuggling were organised on 10-11 September 2024 and on 21-22 October 2025 under the auspices of the European Committee on Crime Problems ([CDPC](#)) in co-operation with the former SRSG Office, and later the DMR. These events followed up on the recommendations of the Reykjavík Summit, which reaffirmed the necessity to fight trafficking and smuggling of migrants, and committed to intensifying efforts to foster and improve international co-operation in this area. Senior officials, prosecutors, policymakers, and experts from international organisations and civil society discussed current challenges and policy responses related to migrant smuggling, and highlighted the importance of international co-operation and co-ordination between law enforcement, judicial authorities, and international partners, the need to uphold human-rights standards in all actions to counter migrant smuggling, as well as the work on a Council of Europe instrument to combat migrant smuggling.

9. Identified as a priority in the decisions of the Council of Europe Heads of State and Government at their [4th Summit](#) held in Reykjavík on 16-17 May 2023.

61. The Drafting Group on the Safe Third Country Concept (CDDH-PTS) of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) began work in 2025 on a draft study on the need for and the feasibility of updating [Recommendation no. R\(97\)22 of the Committee of Ministers to member States containing guidelines on the application of the safe third country concept](#). Given that the Recommendation was adopted over 25 years ago and in light of significant legal developments since, including judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, the Committee of Ministers considered it necessary to review and possibly revise the Recommendation. In 2025, three meetings of the CDDH-PTS were held, during which exchanges of views with external experts took place and members engaged in substantive discussions on the application of the safe third country concept, including relevant jurisprudence of the Court and the content of the [2009 Committee of Ministers Guidelines on human rights protection in the context of accelerated asylum procedures](#). Particular attention was given to safeguards for vulnerable groups. Building on these discussions, preparation of a draft study was initiated, intended to incorporate specific considerations relating to persons in situations of vulnerability. The study, to be finalised by 30 June 2026, is expected to further support the implementation of human rights standards and the development of practical guidance for member states.

2.2 Empowering vulnerable persons to access their rights

62. The DMR published a Thematic Paper on [Ensuring a Human Rights-Compliant End to Refugeehood through Integration, Naturalisation or Voluntary Repatriation](#) in December 2025, which analyses the legal standards and human rights safeguards applicable to the cessation of refugee status under international refugee and human rights law, and provides an overview of state practice in this context. By outlining clear standards and practical guidance, it aims to assist national authorities, legal practitioners and other stakeholders in ensuring that decisions to end refugee status through integration, naturalisation or voluntary repatriation are guided by established standards and principles of international human rights and refugee law, fully respecting the dignity and safety of the persons concerned.
63. DGI continued to manage the [European National Preventive Mechanisms \(NPMs\) Forum](#) as a platform for exchange aimed at bringing together European NPMs and assisting them in carrying out their mandate effectively and independently, which includes safeguarding and protecting the human rights of vulnerable migrants and refugees. The European NPM Forum [Workshop on NPM monitoring in the context of migration](#), organised in Strasbourg on 9-10 April 2025, provided a comprehensive overview of emerging trends in immigration detention and the evolving challenges faced by NPMs, particularly in remote and complex settings. Expert insights from European and international bodies reinforced the importance of legal safeguards and effective remedies, while participants shared valuable strategies for monitoring and oversight, especially in extraterritorial contexts (including the complex legal and operational dynamics of the Italy-Albania migration agreement).
64. The [Handbook on AI and Human Rights](#), which included a section on Immigration and Border Control, was adopted by the CDDH in November 2025. This section addresses state activities relating to border control, conditions and procedures for entry into and removal from the territory of the State, including issuance of visas or other kind of travel authorisations, residence permits, expulsion and deportation, asylum and refugee status and adjustments of status, translation/interpretation services, production of transcripts, collection and assessment of evidence, with due respect for international human rights obligations including those towards migrants and refugees.

65. Several activities of the Youth Department were dedicated to the promotion of the practical implementation of the [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on supporting Young Refugees in Transition to Adulthood, along with the dedicated [Guide "Turning 18 with confidence"](#) and the [HELP course on Transition of Migrant and Refugee Children to Adulthood](#). On 20-21 June 2024, the seminar "Supporting Confidence at 18", organised through co-operation between the Youth Department and the former SRSG Office, in partnership with the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), the European Forum for Youth with Lived Migration Experiences (VOICIFY) and Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE), provided a forum to share practices and initiatives supporting young refugees and migrants. It highlighted the complexity of the transition to adulthood for young refugees, shaped by legal, cultural, political and personal factors, and underscored the urgent need for comprehensive support, accessible information and meaningful participation in policy making to ensure their rights and well-being. On 15-19 September 2025, the study session "[Empowerment in Action: Young Refugees' Journey to Adulthood](#)" was held in Strasbourg, organised by Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE) in co-operation with the Youth Department, with the aim of strengthening participants' competences to support young refugees in their transition to adulthood through youth work and human rights education.
66. The [first Review of the Implementation](#) of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on supporting young refugees in their transition to adulthood was published in October 2025, with contributions from the Council of Europe Network of Focal Points on Migration and the DMR.
67. On 4 November 2024 the HELP Programme hosted a [conference](#) in Strasbourg addressing the deportation of children during armed conflicts and to mark the launch of its new free online course "[Deportation of Children during Armed Conflicts](#)". Organised under the project "HELP in Ukraine, including during wartime", the event highlighted the urgent need for specialised training to address child deportation. It brought together a diverse range of stakeholders, including representatives from Ukraine, and introduced the new course designed to equip legal professionals with essential knowledge and tools to navigate the complexities of child deportation in war zones. Discussions also covered legal frameworks for child protection and strategies for recovery and reintegration.
68. On 28 May 2025 the HELP course on "Deportation of Children during Armed Conflicts" was launched in Kyiv, Ukraine, in co-operation with the National School of Judges and the High School of Advocacy. This course was developed in response to the [Recommendation N2253 \(2023\) of the Parliamentary Assembly](#) of the Council of Europe which called on the Council of Europe member states to prioritise the return of children, their rehabilitation and the creation of conditions for family reunification and preservation of the identity of Ukrainian children. It was launched for 23 judges and 23 lawyers from different regions, guided by national tutors who adapted the course to Ukrainian legislation.
69. On 27 October 2025, 32 Ukrainian legal professionals have started the [HELP tutored course "Deportation of Children during Armed Conflicts"](#) aimed at equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to address complex issues of child deportation in conflict zones and to enforce international legal standards effectively.

