

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026

OF THE COMMISSIONER
FOR PROTECTION AGAINST
DISCRIMINATION

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Strategic Plan 2022 -2026
of the Commissioner for Protection Against Discrimination

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List of abbreviations

AMA	Audio-visual Media Authority
CSSA	Civil Society Support Agency
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
EU	European Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
ECJ	Court of Justice of the European Union
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EQUINET	European Network for Equality Bodies
EC	European Commission
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
CoE	Council of Europe
CPD	COMMISSIONER FOR PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION
CNM	Committee for National Minorities
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual and intersex
LGE	Law no. 9970, dated 24.07.2008 "On gender equality in society"
LPD	Law no. 10221, dated 04.2.2010 "On protection from discrimination", amended by Law 124/2020
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU, ratified by Law no. 9590, dated 27.07.2006
MC	Ministry of Culture
DHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
MV	Monitoring and Evaluation
LGU	Local Government Units
NGO	Non-governmental organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
GO	Government organizations
IO	International Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
UN	United Nations organizations

Chapter I

Strategy Context

1.1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2021

The Strategic Plan 2018-2021 of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination entered into force in January 2018. It was drafted by a team of local and foreign experts with financial support and coordination of the European Union/CoE project office "Increasing the effectiveness of the Albanian system of protection of human rights and anti-discrimination" in Tirana. This Strategic Plan relied heavily on the stage of development of the legislation of the time, as well as on internal reports of the CPD, analysis of external legal contexts, and project evaluations, combined with meetings of working groups, consultations with the CPD headquarters and the staff of the regional offices, as well as several representatives of central state institutions, civil society organizations, and the donor community operating in the field of anti-discrimination.

From the analysis of the context, it results that the Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021 was drafted when the system of reporting, collection and monitoring of data on equality and structural discrimination was not yet adequately developed. The level of discrimination was high, while the level of awareness in the fight against discrimination was low. The institutional plan highlighted the need to consolidate best practices in the work of the CPD, as well as the need to restructure the roles and responsibilities in the CPD by overcoming obstacles of a procedural nature. Also, the Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021 presumed the existence of some challenges of political and normative nature, such as budget constraints for the implementation of the strategy, political instability in the country, the prolonged period of election of the new Commissioner, and the lengthy or difficult implementation of necessary legislative changes to consolidate the legal framework for protection against discrimination.

In response to these challenges, the Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021 identified a number of internal and external priorities, which aimed to improve the work of the CPD by updating the internal regulations and procedures of the institution, improving the normative framework, promoting culture of anti-discrimination and equality in the country (preventing discrimination and establishing equality in a broader way) by intensifying and increasing communication with the public, strengthening law enforcement, and increasing and consolidating the role of the CPD in public and private sectors.

The Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021 was based on five Strategic Goals and the respective Strategic Objectives, which were:

CPD raises awareness of citizens and institutions in Albania regarding protection against discrimination and the special role of CPD

- 1. Raising public awareness on discrimination and the right to equal opportunities in general, and on how the most vulnerable sectors, industries and social groups are affected
- 2. Active promotion of anti-discrimination law and the active role of the CPD, based on success stories

The CPD maximizes the impact of decisions taken within the issues addressed

- 1. Intensify the follow-up of responsible institutions to ensure the implementation of decisions to a high standard, through a detailed follow-up system
- 2. Regular presentation of cases in the media and in the public, in a way that gives status to decisions, generates debates about them and contributes to the understanding of discrimination
- 3. Improve the results of issues and their impact through better communication with responsible organizations from different vulnerable sectors and groups

CPD contributes to evidence-based policy-making by monitoring and conducting research on the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation

- 1. Monitoring and implementation of anti-discrimination law and other anti-discrimination conventions by all major institutions of Albania
- 2. Stimulate legislation and policies that contribute to preventing discrimination and establishing equality

CPD increases the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization internally

- 1. Develop a responsible, efficient and effective business model, with clear internal and external policies and procedures.
- 2. Improve and maintain the professional capacities of the CPD staff based on the field of expertise and relevant responsibilities.
- 3. Create an internal knowledge strategy by defining specific areas of knowledge, appointing knowledge coordinators and creating a culture and platform for knowledge sharing
- 4. Develop a results-based monitoring and evaluation system (M&V), which better absorbs the results and impacts of the work of the CPD

The CPD strengthens and expands the scope of action and supports the network of collaborators

- 1. Strengthen and deepen current key relations with governmental and non-governmental public organizations, Parliament and other independent institutions
- 2. Open and strengthen new relationships with various actors and partners from public and private institutions, international and national CSOs, academia and media
- 3. Establish contact with wider communities and with local and decentralized institutions

1.1.1 Achievement analysis

From the evaluation of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021 it resulted that:

1. The activity of the CPD is characterized by a proactive role regarding the review of complaints and cases *ex officio*, recording a number of 938 cases in the period 01.01.2018 - 30.06.2021.
2. CPD has played a positive role in promoting alternative dispute resolution through reconciliation in accordance with the provisions of Article 33 point 9 of Law no. 10221, dated 04.2.2010 "On protection from discrimination", amended by Law 124/2020 ("LPD").
3. CPD has regularly interacted with the court by participating in about 333 lawsuits according to statistics from the period 01.01.2018 - 28.10.2021. Statistics show that in 42% of lawsuits, the CPD is called as a third party in trials among other parties.

4. The CPD has also given an opinion to the Constitutional Court in proceedings where the issue of discrimination has been raised.¹
- 4.1 In response to emergency situations or other events that have accompanied the country in this period, it turns out that the CPD has played an active role:
 - 4.1 Issuing Recommendations regarding the epidemic caused by COVID-19 infection, where the CPD has issued two Recommendations for expanding the list of specific vulnerable categories and regarding the proposed changes in the Criminal Code for domestic violence, noncompliance with COVID-19 measures, as well as for measures for violation of quarantine rules.
 - 4.2 The CPD has continued to address a steady number of alleged cases of discrimination, mainly in the areas of employment and services during the COVID-19 epidemic.
 - 4.3 The CPD and the State Election Commissioner have issued a Joint Recommendation dated 25.01.2021 on "Preventing the use of hate speech during the election campaign".
5. The contribution of the CPD in promoting improvements in the legal framework and strategic documents in terms of:
 - 5.1 Improving non-discrimination legislation and policies as a whole, by increasing harmonization with EU standards, through Recommendations for legal acts and bylaws;
 - 5.2 Promoting a range of improvements, including the terminology used, categories of discrimination and procedures for addressing them;
 - 5.3 Raising standards in the fight against hate speech, increasing gender equality, as well as in including and increasing the access of people with disabilities, where the CPD has taken concrete roles in protecting these causes and monitoring them;
 - 5.4 CPD has imposed administrative sanctions according to the provisions of the LPD, where in the period 01.01.2018 - 30.03.2021 37 fines were imposed for non-implementation of decisions and for failure to provide information;
 - 5.5 The CPD has entered into several cooperation agreements with other institutions to coordinate actions in the fight against discrimination, such as agreements between the CPD and the Ombudsman, the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination, the Ombudsman in the Republic of Kosovo, the State Labour Inspectorate and Social Services, the Audio-visual Media Authority, the Albanian National Association of the Deaf (ANAD), Roma Versitas Albania, the Together for Life Association, the Albanian Diabetes Association, the Hepatitis Patients Association, and the Albanian Institute for Public Affairs, AIPA, near the University "Marin Barleti".
 - 5.6 In the framework of inclusion in action plans and strategies, a considerable number of reports, information and contributions have been identified within the obligations of the Republic of Albania in international conventions and organizations, in the process of integration into the European Union ("EU"), as well as in a number of technical assistance projects.

1.1.2 Challenges

Despite the achievements, it is noticed that there is still work to be done in terms of the adoption of bylaws by the Council of Ministers or CPD in implementation of the LPD and Law no. 9970, dated 24.07.2008 "On gender equality in society" ("LGE"). From the time of the adoption of the law until currently (11 years) there are no bylaws issued on the basis and implementation of the Law on Protection from Discrimination. There are no bylaws issued on the basis and implementation of the LGE, while an analysis remains important in order to improve the LGE. Also, in the legal framework, in the implementation of the provisions of the CPC in the case of discrimination, given the difficulties presented by this institute in proving the circumstances, it is required to make specific adjustments in the view of international jurisprudence so that the burden of proof does not fully fall on the complainant, but be subject to a special arrangement.

1.1.3 Recommendations

From the analysis of the Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021, a number of recommendations were identified to be considered for the drafting of the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026, which consist of the following:

- **General considerations**
 - ▶ First, it is suggested that the drafting of the new plan provide a full interactivity of the CPD, each of its structural links, as the institution that will implement it. This requires that at every step of the drafting process there be interaction between external experts and the CPD. To achieve this, it is suggested to follow the steps set in the prepared and approved methodology which envisages proactive involvement of CPD and stakeholders.
 - ▶ Second, it is suggested that the drafting of the new strategic plan take into account the practical and effective aspect where eliminations of repetition and ambiguity are eliminated (as these may have been noticed by the CPD during the practical implementation of the strategic plan 2018-2021). To this end, the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 aims at the setting as clear, tangible and concise objectives as possible. These should be kept in the attention of the working group. The Strategic Plan 2022-2026 needs to be oriented to a mapping that takes into account the goals of the CPD based on the main functions of this institution;
 - ▶ Third, the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 needs to take into account aspects related to monitoring the implementation of the law on protection against discrimination and to add the law “On gender equality in society”, as with the legal changes the CPD is also the monitoring authority of this law.

- **Regarding the Strategic goals that need to be kept in mind for the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 of the CPD, the working group suggests to keep in mind the following directions:**
 1. **Strengthening the institutional framework of the CPD. Increasing the professional capacities of the CPD staff based on the field of expertise and relevant responsibilities**
 - ▶ Strengthening the capacity of CPD staff² through:
 - ✓ Drafting a thematic training program (planned according to a calendar) prepared according to the needs assessment and taking into account the legal changes of the LPD of 2020 (collective lawsuits and mobilization of the Constitutional Court) and concrete issues identified in the activity of the CPD and beyond in relation to discrimination;
 - ✓ Conducting trainings, activities, meetings for all staff of the CPD in Tirana and regional offices on specific topics and profiles in cooperation with universities, EQUINES, NGOs or other institutions. Keep in mind that these trainings include topics related to the most problematic sectors such as *employment, social services* (including housing), *education, health care* (see the results of questionnaires related to this need); the sector of *public administration or state-owned enterprises*, where the most massive discrimination is due to political convictions, as well as in *the private sector*.
 - ✓ Expanding cooperation towards professional capacity building through seminars and study exchanges with partner organizations and counterpart institutions in the region or in EU countries. Schedule open hearings at the Court of Human Rights (in Strasbourg) on important discrimination issues, in Strasbourg or online if possible.
 - ✓ Strengthening the capacities of the Regional Offices (geographical and/or internal expansion) on the basis of an individualized training program adopted to specific needs, making them professionally capable of assessing the reality and contributing by making suggestions for improving legal actions and other measures of the CPD;
 - ▶ Increase the number of staff: filing a request for staff increase explaining the new obligations arising from the LPD (collective lawsuits, mobilization of the Constitutional Court, interaction with the justice system, increased number of complaints, participation in activities arising from different strategies, monitoring of at least three strategies, etc., and the need to increase regional offices;³ establishment of the department of study, scientific research and monitoring; visibility of the website also in English through an in-house translator);

- ▶ Adherence of the CPD to various international structures with the objective of participating in boards and their governing bodies and increasing cooperation with local actors and civil society;
- ▶ Draft an action plan based on national strategic documents and international instruments with the appointment of responsible persons, their concrete obligations, deadlines and interaction with other authorities according to the obligations deriving from:
 - Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030 adopted in June 2021.⁴
 - Concluding remarks of the CEDAW Committee after the fifth periodic report by Albania to this Committee;
 - Recommendations following the approval of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the Human Rights Council (September 2019),
 - Etc.,
- ▶ Plan of measures for interaction with academic and research and scientific institutions in Albania, and implementation of joint activities such as research, surveys, etc.
- ▶ Establish an internal institutional system or practice dedicated to discussing lessons learned from work or encouraging knowledge sharing, informally (escape room & team building).
- ▶ Establishment of a team of trainers through ToT activities with dedicated knowledge in the field of equality and protection against discrimination.
- ▶ Strengthen the capacities of the Regional Offices of the CPD so that they are developed in a studied way as regional centres against inequality and discrimination by drafting a detailed plan of trainings and awareness activities which need to take into account:
 - ✓ (a) topics and number of dedicated trainings of RO staff based on detailed planning and modules of the format of continuing training and Training of trainers;
 - ✓ (b) the topics and number of joint trainings of the RO with local institutions in order to create a fair and unified understanding of gender equality standards and non-discrimination and the role of each actor as part of a machinery;
 - ✓ (c) *drafting plans for regional awareness-raising activities on issues of discrimination and gender inequality which ensure uninterrupted awareness-raising of local institutions/NGOs/communities taking into account regional diversity and specific needs and aiming to turn the ROs into strong awareness, training, and regional support centres;*
 - ✓ (ç) *drafting a calendar of meetings with various regional actors aiming at maximizing the presence and role of the RO and CPD in the municipalities where these offices exist and in those that do not exist in order to establish contacts with other municipalities and disadvantaged and vulnerable communities in order to support them in using the guidance materials developed by the CPD headquarters;*
 - ✓ (d) the study on the needs for increasing the human, financial/budgetary and logistical resources of the RO, including their extension to a wider regional base through the establishment of new offices (Kukës, Saranda, etc.) as a first step towards *securing the approval by the Assembly of the Republic of Albania of the state funding for the support of the regional centres and the inclusion of the staff of the regional centres in the organizational chart of the CPD;*

2. **Improve the legal framework**

In this regard, the CPD is expected to influence:

- ▶ The review of the law on gender equality in society (LGE) based on needs and trends and considering harmonization with EU legislation and drafting changes in the law on gender equality in society, based on internal and external reviews and reflecting on needs and the organizational potential of the CPD;
- ▶ Draft regulatory instruments of the CPD on collective lawsuits and setting in motion the Constitutional Court; provide for the drafting of the Regulation on determining the rules for collective lawsuits and initiating ex-officio cases;
- ▶ Review the CPC in order to include the provisions on the inverted burden of proof in discrimination cases;
- ▶ Change and improve the communication strategy of the CPD;
- ▶ Monitor the new legislation and make recommendations to ensure compliance with the law on gender equality in society and support the establishment of equality;
- ▶ Draft bylaws according to the amendments to LPD and LGE (after approval).

3. **Monitor the implementation of LPD and LGE as well as international instruments.**

- ▶ Prepare an annual, clear and measurable monitoring plan where the CPD and the mechanisms available to the CPD are the main actor, and maintain leadership by cooperating with local and international organizations and partners;
- ▶ Carry out monitoring in accordance with the capacities and mechanisms of the CPD in these three directions:
 - monitor the implementation of legislation and international standards related to gender equality and non-discrimination by law enforcement and inspection institutions;
 - dedicated monitoring in problem areas protected by LPD and LGE;
 - monitoring regarding the effects of LPD and LGE in certain groups and in the most vulnerable social groups, as well as in relation to the determinant causes of violation of the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination.
- ▶ Conduct studies focusing on: causes of discrimination and gender inequality in specific areas.

4. **Strengthen cooperation with strategic actors, interest groups and policy makers**

- ▶ Establish/strengthen/function the network of internal and external coordinators through:
 - ✓ Draft a periodic communication protocol between them as well as a communication protocol based on problem cases;
 - ✓ Define interaction between coordinators for the purpose of joint monitoring, evaluation and re-evaluation, capacity building and competencies to jointly design, plan and implement monitoring and evaluation activities (research institutions, universities and NGOs).
- ▶ Strengthen the cooperation with the committees of the Assembly of the Republic of Albania as permanent committees, subcommittees such as the subcommittee on gender equality and prevention of violence against women, and the council on legislation, etc.

- ▶ Further development of cooperation with the People's Advocate based on the Memorandum of Understanding between these institutions by maximizing protection from discrimination and gender inequality in public administration and public administration, joint planning periodically (annually) of activities with common themes and geographical spread wide (including regions where CPD does not have regional offices)
- ▶ Develop cooperation through the implementation of existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoM) and the signing and implementation of new MoUs between CPDs and foreign counterpart institutions, such as key CSOs, NGOs (national and international), national governmental organizations (including municipalities, universities, regional directorates of education, and social services) as well as the Order of the Psychologist to benefit from the expertise of this body to support the work of the CPD in certain cases, such as the investigation of cases of bullying.
 - ✓ Draft annual work plans (a need assessment might be foreseen to be made at the end of December of each year for purposes of future planning) and on the basis of reports of national NGOs for joint activities with CSOs, NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, focusing on the changes in the LPD and LGE of the operation of the anti-discrimination law and the work of the CPD and their implementation as planned.
- ▶ Increase and maximize effective communication of the CPD institution with entities, organizations and strategic partners and communication in a capillary manner without excluding peripheral/rural areas and the most vulnerable social categories (women in rural areas, LGBTIQ, etc.) and neglected interest groups by defining a plan of action.
 - ✓ Regarding the need for improvement in the process of following up cases by the CPD, it is recommended that the CPD place more emphasis by making *inter-institutional cooperation a practice to achieve efficiency until the final resolution of cases*.
- ▶ Provide an open discussion interaction plan with such educational institutions as high schools, Universities, School of Magistrates, School of Advocacy, Security Academy and School of Basic Police Training⁵, Labour Offices and vocational training institutions, etc.,
 - ✓ Systematic and planned development of relations with identified institutions and new institutions of the academic world (universities and research institutions), through exchanges, periodic meetings and joint research that support the development of a broad knowledge base in the fight against discrimination and inequality and assist the CPD in capillary recognition of reality (through interactive methods such as small group meetings and regional specific interest groups)
- ▶ Draft a work plan for the development and support of relations with the private sector, in particular through a systematic and continuous engagement, periodic meetings and joint ventures with chambers of commerce, etc.
- ▶ Strengthen relations with local communities and institutions through:
 - ✓ Planning and conducting ad hoc meetings with communities vulnerable to discrimination and gender inequality at the regional level and peripheral areas, supporting them in the prevention and protection process (including preparation and submission of complaints according to legislation) and raising awareness of legal changes (2020);
 - ✓ Conduct scheduled (annual) and ad hoc meetings with local government units (LGUs), decentralized agencies and other key institutions to promote their awareness of LMD (2020) changes and the need for changes in LGE as well as decisions, issues reviewed, guidelines and recommendations of the CPD with their support in preventing and protecting against gender inequality and discrimination under the LPD to establish systems to prevent discrimination and to support the establishment of equality.

5. Influence and promotion of CPD on strengthening the professional growth of law enforcement actors

- ▶ Implement the legal framework against discrimination through cooperation with the School of Magistrates by enabling the provision of specialized training on this issue for incumbent judges and prosecutors and candidates for magistrates in accordance with the legal amendments of the LPD (2020) and international standards including the practice of the ECHR and domestic courts; monitoring of court decisions for this purpose; This includes cooperation with the School of Advocacy, ASPA, etc.
- ▶ Providing training for NGOs and sectors (chambers of commerce, trade unions, education offices, employment offices and local government bodies) in order to effectively implement the guidance materials and the correct understanding of legal changes (2020) emphasizing the law and presenting the specific role and identity of the CPD;

6. Awareness, information, prevention⁶

- ▶ Informing the public and raising awareness about discrimination issues (especially in rural and remote areas) with negative phenomena and terrains protected by LPD; elimination of hate speech⁷;
- ▶ Awareness activities in response to problematic and legal innovations dictated by the LPD changes (2020); Advertising spots, expert panels, open days, information materials (including their publication and social networks of the CPD) with the latest legal changes (2020) in the LPD and innovations on the ways of filing a complaint to the CPD; posting products/materials on the CPD website in English as well as in some sections in the language of minorities;
- ▶ Development of dedicated, friendly and illustrated guidance materials with success stories for vulnerable sectors and groups (starting with preschool education, etc.) regarding the prevention and protection against discrimination as well as the specific role and identity of the CPD.

