

Supporting enhanced access to higher quality Free Legal Aid (FLA) services in North Macedonia

What is the goal?

The Action aims at enhancing the efficiency, quality, accessibility, and awareness of free legal aid in North Macedonia. More concretely the Action will focus on the:

- ▶ harmonization of provisions, policies and practices related to free legal aid in North Macedonia;
- ▶ capacity building for the main actors in the field (Ministry of Justice, Bar Association and CSOs) including more structured and continuous coordination between the main stakeholders;
- ▶ awareness raising for the public and related institutional actors in the country to support increased access to free legal aid.

Who benefits from the project?

- ▶ Direct beneficiaries are be Free Legal Aid applicants and the general population. For this reason institutional entities and governing structures in the field of ensuring Free Legal Aid will be supported and assisted in building their capacities for a more efficient and accessible free legal aid system.
- ▶ The Action takes into account special needs of vulnerable groups (victims of domestic violence, children, Roma and other minorities) and gender related contexts in all stages of its implementation.

How will the project work?

- ▶ The Action is based in a regular communication, exchange and co-operation with the Ministry of Justice, the Bar Association, Civil Society Organizations in the country, Centres for Social Welfare, and the judiciary system bodies.
- ▶ Training sessions are developed and delivered during the Action, following the Training of Trainers (ToT) approach to produce higher sustainability. In this process, successful self-learning and peer-to-peer exchanges will be also used.
- ▶ To ensure an inclusive and efficient exchange between different actors, a coordination mechanism for improved communication and co-operation among stakeholders will be applied.

What do we expect to achieve?

- ▶ The legal and policy framework related to the provision of Free Legal Aid will be harmonised in line with Council of Europe standards
- ▶ Capacities of Free Legal Aid providers to deliver quality legal aid are strengthened
- ▶ Access to Free Legal Aid by the population will be enhanced and the efficiency of the Free Legal Aid in North Macedonia to be strengthened

How much will it cost?

- ▶ The total budget of the Action is 800 000 EUR.

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- ▶ The budget allocated to the overall Horizontal Facility programme amounts to ca. 41 Million EUR (85% funded by the European Union, 15% by the Council of Europe).

How to get more information?

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About Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey

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.*

The Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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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 freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

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