70. With regard to related co-operation activities, within the action “[Strengthening the Human Rights Protection in the Context of Migration in Türkiye](#)” three grants have been awarded to civil society organisations in Türkiye to improve access to information and to legal aid for people in the context of migration, with particular attention to vulnerable individuals, especially women and children. Working in co-operation with local Bar Associations, the grantees implemented their activities between November 2024 and October 2025, reaching more than 570 refugee and migrant women and children, increasing their understanding of their rights and how to access legal aid. In addition, 42 [refugee and migrant children in Türkiye](#) together with their mothers learnt about their fundamental rights, including the right to non-discrimination, protection from harm, identity, private and family life, education, and the right to express their views and be heard through two [awareness-raising](#) initiatives.
71. The Council of Europe [Committee on Migration Issues of the Conference of INGOs](#) adopted, in October 2025, the [Recommendation on State Accountability in the Provision of Housing for People on the Move, Refugees and Asylum Seekers - A fundamental matter of respect of human rights](#). This recommendation consolidates Council of Europe standards, affirms ultimate public responsibility, dignity (minimum comfort and privacy), immediate safety, long-term stability and an integration perspective; it embeds child-sensitive safeguards and links housing to health, education and non-discrimination.
72. Finally, in 2025 the [Register of Damage for Ukraine](#) caused by the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine launched a new claims category: A1.1 Involuntary Internal Displacement, as well as two other new claims categories: A2.8 & A2.9 - Forcible Transfer or Deportation of Children and Adults. The latter categories are designated for individuals – both children and adults – who were forcibly transferred within Ukraine or deported outside of Ukraine as a result of the Russian Federation’s aggression.

Pillar 3 – Fostering democratic participation and enhancing inclusion (human rights and democracy)

73. Support was provided to member states to strengthen the resilience of local communities in addressing migration-related challenges in accordance with human rights standards and the principles of non-discrimination, equality and democratic participation. These efforts were implemented through measures aimed at enhancing social inclusion in education, building trust within local communities, and reshaping narratives on migration. The capacity of legal professionals was further reinforced through targeted HELP training modules aimed at fostering equality and inclusion of migrants and refugees. In addition, the Anti-Discrimination, Youth and Education Departments contributed to promoting social inclusion and community cohesion through the implementation of tailored initiatives.

3.1 *Promoting non-discrimination and diversity*

74. The Council of Europe [HELP](#) Programme, with contributions and support from key stakeholders, including UNHCR and the EU, had developed a comprehensive package of freely accessible, self-paced online training courses related to migration, mainly aimed at legal professionals (judges, prosecutors and lawyers): [Asylum and Human Rights](#) (available in 29 languages), [Refugee and Migrant Children](#) (available in 22 languages); [Alternatives to Immigration Detention](#) (available in 12 languages); [Deportation of Children during Armed Conflicts](#) (available in 1 language); [Internally Displaced Persons](#) (available in 3 languages); [LGBTI Persons in the Asylum Procedure](#) (available in 9 languages);¹⁰ [Temporary Protection in the European Union](#) (available in 6 languages); [Transition of Migrant and Refugee Children to Adulthood](#) (available in 1 language). Learners who successfully completed these courses could obtain electronic certificates in recognition of their acquired knowledge and skills. By the end of 2025, 24 275 users were enrolled in these courses and 6 473 successfully completed them in self-learning format. Additionally, these courses have been implemented in tutored format in collaboration with various National Justice Training institutions and Bar associations, specifically adapted to national contexts. In 2025, HELP courses “Refugee and Migrant Children”, “Deportation of Children during Armed Conflicts”, “LGBTI Persons in the Asylum Procedure” were tutored in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, with 173 legal professionals participating and 118 successfully certified – a success rate of 67%. Translations and national seminars related to HELP courses were carried out in co-operation with various Council of Europe entities and international partners.
75. In May 2024, in partnership with the Croatian Justice Academy, the HELP course focusing on the protection of refugee and migrant children was launched at the launch event held in Zagreb, Croatia, at an event attended by judges from across the country. This activity was organised under the EU – Council of Europe HELP project “Judicial Training on Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights”, funded by the European Union’s Justice Programme.
76. In June 2024, a seminar for European lawyers on European asylum and migration legal practices to assist people fleeing the consequences of Russian aggression in Ukraine was held under the Council of Europe [project “HELP for Ukraine, including during wartime”](#), in co-operation with the European Commission and UNHCR. The seminar was organised with and at the invitation of the Slovak Bar Association and provided useful and practical information for lawyers from both the EU and Ukraine who are assisting people fleeing the war.
77. In November 2025, a [tutored HELP course on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings](#) was launched in Lviv, Ukraine, for 22 judges and 22 prosecutors from Western regions of Ukraine.

10. [Eight](#) linguistic and national adaptations of the HELP course on “LGBTI persons in the asylum procedure” in Bosnian, French, German, Greek, Italian, Romanian, Serbian and Spanish were carried out within SOGIESC Unit’s project [“Promoting Human Right and Equality for LGBTI persons- IV”](#). These adaptations contributed to increasing the accessibility of the course in member states.

78. Three national launches and tutored training programmes were organised by SOGIESC Unit, based on the HELP course “LGBTI persons in the asylum procedure” in Serbia (September 2024), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (September 2025) and [Moldova](#) (November 2025). As a result, 95 representatives working in the field of asylum expanded their understanding of the specific situation of LGBTI persons in the context of asylum and reception and strengthened their capacity to assess international protection applications in a fair, individualised manner and in line with international human rights standards.
79. Regarding co-operation activities to support linguistic integration of migrants and refugees, implemented by the DGI Human Rights and Justice Co-operation Department (see also Chapter 4), in Moldova, in addition to the concept for country’s first [Multifunctional Integration Centre, which was developed](#) for further consideration by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, progress was also made towards developing a national Romanian language curriculum for adult migrants and refugees, with the A1-A2 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) curriculum finalised and the B1-B2 curriculum to be piloted in 2026.
80. The European Sports Charter forms the cornerstone of the work of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), applying a human rights due diligence approach in sport and a policy of zero tolerance for violence and all forms of discrimination, while paying particular attention to individuals and groups in a situation of vulnerability, such as children, migrants and persons with disabilities. EPAS has worked closely with the International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA), a long-standing member of the EPAS Consultative Committee, migrating the [Sport Migrant Integration Platform](#) to ISCA’s Integration of Refugees Through Sport (IRTS) website. This strategic partnership has increased the visibility of the projects hosted on the EPAS website, while ISCA will manage all future projects through this new webpage. EPAS also continued to collect [good practices](#), in close co-operation with its Consultative Committee (comprising up to 35 sports organisations), to further support member states in implementing Article 6 of the European Sports Charter.