7. Data Administration and keeping

- ▶ Making the current system effective or enabling a new data entry system for the purpose of processing, generating information for various reports;
- ▶ Creating and updating a structured database according to a methodology which ensures the rapid identification of the most potential actor in a given direction through clear, complete (hyperlinked) and synthetic Bio data including updated contacts on CSOs, NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, which cover all causes of discrimination covered by legislation and wish to contribute to the work of the CPD and their use in various activities according to profiling.

8. Strengthening the cooperation of the CPD with the Media and NGOs

- Establish a dynamic communication protocol and coordinated case referral (based on a periodic and case-by-case calendar) between the CPD/Media/NGO and the public by stimulating typical (representative) cases reviewed by the CPD and presented by the media/NGOs to find coverage in the media in the formats of media reports, documentaries, and other forms of providing information in the most appropriate manner and in accordance with applicable legal standards in consultation with the CPD.

- Further strengthening the cooperation with the media by identifying several levels and ways of cooperation such as:
 - Periodic programs in the media with high level representation;
 - Consolidation of established positive/functional practice where cases covered by the media continue to be treated and used as case studies leading subsequently to (a) organizing informative and awareness-raising debates (in the media) and (b) drafting guidelines for the benefit of certain problematic sectors by encouraging and supporting these sectors to inspect, monitor and promote a good understanding of cases and discrimination found in them as well as legal preventive and protective instruments;
 - Develop and maintain relations with existing (print, national and local visual) media and create new ones, through exchanges, meetings, presentations and joint activities with print and visual media of national and local coverage, focusing on professional portrayal of discrimination and the work of the CPD on the prevention of discrimination and gender inequality;
 - Continuation and strengthening of tripartite cooperation between CPD, media (visual and written/ national and local) and NGOs (NGOs that support the most vulnerable and under-represented social groups) through meetings and exchange of information on a periodic basis and based on situations of concrete and problematic trends presented aiming at increasing the commitment and sustainability of NGOs in relation to the protection and prevention of discrimination.

1.2. STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2026

1.2.1. Objective of the document

The objective of the document “Strategic Plan of the CPD for the years 2022 - 2026” is to deconstruct the normative scheme on which the activity of the CPD is based by formulating Strategic Goals and clear objectives for the CPD for the next 4 years, in order to consolidate the implementation of the law in the field of non-discrimination and gender equality in Albania.

1.2.2. New scheme of strategic goals

Considering the achievements and the need to move forward, the new scheme of strategic goals includes these important aspects:

1. Information and awareness

- Awareness of society and law enforcement actors (*guidelines, leaflets, advertising spots, posters, information brochures, website www.kmd.al, social networks twitter, Instagram*) regarding discrimination, and the proper understanding and implementation of the LPD and the role of the institution of the CPD as a whole and for specific aspects, etc.
- Increasing the cooperation and role of media and innovative applications (Bright Sky - as a positive experience can be applied to cases of discrimination)
- Communication with different actors (interest groups, NGOs, organizations specified according to the field of action, but which also have autonomy, e.g., Trade unions, chambers of commerce, universities, central and local bodies, etc.

2. Legal aspect

- Issues handled by the CPD: - Ex officio - Complaints
- Participation in the Court: Defendant - third party - collective lawsuit, case in the Constitutional Court.
- Giving opinions: laws, bylaws, strategies.

3. **Monitoring**

- Monitoring the situation regarding discrimination in Albania, monitoring the implementation of the LPD and LGE, decisions of the CPD.
- Implementation of monitoring strategy in specific areas.

4. **International organization**

- Collaboration
- Membership
- Participation in activities and projects
- Training
- Reporting

5. **Strengthening the CPD Internal aspects**

- Effectiveness and Efficiency
- Rules
- Code of Ethics
- Regional offices
- Cooperation between directorates
- Staff training
- Material base
- Finances

1.2.3. **Design methodology**

The drafting of the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 was preceded by an analysis process of the Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021, at the end of which an Evaluation Report was drafted. This document balances an activity programmed in the strategic plan 2018 - 2021 by comparing the objectives and tasks arising from the strategic plan and the current state of their fulfilment. This assessment was made possible through a close and interactive cooperation between the CPD institution and the working group set up for this purpose, the Council of Europe (CoE) through experts involved in this process, as well as stakeholders who responded extensively to the working group's calls through qualitative questionnaires and structured interviews, presenting valuable findings and recommendations for improving the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation. The direct involvement of the Commissioner and the staff of the CPD Office in its drafting has given added value to this Strategic Plan.

The analysis document for each strategic goal was divided into two parts:

- *The first part*, starting from each goal of the strategic plan, focused on the current status of objectives, measures and activities for the realization of this goal of the strategic plan with three findings, respectively:
 - o Completed;
 - o Partially completed;
 - o Not completed.
- *The second part* consists of conclusions and recommendations which may include:
 - o **Concrete suggestions;**
 - o **Continuation** in the same way of measures and activities;
 - o **Change** through the inclusion of new measures and activities as well as through a systematic planning;

- **Strengthening** important aspects;
- **Correction** of inappropriate measures and activities;
- **Non-application** of unnecessary measures and activities due to their consumption and/or ineffectiveness.

From the methodological point of view, several aspects were also analyzed, including three types of categorizations: if there is 100% implementation; if we have partial implementation expressed in%; as well as demonstrating non-implementations. Those objectives which have been identified as not fully met have been analyzed by the working group in order to identify internal or external factors that have caused this non-compliance. All objectives have been subject to an assessment regarding the need to be included in the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026.

The draft Strategic Plan was presented to the CPD working group, CoE experts, as well as representatives of stakeholders, who also presented their assessments regarding this strategic document.

The applied methodology aimed to eliminate repetitions or ambiguities which were identified during the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021. The working group took into account the need to formulate as clear, tangible and concise objectives as possible in order to define the functions of the CPD as effectively as possible, also in view of the role of the CPD as a monitor of the implementation of the LGE.

1.3. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for protection against discrimination and gender equality is very complex in terms of the hierarchy of different types of legal acts it contains, such as the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights ("ECHR"), international conventions or agreements, laws and bylaws, as well as in terms of the nature of these acts, which in addition to the constitutive or binding nature of the law, often have a recommendatory or even political nature. In this regard, despite the fact that this section lists the legal acts which are considered by the working group for the purpose of identifying legal obligations or functions of the CPD, the document takes into account the legal nature of these acts.

1.3.1. Legal framework of the Republic of Albania

Constitution of the Republic of Albania,⁸ provides the principle of equality in Article 18 (1) and the principle of non-discrimination in Article 18 (2) and lists the grounds for discrimination, as well as defines in Article 18 (3) the normative criteria for justifying the violation of the principle of non-discrimination, which is defined in exhaustively reasonable and objective justification.

Law no. 10221, dated 04.02.2010 "On protection from discrimination" amended ("LPD")⁹. The LPD entered into force on 12.03.2010 and is fully aligned with Council Directive 2004/43/EC of 29 June 2000 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 on defining a general framework for equal treatment in employment and employment relations, Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between men and women access to goods and services", and Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and employment relations".

The scope of the LPD is to implement and respect the principle of equality and non-discrimination in relation to race, ethnicity, colour, language, citizenship, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic, educational or social status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, characteristics of sex, living with HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, parental responsibility, parental responsibility, age, civil or marital status, place of residence, health status, genetic predisposition, appearance, disability, belonging to a particular group, or with any other cause, thus implying an open list of grounds for discrimination (Article 1 LCT). It is noted that the 2020 amendments to the LPD have added new areas specifically protected and cited which were not in the 2010 law such as: *citizenship, sex characteristics, living with HIV/AIDS, appearance*.

⁸ Approved by Law no. 8417, dated 21.10.1998, as amended.

⁹ Amended by Law 124/2020, dated 15.10.2020.

The purpose of the LPD is to ensure the right of every person to: a) equality before the law and equal protection of the law; b) equality of chances and opportunities to exercise rights, enjoy freedoms and participate in public life; c) effective protection against discrimination and against any form of conduct which promotes discrimination.

Definition of discrimination. Article 3 point 1 of the LPD defines discrimination as any difference, exception, restriction or preference, based on any cause referred to in Article 1 of this law, which has as purpose or consequence the impediment or impossibility of exercising in the same manner as others of fundamental rights and freedoms recognized by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, international acts ratified by the Republic of Albania, as well as by applicable laws. With the changes of 2020 a number of new definitions took place and other existing ones were improved and clarified. Thus, out of **9 definitions of terms found in the 2010 law, we have a total of 17 terms, so 8 are new definitions such as:** "Cross-sectoral discrimination"; "Multiple discrimination"; "Structural discrimination"; "Hate speech"; "Incitement or assistance for discrimination"; "The declared purpose of discrimination"; "Sexual harassment"; "Separation". **Innovations are not only new terms but also improvements to the meaning of existing ones. Also, the LPD in Article 3/1 gives the meaning of serious forms of discrimination¹⁰ including** discriminatory behaviour motivated by more than one cause, when committed more than once, when it has lasted for a long period of time, or when it has brought particularly damaging consequences to the victim.

Scope of application. The scope of the law is wide and includes any action or inaction of public authorities or natural or legal persons participating in the life and public or private sectors, which create grounds for denying equality to a person or group of persons, or which exposes them against unfair and unequal treatment, when they are in the same or similar circumstances, in comparison with other persons or other groups of persons, constitutes discrimination (Article 3 (1) LMD).

Exceptions. Differences in treatment under Article 6 are justified only when there is an objectively justifiable purpose based on law, as provided by the Constitution of Albania, international obligations deriving from treaties, or legislation in force. The law provides for the justification of discrimination only on the basis of a genuine and necessary determining professional requirement, provided that the purpose of the different treatment is justified and the requirement does not exceed what is necessary for its realization (Article 6 (2) LPD). Another specific exception is included in the field of conscience and religion, where discrimination can only be established by law in the public interest or for the protection of the rights of others, provided that it is proportionate to the situation which has dictated the need for discrimination. In any case, allowing discrimination on the basis of the exercise of freedom of conscience and religion may not prejudice the essence of the freedoms and rights and in no case may they exceed the restrictions laid down in the European Convention on Human Rights.

Innovation of legal changes of 2020. The LPD and the legislation in force in the Republic of Albania place the CPD in a broad relationship with the Court, providing for competencies regarding the participation of the institution in court proceedings.

- *The commissioner may file a lawsuit* before the court, on behalf of a person or group of persons, only with their consent, referring to Article 34, point 3 of the Law "On Protection from Discrimination".
- *Commissioner as a respondent in the Court:* Decisions given by the CPD are appealable in the Court, in cases where the abrogation or invalidity of the decisions of the CPD is requested.
- *Commissioner as an interested person/third party:* The law provides for the obligation of the Court to notify the CPD of the filing of any complaint of discrimination (Article 36, point 3) and has the right to request the Commissioner, at any stage of the proceedings, to submit a written opinion, the results of its investigation, if an investigation has been made, or any other information relevant to the matter. The CPD is summoned to trial by the competent court as a third party, in cases where the finding of discrimination and compensation for discrimination in court is directly requested.
- *The CPD has the right to set the Constitutional Court in motion.* The 2016 Constitutional Amendments have given the CPD the right to set in motion the Constitutional Court, sanctioning, in Article 134, that "The Constitutional Court is set in motion at the request of:... (e) any Commissioner established by law for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution".

- The CPD as a claimant may address the competent Court with requests for the issuance of Execution Orders, for fines imposed by the Commissioner.

Burden of proof in discrimination cases: In most discrimination cases, the plaintiff/complainant finds it difficult or impossible to gather evidence, sometimes direct evidence does not even exist. Entities that consume discriminatory behaviour never admit to having discriminated. To address this major disadvantage, the legislation has provided for the principle of shifting the burden of proof. The principle of shifting the burden of proof is a principle consolidated in EU legislation and the jurisprudence of the ECHR. In this view, in cases of discrimination, the burden of proof should not depend entirely on the complainant, but should be the subject of a special arrangement.

As the complained party has all the information and documentation necessary to prove the merits of the allegations, the legislation has transferred the burden of proof to the complained party when it is noticed that an allegation of discrimination has been raised *prima facie*. The party against whom the complaint is filed has the burden of proving that differentiated treatment is not discriminatory.

This special regulation regarding the burden of proof in the proceedings before the CPD is reflected in Article 33 (7/1) LCT, which provides that: "7/1. In cases where the appellant presents facts on which he/she bases the allegation of discriminatory behaviour and on the basis of which it can be presumed that there was discrimination, the other party, against whom the complaint has been filed, is obliged to prove that the facts do not constitute discrimination." There is also a special regulation in the CAP regarding cases of discrimination, Specifically in Article 82 (2), which provides that: "2. In cases where the party presents evidence on which it bases the allegation of discriminatory behaviour and on the basis of which it can be presumed that there was discrimination, the other party and/or the public body is obliged to prove that the facts do not constitute discrimination, regardless of the obligation of the public body to make available to the parties the evidence in its possession."

Also, in proceedings before the court in cases of alleged discrimination, the standard of burden of proof is provided in Article 36 (5, 6) of the LPD where it is provided that: "5. The plaintiff has the obligation to bring evidence in support of the lawsuit, using any legal evidence that may prove discriminatory behaviour" and that " 6."As the plaintiff presents evidence, on which he bases his claim and on the basis of which the court may presume discriminatory behaviour, the defendant is obliged to prove that the facts do not constitute discrimination under this law."

In matters of employment, the same regulation regarding the burden of proof is provided in Article 9 (10) of the Labour Code, which stipulates that: "10. In all appeal procedures, which are followed according to point 9 of this article, if the complainant or the plaintiff presents facts from which it can be claimed that he has been discriminated in the exercise of the right to employment and profession, the person against whom the complaint is filed or the respondent is obliged to prove that the principle of equal treatment has not been violated".

In view of Law no. 8116, dated 29.03.1996, "Code of Civil Procedure", as amended ("CPC"), a discussion can be raised regarding the shifting of the burden of proof during the civil process, in cases when the court examines a case of discrimination. The principle of the burden of proof is provided in Article 12, which states: "The party claiming a right has the obligation, in accordance with the law, to prove the facts on which it bases its claim." However, Article 154 (2) (c) of the CPC provides that "In addition to these claims, the plaintiff in the claim must indicate correctly and/or attach: [...] the evidence required to be taken by the respondent and third parties, determining the reasons and location of such evidence". This provision is also in line with the provisions of Article 223 of the CPC, which provides that "The court, at the request of the interested party, may order the other party or a third person who does not participate in the case to submit a document or another item, when it deems it necessary." Despite the fact that it appears that these mechanisms enable the transfer of the burden of proof to the opposing party, the legal arguments for this transfer must be provided by the party claiming the fact to be proved. In practice these arrangements have allowed the adjudication of cases in labour disputes by allowing the burden of proof to shift to the respondent. However, in the case of discrimination, given the difficulties that this institute presents in proving the circumstances, it is required to make specific adjustments in view of international jurisprudence.

The amendments to the LPD in 2020 clearly stipulate that not only the CPD but also all public authorities have an obligation to promote equality and prevent discrimination in the exercise of their functions (Article 7 point 3 of the LPD) thus increasing accountability and alliances in the fight and efforts against discrimination as a non-exclusive task of the CPD.

Law no. 7961, dated 12.07.1995 "The Labour Code of the Republic of Albania, as amended, includes a provision on non-discrimination, defining discrimination in the legal employment relationship as *any difference, exception or preference based on race, colour, sex, age, religion, philosophical and political beliefs, social, economic and educational affiliation, pregnancy, family ties or civil status, place of residence, health conditions, genetic predisposition, physical or mental disabilities, living with HIV/AIDS, affiliation to professional organizations (employees), or any other special group, or based on any other reason, which prohibits, or makes impossible the right to work, or to practice the profession equally* (Article 9 (2)) Labour Code). The article refers to discrimination in employment and occupation, including any unjustified treatment in vocational guidance and education, employment and the exercise of various professions, as well as different employment conditions related to job distribution, job performance, remuneration, social assistance, discipline or termination of employment contract. With the changes brought by Law 136/2015 in the Labour Code, in addition to gender identity, sexual orientation and other grounds for discrimination, was also included a provision to shift the burden of proof to the employer in cases of termination of employment contract without a justified cause (Article 144 (5/1) Labour Code).

Law no. 7895, dated 27.01.1995 "Criminal Code", as amended, has undergone significant changes in 2013 regarding the protection of every citizen against hate crimes, including sexual orientation as a new cause for aggravating circumstances during the commission of a crime (article 265 of the Criminal Code). The general prohibition of discrimination (Article 253) by a public official in the exercise of his/her duties extended to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Law no. 9062, dated 08.05.2003 "Family Code", as amended. The legal status of a couple is related to a number of legal implications in various areas of life. In Albania, marriage is still limited to a man and a woman aged 18 and over. Same-sex marriages are not yet accepted. However, cohabitation in the Family Code that is in force in Albania, is defined as a de facto union between a man and a woman living as a couple, who live together a stable and continuous life. In everyday life, the rights deriving from cohabitation are important for renting an apartment, for insurance contracts, for social benefits, etc.

Law 44/2015, dated 30.04.2015 "Code of Administrative Procedures" ("CAP"), is an important source of administrative and public activity as a whole, which should be based on the principle of equality and non-discrimination (Article 17 of the CAP). This article provides that the public body, in the exercise of its activity, avoids any discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnicity, citizenship, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic status, education or social status, pregnancy, parental affiliation, parental responsibility, age, marital or marital status, marital status, place of residence, health status, genetic predisposition, disability, belonging to a particular group or for any other reason. Even in this regard, the burden of proof to prove the absence of discrimination in an administrative procedure falls on the public body (Article 82 of CAP).

Law no. 10019, dated 29.12.2008 "Electoral Code", provides for the first time the obligation of electoral subjects to respect gender equality through gender quotas as in the election administration, second level commissions and the composition of the elected legislative body, the Assembly. The Electoral Code imposed the obligation that in the multi-name list of candidates for MPs of political parties, for the elections to the Assembly, none of the genders could be represented by less than 30% (Article 4 of the Electoral Code). With the changes of 2020, the concept of "under-represented gender" was included in the Code (the gender with traditionally the smallest number of members in the Assembly or, as the case may be, in local councils at the national level), and the definitions on electoral freedom were clarified and gender equality in Article 4 of this Code.

Law no. 9669, dated 18.12.2006 "On measures against domestic violence", as amended, remains central in addressing the problems of domestic violence. It is supplemented with punitive provisions of a criminal nature by a proper system of provisions of the Criminal Code. A number of changes have been made over the years consolidating the system of measures against violence. In essence, the law sets out measures against domestic violence to prevent and reduce domestic violence in all its forms, through appropriate legal measures, thus guaranteeing the protection of family members who are subject to violence, paying more attention to the needs of children, people with disabilities and the elderly. The law has undergone significant changes in 2008, 2010, 2018 and 2020, where the role of the court in the process of issuing protection orders has been gradually consolidated, including the possibility of ordering the rehabilitation of the perpetrator through specific psycho-social programs or those of parenting training. The law also sets out the commitment to set up a national centre for social care services for victims of domestic violence. It also focused on maintaining the confidentiality of the victim's personal data and information by enhancing coordination and referral mechanisms, to support and rehabilitate victims of domestic violence and improvements to protection orders. Law 47/2018, "On some additions and changes to law no. 9669, dated 18.12.2006, "On

measures against domestic violence”, fulfilled the recommendations given by the CEDAW Committee (2016) and GREVIO (2017). Through the changes, safeguards and procedural measures were strengthened for a more effective response to domestic violence and protection of victims, by issuing an order for immediate protection measures, preceded by a risk assessment, for each case addressed. Also, for the first time, women and girls are protected in intimate relationships, without having formal ties to the perpetrators, such as marriage or cohabitation. In its entirety, the law is an effective tool for protection against domestic violence, and this also applies in cases where violence has a background of gender discrimination.

