The Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey (Horizontal Facility II) 2019-2022 is a co-operation initiative of the European Union and Council of Europe with the Western Balkans region and Turkey. The programme supports tailored reform processes agreed with the authorities, in line with relevant Council of Europe monitoring and advisory bodies’ recommendations, in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy. It builds upon the results and progress achieved under the first phase of the programme, implemented in the period 2016-2019, which include:

- Advances in the implementation of reforms of the judiciary, prisons and police through technical support provided to the Beneficiaries;
- Strengthened harmonisation of legislation and practices with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR);
- Bringing policies, institutions and practices further in line with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) and the opinions of the Venice Commission and standards of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ);
- Strengthened policies against corruption, money laundering and financing of terrorism (MONEYVAL) and the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

The second phase of the programme aims to strengthen the sustainability of results achieved during the first phase, while ensuring ownership by the Beneficiary institutions.

WHAT DOES THE PROGRAMME AIM TO ACHIEVE?

- The programme enables the Beneficiaries to meet their reform agendas and to comply with the European standards, including where relevant within the framework of the EU enlargement process. Tailor-made and demand-driven support is provided to further improve legal and policy frameworks and build institutional capacities, reinforcing the functioning of institutions.
- To this end, the programme activities include capacity development, technical support and expertise, and awareness raising in all four thematic fields.
- The second phase of the programme aims to strengthen the sustainability of results achieved during the first phase, while ensuring ownership by the Beneficiary institutions.
- The programme aims at bringing substantial improvements directly to the lives of citizens through its actions, while enhancing communication on the tangible results achieved.

A unique approach

- Tailor made actions are designed to address the specific needs in each Beneficiary following consultations with the respective authorities.
- The Flexibility of the Horizontal Facility is extremely valued by the beneficiary institutions as it enables adaptation of the programme to changing circumstances and domestic priorities, while fostering strong local ownership of the results.
- Resources can be reallocated in the course of the implementation, to respond to emerging needs.
- The Regional Dimension has been introduced in the course of the implementation of the first phase of the programme. The increased regional dimension featured in phase II allows for a cross-border exchange on addressing common challenges, sharing best practices and establishing platforms and networks to this end.
Cross cutting issues are integrated into the actions. All activities under the Horizontal Facility II are conducted with a human rights approach, incorporating principles of gender equality – in line with the Gender Equality Strategy of the Council of Europe and based on the Gender mainstreaming toolkit for co-operation projects – as well as non-discrimination, equality and inclusive participation, focusing on vulnerable groups and minorities. Co-operation with civil society organisations is ensured in accordance with the Council of Europe’s Guidelines on Civil Society Organisations’ participation in Council of Europe co-operation activities and in line with the European Commission Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries.

A unique working method, through the Council of Europe strategic triangle

The “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey 2019-2022” is a joint initiative of the European Union and the Council of Europe that enables the Beneficiaries to meet their reform agendas in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy and to comply with the European standards, including where relevant within the framework of the EU enlargement process. This three-year programme covers actions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, as well as Kosovo* and it is implemented by the Council of Europe from May 2019.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

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The member states of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedom. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

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Fighting corruption, economic crime and organised crime
Combating discrimination and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups
Freedom of expression and freedom of the media
Expertise co-ordination mechanism