3.2 Promoting democratic participation and inclusion

81. The [Intercultural Cities \(ICC\) Programme](#) significantly strengthened local and multi-level approaches to migration and integration by expanding its membership, consolidating its analytical tools, and deepening policy support to cities facing increasingly complex migration dynamics. The number of local authorities engaged with the ICC Programme grew to 173 cities and regions worldwide, including new members beyond Europe, reinforcing the programme’s global relevance and its role as a platform for evidence-based policy making and peer learning on migrant inclusion. The [ICC Index](#) remained a cornerstone tool and resource, with 22 new Index reports published between May 2024 and December 2025, supporting cities in diagnosing strengths and gaps in areas directly linked to migrant reception, inclusion, equality and participation. These processes helped local authorities translate human rights standards into concrete policies on access to services, non-discrimination, participation of migrants and refugees, and prevention of segregation, while also enabling benchmarking and evidence-based policy development across the network. The [online training programme on alternative narratives and inclusive communication](#) is a starting point to build capacity for positive intercultural messaging and for the development of a public discourse to counter rumours, stereotypes and ultimately the spread of hate speech.

82. The ICC Programme and the Committee of Experts on Intercultural Inclusion (ADI-INT) advanced multi-level governance of migration and integration, bridging local practice with national and European policy frameworks. Through [inter-agency initiatives with UNHCR, OSCE/ODIHR and OECD and targeted capacity-building activities](#), the ICC Programme supported 13 cities in Poland and the Baltic countries to respond to refugee reception and longer-term integration challenges. One example was the Academy on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Polish Cities, which concluded in November 2024. This [18-month pilot programme](#) delivered 10 comprehensive training courses to 146 participants from 13 Polish cities. In March 2025, the Baltic Intercultural Integration Academy was [launched](#) in Riga, Latvia – an inter-agency initiative aimed to enhance the capacity of city administrations in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to integrate refugees and migrants effectively.
83. Initiatives supported through ICC inter-city grants, notably projects such as [Cities of Reciprocity](#) in Ukraine and Poland, demonstrated the added value of intercultural approaches in contexts of displacement, internal migration and post-crisis recovery, strengthening social cohesion and trust at the community level.
84. At the intergovernmental level, ADI-INT continued operationalising the Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration](#) through guidance and concrete deliverables and tools on multi-level governance and intercultural inclusion, such as the [Self-Assessment tool on multilevel governance for intercultural integration](#) and the [Guidance document on strategies for inclusion in the fields under the responsibility of the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion \(CDADI\)](#), reinforcing coherence and synergies between asylum, migration and integration policies across governance levels, policy areas, and target groups.
85. Furthermore, through the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to member States [CM/Rec\(2022\)16 on Combating Hate Speech](#) and [CM/Rec\(2024\)4 on combating hate crime](#), a comprehensive framework for preventing and combating hate speech and hate crime against migrants has been created by Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) in co-operation with the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) and the CDPC.
86. The [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2025\)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Equal Rights for Intersex Persons](#) was adopted on 7 October 2025, and paragraphs 16 to 18 of the Appendix recommend that intersex persons should be protected in asylum procedures by recognising persecution on grounds of sex characteristics as a valid basis for asylum; that member states should ensure that intersex asylum seekers are not sent to a country where they would face a real risk of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment because of their sex characteristics or where their life, bodily integrity or freedom would be threatened; and that appropriate measures should be taken to prevent risks of physical violence, including sexual abuse, verbal aggression and other forms of harassment against intersex asylum seekers, particularly those living in collective housing and those deprived of their liberty, and to ensure they are provided with information relevant to their particular situation, and with healthcare that meets their specific needs.

87. In November 2025, CDADI adopted the [Feasibility study on preventing and combating intersectional discrimination in Europe](#), in view of preparing a draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation on this topic. This work was expected to contribute to strengthening the protection of migrants against this form of discrimination, to which many of them are exposed.
88. The Council of Europe has been running the [European Qualifications Passport for Refugees \(EQPR\)](#) since 2017, an initiative designed to facilitate the recognition of refugees' qualifications in the absence of full documentation. The EQPR is a standardised and portable document that explains the qualification(s) a refugee is likely to have based on the available evidence. Although this document does not constitute a formal recognition act, it summarises and presents available information on the applicant's educational level, work experience and language proficiency. By 31 December 2025, 24 countries had joined the EQPR: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Spain and the United Kingdom.¹¹ Over 1 000 EQPRs have been issued. More than 100 credential evaluators from 24 participating National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility were trained in the interview-based EQPR methodology.
89. The joint EU and Council of Europe project "Supporting an efficient national mechanism of recognition of refugees' qualifications in Italy" (1 September 2022 – 31 August 2024), co-funded via the Technical Support Instrument and implemented by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the DG REFORM, further strengthened the use of EQPR instrument at national level.
90. In 2025, the Council of Europe conducted a [survey](#) on EQPR usage, gathering responses from 336 passport holders representing more than 40 nationalities. The survey confirmed that the EQPR was a practical and effective tool for inclusion in higher education and the labour market. According to the findings, 59% of respondents used their EQPR, most often in the country where it was issued. 65% of students said the EQPR directly helped them access higher education, while 59% of employed respondents credited it with improving their job opportunities. Over 60% were working in their original field of qualification, demonstrating the EQPR's capacity to turn academic recognition into real opportunities. Furthermore, high satisfaction rate – 95% of participants would recommend the EQPR – reflects the programme's success. The survey also showed that more than 60% of EQPR users in work or study held a language certificate at B2 level or higher, underscoring how language proficiency reinforces employability and integration. This demonstrated the increasing acceptance of the EQPR as a vital tool for integrating refugees.
91. A collection of lived experiences of the EQPR, the "[Portrait of Refugees](#)" brochure, was published by the Education Department in May 2025. Seven refugees from several different countries were interviewed, with each narrative revealing a unique journey of continuing education and resuming professional careers in host countries.
92. Furthermore, the EQPR project developed synergies and has been co-operating with the [UNESCO Qualifications Passport](#) for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants, which targets countries beyond Europe. The EQPR may serve to support the implementation of the 2019 UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education.