Law no. 9970, dated 24.07.2008 “On gender equality in society”. By its very nature, the law regulates the fundamental issues of gender equality in public life, the equal protection and treatment of women and men, equal opportunities and opportunities for the exercise of rights, as well as their participation and assistance in development of all walks of life. This law provides for special temporary measures to guarantee at least 30% participation of the under-represented gender in political and public decision-making positions, as well as protection from discrimination in the sectors of education, employment, media, etc. It also envisages the mandatory collection of gender statistics by all state bodies, as well as the establishment of institutional structures and mechanisms for advancing gender equality. Completion of the sub-legal framework for the implementation of this law, among others with DCM no. 465 dated 16.07.2012 “On gender mainstreaming in the medium-term budget program”, paved the way not only for the planning of measurable gender objectives in the budget programs of central institutions, but also for all further steps towards general gender budgeting (GRB) in Albania. While with Law no. 139/2015 “On local self-government” the mayors are obliged to implement and respect gender equality in the appointments of deputy mayors and the appointments of administrators of administrative units.

Law 18/2017 “On the protection of children’s rights”. The principle of equality and non-discrimination is included in the general principles of realization and protection of children’s rights. These principles are specifically extended in terms of the right to education (Article 18 (1) Law 18/2017), legal and psychological assistance during an administrative or judicial process (Article 29 (2) Law 18/2017). Also, discrimination is one of the determining causes of the need for child protection in the sense of Article 3 (6) ff. of Law 18/2017.

Law 37/2017 “Code of Juvenile Justice” strengthens the protection of the rights of children in need of protection, as it guarantees a legal framework for criminal justice for children, promotes the reintegration of the child in conflict with the law, protection of rights of the child victim and/or witness of the criminal offense and prevents the re-victimization/ secondary victimization of the child who has previously been a victim of a criminal offense.

Law no. 10129, dated 11.05.2009 “On civil status”, as amended, is another basis for equal treatment of all citizens in the Republic of Albania.

Law 97/2013 “On audio-visual media in Albania”, as amended. Article 32 provides that audio and/or audio-visual media services must not contain content that incites hatred on the grounds of race, sex, religion, nationality, or any other cause of discrimination. Also, Article 42 (3 (b)) provides that *commercial audio-visual communications must not contain content that includes or promotes discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation*. The bylaws also specifically regulate the prohibition of discrimination. According to Section 4/8 of the Audio-visual Media Broadcasting Code¹¹, *audio-visual information broadcasts should not directly contain or imply discriminatory messages on grounds such as: gender, race, age, colour, ethnicity, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic status, education or social or any other cause*.

Law no. 69/2012 “On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania”, as amended, provides that: “In the pre-university education system, students are offered protection from any form of action or inaction that may cause them discrimination, violence, ill-treatment or moral damage”(Article 6 (3)).

Law 121/2016 “On social care services in the Republic of Albania” is based on the principle of non-discrimination for a variety of reasons, starting with gender. These are basic principles for service delivery. The law also provides for the provision of specialized services for abused or trafficked women and girls, for pregnant women and girls or single parents with children up to 1 year of age, etc.

Law 65/2016 “On social enterprises in the Republic of Albania” among others aims at the employment of persons not favoured in the labour market, such as: persons treated with economic assistance, persons with disabilities, orphans, women victims of violence and trafficking, etc.

¹¹ Approved by the Decision of AMA, No. 228, dated 11.12.2017.

Law no. 93/2014 “On inclusion and accessibility” aims to guarantee equal opportunities for all persons with disabilities, defining the essential rights related to their inclusion and eternity, as well as standards for guaranteeing an independent life to these persons. This serves the equal treatment of persons with disabilities as an essential goal of the law, and in this view, it is an essential task of all state bodies to remove barriers to this social group and to guarantee equal treatment with all members of the community. Pursuant to Article 16 (2) of this Law, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination monitors the implementation of this law in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, pursuant to the obligations set out in law no. 10 221, dated 4.2.2010, “On protection from discrimination”.

Law 97/2016 “On the organization and functioning of the Prosecution in the Republic of Albania” improves the access of victims to information by establishing a public relations coordinator in each prosecution, a person responsible for informing victims of gender-based violence.

Law 111/2017 “On legal aid guaranteed by the state”, among others guarantees, free legal aid for special categories: victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse, trafficking in human beings, minors/minors in conflict with the law, children in social care institutions, persons whose rights have been **violated** through an act or omission that constitutes discrimination, etc.

Law no. 7905, dated 21.03.1995 “Code of Criminal Procedure”, as amended, which provides new legal provisions that significantly improve the position of the victim in criminal matters, as well as special procedural rights for the juvenile, sexually abused victim and the victim of trafficking in human beings.

Law 79/2017 “On sports”, as amended, provides that: “Discrimination in sports activities is prohibited for reasons such as political or religious beliefs, race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, economic or social status.” (Article 5 (3)).

Law 22/2018 “On social housing”, emphasizes the principle of non-discrimination in the planning, equipment, distribution and management of housing for social groups in need of housing. The specialized housing program benefits the most disadvantaged social strata including victims of trafficking, domestic violence and single mothers.

Law 110/2018 “On notary”, strengthens the economic independence of women and is the main guarantor of their property rights, bringing innovations in matters of gender equality in terms of protection of property. Thus, according to Article 127 of the law, the procedure of alienation of immovable property in the marital property regime provides for the *ipso jure* acquisition of property rights over the items by the spouse not present due to the presumed regime of the legal community.

Law 111/2018 “On the cadastre” also regulates gender equality issues related to the registration of property of the legal community. Thus, Article 45 of this law provides that all immovable property acquired during the marriage by each of the spouses through the contract will be registered in their joint ownership, unless it is proven that they are subject to a regime of separate property. This is one more guarantee for the protection of women’s property rights.

Law 15/2019 “On employment promotion” stipulates that victims (or potential victims of) trafficking, gender-based violence, domestic violence or mothers under the age of 18, belong to special groups of disadvantaged jobseekers in the market who benefit from employment promotion services and programs.

Law 57/2019 “On social assistance in the Republic of Albania” defines as beneficiaries of economic assistance, among others, victims of trafficking, after leaving social care institutions, until the moment of their employment and victims of domestic violence for the period of validity of the protection order or the immediate protection order, which are not treated in the social care institutions.

Law 75/2019 “On youth”, provides that: “Support and empowerment of young people is based on the following principles: a) the principle of equality and non-discrimination, sanctioned by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, other international acts ratified by the Republic of Albania and the legislation in force; b) the principle of equal opportunities and guaranteeing the participation of young people in policy-making and decision-making processes in the fields of education, research, financial policy, employment, volunteering, protection of social inclusion, health, culture, sports, environment, tourism, justice, internal and external affairs, integration and defense, information technology, entrepreneurship and other areas that encourage the development of young people;... etc.” (Article 3 (1)).

1.3.2. International legal framework: Legal and standard acts

Numerous standards in the field of non-discrimination and gender equality have been established at the level of the United Nations, the European Union, or the Council of Europe, standards which can serve as a useful basis for any assessment of parts of the legal framework for equality and human rights in Albania. Following the signing and ratification of instruments of international law dealing with human rights and the prohibition of instruments of discrimination, Albania has made them part of its legal system.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 proclaimed the principle of equality and non-discrimination in a single provision (Article 7).

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights¹² provides for the principle of equality before the law and the right to equal protection of the law without discrimination.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights¹³ sanctions the obligation of States Parties to guarantee the exercise of the rights expressed in the present Covenant without discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or any other status.

European Convention for the Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms¹⁴ (and Additional Protocols) provide for the “prohibition of discrimination” in Article 14. Of particular value is the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, which has consolidated the concept of protection against discrimination over the decades across the European Continent.

Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention),¹⁵ aims to protect women from all forms of violence, prevention, prosecution and elimination of violence against women and domestic violence as well as to contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the promotion of fundamental equality between men and women, including ways to empower women; providing support and assistance to organizations and law enforcement agencies to cooperate effectively. According to this Convention, “violence against women” is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and means all acts of gender-based violence that led to or may lead to physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats to commit such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. The Convention requires states to condemn all forms of discrimination against women (Article 4) and to take without delay the legislative and other measures necessary to prevent them, in particular by: expressing the principle of equality between men and women in their national constitutions or in any other relevant legislation, guaranteeing the practical realization of this principle; prohibition of discrimination against women, in particular through the imposition of sanctions, as appropriate; repealing laws and practices that discriminate against women.

According to the Convention, the application of the provisions of this Convention by the Parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be ensured without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, health status, disability, civil status, immigrant or refugee status or any other status. Special measures necessary to prevent and protect women from gender-based violence shall not be considered discrimination under the terms of this Convention.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women¹⁶ and the Optional Protocol to the Convention (ratified by Albania in 2003), sanction the protection of women against discrimination through special interim measures aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality between men and women, as well as appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure them equal rights with men in various fields.

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination¹⁷ sets out the obligation of State parties to prohibit and eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the rights of all, regardless of race, colour, or national or ethnic origin.

Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities¹⁸, stipulates that any discrimination based on the belonging to a national minority is prohibited, defining the obligation of the signatory states to this Convention to guarantee persons belonging to minorities, the right to equality before the law and equal protection by law.

Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁹ guarantees the principle of equality and states that States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected from all forms of discrimination or punishment based on the status, activities, opinions expressed, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities²⁰ aims to promote, protect and ensure that all persons with disabilities fully and equally enjoy all fundamental human rights and freedoms, and to promote respect for their dignity. Non-discrimination is one of the fundamental principles of this Convention. Equality and non-discrimination on the grounds of disability are commitments of States parties to the Convention accompanied by measures of a positive nature that eliminate any form of discrimination against persons with disabilities, especially in the field of family relations, education, health, employment, protection social, political and public life, cultural life and entertainment and sports activities, etc.

European Union law.

EU standards on the principles of equality and non-discrimination are a fundamental pillar of the EU's Catalog of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. They are part of the primary sources of law (treaties) and secondary sources (Regulations, Directives), and have been consolidated for decades through the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice. All of these sources define the different forms of discrimination and oblige member states to apply these standards in their legislative framework as well as in case law. These recognitions have led to the development of some legislative standards for protection against discrimination, with particular attention to those persons and groups who are considered to be more vulnerable than others.

The Republic of Albania has signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU, and has ratified it with Law no. 9590, dated 27.07.2006 ("MSA"). This Agreement, in addition to formalizing the process of European integration of Albania through the approximation of legislation (Article 70 SAA), internalizes in the Albanian legal order the European principles of non-discrimination and equality, exceeding the commercial scope. Specifically, these principles extend to the right to education (Article 100 SAA), the field of employment (Article 46 SAA), commercial initiatives (Articles 40, 50, 51, 56, the following SAA) or the protection of property rights (Article 123 of the SAA). In the framework of the approximation of the Albanian legislation with that of the European Union, the following acts are taken into consideration in terms of issues of equality and non-discrimination:

- **The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union** is dedicated to ensuring "equality". Article 21 requires *the prohibition of any discrimination on any grounds, such as gender, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic characteristics, language, religion or belief, political opinion or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, age or sexual orientation*. The rights and principles enshrined in the Charter should be applied in national legal practice in cases where:
 - Legislation implementing EU law is relevant (as an instrument of interpretation).
 - National legislation is considered to interfere with EU law.
 - EU authorities have acted in compliance with EU law.
- Article 19 of the **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)** has enabled the European Union to take appropriate action to combat discrimination *based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation*. This competence has led to the adoption of a number of Directives which set equal standards for protection against discrimination in certain areas. Among them, we mention those Directives with which the LPD is fully aligned.
- **The European Union Equal Treatment Directives** set minimum standards in equal treatment legislation. They prohibit discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment, victimization in employment and occupation on the grounds of gender, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability; and in the provision of goods and services due to gender and racial or ethnic origin.
 - **The Race Directive** (Council Directive 2004/43/EC of 29 June 2000 on the "Application of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin") prohibits

19 Ratified by the Republic of Albania with law no. 7531, dated 11.12.1991 "On the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child".

20 Law 108/2012 "On the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities".

discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnicity in the field of employment, education, access to and supply of goods and services that are available to the public, including housing, social protection, including social security and health care, social benefits, etc.

- **Equality in Employment Directives** (Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and employment relations, and Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on “Implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and work relations (reformulated)”, and Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity as self-employed and the repeal of Directive 86/613/EEC”) prohibit discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex, age, of disability in the field of employment.
- **The Gender Equality Directive** (Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 on implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services) aims to eliminate gender-based discrimination in the workplace, including self-employment and access to goods and services. The case law of the ECJ shows that this includes gender identity, and not mere discrimination on the grounds of sex.
- **Council of Europe standards.** According to Council of Europe standards, legislation on equal treatment should prohibit discrimination, harassment and victimization on grounds such as gender or sex, racial or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion or belief, among others. among others, to provide rights applicable in these areas, and to establish national structures for the promotion of equality. The same standards identify that the area of equal treatment legislation covers most employment, training and vocational training, but may also include areas outside of work, such as access to goods and services, housing, education, social protection, health care or other social advantages.
- The standards of the Council of Europe are based on Article 14 of **the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)**, which guarantees *the prohibition of discrimination in relation to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in the Convention for any reason, such as gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, or any other status.*
- **Protocol 12 (2000) to the ECHR**²¹ expands the scope of non-discrimination by guaranteeing equal treatment with regard to the enjoyment of all rights (including rights under national law). In particular, Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 to the ECHR provides that, “(1) The enjoyment of any right sanctioned by law shall be guaranteed without distinction as to any particular cause, such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political opinion or other, national or social origin, affiliation with a national minority, property, descent or any other status. [2.] No one shall be discriminated against by any public authority on any of the grounds referred to in paragraph 1.”
- Sexual orientation and gender identity are not explicitly mentioned in Article 14, but the jurisprudence of the ECHR (such as *EB v. France and Identoba and others v. Georgia*) has made it clear that it is included in the wording “for any reason”.

21 Ratified by Law no. 9264, dated 29.07.2004 “On the ratification of the” Protocol No. 12 of the Convention “On the Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms”.

- **European Social Charter**²² sanctions the principle of equality and the principle of non-discrimination in the exercise of economic and social rights. The European Social Charter of 1961/1965 constitutes a major European treaty and supplements the European Convention on Human Rights.
- **Recommendation no. 74 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on General Policies**, urges member states to ensure non-discrimination in all areas, in particular: *employment, membership in professional organizations, education, training, housing, health, social protection, goods and services intended for the public and public places, exercise of economic activity, and public services.*
- It is important to note that under EU anti-discrimination law, the prohibition of discrimination is a single provision and is applicable horizontally. This means that the prohibition of discrimination does not necessarily have to do with the violation of a fundamental right or freedom, nor with the violation of any other right other than the right not to be discriminated against. However, under the national context, this right may be limited to specific areas, such as employment and access to goods and services. Article 14 of the ECHR, on the other hand, prohibits discrimination only in relation to the exercise of (other) rights guaranteed by treaties. In Albania, as the country has signed and implemented Protocol 12, the prohibition of discrimination extends to the enjoyment of every right provided by law.

1.3.3. Link to strategic documents

1.3.3.1. Link to the National Strategy for Development and Integration

Like the NSGE 2021-2030, the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 of the CPD is linked and harmonized with the National Strategy for Development and Integration II, more specifically with Pillar 3 of this strategy: "Investing in Human Capital and Social Cohesion", where Albanian citizens are in the centre of development in a free, democratic, socially inclusive, cohesive, healthy, secure and just society, respecting fundamental human rights and civil rights, and rejecting all forms of discrimination. The most important resource in Albania is human resources, consequently its society and culture. It is in these segments of the state that all those fundamental values for the freedom, equality, well-being and security of the person and property lie. Together with the systems of good governance, democracy and the rule of law, it is the human and social dimensions of Albania that underlie economic growth. More specifically, the CPD Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 relates to Clause 8.6 of the NSDI "Strengthening Human Rights", and serves to address the challenge of raising awareness of protection against discrimination and available legal remedies, as well as the challenge for more effective protection against discrimination.

1.3.3.2. National Plan for European Integration 2019 - 2021

The national integration process is based on the National Plan for European Integration ("NPEI"), which is updated annually. NPEI includes medium and long-term measures, extending until 2021, in order for Albania to achieve full legal approximation of national legislation with EU law and to harmonize all sectors with the standards set out in the *acquis* chapters. With reference to NPEI 2019-2021 (plan in force on the date of approval of this Strategic Plan), it results that the main activities covering the field of discrimination and gender equality are part of Chapter 19 "Social Policy and Employment" and Chapter 23 "Justice and Fundamental Rights". EU law in the field of social policy includes minimum standards in areas such as employment law, equal treatment of women and men in employment and social policy, health and safety at work, non-discrimination in employment and social policy, also in social inclusion and protection. The protection of fundamental rights includes traditional civil rights, such as the right to life, the right to dignity and integrity, the prohibition of torture and degrading treatment, the right to liberty and security, the right to respect for private and family life, the freedom to religion, freedom of speech, freedom of association and assembly, freedom of education, right to property, etc.

CPD is not only an implementing and reporting entity of certain disciplines of the NPEI 2019-2021, but also actively interacts with all institutions that exercise responsibility in the framework of integration. In this

²² Ratified by Law no. 8960, dated 24.10.2002 "On the ratification of the European Social Charter, as amended".

regard, the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 of the CPD has an integral link with the NPEI, enabling the active role of the CPD in the European integration process.

1. 3. 3. 3. National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021 - 2030

National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021 - 2030, approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 400, dated 30.6.2021 ("NSGE 2021-2030") is a guide to a society where all individuals women, men, young people, young people, girls and boys, regardless of age, gender, place of birth, place of residence or ethnic group or social disabilities, religious affiliation, expression of gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as other individual characteristics, are given equal opportunities to develop their potentials; to participate equally in political and public decision-making; to elect and be elected; to be educated and trained throughout life; to be employed and employ by advancing towards new professions and challenging stereotypes and gender division of labour; to influence the socio-economic development of the country and to be supported to develop socially and economically; create healthy families, where parents share responsibilities equally and where communication is the key to problem solving; to live free from harmful practices and violence; and where vulnerable groups are treated with priority and are supported until they are empowered and enjoy equal rights and opportunities in all walks of life - a society where equality is not confused with uniformity and where no one should be left behind.

Due to the combination of spheres of activity, the CPD has been designated an institution responsible for an activity of the NSGE 2021 - 2030, namely Activity I.3.2.d. "Annual monitoring of the judicial treatment of cases of" sexual harassment or violence in the workplace, as well as gender discrimination in employment", and is a partner institution in 27 other activities of this Strategy. For this reason, the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 will integrate this area of state responsibility of the CPD.