11. This is in line with the Council of Europe's goal of having at least 50% of Member States join the EQPR by 2027.

93. On 9 July 2025, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted [Recommendation CM/Rec \(2025\)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on qualifications and linguistic competences of refugees in Europe](#). Since 2024, a dedicated Working Group developed the Recommendation under the mandate of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU). The Recommendation builds on ongoing Council of Europe Education projects in the field of refugee integration through education, especially on the [EQPR](#) and the [Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants programme](#). The Recommendation marked a step towards a comprehensive approach to recognising and valuing refugees' qualifications and language skills across member states. It aimed to establish transparent recognition procedures and encourages accessible, efficient, flexible and transparent processes to rapidly assess academic qualifications, including linguistic skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning. In highlighting the importance of the academic, professional, and linguistic integration, it also recognises the broader contributions of displaced persons to their host countries.
94. In addition to activities related to the support to young refugees in transition to adulthood (see Chapter 2.2.), the participation of young refugees in youth work and platforms for youth participation was promoted through co-operation with the Council of Europe Youth Department and civil society organisations. In November 2024, at the European Youth Centre in Budapest the former SRSG held a discussion with the participants of the study session "[Human Rights-Based Advocacy Unleashed: Access to Rights and Services for Young Migrant and Refugee Women in Europe](#)", which was co-organised with a refugee-led youth organisation "The Voices of Young Refugees in Europe" (VYRE).
95. Lastly, a "[Positive Storytellers](#)" session was organised in November 2024 in Strasbourg by the Youth Department in co-ordination with the Youth Social Rights Network and I-Participate NGO, which aimed at empowering participants to create positive narratives that foster inclusion and belonging for young refugees and migrants, helping young refugees feel valued and accepted.

Pillar 4 – Enhancing co-operation between migration and asylum authorities in Council of Europe member states (transversal support)

96. Throughout the implementation of the Action Plan, the Council of Europe Network of Focal Points on Migration, composed of representatives of all 46 member states, continued to have a central role in enabling co-operation and dialogue among migration and asylum authorities in Council of Europe member states. The participation of member states was particularly important during the organisation of fact-finding and country missions, as well as in thematic discussions, which were further developed by the DMR in 2025, thereby strengthening inter-agency co-operation and facilitating the exchange of good practices and lessons learnt among members.

4.1 Promoting inter-agency co-operation

97. Four meetings of the Network of Focal Points on Migration were organised during the reporting period (two ordinary meetings per year). The meetings of the Network ensured that the Council of Europe's activities in the field of migration, as well as the Action Plan, were appropriately adapted to meet the needs of member states. Existing standards and practices have been further promoted through the work of the Network.

98. In the reporting period, the former SRSG carried out a fact-finding mission to [Finland](#) from 21 to 23 May 2024. The [report](#) of the mission examined Finland's migration situation, particularly the "instrumentalisation" of migrants in the context of the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine, and provided a detailed analysis of the domestic legislation and the challenges related to safeguarding human rights and the rule of law in migration and asylum contexts.
99. On 9 and 10 September 2025, the DMR carried out a country mission to [Croatia](#), which focused on border monitoring and protection of migrant children. As noted in the [country mission report](#), the mission enabled the DMR to identify areas in which the Council of Europe may support the Croatian authorities, such as: exploring synergies with Croatia's Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM) and other similar European institutions in order to further reinforce the existing IMM methodology and its efficiency, including the Council of Europe Network of Focal Points on Migration and the European National Preventive Mechanisms Forum, managed by DGI.
100. These missions to member states served as opportunities to witness the situation on the ground and to provide recommendations and follow up actions in line with Council of Europe expertise, focusing also on vulnerable persons on the move. Communication with the Permanent Representations and the Network of Focal Points on Migration proved instrumental in organising the missions to member states and in conducting associated follow-up activities.
101. Furthermore, during the reporting period, the former SRSG and the DMR participated in several high-level events, including: [75th Session of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR) in October 2024 in Geneva; a Roundtable on the Protection of Unaccompanied Children, co-organised in June 2024 in Strasbourg with UNHCR in the framework of World Refugee Day; the 16th [Warsaw Human Rights Seminar](#) in November 2025; and UNHCR [Global Refugee Forum Progress Review](#) in December 2025. The former SRSG and the DMR regularly attended the PACE Migration Committee meetings and plenary sessions of the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities, which provided opportunities to present the activities of the Action Plan and strengthen co-operation and information exchange with relevant stakeholders from member states.
102. Regarding co-operation with the Committee on Migration Issues of the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) of the Council of Europe, the former SRSG addressed the webinar "Migration and Health" in February 2024, while the DMR contributed to the discussions of the webinar "Education and Migration: Higher Education, Vocational Training, and Young Migrants" in April 2025. In November 2025, the DMR addressed the Committee on Migration Issues' webinar "AI and Migration", which aimed to examine current uses of artificial intelligence in the migration context, assess existing safeguards for the protection of migrants and open the debate on transparency, accountability, and redress mechanisms in an increasingly algorithmic environment.
103. Finally, the former SRSG and the DMR represented the Council of Europe and participated actively in the activities of the Consultative Forums of [Frontex](#) and the [EUAA](#), as well as the UNHCR [Nansen Refugee Award](#) Selection Committee.

4.2 Fostering peer-to-peer exchanges

104. The Council of Europe Network of Focal Points on Migration continued to regularly discuss good practices of national-level implementation of European Court of Human Rights judgments concerning the vulnerability of accompanied and unaccompanied minors and their access to asylum (see also the DMR's new webpage on the [Council of Europe's work on migration and refugees](#), including migration-related judgments of the European Court of Human Rights pending execution).

4. Additional activities

105. This chapter presents an overview of additional activities carried out during the reporting period. Although these activities are not directly referenced in the Action Plan, they supported its overall objective and respective pillars and further complemented its implementation. The majority of the activities outlined were focused on assisting member states in safeguarding the human rights of vulnerable persons displaced from Ukraine, while also remaining relevant in other migration and asylum contexts.

Protection of women and children in vulnerable situations

106. In July 2024, GRETA adopted a new [Guidance Note on the recovery and reflection period](#), which is provided for by Article 13 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. It highlights the purposes and principles of the recovery and reflection period, the legal basis and procedures for granting it, and its relationship with other provisions of the Anti-Trafficking Convention. The purpose of the Guidance Note is to strengthen the implementation of the obligation to grant a recovery and reflection period to victims of trafficking and provide concrete, practical guidance for relevant authorities, agencies and civil society organisations. This period is relevant for victims of trafficking who are in an irregular situation.
107. In the context of the ongoing 4th evaluation round of the Anti-Trafficking Convention, which has a thematic focus on preventing and addressing vulnerabilities to human trafficking, GRETA has examined in particular how the vulnerabilities of asylum seekers and migrants are assessed and what measures were taken by member states to prevent them from falling victim to human trafficking.
108. In 2024, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) held a range of events that tackled the human rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls, including the conference "[United around gender equality: making space for women and girls](#)", organised under the aegis of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers on 30 May 2024 in Strasbourg.

109. In 2025, GREVIO published a baseline report concerning the United Kingdom and carried out baseline evaluation visits to Latvia and Ukraine. In the above report and in the upcoming reports on Latvia and Ukraine, compliance with provisions of Chapter 7 of the Istanbul Convention¹² relating to the rights of migrant and asylum-seeking women was analysed and assessed. GREVIO also published first thematic evaluation reports on Monaco, Austria, Albania, Spain, Montenegro, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Portugal, France, Serbia, Netherlands, Andorra, Belgium and Italy, with evaluation visits within this framework to Estonia, Romania, Slovenia and Malta. In these reports, the situation of asylum-seeking women and migrant women was assessed horizontally in relation to prevention, protection and co-ordinated policies. An evaluation of the situation in the EU, including on issues related to asylum and migration, has been in progress, with the evaluation visit foreseen to take place in mid-2026.
110. Regarding the related co-operation activities, comprehensive support to the Republic of Moldova in strengthening human rights protections for refugees and migrants, particularly for those in vulnerable situations, such as women and children displaced from Ukraine by Russia's large-scale military aggression, was in focus of the international conference "[Protecting the Human Rights of Displaced Persons: Current Challenges and Ways Forward](#)" held in November 2024 in Chişinău with the participation of the Office of the former SRSG, following up on the former SRSG's fact-finding mission to the [Republic of Moldova](#).

Strengthening human rights protection of refugees, migrants and returnees

111. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) carried out migration-related visits to [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Cyprus](#), [Denmark](#), [Italy](#), and [Norway](#), with reports and government responses published, as well as migration-focused visits to [France](#) and [the Netherlands](#).
112. The CPT also strengthened co-operation with relevant bodies in order to protect vulnerable persons in the context of migration. This included engagement with Frontex on identifying and protecting vulnerable persons and addressing smuggling-related exploitation, as well as continued vigilance regarding pushbacks. The CPT shared its border-monitoring methodology with national mechanisms, contributed to the European Commission's review of the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common system for the return of third-country nationals staying illegally in the Union (Return Regulation), and worked with the Fundamental Rights Agency on developing a border-monitoring methodology.

12. The Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) includes a Chapter on migration and asylum (Chapter 7), with articles focusing on residence status, gender-based asylum claims, gender-sensitive reception and asylum procedures, and the principle of non-refoulement, as well as a transversal article on fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination, which relate to the situation of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.

113. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance ([ECRI](#)) released on 20 June 2024 its [Annual report 2023](#), which examined the ways in which Council of Europe member states had addressed the situation of people displaced by war and other emergencies. It analysed the main challenges and positive developments in several areas, such as ensuring equal protection for all people displaced by wars and other emergencies, their reception, integration and inclusion in host countries, as well as the ways in which public narratives concerning this group of persons are shaped. Moreover, ECRI country reports published during the ECRI's 6th monitoring round contain sections dealing with the integration and inclusion of migrants (including, where relevant, the situation of people displaced from Ukraine as a result of the Russian Federation's full-scale aggression), as well as hate speech and hate-motivated violence. The reports concerned the following [member states](#): Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom.
114. Regarding the related co-operation activities of the DGI Human Rights and Justice Co-operation Department, since May 2024 the Council of Europe project in Ukraine "[Facilitating access to human rights and essential services for internally displaced persons and returnees at the community level](#)" focused, among other things, on advancing integration and re-integration policies and practices through better access to legal aid, information, and services for vulnerable IDPs and returnees. The project supported the Ombudsman Office in Ukraine in developing [recommendations](#) on return policies with a focus on vulnerable groups. Aiming to foster participation and enhance inclusion of displaced persons, the project developed the [Methodology for the analysis of local programmes to take into account and meet the needs of IDPs](#).¹³ The Methodology is applied by IDP councils, local self-government, and civil society organisations. Within the [Action Plan for Ukraine "Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction" 2023-2026](#), two studies were produced in November 2024: "[Human rights protection of returnees: standards and policies](#)"¹⁴ and "[Reintegration of returnees: exploring complexities and human rights considerations](#)".
115. A fully-fledged project "[Strengthening the human rights protection of refugees and migrants in the Republic of Moldova](#)" (October 2022 – December 2024), was implemented by the DGI Human Rights and Justice Co-operation Department with the aim of strengthening human rights protection for refugees and migrants in the Republic of Moldova. The project aimed to support Moldovan authorities and other national stakeholders in addressing the needs of refugees and migrants while building resilient migration, asylum and reception systems in the long term. Further progress, including the development of more effective and human rights-based migration, asylum, reception, and integration systems, was achieved during Phase II, which was funded and implemented under the [Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova for 2025-2028](#). Based on [the recommendations](#) of the analysis of the capacity of the national asylum system, [the law on asylum](#) in Moldova was amended. The Project strengthened the capacity of the General Inspectorate for Migration, inter alia, through the provision of IT equipment (valued at €84 000), enabling systematic data collection for the protection of vulnerable groups, including women, children, and persons with disabilities.

13. Available only in Ukrainian.

14. Ibid.

116. In the context of this project, [the Resilience Journal for Adolescents](#)¹⁵ was developed to support young refugees and residents of host communities in acquiring stress-coping and self-care techniques. Due to its user-friendly design, the journal was distributed internationally, widely promoted in Türkiye and applied [in Ukraine](#).
117. In November 2025, a delegation of 18 representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, including the General Inspectorate for Migration and the General Inspectorate of Border Police, as well as the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the People's Advocate Office, and National Institute of Justice, conducted a two-day [study visit](#) to the Council of Europe headquarters, to focus on Council of Europe standards and mechanisms in the field of migration, displacement and refugee protection, and acquire knowledge from its entities, mechanisms and monitoring bodies that regularly address the protection of displaced persons, migrants and refugees.
118. In Armenia, as part of the response package for the refugee influx, the project carried out by the DGI Human Rights and Justice Co-operation Department on [Strengthening Human Rights Safeguards for the Displaced Population in Armenia](#) advanced the operational capacities of the Migration and Citizenship Service of Armenia, among other things, through [support for establishing a call centre](#). The call centre provides consultations to the displaced population on citizenship, documentation, and legal status. To facilitate access to justice for vulnerable migrants and asylum seekers, [the project implemented extensive capacity-building for legal professionals](#) on procedural safeguards in the context of migration, including Rule 39 of the Rules of Court of the European Court of Human Rights.
119. Finally, the SOGIESC Unit presented the Council of Europe's standards at various events and promoted its tools for the protection of LGBTI persons seeking asylum, such as at the TGEU's Ninth European and Central Asian Trans Council, held in November 2024 in Malta.