1. 3. 3. 4. National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2021 - 2025

The National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2021 - 2025 ("NAP for PwD 2021-2025") was approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 276, dated 12.05.2021. This is a strategic document that provides policies for people with disabilities in the Republic of Albania. Its purpose is to continue to promote and support the integration of persons with disabilities into the socio-economic life of the country, paying constant attention to the fulfilment of the obligations of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through specific measures. One of the goals of this plan is to help Albania's efforts to build a society that respects fundamental human rights and freedoms and prohibits discrimination. The full and equal exercise of all the rights of persons with disabilities is a national priority that requires active, purposeful and sustainable policies, as well as joint actions of central and local authorities, independent institutions and the active participation of civil society and especially representative organizations of persons with disabilities.

According to law no. 93/2014 "On Inclusion and Accessibility", the People's Advocate and the Commissioner for Discrimination are monitoring institutions for the implementation of the rights of Persons with Disabilities. These persons may face multiple discrimination, especially in specific areas of public or private life, such as education, services, transportation, employment, etc. For this reason, the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 treats disability-related discrimination as one of the sensitive areas of discrimination.

1. 3. 3. 5. National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians, 2021-2025

The National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians, 2021-2025 ("NAP for Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025") was approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 701, dated 18.11.2021. In addition to the measures being implemented, the Plan aims to launch new activities to promote the integration of Roma and Egyptians. Roma and Egyptians face direct and indirect barriers to accessing public services, which arise from the eligibility criteria they cannot meet, from lack of information or misunderstanding of administrative procedures, and from continuous stigma and discrimination by the rest of the population. Long-term exclusion has affected the living conditions of Roma and Egyptians, discriminatory treatment in some cases by the rest of the population, and relations with state institutions. This issue should continue to be addressed in the normative and institutional plan in accordance with the legal framework in force, which is considered relatively developed and in line with international norms. Cooperation with the Ombudsman should continue in order to deepen institutional action in addressing the

problems of the Roma and Egyptian communities. The CPD should in particular implement measures and activities within this plan, in terms of:

1. Informing and taking protective measures and improving instruments for preventing discrimination against Roma and Egyptians in the workplace due to ethnicity;
2. To follow up and monitor the complaints of this social group;
3. To follow activities towards the operationalization of the term 'anti-gypsyism' and its inclusion in other political, legal documents, etc.;
4. Continue to analyze existing laws and policies that are most relevant to Roma and Egyptians to identify direct and indirect (or covert) discrimination that may adversely affect the lives of Roma and Egyptians;
5. Continue to inform and raise the awareness of civil servants (central and local level - officials, lawyers, teachers, police officers, social workers, etc.) on anti-Gypsyism to be trained in recognizing and preventing discrimination/racism against Roma and Egyptian minorities, as well as on issues of intersexuality (gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, etc.);
6. Provide Recommendations for the improvement and approximation of the national legal framework with that of the EU, with sensitivity to the issues of Roma and Egyptian minorities;
7. Undertake lawsuits of public interest, positive actions, etc. in the fight against discrimination against Roma and Egyptian minorities;
8. Monitor cases of discrimination against Roma and Egyptian minorities to identify areas of higher incidence and barriers to obtaining justice;
9. Continue to monitor and report inequalities in access that Roma and Egyptian minorities face in education, health, social services, etc.
10. Continue systematic monitoring of anti-Gypsy language and hate crimes: data collection and reporting on hate speech against Roma and Egyptian minorities.
11. Continue to support CSOs in monitoring and reporting hate speech (including online media, to remove/delete such elements).

1.3.3.6. National Action Plan for LGBTI + Persons, 2021–2027

The National Action Plan for LGBTI + Persons, 2021–2027, ("NAP for LGBTI + 2021–2027"), was approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 700, dated 18.11.2021. This plan is a guide to an inclusive, accepting and non-discriminatory society for all LGBTI + people who have the freedom to be themselves; treated appropriately, according to applicable national standards harmonized with international ones; have access to quality public services or specialized support services, available nationwide and tailored to their specific needs; as well as actively participate in all areas of life, regardless of the expression of gender identity, sexual orientation, sex characteristics or the totality of their other individual characteristics. Given that the normative framework for protection against discrimination is primary for the protection of the rights of this social group, the CPD, together with the People's Advocate, are the two main independent institutions, which, among other things, have the responsibility of properly addressing of LGBTI + issues in Albania. The Action Plan for LGBTI people is a useful basis for achieving positive change. However, steps are particularly needed to prevent discrimination and promote equality for LGBTI people in the health and education sectors, and to build capacity at the municipal level, outside the capital.

1.3.3.7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Like the NSGE 2021-2030, the CPD Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 is linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, part of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Agenda is supported by the Resolution of the Albanian Parliament "On the Objectives of Sustainable Development of the Agenda 2030 of the member states of the United Nations" dated 04.12.2017. Specifically, it relates to:

- **SDG 4** "Ensuring quality, inclusive and equitable education, as well as opportunities for skills throughout the life cycle";

- **SDG 5** “Gender Equality” - Achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls;
- **SDG 8** “Promoting continuous, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”;
- **SDG 10** “Reducing Inequalities” - Reducing inequality within each country and between countries;
- **SDG 11** “Sustainable Cities and Communities” - Construction of inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and settlements; and
- **SDG 16** “Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”
- **SDG 17** “Partnership for Objectives” - Strengthening the tools for implementation and revitalization of the global partnership for sustainable development through partnerships with stakeholders.

1.4. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CPD

The LPD designates the institutions responsible for law enforcement. The law has established the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination (CPD) as an independent institution responsible for ensuring effective protection against discrimination and any form of conduct that promotes discrimination (Article 21 (1) LPD). The LPD also defines the duties of the Council of Ministers, the Minister responsible for labour and social affairs, the Minister responsible for internal affairs, the Minister responsible for education and science, as well as the heads of educational institutions (Articles 14, 18, 19 LCT) to combat discrimination within the spheres of its competence.

The CPD is appointed by the Assembly of Albania according to the procedures set out in the LPD. The CPD was established as the central body for protection against discrimination and prevention of discrimination. The CPD is an independent body and is appointed by the Assembly of the Republic of Albania by a simple majority. The law sets out a broad mandate for the Commissioner, including handling individual complaints, raising awareness of discrimination, monitoring and enforcing the law, conducting surveys, and publishing opinions and recommendations.

Pursuant to Article 32 of the LCT, the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination has the competence:

- a) to review complaints from persons or groups of persons who claim to have been discriminated against, as provided in this law and the law “On gender equality in society”;
- b) review complaints from organizations that have a legitimate interest in acting on behalf of and with the written consent of individuals or groups of individuals alleging discrimination or on their behalf on matters relating to the collective interest;
- c) to conduct administrative investigations after receiving reliable information on violations of this law;
- ç) to impose administrative sanctions according to the definition of this law;
- d) to promote the principle of equality and non-discrimination, in particular by raising awareness and informing on these issues, including the provision of written information, inter alia, on this law, in the Albanian language, in minority languages, as well as in formats used by persons with disabilities;
- dh) to monitor the implementation of this law, as well as the law “On gender equality in society”;
- e) conduct surveys related to discrimination;
- ë) make recommendations to the competent authorities, in particular by proposing the adoption of new legislation, or the amendment or reform of existing legislation;
- f) publish reports and make recommendations on any issue related to discrimination;
- g) address public opinion directly on any issue related to discrimination;
- gj) upon the request of the court reviewing the case, to submit a written opinion on any kind of issue related to discrimination;
- h) contribute to reporting and, as appropriate, submit reports to international and regional bodies;

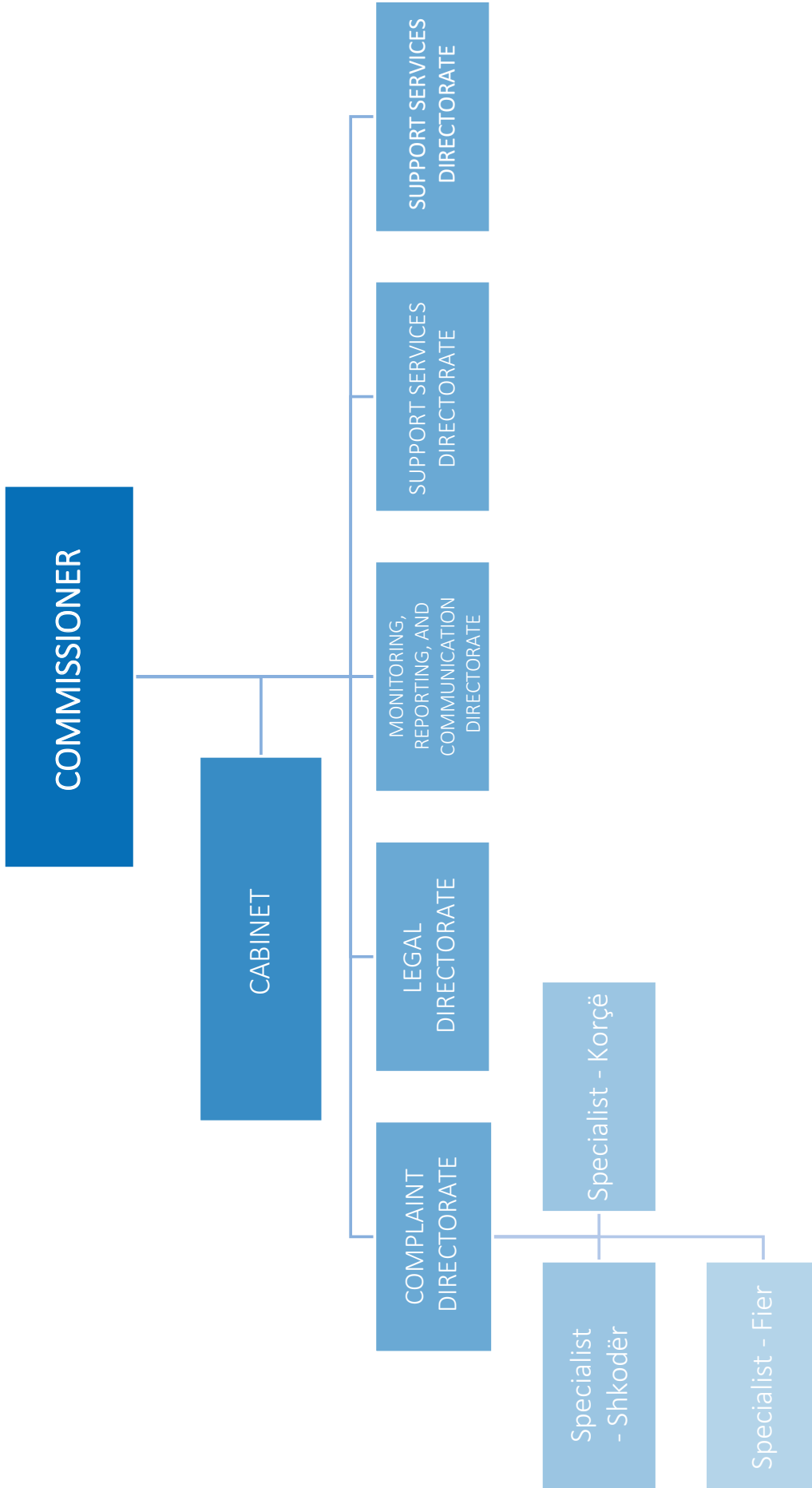
- i) to file lawsuits, in defense of the principle of equality and non-discrimination, on issues related to collective interests;
- i/1) to set in motion the Constitutional Court, when during its activity it ascertains that the law or normative act violates the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals;
- j) to inform about the right to protection from discrimination and about the legal means available for this protection;
- k) develop regular dialogue on discrimination issues with relevant social groups, including non-governmental organizations;
- l) to develop awareness and education activities that assist in the implementation of this law.

From the analysis of the spectrum of competencies it results that the CPD has as its main function to guarantee the legal protection of the subjects of the right to discrimination (Article 32 (a- ç, ë, gj, i, i/1) LPD). Also, the informative and awareness-raising role occupies an important place in the function of the CPD (Article 32 (d, f, g, j, l) LPD). CPD also has a monitoring role in terms of implementation of the legislative framework (Article 32 (dh, e) LPD), as well as a reporting role in function of the commitments of the Republic of Albania in international organizations or agreements (Article 32 (k) LPD). The main pillars of the mission of the CPD also derive from these groups of functions.

After the establishment of the CPD by law, the Albanian Parliament is responsible not only for the appointment of the CPD, but also for the establishment of the CPD Office, as an apparatus that supports the activity of the CPD. This office operates according to Decision no. 34, dated 20. 05. 2010 of the Assembly of the Republic of Albania "On the approval of the structure, organizational structure and classification of job positions of the Office of the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination".

The internal activity of the Office of the CPD is regulated by Order no. 65, dated 21.05.2021 of the CPD "On the approval of **the Internal Regulation of the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination**". For the organization and functioning of the Office of the Commissioner and special sectors of this institution. This document defines in detail all the internal activity of the institution for the organization and functioning of its structures, the internal discipline in the institution, as well as the daily direction and administration of its activity. In its activity, the Office of the CPD must respect **the Code of Ethics** approved by Order no. 66, dated 21.05.2021. This Code sets out the rules of conduct for the employees of the Office of the Commissioner in the exercise of their functions according to standards based on the principles of the rule of law.

The organizational structure of the CPD Office is as follows:



Chapter II

Strategic Planning

2.1. OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026, takes into account the entire normative and social context of the issue of discrimination in Albanian society. It draws on the achievements of the Office of the CPD to date, and after considering the resources, structures and systems available, sets out the action plan of the Office of the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination over the next four years in response to the vision and mission of the CPD as reflections on the legal competencies of the CPD institution.

Strategic goals, while deriving from the powers of the CPD in a broad sense, convey the vision and mission of the CPD to specific objectives and these are then broken down into measures for the implementation of the strategy.

From the point of view of values, the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 relies on the accumulated expertise in the human capital of the Office of the CPD, to design further, with the help of innovative technologies and distinct managerial competencies, further institutional consolidation with the aim of:

1. Raising public and institutional awareness in Albania towards the fight against discrimination in every cell of the society and its institutions as a premise for the establishment of an effective peace and social justice.
2. Replication of the best practices accumulated by the CPD in as many public and private institutions as possible, in order to prevent discrimination from the start.
3. Consolidation of the normative framework through continuous monitoring of the evolutionary stage of discrimination in society, consolidating and developing legislation in all areas vulnerable to society to continuously increase its effectiveness.
4. Increasing the effectiveness and internal efficiency of the organization to respond as well as possible to the challenges of the issue of discrimination in Albanian society, providing services as efficiently as possible, as well as transmitting values to other law enforcement institutions.
5. Strengthening and expanding the scope of action and better interaction with partners and collaborators in order to consolidate mutual support, as well as further consolidate the authority of the CPD in the institutional plan.

In this regard, the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 will be based on the following strategic goals:

1. Raising information and awareness of society and public institutions in Albania, regarding the promotion of equality and protection from discrimination.
2. Increasing the impact of decisions taken within the issues addressed by the CPD, in order to provide legal protection against discrimination.
3. Improve evidence-based policy-making by studying and monitoring the situation for the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation.
4. Strengthen cooperation and interaction with civil society organizations, international organizations and the media.
5. Increasing the effectiveness and internal efficiency of the institution.

2.2. STRATEGIC GOALS, SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

Strategic Goal 1

Raising information and awareness of society and public institutions in Albania, regarding the promotion of equality and protection from discrimination.

Strategic Goal 1

Information and awareness on protection against discrimination

Strategic Objective 1.1

Raising public awareness on discrimination and the right to equal opportunities in general, and on how the most vulnerable sectors, areas and social groups are affected

Specific measures in implementation of Strategic Objective 1.1:

- 1.1.1 Drafting information and guidance materials on preventing and combating discrimination and the right to equal opportunities, both in general and in specific cases of discrimination in the public and private sectors, or in specific areas such as education, health, public services in their diversity, employment, etc., identifying individual and collective rights protected by law by focusing on the most vulnerable social groups. Distribution of materials through a mixed communication strategy based on print and audio-visual media. Forms of communication can be in written speeches, short media briefings, leaflets, brochures and short videos that convey messages to target groups according to the content of the information.
- 1.1.2 Preparation of a TV commercial about discrimination, including information on referral mechanisms and legal provisions, as well as recent legal changes in the field of discrimination.
- 1.1.3 Dissemination and broadcasting of information materials and advertising spots on national television channels and other nationally covered mass media outlets, targeting the most used television platforms. To continue with the distribution and transmission of advertising spots and informational materials throughout the country through a good cooperation that ensures their appearance on national television channels and other mass media bodies with national coverage, website and social networks like Instagram, Facebook, Tik-Tok by eliminating barriers associated with limited staffing and budgets. To study ways of cooperation with partner organizations and institutions and television which can provide television time in the framework of legal education of the public.
- 1.1.4 Continuous publication of information materials on the website of the CPD, on other Internet channels and on the websites of partner institutions. The official website of the CPD should serve as a reference source of information and an access gateway for all individuals and groups interested in the Office's services. Due to the fact that the CPD has become part of international structures and participates continuously in various international activities, the service and information in English should be consolidated and some sections should be adapted to minority languages.
- 1.1.5 Participation in public activities involving civil servants of central and local government, professional representation bodies (trade unions, chambers of commerce), private sector employees and CSOs (representing persons with disabilities, Roma, Egyptians, LGBTI and other most vulnerable social groups, and gender-based associations) on justice, education, health, housing, employment, and labour rights, as well as services and other public and private sectors.
- 1.1.6 Planning, organizing and conducting "open days" in cooperation with local government authorities and other CSO partners. For this, it is required to further deepen the planning by updating on a 6 (six) monthly basis the list of contacts in partner organizations, expanding their number, as well as clearly formulating the purpose and objectives of the CPD in order to increase its presence as much as possible. many cells of society and in as many institutions as possible. Increasing contacts with regional directorates of local government, such as administrative units dealing with issues of employment, housing, social services, gender equality coordinators, CSO coordinators, etc. It is recommended to resize the planning related to 'Open Days' but by maximizing the effects of these activities in two directions (a) by making the necessary plans in an approved calendar of joint activities with *the regional directorates of local government* and (b) by increasing the ranks of associates listed in (a) for the whole country as well as other relevant actors in these activities in order to inform the

public about the LPD as well as enabling these meetings to be broadcast on TV or social networks.

- 1.1.7 Preparation of information materials on the protection of Roma and Egyptians from ethnic discrimination in the workplace. This specific task stems from the Roma and Egyptian NAP 2021-2025.

Effects on the staff: The inclusion of *an English translator* in the CPD structure for translating materials and making the site accessible in English.

Strategic Objective 1.2	<i>Active promotion of anti-discrimination law and the active role of the CPD, based on success stories</i>
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Specific measures in implementation of the Strategic Objective 1.2

- 1.1.1 Open and active presentation of the anti-discrimination law in media debates and promotion of the role of the CPD in its implementation, clearly focusing on the specific mandate of the CPD and work to combat and prevent all forms of discrimination and the establishment of equality in Albania. It is recommended that the promotion be extended to the region, especially in the Albanian-speaking area, in order to amplify the effects in the societies with which the Albanian society interacts for natural or socio-cultural reasons.
- 1.1.2 Develop packages of anti-discrimination law guidance materials, suitable for different public and social sectors, identify steps that can be taken to prevent discrimination and support equality, and define relevant legal provisions for vulnerable groups, which explain discrimination, determine the steps to be followed for reporting discrimination cases, and determine the relevant provisions of the law. It is recommended to use, in addition to traditional media, contemporary ways of social communication, such as social networks, electronic posters, various digital applications, etc.
- 1.1.3 Compilation of leaflets, brochures, public statements and other communication and visibility materials based on practical examples describing the special role and work of the CPD and their strategic distribution among key actors.
- 1.1.4 Drafting press releases, written speeches, discussion points, case summaries and other information materials supporting the views (to be taken) by the CPD on open and closed discrimination-related debates. It is recommended that speeches and information materials can be published in the print media as academic and professional journals (such as "Advocacy" Magazine, university and School Magistrates' journals, etc.). Involvement of the Academy of Sciences and universities in the scientific debate on rights related to discrimination and related social phenomena can further deepen and amplify the scientific debate on the analysis and treatment of social phenomena that cause discrimination or violation of gender equality.
- 1.1.5 Planning, organizing and activating open debates and conferences with expert panels attended by civil servants, professional representation bodies (unions, chambers of commerce, etc.), private sector employees regarding employment and their labour rights, such as actors and interest groups. Legal changes in the field of non-discrimination, as well as the opening of regional markets due to trade agreements in the region dictate the need to intensify communication with the public in order to increase public sensitivity to discrimination, as a receptor that activates individual or collective protection.
- 1.1.6 Distribution and posting of LPD in a language adapted for children in all schools of the Republic of Albania, as well as posting of LPD especially in relation to the rights of employees in medium and large businesses.