Promoting fact-based communication on migration

120. In November 2025, the DMR published a comprehensive overview of key migration data at global and European levels titled "[Migration Key Facts Sheet](#)". By compiling and presenting the most relevant trends and data, this publication serves as a practical resource for all stakeholders, facilitating fact-based reflection on migration, discussions, and decision-making on migration. It is intended to be updated regularly and made available on the DMR's website.
121. On 7 November 2025, the DMR organised the first [Roundtable on Fact-Based Communication on Migration](#), in a hybrid format, which was attended by 120 leading academics, communication experts, journalists, and institutional representatives, with the aim of addressing the growing challenges of communicating effectively and responsibly about migration. This exchange of ideas and practices focused on how to promote balanced, evidence-based, and human-rights-compliant communication on migration, while countering negative stereotyping and disinformation about migrants, which, among other things, lead to hate speech. The discussions emphasised that fact-based communication on migration needs to be complemented by narratives appealing to shared values, empathy, and inclusivity. A [Summary Report](#) of the Roundtable was published by the DMR in December 2025.

15. Available in English, Romanian, Ukrainian, and Russian at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/chisinau/human-rights-protection-of-refugees-and-migrants>

122. In the context of providing information in the area of migration, the DMR also issued in February 2025 a [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) document on the European Convention on Human Rights and Migration, explaining](#) how the Convention applies to migration-related cases.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

123. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) continued to contribute with useful reports, resolutions and discussions on various migration-related topics concerning the protection of vulnerable migrant and refugees. Its reports during the reporting period urged member states to develop [asylum procedures taking into account the vulnerabilities](#) of certain groups of applicants. It also stressed the importance of properly [addressing the needs of vulnerable Ukrainian refugees](#) through adequate programmes, services, and resources. In the context of [migrant smuggling](#), PACE called for adequate protection for smuggled people, whose vulnerability may be heightened. PACE's work on missing migrants included both a [report](#), the organisation of a [multi-stakeholder conference](#) and the development of a [toolkit for parliamentarians](#) to prevent disappearances of migrants. Certain resolutions focused on border control practices, with a particular focus on their impact on vulnerable migrants both on land in the context of [collective expulsions](#) and at sea in [search and rescue operations](#). PACE also adopted a Resolution mentioning the need to structure relevant policies on [artificial intelligence and migration](#), bearing in mind the entire migration journey, from pre-departure to transit, stay and integration, and, finally, return decisions, with a "human in the loop" approach when designing AI instruments that could be applied in the field of migration. Finally, PACE also [urged private and public actors](#) involved in migration management to ensure adequate assistance for vulnerable people in border areas and hotspots.
124. The [PACE Parliamentary Network on the Situation of the Children of Ukraine](#) continued to make a significant contribution to addressing the situation of vulnerable Ukrainian children displaced across Europe as a result of the war. Several meetings focused specifically on challenges faced by children living in European host countries, including access to education, preservation of identity, legal guardianship, and protection risks for displaced and institutionalised children. By bringing together parliamentarians, national authorities, international organisations, and civil society, the Network facilitated the exchange of national practices and highlighted common challenges such as language barriers, dual-curriculum overload, mental health needs, and gaps in integration support systems. The Network's work resulted in concrete guidance for European states hosting Ukrainian children, including recommendations on recognising learning outcomes obtained abroad, supporting Ukrainian-language and community-based education, preserving Ukrainian guardianship arrangements, and preventing unlawful adoption or loss of legal identity. It also reinforced the principle that displaced Ukrainian children should remain under temporary protection and maintain their ties to Ukraine while receiving adequate care and services in host countries.

Congress of Regional and Local Authorities

125. The fully-fledged project “[Strengthening resilience in local and regional authorities facing migration challenges](#)” was implemented from January 2023 to December 2024. The project aimed to enhance the capacity of local and regional authorities to manage migration effectively in Poland, the Republic of Moldova and Romania. It strengthened multi-level dialogue, local institutional capacity, and built resilience in migration management while fostering regional co-operation. Through institutional dialogue, peer learning, and knowledge-sharing interventions, the project empowered local authorities, along with their national associations, to better co-ordinate migration practices, protect human rights, and support migrant integration, particularly with a focus on the most vulnerable groups (women, children, youth, and elderly). 13 activities were organised, altogether gathering 445 participants (268 women and 177 men) from all levels of governments and relevant stakeholders. The established synergies with Ukrainian local authorities provided a better understanding of the context of displacements and gave an impetus to the commitment for continued support for Ukrainian displaced persons.
126. In the context of this project, the establishment of the Community of Practice on Migration and Human Rights at local level (Community of Practice) was among the key achievements, creating a multilateral peer-exchange platform that brought together more than 156 participants (112 women and 44 men) and enabled the exchange of best practices, policy discussions, and capacity development. The Community of Practice included representatives from three local authorities per country: Hrubieszów, Rzeszów, and Wrocław (Poland); Edineț, Strășeni, and Vinogradovca (Republic of Moldova); and Bogdan Vodă, Măgurele, and Tulcea (Romania). It also featured representatives from the Association of Polish Cities, the Congress of Local Authorities from the Republic of Moldova and the Association of Communes of Romania.
127. As a result of this project, the institutional capacities and knowledge of project partners and participating local authorities increased not only in key thematic areas (migration management, human rights, multi-level dialogue and co-operation, social inclusion, etc.), but also in their understanding of the legal and policy frameworks governing migration in the countries concerned. In addition, the project produced three country-specific baseline assessment reports, providing evidence on the role of local and regional authorities within national migration governance systems and offering recommendations to strengthen their mandate. The findings of these reports informed the development of project interventions and supported advocacy efforts to promote multi-level dialogue and co-operation.

Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)

128. Between May 2024 and December 2025, the CEB approved projects totalling approximately €2.2 billion, contributed to, *inter alia*, support for refugees, displaced persons and migrants. These investments tackled critical challenges, such as social and affordable housing shortages, gaps in education and social services, and the need for targeted support in the aftermath of natural and ecological disasters. Notably, a significant share of these efforts focused on fostering resilience and long-term integration for those affected by the ongoing aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

129. The CEB has been implementing innovative projects that leverage microfinance to reach the most vulnerable groups. One of these initiatives, funded by the EU, was the PAFMI (Partnership and Financing for Migrant Inclusion) project, completed in 2025, which focused on migrant and refugee integration through training and business development services. It was implemented by the CEB and funded by a €3.5 million contribution from the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).
130. The CEB's [Strategic Framework 2023–2027](#) sets out the path for the CEB to initiate activities in Ukraine, continue to assist migrants and their host communities, and address other social challenges across Europe. Since the Russian Federation's full-scale aggression against Ukraine, the CEB has approved a total of €31 million in grants and loan guarantees to support projects related to Ukraine, including for neighbouring member states hosting refugees. The grants are primarily financed by the EU's Ukraine Investment Framework and two CEB trust funds: the Ukraine Solidarity Fund (USF) and the Migrant and Refugee Fund (MRF). The USF was established in 2022 to assist displaced Ukrainians and support reconstruction of the country. It has received €17 million in contributions from Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic and the CEB, while approvals stand at €8 million. The MRF was established in 2015 to support member states in hosting and integrating displaced persons. It has been endowed with €39 million by 22 CEB member states, as well as the CEB and the European Investment Bank, while approved amounts total €37 million. In July 2025, a [€200 million loan was granted by the CEB to Ukraine](#), to support a government assistance programme that provides housing and basic means of subsistence to 1.2 million displaced persons across Ukraine. This loan is aligned with Ukraine's State Policy Strategy on Internal Displacement, adopted in August 2023 with support from international partners, including the Council of Europe.

5. Multilateral co-operation

131. The implementation of the Action Plan strengthened multilateral co-operation on migration and created new synergies with key international partners, with a view to enhancing co-operation and co-ordination with international organisations, while also promoting relations with civil society, ombudspersons institutions and national human rights institutions.
132. In line with their respective mandates, the former SRSG and the DMR liaised and regularly exchanged information with relevant international partners in order to foster co-operation in the field of refugees and migration, notably with the EU and its specialised agencies, the UN, IOM, OSCE/ODIHR, and other national, regional and international stakeholders, including NHRIs and civil society organisations.

European Union and its Agencies

133. The former SRSG held meetings with key counterparts from the European Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Council of the EU and the European Parliament/LIBE Committee. Additional discussions were organised by the DMR and took place at a more technical level with DG HOME. These exchanges provided an opportunity to share updates on respective developments and to highlight relevant standards and obligations, while promoting more coherent and co-ordinated approaches whenever feasible. This high-level dialogue also sought to support the mobilisation of funding for capacity-building initiatives related to migration and refugees within the framework of the Action Plan. In October 2025, DMR co-ordinated the [reply](#) of the Council of Europe to the European Commission's call for evidence for the first five-year European asylum and migration management strategy. In December 2025, DMR organised an online meeting with representatives of the European Commission – DG HOME Secretariat, during which the DMR presented its ongoing work and explored possible avenues of synergy, including the development of independent and efficient border monitoring mechanisms in member states, as provided for by the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, and fact-based communication on migration, on which DMR organised a first roundtable in November 2025.
134. The former SRSG and the DMR regularly represented the Council of Europe in the [Consultative Forum of the EUAA](#), the Agency's main channel for co-operation with nearly 120 civil society organisations and other competent bodies working in the field of asylum at local, regional, national, European Union or international level. The DMR took an active part in the EUAA Consultative Forum's plenary meeting in October 2025, which provided a useful forum for exchanging on possible further synergies.
135. The regular and active participation of the former SRSG and the DMR representing the Council of Europe in the Consultative Forum of [Frontex](#) provided an opportunity to communicate, explain, and recall the relevant Council of Europe standards and the obligations of member states derived from these standards. In addition, the former SRSG Office participated in the on-the-spot visit of the Frontex Consultative Forum to joint operation Bulgaria and joint operation Serbia in December 2024. The DMR represented the Council of Europe in the Consultative Forum of Frontex and participated actively in its meetings held in May and October 2025, including discussions about the drafting of the recast Regulation of the European Coast and Border Guard. Upon initiative of the DMR, in November 2025 the Head of the Council of Europe Data Protection Unit was appointed representative of the Frontex Consultative Forum in the Fundamental Rights Guidance Board (EFRGB) of the European Travel Information Authorization System (ETIAS). Representatives of the Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer's Office, of the EUAA (and of the European Commission DG HOME) participated as panellists in the June and November 2025 meetings of the Council of Europe Network of Focal Points on Migration, which were organised by the DMR, focusing on Council of Europe and EU standards and member states' practices in the field of migration and asylum.

136. Co-operation and information exchanges with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) also continued during the reporting period. FRA representatives made presentations at the 18th Co-ordination Group on Migration in October 2024, which was dedicated to thematic discussion on the new [EU Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), alongside other EU Agencies (Frontex, EUAA), and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE). Representatives of FRA (and of the EUAA Fundamental Rights Officer's Office) were invited and participated in meetings of the inter-secretariat Co-ordination Group on Migration, which were organised by the DMR in March and April 2025, and exchanged with participants on EU developments, notably under the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum and related Council of Europe action.

United Nations (UN)

137. Co-operation with United Nations bodies continued to play a vital role in promoting the Council of Europe's human rights standards within the broader asylum and migration framework. It continued to be instrumental in standard-setting, monitoring, and capacity-building activities. Within the UN family, relations are most developed with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and are facilitated by UNHCR's presence in Strasbourg and its field presence in many Council of Europe member states. Events were jointly organised in different member states of the Council of Europe, focusing on relevant European Court of Human Rights case law and Council of Europe, European Union and UNHCR actions on asylum and migration. The joint events and actions contributed to concrete thematic co-operation, in particular on the rights of unaccompanied migrant children and vulnerable asylum seekers; on the new UNHCR Toolkit on Rule 39 interim measures of the European Court of Human Rights; and in the development of new training modules in the framework of the HELP online courses on refugee and migrant children and on alternatives to immigration detention. Joint capacity-building activities were carried out in the context of the current Action Plan and as a follow-up to the former SRSG's fact-finding missions.
138. In 2025, DGI/DMR provided input to the following migration-related calls of UN institutions: [contribution to the call by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants concerning externalisation of migration governance \(December 2025\)](#); [contribution to the OHCHR call for inputs for the report on the protection of migrants \(October 2025\)](#); [input to the report on "Labour Migration, Business and Human Rights" to the 80th session of the UN General Assembly \(July 2025\)](#).
139. The former SRSG and the DMR participated and intervened regularly in meetings organised by UNHCR during the reporting period, provided feedback and follow-up on behalf of the Organisation to the stocktaking on the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees in line with the relevant provisions of the UNGA Resolution on the [co-operation between the Council of Europe and the UN](#). In this context, the Action Plan was also promoted. Emphasis was given not only to its complementary nature and importance in the context of implementing the Global Compact on Refugees, but also to supporting the achievement of many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Action Plan contributed to SDGs 3, 4, 5, 8, and globally contributed to achieving SDG 10.