Strategic Objective 2.1

Reaching citizens and using the means of appeal, as well as intensifying the follow-up of cases by the responsible institutions to ensure the implementation of decisions to a high standard, through a detailed follow-up system

Specific measures in implementation of Strategic Objective 2.1:

- 1.1.1 Organize a support system for receiving complaints of discrimination and provide comments or assistance to ensure proper grievance. To envisage as a priority issue for the CPD the empowerment towards the use of the instrument recognized by the law for 'instituting collective lawsuits' and the mobilization of the Constitutional Court.

Strengthen and extend the reception system, support the receipt of complaints about discrimination and gender inequality and provide comments to ensure the proper formulation of complaints through expanding the activity of Regional Offices, strengthening internal capacity by providing human resources/additional financial and logistical support for existing offices and the opening of new offices in those counties where the need for the presence of a CPD office is growing.

In response to the increase in the number of complaints and the geography of their distribution (almost throughout the country) it is necessary to expand the activity of the Regional Offices, either by strengthening internal capacities by providing additional human resources, or by opening new offices in those regions where the need for the presence of a CPD office is growing.

- 1.1.2 Implement effective processing and decision-making procedures for protection against discrimination in cases based on law. In order to increase the effectiveness of decision-making, a process of internal evaluation should be continuously followed to identify all the needs for review of procedures by adapting the regulation of the Office of the CPD to the extent permitted by law as a whole.
- 1.1.3 Bringing cases before the courts, and action by the CPD as *amicus curiae* when required. To respond to the growing need and legal changes in increasing the role of the CPD in collective lawsuits, it is recommended to increase the number of dedicated staff related to the competence recognized by law after the changes of 2020 (Article 34 point 4 and Article 32 point 1 letter h/of the LPD) for filing collective lawsuits as well as for initiating the Constitutional Court (Article 32 point 1 letter h/OF/1 of the LPD) enabling the legal framework for protection against discrimination to develop judicial practice in the right direction.²³

Prioritize any case that may constitute an opportunity for a collective action by the CPD, and set in motion the Courts without delay, in order to prevent the effects of group discrimination as effectively and expeditiously as possible. Preparation is required in terms of legal arguments in accordance with the current practice of the Albanian courts and the jurisprudence of the ECHR on the main topics of discrimination and gender equality. In particular, as many legal arguments as possible should be prepared regarding the security measures of the lawsuit, which are recommended to accompany the collective lawsuits in order to provide temporary protection of the object of the lawsuit. These arguments should be analyzed in the light of the interpretation of the higher courts in order to create the conditions for the most successful claims.

- 1.1.4 Undertaking lawsuits with public interest, positive actions, etc. in the fight against discrimination of Roma and Egyptian minorities is another task arising from the NAP for Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025, which, due to the substantive competence of the CPD is treated in each case with priority by the CPD.
- 1.1.5 Drafting a Regulation on determining the rules for collective lawsuits and initiating cases *ex officio*. Such a regulation will increase legal certainty by defining rules and normative criteria for the action of the CPD Office in cases of identifying the circumstances of the application of collective lawsuits.
- 1.1.6 Develop a detailed system for following up and implementing decisions, consisting of the most important elements, relevant timelines and responsible persons and/or departments and institutions, as well as specific practical steps that can be taken to intervene directly with the responsible institutions. It is recommended to make the existing detailed decision-making and enforcement

system effective, or build a new system, in order to increase the effectiveness of resources and capacities through the help of technology, to help more in data processing and generation of information for various reports.

- 1.1.7 Follow up on every step of the timely monitoring system and intensify contacts with responsible institutions, including via email, telephone and in person. It is recommended to send a summary of the CPD Decisions to the institutions as well as to envisage an interaction plan of open discussions with such educational institutions as high schools, Universities, School of Magistrates, School of Advocacy, Security Academy and basic police training school²⁴, employment offices and vocational training institutions, etc.
- 1.1.8 Design and implement simple risk mitigation measures, including specific non-compliance actions.
- 1.1.9 Taking protective measures and improving instruments to prevent discrimination of Roma and Egyptians in the workplace due to ethnicity, through the implementation of information events with all partners in cooperation agreements that provide vacancies, that promote the treatment of equal including ethnicity. This specific task also stems from the NAP for Roma and Egyptian 2021-2025.

Strategic Objective 2.2

Regular presentation of cases in the media and in the public, in a way that gives status to decisions, generates debates about them and contributes to the understanding of discrimination

Specific measures for the implementation of the Strategic Objective 2.2

- 1.1.1 Compilation of very representative and different cases for which a decision is taken by the CPD every month in order to present them in the media and the general public through media information and short stories in the news programs or in broadcasts dedicated to this purpose. The coordinator responsible for the media should identify and adapt to public opinion the results of specific decisions or specific cases, and establish regular contacts with the mainstream media to convey this information. It is therefore recommended to build a dynamic communication protocol and coordinated case referral (based on a periodic and case-by-case calendar) between the CPD/Media/CSO and the public by enabling typical (representative) cases reviewed by the CPD and submitted by the media/CSOs to find coverage in the media in the formats of media reports, documentaries, and other forms of providing information in the most appropriate way and in accordance with the legal standards in force in consultation with the CPD.
- 1.1.2 Planning and implementation of periodic programs in the media with high level representation, activities which give status to special cases and relevant decisions. It is recommended to further strengthen the cooperation with the media by identifying several levels and ways of cooperation such as periodic programs in the media with high level representation.
- 1.1.3 Combining the use of pre-defined and recent media cases to generate debate about discrimination, the legal consequences of discrimination cases, and the CPD's legal opinions and decisions to address them, including the preparation of packages designed for specific sectors and engaging with these sectors to promote a good understanding of these cases and their impact on systems and practices within organizations. It is recommended to consolidate the established positive/functional practice where the cases covered by the media continue to be treated and used as case studies and then on this basis (a) organize informative and awareness-raising debates (in the media) and (b) draft guidelines for the benefit of certain problematic sectors by encouraging and supporting these sectors to inspect, monitor and promote a good understanding of cases and discrimination found in them as well as in preventive and protective legal instruments.
- 1.1.4 Proactively responding to external media or CSO reports and internal trends analysis of the issues under consideration, engaging with representatives of under-represented groups through meetings and information exchange. It is recommended to continue and strengthen the tripartite cooperation between CPD, media (audio-visual and written, national and local) and CSOs (CSOs that support the most vulnerable and under-represented social groups) through meetings and exchange of information on a periodic basis and initiated by concrete situations and problematic trends presented aiming at increasing the commitment and sustainability of CSOs in relation to the protection and prevention of discrimination.

Strategic Objective 2.3

Improve the results of cases and their impact through better communication with responsible organizations from different vulnerable sectors and groups

Specific measures in implementation of the Strategic Objective 2.3

- 1.1.1 Development of guidance materials on the systems and practices required in the organization of different sectors and different fields of activity on how to prevent discrimination and support the creation of equality, emphasizing the specific role and identity of the CPD. Development of dedicated, friendly and illustrated guidance materials with success stories for vulnerable sectors and groups (starting with preschool education, etc.) regarding the prevention and protection from discrimination as well as the specific role and identity of the CPD
- 1.1.2 Providing training and support for the effective implementation of these guidance materials by various organizations, highlighting the law and presenting the specific role and identity of the CPD. It is recommended to provide training for new staff of CSOs and various sectors (journalists, chambers of commerce, trade unions, education offices, employment offices and local government bodies) in order to effectively implement the guidance materials and a correct understanding of legal changes. (2020) emphasizing the law and presenting the specific role and identity of the CPD. It is also recommended to strengthen the cooperation with the committees of the Albanian Parliament as standing committees, and subcommittees, especially the subcommittee on gender equality and prevention of violence against women, the council for legislation, etc.

Strategic Goal 3

Improve evidence-based policy-making by studying and monitoring the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation

Strategic Objective 3.1

Monitoring and implementation of the anti-discrimination law, the law on gender equality and other anti-discrimination conventions by all major institutions of Albania

Specific measures in implementation of Strategic Objective 3.1:

- 3.1.1 Prepare an annual and clear and measurable monitoring plan where the CPD and the mechanisms available to the CPD are the main actors and maintain leadership by cooperating with local and international organizations and partners.
- 3.1.2 Carry out monitoring in accordance with the capacities and mechanisms of the CPD in these three directions:
 - 3.1.2.1 monitoring the implementation of legislation and international standards related to gender equality and non-discrimination by law enforcement and inspection institutions;
 - 3.1.2.2 dedicated monitoring in problem areas protected by LPD and LGE;
 - 3.1.2.3 monitoring regarding the effects of LMD and LGE in certain groups and in the most impossible social groups, as well as in relation to the determining causes of the violation of the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination.
- 3.1.3 Conducting studies focusing on the causes of discrimination and gender inequality by focusing the analysis on specific areas by analyzing and presenting cases by sectors, geographical areas, and vulnerability²⁵.
- 3.1.4 Monitoring cases of discrimination against Roma and Egyptian minorities to identify areas of higher incidence and barriers to obtaining justice.
- 3.1.5 Monitoring and reporting of inequalities in access that Roma and Egyptian minorities face in

²⁵ Because of gender identity, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin, economic, educational, or social status and political beliefs.

education, health, social services, etc.

- 3.1.6 Systematic monitoring of anti-Gypsy language and hate crimes: data collection and reporting on hate speech against Roma and Egyptian minorities.

Strategic Objective 3.2

Stimulate legislation and policies that contribute to the prevention of discrimination and the establishment of gender equality

Specific measures in implementation of the Strategic Objective 3.2

- 3.2.1 Review of the law on gender equality in society based on needs and trends and similar international legislation, focusing on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals that have a direct or indirect impact on the issue of non-discrimination and gender equality.
- 3.2.2 Drafting changes in the law on gender equality in society, based on internal and external reviews and reflecting on the needs and organizational potential of the CPD;
- 3.2.3 Monitoring the introduction of new legislation and making recommendations to ensure compliance with the law on gender equality in society and support the establishment of equality;
- 3.2.4 Propose new policies and changes related to the proposed policies to ensure the prevention of discrimination and gender inequality and support for the establishment of equality and non-discrimination in all policies.
- 3.2.5 Drafting bylaws according to the amendments of LPD and LGE after approval.
- 3.2.6 Operationalization of the term anti-Gypsyism and its inclusion in other political, legal, documents, etc.
- 3.2.7 Establishment of working groups with experts (representatives of the administration, as well as independent experts) who work on anti-gypsyism and develop proposals and recommendations for policy makers/policymakers in various fields.
- 3.2.8 Analyze existing laws and policies that are most relevant to R&E to identify direct and indirect (or covert) discrimination that may adversely affect the lives of Roma and Egyptians.
- 3.2.9 Recommendations for improving and aligning the national legal framework with that of the EU, with sensitivity to the issues of Roma and Egyptian minorities.

Strategic Goal 4

Strengthened cooperation and interaction with civil society organizations, international organizations and the media

Strategic Objective 4.1

Strengthen and deepen current key relations with governmental and non-governmental public organizations, Parliament and other independent institutions

Specific measures in implementation of Strategic Objective 4.1:

- 4.1.1 Develop cooperation through the implementation of existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and the signing and implementation of new MoUs between CPD and foreign counterpart institutions, such as key CSOs, NGOs (national and international), the Psychologist Order to benefit from the expertise of this body to support the work of the CPD in certain cases, such as the investigation of cases of bullying, national governmental organizations (including municipalities, universities, regional directorates of education, and social services) as well as international organizations, which have supported and can support the exercise of a greater influence of the role of the CPD, aiming at strengthening cooperation and their profiling with more knowledge on discrimination and gender inequality in cities where civil society organizations lack such focus. It is recommended to continue the signing MoUs with a wider network of organizations, setting cooperation agendas and periodic deadlines for evaluating the implementation of these agendas and deadlines for their review.

- 4.1.2 Creating and updating a structured database according to a methodology which ensures the rapid identification of the most potential actor in a given direction through clear, complete (hyperlinked) and synthetic Bio data including updated contacts on CSOs, NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, which cover all causes of discrimination covered by legislation and wish to contribute to the work of the CPD and their use in various activities according to profiling. This process is recommended to continue on ongoing basis, creating a unified database for the integration of all information and providing access for use by the responsible units within the Office of the CPD.
- 4.1.3 Draft annual work plans (a need assessment might be foreseen to be made at the end of December of each year for purposes of future planning) and on the basis of reports of national NGOs for joint activities with CSOs, NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, focusing on the changes in the LPD and LGE of the operation of the anti-discrimination law and the work of the CPD and their implementation as planned.
- 4.1.4 Further development of cooperation with the People's Advocate based on the Memorandum of Understanding between these institutions by maximizing protection from discrimination and gender inequality in public administration and public administration, joint planning periodically (annually) of activities with common themes and geographical spread wide (including regions where CPD does not have regional offices)
- 4.1.5 Support CS for monitoring and reporting hate speech (including online media, to remove/delete such elements).
- 4.1.6 Participation in anti-gypsy boards/working groups together with CSOs representing Roma and Egyptians.
- 4.1.7 Strengthen the cooperation between CSOs and CPD for the referral, follow-up and monitoring of complaints.
- 4.1.8 Support to Roma and Egyptians CS with capacity building activities and promotion of Roma and Egyptian minorities.

Strategic Objective 4.2

Opening and strengthening new relationships with various actors and partners from public and private institutions, international and national CSOs, academia and media

Specific measures in implementation of the Strategic Objective 4.2

- 4.2.1 Develop and support new relationships with the private sector, in particular through a systematic and ongoing engagement, periodic meetings and joint ventures with chambers of commerce. Draft a work plan for the development and support of relations with the private sector, in particular through a systematic and continuous engagement, periodic meetings and joint ventures with chambers of commerce, etc.
- 4.2.2 Systematic and planned development of relations with identified institutions and new institutions of the academic world (universities and research institutions), through exchanges, periodic meetings and joint research that support the development of a broad knowledge base in the fight against discrimination and inequality and assist the CPD in the capillary recognition of reality (through interactive methods such as small group meetings and groups with specific regional interests)
- 4.2.3 Develop cooperation through the implementation of existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and the signing and implementation of new MoUs between CPD and foreign counterpart institutions, such as key CSOs, NGOs (national and international), the Psychologist Order to benefit from the expertise of this body to support the work of the CPD in certain cases, such as the investigation of cases of bullying, national governmental organizations (including municipalities, universities, regional directorates of education, and social services) as well as international organizations, which have supported and can support the exercise of a greater influence of the role of the CPD, aiming at strengthening cooperation and their profiling with more knowledge on discrimination and gender inequality in cities where civil society organizations lack such focus. Prioritize collaborations in areas where the CPD does not have a presence or cooperative relationship with local institutions.
- 4.2.4 Develop and maintain relationships, through exchanges, meetings, presentations and joint activities

with print and audio-visual media of national and local reach, focusing on professional portrayal of discrimination and the work of the CPD to prevent discrimination and establishing equality. It is recommended to develop and maintain relations with existing media (audio-visual and print, national and local) and to establish new relations, through exchanges, meetings, presentations and joint activities with print and audio-visual media of national and local scope, being focused on the professional portrayal of discrimination and the work of the CPD on the prevention of discrimination and gender inequality.

Strategic Objective 4.3

Establishing contact with wider communities and with local and decentralized institutions

Specific measures in implementation of the Strategic Objective 4.3:

- 4.3.1 Planning and conducting ad hoc meetings with vulnerable communities at the regional level and peripheral areas from discrimination and gender inequality based on the process of prevention and protection (including preparation and submission of complaints according to legislation) and awareness of legal changes (2020).
- 4.3.2 Conduct scheduled (annual) and ad hoc meetings with local government units (LGUs), decentralized agencies and other key institutions to promote their awareness of LMD (2020) changes and the need for changes in LGE as well as decisions, issues reviewed, guidelines and recommendations of the CPD with their support in preventing and protecting against gender inequality and discrimination under the LCT to establish systems to prevent discrimination and to support the establishment of equality. Public reception offices and staff at local units to be trained to inform citizens and how to refer cases of discrimination to the CPD.
- 4.3.3 Implement procedures and systems of operation and support for the three regional offices in order for them to develop as regional centres, with the capacity to ensure a lively presence of the CPD in the municipalities where they have offices and to establish contacts with other nearby municipalities. It is recommended to continue the process of capacity building in order to expand the map of CPD services, strengthening and further extending the system of reception, support and acceptance of complaints of discrimination and gender inequality and providing comments to ensure proper wording, through expanding the activity of the Regional Offices, strengthening the internal capacities by providing additional human/financial and logistical resources for the existing offices and opening new offices in those regions where the need for the presence of a CPD office is growing (cases of Kukës, Saranda).
- 4.3.4 Clearly define the territorial jurisdiction they cover and how the coordination activity is carried out between the different municipalities.
- 4.3.5 Strengthen the capacities of the Regional Offices of the CPD so that they are developed in a studied way as regional centres against inequality and discrimination through the drafting of a detailed plan of trainings and awareness-raising activities which need to take into account:
 - 4.3.5.1 topics and number of dedicated trainings of RO staff based on detailed planning and modules of the format of continuing training and Training of trainers;
 - 4.3.5.2 the topics and number of joint trainings of the RO with local institutions in order to create a fair and unified understanding of gender equality standards and non-discrimination and the role of each actor as part of a machinery;
 - 4.3.5.3 Develop regional awareness-raising activity plans related to issues of discrimination and gender inequality which ensure ongoing awareness-raising of local institutions/CSOs/communities taking into account regional diversity and specific needs and aiming to turn Regional Offices into strong awareness-raising, training, regional support centres.
 - 4.3.5.4 Develop a calendar of meetings with various regional actors aiming to maximize the presence and role of Regional Offices and CPD in municipalities where these offices exist and those that do not exist in order to establish contacts with other municipalities and disadvantaged and vulnerable communities to support them in using the guidance materials developed by the CPD headquarters.
 - 4.3.5.5 The study on the needs for increasing the human, financial/budgetary and logistical resources of the RO, including their extension to a wider regional base through the establishment of new offices (Kukës, Saranda, etc.) as a first step towards securing the approval by the Assembly of the Republic

of Albania of the state funding for the support of the regional centres and the inclusion of the staff of the regional centres in the organizational chart of the CPD;

- 4.3.6 Develop cooperation through the implementation of existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and the signing and implementation of new MoUs between CPD and foreign counterpart institutions, such as key CSOs, NGOs (national and international), the Psychologist Order to benefit from the expertise of this body to support the work of the CPD in certain cases, such as the investigation of cases of bullying, national governmental organizations (including municipalities, universities, regional directorates of education, and social services) as well as international organizations, which have supported and can support the exercise of a greater influence of the role of the CPD, aiming at strengthening cooperation and their profiling with more knowledge on discrimination and gender inequality in cities where civil society organizations lack such focus.
- 4.3.7 Take steps to secure parliamentary approval and state funding to support regional centres and include regional centre staff in the CPD chart, or add two new offices in Kukës and Saranda.

Strategic Goal 5

Increasing the effectiveness and internal efficiency of the institution

Strategic Objective 5.1

Develop an accountable, efficient and effective business model, with clear internal and external policies and procedures.

Specific measures in implementation of Strategic Objective 5.1:

- 5.1.1 Changing and improving the CPD communication strategy, making this communication easily accessible, using modern communication tools that can more easily reach different stakeholders.

Strategic Objective 5.2

Improving and maintaining the professional capacities of the CPD staff based on the field of expertise and relevant responsibilities.

Specific measures in implementation of Strategic Objective 5.2:

- 5.2.1 Preparation of a thematic training program including topics of interest depending on the legal changes of 2020 and concrete problems identified in the activity of the CPD and beyond.
- 5.2.2 Conduct trainings, activities, meetings for all staff of the CPD in Tirana and regional offices on specific topics and profiles in cooperation with universities, EQUINET, NGOs or other institutions.
- 5.2.3 Creating interaction with academic and research and scientific institutions in Albania, and carrying out joint activities such as research, surveys, etc.
- 5.2.4 Establish a team of trainers with knowledge dedicated to 'training of trainers'.
- 5.2.5 Expanding cooperation towards professional capacity building through seminars and study exchanges with partner organizations and counterpart institutions in the region or in EU countries. Schedule open hearings at the Court of Human Rights (in Strasbourg) on important discrimination issues, in Strasbourg or online if possible.
- 5.2.6 Establishment of the department of study, research and monitoring.
- 5.2.7 Close cooperation with the School of Magistrates, the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA), the School of Advocacy, EQUINET and specialized Universities, research institutions and relevant CSOs in conducting training needs assessments and capacity building activities.
- 5.2.8 Informing and raising awareness of civil servants (central and local level - officials, lawyers, teachers, police officers, social workers, etc.) on anti-Gypsyism to be trained in recognizing and preventing discrimination/racism against Roma and Egyptian minorities, as well as on issues of intersexuality (gender, age, disabilities, sexual orientation, etc.).
- 5.2.9 Increase organizational efficiency and transparency through the construction of an internal information system and case management.

Strategic Objective 5.3

Creating an internal knowledge strategy by defining specific areas of knowledge, appointing knowledge coordinators and creating a culture and platform for knowledge sharing

Specific measures in implementation of Strategic Objective 5.3:

- 5.3.1 Establish an internal institutional system or practice dedicated to discussing lessons learned from work or encouraging knowledge sharing, informally (escape room & team building).

Strategic Objective 5.4

Development of a results-based monitoring and evaluation system (M&V), which better absorbs the results and impacts of the work of the CPD

- 5.4.1 Establishment of a network of internal and external coordinators by providing a periodic communication protocol between them as well as a communication protocol based on problematic cases.
- 5.4.2 Interaction between coordinators for the purpose of joint monitoring, evaluation and re-evaluation, capacity building and competencies to jointly design, plan and implement monitoring and evaluation activities (research institutions, Universities and CSOs).

Chapter III

Implementation, Reporting, Monitoring and Accountability

3.1. RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION

The Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 aims to coordinate various activities in fulfilment of the competencies of the CPD deriving from the LPD as well as for the fulfilment of obligations arising from the legal framework in force. The CPD Office is the institution responsible for the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 of the CPD.

The Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 aims to create conditions for the interaction of CPD with other institutions and involvement in various processes of legal and social character, in order to create conditions for a positive synergy of cooperation between actors responsible for respecting the principle of non-discrimination and that of gender equality. This aims, rather than identifying a proactive role of the CPD, to increase political, institutional and social activism as a whole, creating the appropriate premises for the development of a more effective fight towards the avoidance of discrimination and its punishment by all means available by law. In this process, the courts play a fundamental role, and therefore the interaction between them and the CPD should be increased. For this, it is not enough just to strengthen the capacities of the CPD Office, but also to raise the awareness of the judiciary and the actors that interact with it, such as lawyers, to facilitate the work of the CPD in this regard.

Furthermore, the Council of Ministers, the Minister responsible for internal affairs, the Minister responsible for social affairs, and the Minister responsible for education have powers under the law to issue bylaws within their spheres of competence to combat discrimination. These acts are missing, so it is necessary to continue and intensify efforts by the CPD to delay the process of completion of these acts. This is also due to the valuable expertise available in this Office.

Another important actor can be found near the local government, in order to expand the network of services and access of the CPD to a wider territory. To this end, collaboration with certain municipalities will be aimed at setting up a coordination network to address issues related to discrimination at the community level.

Other institutions that can play an important role in implementing the legal framework against discrimination and gender inequality are institutions that specialize in continuing education, such as the School of Magistrates, the School of Advocacy, ASPA, etc.

In addition to public institutions, valuable potential for anti-discrimination law enforcement is found in domestic and foreign CSOs that address discrimination and gender inequality directly or indirectly. The aim is to maintain an active partnership network between the CPD and these organizations.

Through cooperation with them, the aim will be to expand the network of access to CPD services to stakeholders.

A target group for deepening cooperation are also the chambers of commerce and industry, which can spread in their membership the fight against discrimination and gender inequality.

In addition to the above, cooperation with academic institutions and universities is seen as a relationship of dual benefit. This, because in addition to expanding the fight against discrimination and inequality in these communities, aims to absorb expertise, ideas, and scientific arguments from academia, in order to perfect the activity of the CPD to a higher level.

3.2. MONITORING MECHANISMS

In order for this strategic plan to remain coherent and focus on the implementation of achievements and challenges, it needs to be constantly reviewed and updated. In addition, the strategic plan should be translated into annual planning instruments that are more specific and appropriate to change and correct. The annual plans to be drafted as part of the implementation of the strategy include more detailed activities and more indicators corresponding to internal resources (mainly human and financial) and external resources (including networking and external financing).

The CPD Office will designate a dedicated monitoring and evaluation coordinator by the CPD internal staff to develop more specific monitoring and evaluation tools, such as periodic and specific activity reporting models, design and carry out monitoring activities for specific activities and strategic goals, develop specific indicators, update existing indicators, advise on the process of drawing conclusions on the results, and set or review new objectives and activities for the future implementation phases or periods and for other tasks to be identified during the process.

Approval of all monitoring and evaluation instruments, including mainly periodic reports, evaluation team and methodology and evaluation report or reports, remains the responsibility of the Commissioner. The commissioner, as the head of the institution, will also be responsible for the overall coordination and guidance of the monitoring process, as well as for exchanging data within the institution, or obtaining the necessary information from other institutions, delegating specific tasks to the coordinator for monitoring and evaluation and to department heads.

3.3. PROGRESS REPORTS

Monitoring will include tracking progress in the implementation of this Strategic Plan against performance indicators that measure efficiency and effectiveness, timelines and quality standards set out in the value proposition. In this regard, the process will focus mainly on the level of achievement of the success of the planned results, measuring key actions, and maintaining a perspective towards the achievement of all strategic goals and objectives. The monitoring process will constitute an ongoing internal process that includes effective systems for collecting data on the work done by reporting and management structure meetings, staff contributions, and stakeholder engagement.

As part of the monitoring, this Strategic Plan includes a logical framework with:

- quantitative and qualitative indicators that form the basis for monitoring the progress of each strategic or specific objective;
- implementation deadlines for each action; these should be broken down into the most important elements and timelines for each action in the annual planning process;
- forecasting financial resources based on previous years, intensity of operations, as well as the inclusion of financed claims within the institution and unfunded claims;
- an indicative list of institutions responsible for implementation, including potential funding partners for specific joint activities

3.4. EVALUATION OF PROGRESS

The evaluation of this Strategic Plan envisages three main types of activities: *annual analysis*, *medium-term evaluation* and *evaluation of the final strategy*.

Annual analysis is the process of evaluating the annual results for the implementation of each annual work plan. The CPD will develop annual work plans that are derived and in line with the goals, objectives and

actions set out in this strategy. The CPD will appoint a working group composed of heads of departments or other professionals, to whom this task can be delegated and who represent the various technical-professional structures of the CPD. The annual analysis process will include an analysis of the objectives and results compared to the current situation.

The medium-term analysis is the process of evaluating the progress in the implementation of the strategy against the goals and objectives set out in the strategic plan, as well as the results and achievements achieved during the first two annual analysis. The mid-term analysis can be performed by a mixed team of professionals consisting of internally appointed department heads and subcontracted experts. The end result of the mid-term analysis will be the updated strategic plan, reflecting on achievements, challenges and the changing context.

The final evaluation of the strategy will evaluate the overall achievement of the results foreseen in the Strategic Plan and will identify the results and changes that may be related to its implementation. To ensure objectivity and to guarantee the impartiality of views and opinions, the final evaluation can be performed by external experts with experience in evaluation, supported by a team of professionals appointed by the institution itself. The final product of the evaluation of the final strategy will be the final evaluation report, including learning from implementation and recommendations for the next stages of implementation.

The final reports from the mid-term analysis and the final evaluation of the strategy will be approved by the Commissioner before being distributed, as required by law.

3.5. OUTPUT INDICATORS AND IMPACT INDICATORS

The achievement of the strategic goals and strategic objectives of the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 of the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination will be measured using two different sets of indicators, namely *the output indicators and the impact indicators*.

3.5.1 Output indicators²⁶

Output indicators measure progress towards achieving 14 specific objectives and their 58 measures. The Strategic Plan has a total of ___ result indicators with at least one outcome indicator for each measure.

Objectives	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	TOTAL
<i>strategic</i>	2	3	2	3	4	14
<i>Measures</i>	11	13	8	15	11	58
<i>Indicators</i>	-	-	-	-	-	--

3.5.1 Outcome/impact indicators

The results/impact indicators in this Strategic Plan aim to quantify the fulfilment of the 5 Strategic Goals and the respective Specific Objectives. The document contains 5 indicators of results/impacts directly related to the five strategic goals:

- 1) **Increase by 20% the awareness of citizens and institutions in Albania regarding protection from discrimination and the special role of the CPD;**
- 2) **25% increase in the number of CPD decisions directly implemented or confirmed by the courts;**
- 3) **Carrying out planned monitoring for the implementation of LPD, LGE as well as the approval of bylaws and legal changes of LGE. Proposing at least one policy or amendment to implement the SDGs.**

- 4) 20% increase in the effectiveness and efficiency of the CPD staff regarding the processing of complaints and the successful handling of a number of discrimination issues;**
- 5) 50% increase in the geography of cases reported and successfully addressed.**

During the annual planning processes of the CPD, more specific indicators of results can and should be developed, directly related to the achievement of specific objectives.

Chapter IV

Action Plan and Budgeting Activities

The budgeting of this strategic plan was realized after an analysis process evaluating the past budget performance and at the same time of the internal and external environments in which the CPD operates. This analysis enabled the budgetary approach of this strategic plan.

To ensure the availability of adequate financial resources to support the implementation of planned activities, the formulation and implementation of a resource mobilization strategy specified in the action plan has been considered. The following priority measures were taken into account during the Budgeting of the Strategic Plan:

1. Increasing organizational capacity, effectiveness and efficiency;
2. Attract, develop and strengthen skilled and productive human resources;
3. Strengthen management and stakeholder involvement;
4. Strengthen the financial capacity of the CPD;
5. Provision and maintenance of appropriate infrastructure and assets;
6. Implement efficient and effective processes and procedures;
7. Adoption of ICT in various processes;
8. Strict financial discipline;
9. Development and operation of the risk management framework.

Thus, providing the necessary financial resources has been thought of by several sources, such as support from the Government, CPD partners, and other actors. Ways to secure financial resources will include, but are not limited to:

- a. Government commitment to increase the CPD budget;
- b. Engagement of Relevant Parliamentary Committees;
- c. Identification and engagement of potential partners;
- d. Engagement and partnership with Local Self-Government Bodies;
- e. Engagement and partnerships with international and domestic organizations and institutions.

NO.	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	MAIN MEASURES/ACTIVITIES	DEADLINE	BUDGET (ALL)	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS AND PARTNERS	INDICATORS
STRATEGIC GOAL 1 RAISING INFORMATION AND AWARENESS OF SOCIETY AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN ALBANIA, REGARDING THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY AND PROTECTION FROM DISCRIMINATION						
1.1	Raising public awareness on discrimination and the right to equal opportunities in general, and on how the most vulnerable sectors, areas and social groups are affected	<p>1.1.1 Drafting information and guidance materials on preventing and combating discrimination and the right to equal opportunities, both in general and in specific cases of discrimination in the public and private sectors, or in specific areas such as education, health, public services, employment, etc., identifying individual and collective rights protected by law by focusing on the most disadvantaged social groups.</p> <p>Distribution of materials through a mixed communication strategy based on print and audio-visual media. Forms of communication can be in written speeches, short media briefings, leaflets, brochures and short videos that convey messages to target groups according to the content of the information.</p>	2022-2026	<p>1.1.1.3- 960,000 ALL</p> <p>1.1.1.4- 1,600,000 ALL</p> <p>1.1.1.5- 1,200,000</p>	CPD MEDIA	<p>1.1.1.1 Prepare 20 written speeches.</p> <p>1.1.1.2 Compilation of 12 information materials for the media.</p> <p>1.1.1.3 Design of 12 leaflets.</p> <p>1.1.1.4 Compilation of 8 informative brochures</p> <p>1.1.1.5 Preparation of 4 short video clips.</p>
		<p>1.1.2 Preparation of a TV commercial about discrimination, including information on referral mechanisms and legal provisions, as well as recent legal changes in the field of discrimination.</p>	2022	<p>1.1.2.1- 400,000</p>	CSO ()NGO	<p>1.1.2.1 Preparing a TV spot.</p>
		<p>1.1.3 Dissemination and broadcasting of information materials and advertising spots on national television channels and other national media outlets, targeting the most used television platforms. Continue with the distribution and transmission of advertising spots and informational materials throughout the country through good cooperation that ensures their appearance on national television channels and other mass media bodies with national coverage, website and social networks Instagram, Facebook, CPD tik-tok by eliminating barriers associated with limited staffing and budgets. To study ways of cooperation with partner organizations and institutions and television which can provide television time in the framework of legal education of the public.</p>	2022-2026	<p>1.1.3.1. 600,000 ALL</p> <p>1.1.3.2. 700,000 ALL</p>	GO (N)	<p>1.1.3.1 The TV spot is broadcast on 2 national TV channels.</p> <p>1.1.3.2 The TV spot is broadcast on 12 local TV channels.</p>

<p>1.1.4.1 The information is published on the CPD website as soon as it is prepared and immediately available.</p> <p>1.1.4.2 The information is published on the website of 6 partner institutions</p>	<p>1.1.5.1 Participation in 100 activities organized by other organizations (in 20 activities each year).</p> <p>1.1.5.2 Specific videos appear on Instagram, Facebook, Tik-Tok at least 6 times a year.</p>		<p>1.1.7.10% more materials than in 2020 will be prepared for Roma and Egyptian minorities and will be distributed to Regional and Local Employment Offices, Regional Directorates of Public Vocational Training, as well as Public Vocational Education Schools and the private sector.</p>
<p>1.1.4.1 5,000,000 ALL</p> <p>1.1.4.2 5,000,000 ALL</p>	<p>1.1.5.1 14,000,000 ALL</p> <p>1.1.5.2 11,000,000 ALL</p>	<p>1.1.6.1 2,500,000 ALL</p>	<p>1.1.7.1 10,000,000 ALL</p>
<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>
<p>1.1.4 Continuous publication of information materials on the website of the CPD, on other Internet channels and on the websites of partner institutions. The official website of the CPD should serve as a reference source of information and an access gateway for all individuals and groups interested in the Office's services. For this reason, the English language service should be consolidated and some sections should be adapted to the minority language. By following different customer models, the official website should provide tailored information for each of the models, conveying the information concisely, clearly and exhaustively.</p>	<p>1.1.5 Participation in public activities involving civil servants of central and local government, professional representation bodies (trade unions, chambers of commerce), private sector employees and CSOs (representing persons with disabilities, Roma, Egyptians, LGBTI and other most vulnerable social groups, and gender-based associations) on justice, education, health, housing, employment and labour rights, as well as services and other public and private sectors.</p>	<p>1.1.6 Planning, organizing and conducting "open days" in cooperation with local government authorities and other CSO partners. For this, it is required to further deepen the planning by updating on a 6 (six) monthly basis the list of contacts in partner organizations, expanding their number, as well as clearly formulating the purpose and objectives of the CPD in order to increase its presence as much as possible, many cells of society and in as many institutions as possible. Increasing contacts with regional directorates of local government, such as administrative units dealing with issues of employment, housing, social services, gender equality coordinators, CSO coordinators, etc. It is recommended to resize planning related to 'Open Days' by maximizing the effects of these activities in two directions: (a) by making the necessary plans in an approved calendar of joint activities with the regional directorates of local government and (b) by increasing the ranks of associates listed in (a) for the whole country as well as other relevant actors in these activities in order to inform the public about LPD, as well as enabling these meetings to be broadcast on TV or social networks.</p>	<p>1.1.7 Preparation of information materials on the protection of Roma and Egyptians from ethnic discrimination in the workplace.</p>

1.2	Active promotion of anti-discrimination law and the active role of the CPD, based on success stories	1.2.1 Open and active presentation of the law on anti-discrimination in media debates and promotion of the role of the CPD in its implementation, clearly focusing on the specific mandate of the CPD and the work to combat and prevent all forms of discrimination and the establishment of equality in Albania. It is recommended that the promotion be extended to the region, especially in the Albanian-speaking area, in order to amplify the effects in the societies with which the Albanian society interacts for natural or socio-cultural reasons.	2022-2026	1.2.2.1-50,000 ALL	CPD MEDIA CSOs ()NGO IGOs	1.2.1.1 Participation in 15 TV debates
		1.2.2 Develop packages of anti-discrimination law guidance materials, suitable for different public and social sectors, identify steps that can be taken to prevent discrimination and support equality, and define relevant legal provisions for vulnerable groups, which explain discrimination, determine the steps to be followed for reporting discrimination cases, and determine the relevant provisions of the law. It is recommended to use, in addition to traditional media, contemporary ways of social communication, such as social networks, electronic posters, various digital applications, etc.	2022-2026	1.2.2.1-50,000 ALL		1.2.2.1 preparation of 8 instruction packages (two per year)
		1.2.3 Compilation of leaflets, brochures, public statements and other communication and visibility materials based on practical examples describing the special role and work of the CPD and their strategic distribution among key actors.	2022-2026	1.2.3.1-8,900,000 ALL 1.2.3.2-6,400,000 ALL		1.2.3.1 design of 4 leaflets 1.2.3.2 design of 4 brochures 1.2.3.3 writing 10 public statements
		1.2.4 Drafting press releases, written speeches, discussion points, case summaries and other information materials supporting the views (to be taken) by the CPD on open and closed discrimination-related debates. It is recommended that speeches and information materials can be published in the print media as academic and professional journals (such as "Advocacy" Magazine, university and School Magistrates' journals, etc.). Involvement of the Academy of Sciences and universities in the scientific debate on rights related to discrimination and related social phenomena can further deepen and amplify the scientific debate on the analysis and treatment of social phenomena that cause discrimination or violation of gender equality.	2022-2026			1.2.4.1 drafting 25 press releases, points for discussion, case studies, articles in legal journals, etc.
		1.2.5 Planning, organizing and activating open debates and conferences with expert panels attended by civil servants, professional representation bodies (unions, chambers of commerce, etc.), private sector employees regarding employment and their labour rights, such as actors and interest groups. Legal changes in the field of non-discrimination, as well as the opening of regional markets due to trade agreements in the region dictate the need to intensify communication with the public in order to increase public sensitivity to discrimination, as a receptor that activates individual or collective protection.	2022-2026	1.2.5.1-5,000,000 ALL		1.2.5.1 organizing 5 open debates and annual conferences each year