140. As a follow-up to the [Council of Europe pledges to the Global Refugee Forum](#) (GRF), announced during the second GRF in December 2023 – namely, on addressing the statelessness of children and their access to nationality; ensuring gender equality and protecting the rights of refugee women and girls, including victims of gender-based violence; achieving inclusion in national health systems and fostering mental health and psychosocial wellbeing; and promoting intercultural inclusion strategies and policies at local, regional, and national level – the former SRSG Office and the DMR carried out the role of transversal inter-secretariat co-ordination and reporting towards the GRF. [Progress on the implementation of the Council of Europe pledges](#) was regularly reported on the SRSG/DMR website. At the UNHCR [Global Refugee Forum Progress Review](#) in December 2025 in Geneva, the DMR increased visibility and provided updates on the implementation of the Council of Europe's pledges to the Global Compact on Refugees concerning intercultural inclusion strategies and the protection of refugee women and girls.
141. In March 2025, the DMR participated in the [2nd Biannual Exchange](#) of Friends of the Child Rights Pledge: From Commitments to Action on Child Rights, organised by the United Nations Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts.
142. In May 2025, the DMR, in co-operation with UNHCR and the European Guardianship Network, co-organised in Sofia, Bulgaria, a roundtable on [Effective Guardianship for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children in Bulgaria: Ways Forward in the Context of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum](#). It gathered representatives of Bulgarian authorities, international organisations and civil society organisations, who discussed sustainable, rights-based solutions for strengthening guardianship systems for unaccompanied children in the context of migration and asylum.
143. In November 2025, the DMR and UNHCR jointly organised a [Seminar on Rule 39 Interim Measures of the European Court of Human Rights for Persons in Need of International Protection](#), to mark the publication of the new [UNHCR Toolkit](#) "How to Request Interim Measures under Rule 39 of the Rules of the European Court of Human Rights for Persons in Need of International Protection".
144. In December 2025, the DMR in co-operation with UNHCR co-organised in Sofia, Bulgaria, two [seminars to address issues related to the protection of unaccompanied migrant children and other vulnerable asylum seekers](#). The events, supported by Bulgaria's National Institute of Justice and the National Bureau for Legal Aid, brought together judges, lawyers, policymakers, and representatives of international organisations to share expertise and discuss best practices.
145. Relations with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) were further strengthened in the past 20 months. Bilateral exchanges were regular and aimed to explore possible synergies relevant to the implementation of the Action Plan.

Other international relations

146. Relations with OSCE/ODIHR were consistently upheld, which included bilateral meetings and exchanges of information on migration and asylum-related initiatives.

6. Financial overview

147. The overall budget of the Action Plan amounted to €10 815 123.34. By the end of the reporting period, a total of € 9 461 718.35 was secured. The amount of funding secured included the Ordinary Budget and extra-budgetary funding. Extra-budgetary funding is split under: 1) unearmarked through voluntary contributions, in the amount of €2 036 934.33 which included contributions from Andorra, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Slovenia, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom; 2) earmarked to specific projects or as part of joint programmes, in the amount of €7 424 784.02¹⁶ including contributions from the European Union, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Georgia, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Norway, and the Slovak Republic.
148. The total budget of the Action Plan included 31 projects that had been associated with this Action Plan throughout its duration. As of 31 December 2025, 14 projects were successfully closed or implemented, 6 were in the implementing/initiating status, and 11 had been abandoned. 12 projects were fully funded, while 8 projects were partially funded.

7. Conclusion

149. The implementation of the Council of Europe [Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe \(2021 – 2025\)](#) has provided a comprehensive framework to enhance member states' capacity to identify and address vulnerabilities in migration and asylum procedures. The Action Plan supported, among others, the adoption, dissemination, and implementation of significant Committee of Ministers Recommendations. It contributed to the development of a large number of related courses of the Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) Programme and supported the wide dissemination and implementation of other Council of Europe standards and tools, and of important migration-related jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights.
150. Through the Action Plan, various initiatives have effectively increased awareness and capacity of stakeholders at national level to cope with the complexities of migration and asylum. Such initiatives have maintained active engagement among member states and other stakeholders in effectively applying relevant standards and practical tools.
151. The Action Plan increased the overall visibility and impact of the Council of Europe's rich *acquis* in migration and asylum and confirmed its relevance through its capacity to adapt and efficiently mobilise resources to meet the needs of member states. Its implementation responded to unprecedented migratory movements in Europe through concrete measures. Co-ordination with key international stakeholders in the field of migration and asylum was strengthened, and communication with member states was further reinforced.

16. The project "Strengthening the human rights protection of refugees and migrants in the Republic of Moldova" was funded as part of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024.

152. As regards internal co-ordination, 28 actions listed in the Action Plan were supplemented by many tailor-made initiatives, including co-operation projects implemented by different entities within the Organisation. It proved essential to ensure adequate overall co-ordination by making links and synergies between different actions and projects, while aligning them with the Action Plan's objectives and communication. The vital co-ordinating role of the former SRSG and the DMR focused on creating opportunities, including through the work of the inter-secretariat Co-ordination Group on Migration and the Network of Focal Points on Migration, for shared management rather than unilateral action.
153. A prominent advantage of the Action Plan was its adaptability. The Action Plan served as a living strategic framework, allowing the Council of Europe to respond to emerging challenges with concrete actions. Drawing on the long-standing programmatic and technical experience of the relevant Council of Europe entities, it mobilised and channelled expertise, rapidly adapting it to diverse contexts. Several actions were adjusted to focus on supporting member states' efforts in responding to the needs of war-displaced people from Ukraine in need of protection, including particularly vulnerable groups.
154. As regards the mobilisation of funding and resources, the implementation of the Action Plan was carried out with limited financial means, which constrained the ability to fully address newly emerging needs and to provide systematic and long-term support in response to the needs of member states.
155. The implementation of the Action Plan required continuous co-ordination and active engagement of all relevant stakeholders, both within and beyond the Council of Europe. It was important to promote strong engagement by member states in taking responsibility for its implementation and achievements. At the same time, maintaining regular interaction and co-ordination with key international partners was essential to ensuring that the activities of the Action Plan complemented all ongoing efforts on the ground.
156. In conclusion, the rich output of the Action Plan constitutes a solid foundation for the future work of the Council of Europe in this area, building on the progress achieved and aiming to further strengthen member states' capacities and action on the ground.