		1.2.6 Distribution and posting of LPD in a language adapted for children in all schools of the Republic of Albania, as well as posting of LPD especially in relation to the rights of employees in medium and large businesses.	2022-2026	16,000,000 ALL		1.2.1.1 Preparation of legal information adapted for children, in accordance with the school curricula. 1.2.1.2 Dissemination and posting of legal information at educational institutions.
STRATEGIC GOAL 2						
INCREASING THE IMPACT OF DECISIONS TAKEN WITHIN THE ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE CPD, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE LEGAL PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION						
2.1	Reaching citizens and using the means of appeal, as well as intensifying the follow-up of cases by the responsible institutions to ensure the implementation of decisions to a high standard, through a detailed follow-up system	<p>2.1.1 Organize a support system for receiving complaints of discrimination and provide comments or assistance to ensure proper formulation of complaints. To envisage as a priority issue for the CPD the empowerment towards the use of the instrument recognized by the law for 'instituting collective lawsuits' and the mobilization of the Constitutional Court.</p> <p>Strengthen and extend the reception system, support the receipt of complaints about discrimination and gender inequality and provide comments to ensure the proper formulation of complaints through expanding the activity of Regional Offices, strengthening internal capacity by providing human resources/additional financial and logistical support for existing offices and the opening of new offices in those counties where the need for the presence of a CPD office is growing.</p> <p>In response to the increase in the number of complaints and the geography of their distribution (almost throughout the country) it is necessary to expand the activity of the Regional Offices, either by strengthening internal capacities by providing additional human resources, or by opening new offices in those regions where the need for the presence of a CPD office is growing.</p>	2022-2026	<p>2.1.1.1 1,500,000 ALL</p> <p>2.1.1.2 1,000,000 ALL</p>	<p>CPD</p> <p>NC</p> <p>LGU</p> <p>Courts</p>	<p>2.1.1.1 Organizing a more extended reception system.</p> <p>2.1.1.2 Support the reception system with standard procedures, logistical means and training</p>
			2022-2026	<p>2.1.2.1 20,000,000 ALL</p>		<p>2.1.2.1 100% of decisions are made based on existing procedures.</p>

		<p>2.1.3 Bringing cases before the courts, and action by the CPD as <i>amicus curiae</i> when required. To respond to the growing need and legal changes in increasing the role of the CPD in collective lawsuits, it is recommended to increase the number of dedicated staff related to the competence recognized by law after the changes of 2020 (Article 34 point 4 and Article 32 point 1 letter h/ of the LPD) for filing collective lawsuits as well as for initiating the Constitutional Court (Article 32 point 1 letter h/OF/1 of the LPD) enabling the legal framework for protection against discrimination to develop judicial practice in the right direction.</p> <p>Priority should be given to any case which may constitute an opportunity for a collective action by the CPD, and the Courts should be set in motion without delay, in order to prevent the effects of group discrimination as effectively and expeditiously as possible. Preparation is required in terms of legal arguments in accordance with the current practice of the Albanian courts and the jurisprudence of the ECHR on the main topics of discrimination and gender equality. In particular, as many legal arguments as possible should be prepared regarding the security measures of the lawsuit, which are recommended to accompany the collective lawsuits in order to provide temporary protection of the object of the lawsuit. These arguments should be analyzed in the light of the interpretation of the higher courts in order to create the conditions for the most successful claims.</p>	2022-2026	2.1.3.1 16,000,000 ALL	2.1.3.1 80% of unresolved cases are sent to court.
		2.1.4 Undertaking lawsuits with public interest, positive actions, etc. in the fight against discrimination against Roma and Egyptian minorities.	2022-2025	20,000,000 ALL	2.1.4.1 Undertaking court proceedings and following them
		2.1.5 Drafting a Regulation on determining the rules for collective lawsuits and initiating cases <i>ex officio</i> . Such a regulation will increase legal certainty by defining rules and normative criteria for the action of the CPD Office in cases of identifying the circumstances of the application of collective lawsuits.	2022	3,500,000 ALL	2.1.5.1 Drafting the Regulation for handling collective lawsuits 2.1.5.2 Ex-officio continues with 80% of new cases;
		2.1.6 Develop a detailed system for following up and implementing decisions, consisting of the most important elements, relevant timelines and responsible persons and/or departments and institutions, as well as specific practical steps that can be taken to intervene directly with responsible institutions. It is recommended to make the existing detailed decision-making and enforcement system effective, or build a new system, in order to increase the effectiveness of resources and capacities through the help of technology, to help more in data processing and generation of information for various reports.	2022	15,000,000 ALL	2.1.6.1 Establish a detailed system for monitoring and enforcing decisions

2.2	Regular presentation of cases in the media and in the public, in a way that gives status to decisions, generates debates about them and contributes to the understanding of discrimination	<p>2.1.7 Follow up every step of the timely supervision system and intensify contacts with responsible institutions, including via email, telephone and in person. It is recommended to send a summary of the CPD Decisions to the institutions as well as to provide an interaction plan for open discussions with such educational institutions as high schools, Universities, School of Magistrates, School of Advocacy, Security Academy and basic police training school, employment offices and vocational training institutions, etc.</p> <p>2.1.8 Design and implement simple risk mitigation measures, including specific non - compliance actions.</p> <p>2.1.9 Take safeguards and improve instruments to prevent discrimination against Roma and Egyptians in the workplace on grounds of ethnicity.</p> <p>2.2.1 Identification of very representative and different cases for which a decision is taken by the CPD every month in order to present them in the media and the general public through media information and short stories in news programs, or in broadcasts dedicated to this purpose. The coordinator responsible for the media should identify and adapt to public opinion the results of specific decisions or specific cases, and establish regular contacts with the mainstream media to convey this information. It is therefore recommended to build a dynamic communication protocol and coordinated case referral (based on a periodic and case-by-case calendar) between the CPD/Media/CSO and the public by enabling typical (representative) cases reviewed by the CPD and submitted by the media/CSOs to find coverage in the media in the formats of media reports, documentaries, and other forms of providing information in the most appropriate way and in accordance with the legal standards in force in consultation with the CPD.</p> <p>2.2.2 Planning and implementation of periodic programs in the media with high level representation, activities which give status to special cases and relevant decisions. It is recommended to further strengthen the cooperation with the media by identifying several levels and ways of cooperation such as periodic programs in the media with high level representation.</p>	2022-2026	20,000,000 ALL		2.1.7.1 320 decisions are followed.
			2022-2026	10,000,000 ALL		2.1.8.1 Establishment of data entry and processing system.
			2022-2026	15,000,000 ALL		2.1.9.1 Thirteen information events will be held with all partners in cooperation agreements that provide vacancies, promoting equal treatment including ethnicity.
2.2	Regular presentation of cases in the media and in the public, in a way that gives status to decisions, generates debates about them and contributes to the understanding of discrimination		2022-2026	3,000,000 ALL	CPD MEDIA CSOs	2.2.2.1 10 Packages with new issues presented to the media/presented by the media (two for each year)
			2022-2026	2,500,000 ALL		2.2.2.1 Preparation of 10 high-level media programs (two for each year).

		<p>2.2.3 Combine the use of pre-defined and recent media cases to generate debate about discrimination, the legal consequences of discrimination cases, and the CPD's legal opinions and decisions to address them, including preparing packages designed for specific sectors and engaging with those sectors to promote a good understanding of these cases and their impact on systems and practices within organizations. It is recommended to consolidate the established positive/functional practice where the cases covered by the media continue to be treated and used as case studies and then on this basis (a) organize informative and awareness-raising debates (in the media) and (b) draft guidelines for the benefit of certain problematic sectors by encouraging and supporting these sectors to inspect, monitor and promote a good understanding of cases and discrimination found in them as well as in preventive and protective legal instruments.</p>	2022-2026	2,500,000 ALL		<p>2.2.3.1 Preparation of 10 combined and pre-prepared cases that are jointly discussed in the media (two for each year).</p>
		<p>2.2.4 Proactively respond to external media or CSO reports and internal trends analysis of issues addressed, engaging with representatives of underrepresented groups through meetings and information exchange. It is recommended to continue and strengthen the tripartite cooperation between CPD, media (audio-visual and written, national and local) and CSOs (CSOs that support the most vulnerable and under-represented social groups) through meetings and exchange of information on a periodic basis and based on concrete situations and the problematic trends presented aiming at increasing the commitment and sustainability of CSOs in relation to the protection and prevention of discrimination.</p>	2022-2026	3,000,000 ALL		<p>2.2.4.1 20% increase in the number of active meetings compared to the base.</p>
<p>2.3</p>	<p>Improve the results of cases and their impact through better communication with responsible organizations from different vulnerable sectors and groups</p>	<p>2.3.1 Develop guidance materials on the systems and practices required in the organization of different sectors and different fields of activity regarding the way to prevent discrimination and support the creation of equality, emphasizing the specific role and identity of the CPD. Develop dedicated, friendly and illustrated guidance materials with success stories for vulnerable sectors and groups (starting with preschool education, etc.) regarding the prevention and protection against discrimination as well as the specific role and identity of the CPD.</p>	2018 -2021	2.3.1.1 --- 8,000,000 ALL	<p>CPD NC LGU</p>	<p>2.3.1.1 Compilation of 4 guidance materials for different sectors.</p>
		<p>2.3.2 Provide training and support for the effective implementation of these guidance materials by various organizations, highlighting the law and presenting the specific role and identity of the CPD. It is recommended to provide training for new CSO staff and various sectors (journalists, chambers of commerce, trade unions, education offices, employment offices and local government bodies) in order to effectively implement the guidance materials and the correct understanding of the legal changes (2020) emphasizing the law and presenting the specific role and identity of the CPD. It is also recommended to strengthen the cooperation with the committees of the Albanian Parliament as standing committees, and subcommittees, especially the subcommittee on gender equality and prevention of violence against women, the council for legislation, etc.</p>	2022-2026	2.3.2.1 1,000,000 ALL	<p>WORK OFFICES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TRADE UNIONS BUSINESS</p>	<p>2.3.2.1 Conduct of 5 training activities (one per year)</p>

STRATEGIC GOAL 3		IMPROVE EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY-MAKING BY STUDYING AND MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION				Result Indicator 3:
3.1	Monitoring and implementation of the anti-discrimination law, the law on gender equality and other anti-discrimination conventions by all major institutions of Albania	3.1.1 Prepare an annual and clear and measurable monitoring plan where the CPD and the mechanisms available to the CPD are the main actors and maintain leadership by cooperating with local and international organizations and partners. 3.1.2.1 Monitoring the implementation of legislation and international standards related to gender equality and non-discrimination by law enforcement and inspection institutions. 3.1.2.2 Dedicated monitoring in problem areas protected by LPD and LGE. 3.1.2.3 Monitoring the effects of LPD and LGE in certain groups and in the most impossible social groups, as well as identifying the determinant causes of violation of the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination. 3.1.3 Conduct studies focusing on the causes of discrimination and gender inequality by focusing the analysis on specific areas by analyzing and presenting cases by sectors, geographical areas, and vulnerability. 3.1.4 Monitor cases of discrimination against Roma and Egyptian minorities to identify areas of higher incidence and barriers to obtaining justice. 3.1.5 Monitoring and reporting of inequalities in access that Roma and Egyptian minorities face in education, health, social services, etc. 3.1.6 Systematic monitoring of anti-Gypsy language and hate crimes: data collection and reporting on hate speech against Roma and Egyptian minorities.	2022-2026	2,500,000 ALL	CPD	3.1.1.1 Conduct 5 annual surveys with partner organizations according to different fields.
				2,000,000 ALL	ACADEMIA	3.1.2.1 Realization of annual analytical reports of normative acts and documents.
				1,000,000 ALL	RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS	3.1.2.2 Realization of annual analytical media reports.
				1,000,000 ALL	()NGO	3.1.2.3 Realization of annual analytical reports of the effects of laws and causes of violation of rights based on surveys of 3.1.1.
				5,000,000 ALL		3.2.3.1 Conduct an interim study report based on 3.1.1 surveys and 3.1.2 reports in 2024 and a final study report on the causes of discrimination and gender inequality by sectors, geographical areas and vulnerability in 2026.
				8,000,000 ALL	CPD THE OMBUDSMAN MINISTER OF JUSTICE	3.1.4.1 Completion of five monitoring reports (one for each year for the period 2021-2025)
3.2	Stimulate legislation and policies that contribute to the	3.2.1 Review the law on gender equality in society based on needs and trends and similar international legislation, focusing on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals that have a direct or indirect impact on the issue of non-discrimination and gender equality.	2022-2026	5,000,000 ALL	PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE LINE MINISTRIES AMA	3.1.5.1 Completion of study and monitoring reports 3.1.6.1 Completion of monitoring reports
			2022-2026	500,000 ALL	CPD	3.2.1.1 Ongoing; 3.2.1.2 Completion of a comprehensive analysis in 2026.

prevention of discrimination and the establishment of gender equality	3.2.2 Draft amendments to the law on gender equality in society, based on internal and external reviews and reflecting on the needs and organizational potential of the CPD. 3.2.3 Monitor the introduction of new legislation and make recommendations to ensure compliance with the law on gender equality in society and support the establishment of equality. 3.2.4 Propose new policies and changes related to the proposed policies to ensure the prevention of discrimination and gender inequality and support for the establishment of equality and non-discrimination in all policies. 3.2.5 Draft bylaws according to the amendments of LPD and LGE after approval. 3.2.6 Operationalization of the term anti-gypsyism and its inclusion in other political, legal, documents, etc. 3.2.7 Establishment of working groups with experts (representatives of the administration, as well as independent experts) who work on anti-gypsyism and develop proposals and recommendations for policymakers/policymaking in various fields. 3.2.8 Analyze existing laws and policies that are most relevant to R&E to identify direct and indirect (or covert) discrimination that may adversely affect the lives of Roma and Egyptians. 3.2.9 Recommendations for improving and aligning the national legal framework with that of the EU, with sensitivity to the issues of Roma and Egyptian minorities.	2022-2025	250,000 ALL	ACADEMIA	3.2.2.1 Preparation of the final document with relevant changes.
			300,000 ALL	RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS	3.2.3.1 Compilation of recommendations for new legislation (main laws).
			2,500,000 ALL	(I)NGO	3.2.4.1 Proposals for new policies and/or legal changes are sent to Parliament
			1,000,000 ALL	PARLIAMENT	3.2.1.1 Propose new bylaws according to the changes in LPD and LGE.
			5,000,000 ALL		3.2.6.1 Drafting and approval of a policy document with the definition of terminology 3.2.6.2 Inclusion in political and legal documents of the concept of "anti-gypsyism"
			200,000 ALL		3.2.7.1 Establishment of a working group at the CPD
			1,000,000 all		3.2.8.1 Reports on monitoring and analysis performed
			1,000,000 ALL		3.2.9.1 Drafting of relevant recommendations and proposals/documents
STRATEGIC GOAL 4 STRENGTHENED COOPERATION AND INTERACTION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE MEDIA					

4.1	Strengthen and deepen current key relations with governmental and non-governmental public organizations, Parliament and other independent institutions	<p>4.1.1 Develop cooperation through the implementation of existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and the signing and implementation of new MoUs between CPD and foreign counterpart institutions, such as key CSOs, (national and international) NGOs, the Psychologist Order to benefit from the expertise of this body to support the work of the CPD in certain cases, such as the investigation of cases of bullying, national governmental organizations (including municipalities, universities, regional directorates of education, and social services) as well as international organizations, which have supported and can support the exercise of a greater influence of the role of the CPD, aiming at strengthening cooperation and their profiling with more knowledge on discrimination and gender inequality in cities where civil society organizations lack such focus. It is recommended to continue the signing MoUs with a wider network of organizations, setting cooperation agendas and periodic deadlines for evaluating the implementation of these agendas and deadlines for their review.</p> <p>4.1.2 Creating and updating a structured database according to a methodology which ensures the rapid identification of the most potential actor in a given direction through clear, complete (hyperlinked) and synthetic Bio dates including updated contacts on CSOs NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, which include all causes of discrimination covered by legislation and wish to contribute to the work of the CPD and their use in various activities according to their profile. This process is recommended to continue on ongoing basis, creating a unified database for the integration of all information and providing access for use by the responsible units within the Office of the CPD.</p> <p>4.1.3 Drafting work plans on an annual basis (a needs assessment activity can be foreseen at the end of December of each year for future planning) and upon the proposals of national CSOs for joint activities with CSOs, NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, focusing on the scope of anti-discrimination law and the work of the CPD and their implementation as planned.</p> <p>4.1.4 Further development of cooperation with the People's Advocate based on the Memorandum of Understanding between these institutions by maximizing protection from discrimination and gender inequality in the public administration and by the public administration of joint planning periodically (annually) of activities with a common theme and wide geographical scope (including regions where the CPD does not have regional offices).</p> <p>4.1.5 Support OS for monitoring and reporting hate speech (including online media, to remove/delete such elements).</p>	2022 - 2026	3,000,000 ALL	<p>CPD LGU CSO ACADEMIA THE ORDER OF PSYCHOLOGISTS</p>	<p>4.1.1.1 Evaluation of existing MoUs in terms of expected results</p> <p>4.1.1.2 Review of MoUs evaluates as ineffective</p> <p>4.1.1.3 Completion of the process of approving changes in MoUs by extending the validity period until the completion of the respective projects, or at least until the end of 2026</p> <p>4.1.1.4 Formalize cooperation with new partner organizations through MoUs</p> <p>4.1.2.1 Creating a structured database in 2022.</p> <p>4.1.2.2 Continuous updating and improvement of the database in relation to the needs.</p> <p>4.1.3.1 Drafting annual work plans at the end of each year for the following year.</p> <p>4.1.3.2 Implementation of annual work plans.</p> <p>4.1.4 Organizing periodic annual meetings at the management level and periodic four-month meetings at the technical level in order to organize and implement joint projects according to areas of competence.</p> <p>4.1.5.1 Compilation of reports</p> <p>4.1.5.2 Pursuit of hate speech correction actions.</p>
4.1	Strengthen and deepen current key relations with governmental and non-governmental public organizations, Parliament and other independent institutions	<p>4.1.2 Creating and updating a structured database according to a methodology which ensures the rapid identification of the most potential actor in a given direction through clear, complete (hyperlinked) and synthetic Bio dates including updated contacts on CSOs NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, which include all causes of discrimination covered by legislation and wish to contribute to the work of the CPD and their use in various activities according to their profile. This process is recommended to continue on ongoing basis, creating a unified database for the integration of all information and providing access for use by the responsible units within the Office of the CPD.</p> <p>4.1.3 Drafting work plans on an annual basis (a needs assessment activity can be foreseen at the end of December of each year for future planning) and upon the proposals of national CSOs for joint activities with CSOs, NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, focusing on the scope of anti-discrimination law and the work of the CPD and their implementation as planned.</p> <p>4.1.4 Further development of cooperation with the People's Advocate based on the Memorandum of Understanding between these institutions by maximizing protection from discrimination and gender inequality in the public administration and by the public administration of joint planning periodically (annually) of activities with a common theme and wide geographical scope (including regions where the CPD does not have regional offices).</p> <p>4.1.5 Support OS for monitoring and reporting hate speech (including online media, to remove/delete such elements).</p>	2022-2026	3,000,000 ALL	CPD	<p>4.1.2.1 Creating a structured database in 2022.</p> <p>4.1.2.2 Continuous updating and improvement of the database in relation to the needs.</p> <p>4.1.3.1 Drafting annual work plans at the end of each year for the following year.</p> <p>4.1.3.2 Implementation of annual work plans.</p> <p>4.1.4 Organizing periodic annual meetings at the management level and periodic four-month meetings at the technical level in order to organize and implement joint projects according to areas of competence.</p> <p>4.1.5.1 Compilation of reports</p> <p>4.1.5.2 Pursuit of hate speech correction actions.</p>
4.1	Strengthen and deepen current key relations with governmental and non-governmental public organizations, Parliament and other independent institutions	<p>4.1.2 Creating and updating a structured database according to a methodology which ensures the rapid identification of the most potential actor in a given direction through clear, complete (hyperlinked) and synthetic Bio dates including updated contacts on CSOs NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, which include all causes of discrimination covered by legislation and wish to contribute to the work of the CPD and their use in various activities according to their profile. This process is recommended to continue on ongoing basis, creating a unified database for the integration of all information and providing access for use by the responsible units within the Office of the CPD.</p> <p>4.1.3 Drafting work plans on an annual basis (a needs assessment activity can be foreseen at the end of December of each year for future planning) and upon the proposals of national CSOs for joint activities with CSOs, NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, focusing on the scope of anti-discrimination law and the work of the CPD and their implementation as planned.</p> <p>4.1.4 Further development of cooperation with the People's Advocate based on the Memorandum of Understanding between these institutions by maximizing protection from discrimination and gender inequality in the public administration and by the public administration of joint planning periodically (annually) of activities with a common theme and wide geographical scope (including regions where the CPD does not have regional offices).</p> <p>4.1.5 Support OS for monitoring and reporting hate speech (including online media, to remove/delete such elements).</p>	2022-2026	1,500,000 ALL	CPD	<p>4.1.2.1 Creating a structured database in 2022.</p> <p>4.1.2.2 Continuous updating and improvement of the database in relation to the needs.</p> <p>4.1.3.1 Drafting annual work plans at the end of each year for the following year.</p> <p>4.1.3.2 Implementation of annual work plans.</p> <p>4.1.4 Organizing periodic annual meetings at the management level and periodic four-month meetings at the technical level in order to organize and implement joint projects according to areas of competence.</p> <p>4.1.5.1 Compilation of reports</p> <p>4.1.5.2 Pursuit of hate speech correction actions.</p>
4.1	Strengthen and deepen current key relations with governmental and non-governmental public organizations, Parliament and other independent institutions	<p>4.1.2 Creating and updating a structured database according to a methodology which ensures the rapid identification of the most potential actor in a given direction through clear, complete (hyperlinked) and synthetic Bio dates including updated contacts on CSOs NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, which include all causes of discrimination covered by legislation and wish to contribute to the work of the CPD and their use in various activities according to their profile. This process is recommended to continue on ongoing basis, creating a unified database for the integration of all information and providing access for use by the responsible units within the Office of the CPD.</p> <p>4.1.3 Drafting work plans on an annual basis (a needs assessment activity can be foreseen at the end of December of each year for future planning) and upon the proposals of national CSOs for joint activities with CSOs, NGOs (national and international), national and international governmental organizations, focusing on the scope of anti-discrimination law and the work of the CPD and their implementation as planned.</p> <p>4.1.4 Further development of cooperation with the People's Advocate based on the Memorandum of Understanding between these institutions by maximizing protection from discrimination and gender inequality in the public administration and by the public administration of joint planning periodically (annually) of activities with a common theme and wide geographical scope (including regions where the CPD does not have regional offices).</p> <p>4.1.5 Support OS for monitoring and reporting hate speech (including online media, to remove/delete such elements).</p>	2022-2026	2,000,000 ALL	CPD CSSA	<p>4.1.2.1 Creating a structured database in 2022.</p> <p>4.1.2.2 Continuous updating and improvement of the database in relation to the needs.</p> <p>4.1.3.1 Drafting annual work plans at the end of each year for the following year.</p> <p>4.1.3.2 Implementation of annual work plans.</p> <p>4.1.4 Organizing periodic annual meetings at the management level and periodic four-month meetings at the technical level in order to organize and implement joint projects according to areas of competence.</p> <p>4.1.5.1 Compilation of reports</p> <p>4.1.5.2 Pursuit of hate speech correction actions.</p>

		4.1.6 Participation in anti-gypsy boards/working groups together with CSOs representing Roma and Egyptians.				4.1.6.1 Participation in boards/working groups set up by CNIM with the participation of Roma and Egyptians
		4.1.7 Strengthen the cooperation between CSOs and CPD for the referral, follow-up and monitoring of complaints.		500,000 ALL		4.1.7.1 Cooperation in following up complaints for protection against discrimination
		4.1.8 Support Roma and Egyptians CS with capacity building activities and promotion of Roma and Egyptian minorities.		1,000,000 ALL	2022-2025	4.1.8.1 Roma and Egyptian CSOs participate in 100% of activities aimed at promoting Roma and Egyptian minorities
		4.2.1 Develop and support new relationships with the private sector, in particular through a systematic and ongoing engagement, periodic meetings and joint ventures with chambers of commerce. Drafting a work plan for the development and support of relations with the private sector. in particular through a systematic and continuous engagement, periodic meetings and joint ventures with chambers of commerce and industry, etc.		1,000,000 ALL	2022-2026	4.2.1.1 Drafting annual cooperation plans with the private sector. 4.2.1.2 Implementation of cooperation plans.
	Opening and strengthening new relationships with various actors and partners from public and private institutions, international and national CSOs, academia and media	4.2.2 Systematic and planned development of relations with identified institutions and new institutions of the academic world (universities and research institutions), through exchanges, periodic meetings and joint research that support the development of a broad knowledge base in the fight against discrimination and inequality and assist the CPD in the capillary recognition of reality (through interactive methods such as small group meetings and groups with specific regional interests)		3,000,000 ALL	2022-2026	4.2.2.1 Conduct 10 meetings with academics and/or new research institutions (2 per year). 4.2.2.2 Joint research with 2 new academic and/or research institutions.
		4.2.3 Develop cooperation through the implementation of existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and the signing and implementation of new MoUs between CPD and foreign counterpart institutions, such as key CSOs, NGOs (national and international), the Psychologist Order to benefit from the expertise of this body to support the work of the CPD in certain cases, such as the investigation of cases of bullying, national governmental organizations (including municipalities, universities, regional directorates of education, and social services) as well as international organizations, which have supported and can support the exercise of a greater influence of the role of the CPD, aiming at strengthening cooperation and their profiling with more knowledge on discrimination and gender inequality in cities where civil society organizations lack such focus. Prioritize collaborations in areas where the CPD does not have a presence or cooperative relationship with local institutions.		1,400,000 ALL	2022-2026	4.2.3.1 Signing of 3 MoUs with the three municipalities that have hosted the regional offices. 4.2.3.2 Signing of 9 MoUs with universities, regional directorates of education and social services in the three municipalities that have hosted the regional centres (one with each institution in each of the regional centres).
4.2						

		<p>4.2.4. Develop and maintain relationships, through exchanges, meetings, presentations and joint activities with print and audio-visual media of national and local reach, focusing on professional portrayal of discrimination and the work of the CPD to prevent discrimination and establishing equality. It is recommended to develop and maintain relations with existing media (audio-visual and print, national and local) and to establish new relations, through exchanges, meetings, presentations and joint activities with print and audio-visual media of national and local scope, being focused on the professional portrayal of discrimination and the work of the CPD on the prevention of discrimination and gender inequality.</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>4.2.11. 1,500,000 ALL</p> <p>4.2.12. 1,000,000 ALL</p>	<p>CPD MEDIA</p>	<p>4.2.11 Organizing 10 meetings with print and audio-visual media and establishing contacts at the local level (2 per year).</p> <p>4.2.12. Joint measures with 2 print and audio-visual media with national and local coverage.</p>
		<p>4.3.1 Planning and conducting <i>ad hoc</i> meetings with vulnerable communities at the regional level and peripheral areas from discrimination and gender inequality based on the process of prevention and protection (including preparation and submission of complaints according to legislation) and awareness of legal changes (2020).</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>2,000,000 all</p>	<p>CPD COMMUNITY CSO LGU</p>	<p>4.3.1.1 Ongoing</p>
<p>4.3</p> <p>Establishing contact with wider communities and with local and decentralized institutions</p>		<p>4.3.2 Conduct scheduled (annual) and <i>ad hoc</i> meetings with local government units (LGUs), other key institutions for the fight against discrimination and gender inequality to promote their awareness of the changes in LPD (2020) and the need for amendments to the LGE as well as to the decisions, issues reviewed, guidelines and recommendations of the CPD with their support in preventing and protecting against gender inequality and discrimination under the LPD to establish systems to prevent discrimination and to support the establishment of equality.</p> <p>Public reception offices and staff at local units and other institutions to be trained to inform citizens and to refer cases of discrimination to the CPD.</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>4,800,000 ALL</p>	<p>CPD LGU PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS</p>	<p>4.3.2.1 Organizing annual meetings with LGUs, decentralized public institutions, as well as key institutions for the fight against discrimination and gender inequality</p> <p>4.3.2.2 Establishment and consolidation of communication points with representatives capable of following the recommendations in real time and monitoring them.</p> <p>4.3.2.3 Organizing trainings for the employees of the reception offices of the citizens.</p>
		<p>4.3.3 Implement procedures and systems of operation and support for the three regional offices in order for them to develop as regional centres, with the capacity to ensure a lively presence of the CPD in the municipalities where they have offices and to establish contacts with other nearby municipalities. It is recommended to continue the process of capacity building in order to expand the map of CPD services, strengthening and further extending the system of reception, support and acceptance of complaints of discrimination and gender inequality and providing comments to ensure proper wording, through expanding the activity of the Regional Offices, strengthening the internal capacities by providing additional human/financial and logistical resources for the existing offices and opening new offices in those regions where the need for the presence of a CPD office is growing (cases of Kukës, Saranda).</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>2,500,000 ALL</p>	<p>CPD LGU</p>	<p>4.3.3.1 Establish and implement operating procedures and systems for all three regional offices</p>

<p>4.3.4 Clearly define the territorial jurisdiction they cover and how the coordination activity is carried out between the different municipalities.</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>5,000,000 all</p>	<p>CPD LGU</p>	<p>4.3.4.1 Review of the regional organization and drafting an expansion plan within the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 4.3.4.2 Approval of the jurisdictional map of the regions. 4.3.4.3 Approval of the coordination system between different municipalities.</p>
<p>4.3.5.1 Strengthen the capacities of the Regional Offices of the CPD so that they are developed in a studied way as regional centres against inequality and discrimination through the drafting of a detailed plan of training and awareness-raising activities which need to take into account the topics and number of Dedicated trainings of the staffs of the Regional Offices based on detailed planning and modules of the format of continuous trainings and Training of trainers.</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>3,200,000 ALL</p>	<p>CPD</p>	<p>4.3.5.1.1 Drafting an annual training plan for the staff of the regional offices. 4.3.5.1.2 Conduct trainings for the staff of the regional offices (one for each regional office) according to the plan.</p>
<p>4.3.5.2 Approve the topics and number of joint trainings of the Regional Offices with local institutions in order to create a fair and unified understanding of the standards of gender equality and non-discrimination and the role of each actor as part of a machinery.</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>1,000,000 ALL</p>	<p>CPD LGU</p>	<p>4.3.5.2.1 Drafting an annual training plan for the staff of the regional offices and LGUs. 4.3.5.2.2 Conduct trainings for the staff of the regional offices (one for each regional office) according to the plan.</p>
<p>4.3.5.3 Develop regional awareness-raising activity plans related to issues of discrimination and gender inequality which ensure ongoing awareness-raising of local institutions/CSOs/communities taking into account regional diversity and specific needs and aiming to turn Regional Offices into strong awareness-raising, training, regional support centres.</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>3,000,000 ALL</p>	<p>CPD LGU CSO</p>	<p>4.3.5.3.1 Develop a regional activity plan. 4.3.5.3.2 Implementation of at least 15 regional awareness activities distributed throughout the main cities.</p>
<p>4.3.5.4 Develop a calendar of meetings with various regional actors aiming to maximize the presence and role of Regional Offices and CPD in municipalities where these offices exist and those that do not exist in order to establish contacts with other municipalities and disadvantaged and vulnerable communities to support them in using the guidance materials developed by the CPD headquarters.</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>1,000,000 ALL</p>	<p>CPD LGU CSO</p>	<p>4.3.5.4.1 Organizing 1 meeting with MPs in each of the regional centres to be part of the CPD.</p>
<p>4.3.5.5 Study of the needs for increasing the human, financial/budgetary and logistical resources of the ROs, including their extension to a wider regional basis through the establishment of new offices (Kukës, Saranda, etc.) as a first step towards securing the approval by the Assembly of the Republic of Albania of the state funding for the support of the regional centres and the inclusion of the staff of the regional centres in the organizational chart of the CPD.</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	<p>4,000,000 ALL</p>	<p>CPD LGU NC</p>	<p>4.3.5.5.1 Develop a research prospectus on the costs and effects of a regional office expansion plan.</p>

		4.3.6 Develop cooperation through the implementation of existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and the signing and implementation of new MoUs between CPD and foreign counterpart institutions, such as key CSOs, NGOs (national and international), the Psychologist Order to benefit from the expertise of this body to support the work of the CPD in certain cases, such as the investigation of cases of bullying, national governmental organizations (including municipalities, universities, regional directorates of education, and social services) as well as international organizations, which have supported and can support the exercise of a greater influence of the role of the CPD, aiming at strengthening cooperation and their profiling with more knowledge on discrimination and gender inequality in cities where civil society organizations lack such focus.	2022-2026	3,200,000 ALL	CPD LGU CSO ACADEMIA THE ORDER OF PSYCHOLOG ISTS	4.3.6.1 Organizing 10 meetings with NGOs (I), new NGOs or NGOs (N) (2 per year). 4.3.6.2 Realization of presentations and/or joint measures with 2 NGOs (N), NGOs, or ONCs.
		4.3.7 Take steps to secure parliamentary approval and state funding to support regional centres and include regional centre staff in the CPD chart, or add two new offices in Kukës and Saranda.	2022-2026	2,500,000 ALL	CPD LGU NC	4.3.1.1 Draft an action plan to provide support to the central and local plan for the expansion of the network of regional centres. 4.3.1.2 Implementation of the project for the expansion of the regional centres of the CPD.
STRATEGIC GOAL 5 INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND INTERNAL EFFICIENCY OF THE INSTITUTION						
5.1	Develop an accountable, efficient and effective business model, with clear internal and external policies and procedures.	5.1.1 Changing and improving the CPD communication strategy, making this communication easily accessible, using modern communication tools that can more easily reach different stakeholders.	2022-2026	2,500,000 ALL	CPD	5.1.1.1 Drafting and approval of a new CPD communication strategy including a technological support plan to enable its implementation.
5.2	Improving and maintaining the professional capacities of the CPD staff based on the field of expertise and	5.2.1 Preparation of a thematic training program including topics of interest depending on the legal changes of 2020 and concrete problems identified in the activity of the CPD and beyond. 5.2.2 Conduct trainings, activities, meetings for all staff of the CPD in Tirana and regional offices on specific topics and profiles in cooperation with universities, EQUINET, NGOs or other institutions.	2022-2026	3,000,000 ALL 1,500,000 ALL	CPD ACADEMIA RESEARCH INSTITUTES	5.2.1.1 Preparation and approval of a thematic annual training program for CPD staff. 5.2.2.1 Implementation of the annual training program.

relevant responsibilities.	5.2.3 Creating interaction with academic and research and scientific institutions in Albania, and carrying out joint activities such as research, surveys, etc.	6,000,000 ALL		5.2.3.1 Planning and implementation of a flexible program of cooperation with academic institutions by setting objectives for joint cooperation projects within the areas of interest set out in the Strategic Plan 2022-2026.
		3,000,000 ALL		5.2.4.1 Identify and design an open trainer database for trainers.
	7,000,000 ALL	2022-2026	5.2.5 Expand cooperation in terms of professional capacity building through seminars and study exchanges with partner organizations and counterpart institutions in the region or in EU countries. Schedule open hearings at the Court of Human Rights (in Strasbourg) on important discrimination issues, in Strasbourg or online if possible.	5.2.5.1 Drafting a cooperation map with international counterpart organizations or institutions to deepen cooperation in terms of strengthening professional capacity
	6,000,000 ALL	2022-2026	5.2.6 Establishment of the department of study, scientific research and monitoring.	5.2.6.1 Review of the structure in order to establish a sector for the coordination of study, research and monitoring work. 5.2.6.2 Amendment of the CPD Regulation after securing the relevant financial resources.
	2,000,000 ALL	2022-2026	5.2.7 Close cooperation with the School of Magistrates, the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA), the School of Advocacy, EQUINET and specialized Universities, research institutions and relevant CSOs in conducting training needs assessments and capacity building activities.	5.2.7.1 Develop a cooperation plan for curriculum review and development of initial and continuing training programs for magistrates, lawyers, public administration, journalists, etc.
	5,000,000 ALL	2022-2026	5.2.8 Informing and raising awareness of civil servants (central and local level - officials, lawyers, teachers, police officers, social workers, etc.) on anti-Gypsyism to be trained in recognizing and preventing discrimination/racism against Roma and Egyptian minorities, as well as on issues of intersexuality (gender, age, disabilities, sexual orientation, etc.).	5.2.8.1 Support line ministries and ASPA in civil servants' information and awareness programs.

			5.2.9 Increase organizational efficiency and transparency through the construction of an internal information system and case management.	2022-2026	20,000,000 ALL	CPD	<p>5.2.9.1 Drafting technical specifications for the purchase of an information program for information administration and management of issues followed by the CPD</p> <p>5.2.9.2 Budgeting the cost of purchasing and maintaining the program.</p> <p>5.2.9.3 Follow the procurement procedures for the purchase of the program.</p> <p>5.2.9.4 Attending staff training to use the program.</p> <p>5.2.9.5 Ongoing technical maintenance of the program.</p>
5.3	<p>Creating an internal knowledge strategy by defining specific areas of knowledge, appointing knowledge coordinators and creating a culture and platform for knowledge sharing</p>		5.3.1 Establish an internal institutional system or practice dedicated to discussing lessons learned from work or encouraging knowledge sharing, informally (escape room & team building).	2022-2026	2,500,000 ALL	CPD	<p>5.3.1.1 Establishment of an internal system for increasing knowledge.</p> <p>5.3.1.2 Adoption of an internal act (regulation/order) for the organization and functioning of the knowledge network.</p> <p>5.3.1.3 Defining a calendar for the internal exchange of knowledge.</p>
5.4	<p>Development of a results-based monitoring and evaluation system (M&V), which better absorbs the results and impacts of the work of the CPD</p>		<p>5.3.1 Establishment of a network of internal and external coordinators by providing a periodic communication protocol between them as well as a communication protocol based on problem cases.</p> <p>Interaction between coordinators for the purpose of joint monitoring, evaluation and re-evaluation, capacity building and competencies to jointly design, plan and implement monitoring and evaluation activities (research institutions, Universities and CSOs).</p>	2022-2026	5,000,000 ALL	<p>CPD NC LGU MEDIA</p> <p>CPD NC LGU MEDIA</p>	<p>5.3.1.1 Establishment of a network of internal and external coordinators.</p> <p>5.3.1.2 Approval of an internal act (regulation/order) for the organization and functioning of the network of coordinators and the manner of their interaction.</p>

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