



## **“Strengthening the protection of the rights of sentenced persons”**

The Council of Europe will assist the national authorities in North Macedonia in overcoming the identified shortcomings and practical deficiencies related to the treatment of sentenced persons in the beneficiary country. The project will be implemented in close cooperation and partnership with the Ministry of Justice (Directorate for Execution of Sanctions), and will include a wider group of national partners and stakeholders, including the Ombudsman and the National Preventive Mechanism, the Standing Inquiry Committee for Protection of Civil Rights and Freedoms, the Public Prosecutor’s Office and civil society organisations active in the penitentiary field and combatting ill-treatment and impunity.

The Project is co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe as part of the “Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey” (Horizontal Facility) and will be implemented by the Council of Europe. The Horizontal Facility will provide technical assistance and expertise in the areas of ensuring justice; fighting corruption, economic crime and money laundering; promoting freedom of expression and information; and promoting anti-discrimination and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, with the aim to assist the authorities in implementing key recommendations of relevant Council of Europe bodies, prioritised according to the needs within the enlargement negotiations of the European Union. The duration of the project is set at 30 months and it is expected to be completed by 30 November 2018, with an overall budget of EUR 950,000.

### **Background information**

The country is party to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), as well as the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, thus prohibiting torture and other forms of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

However, the reports of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), the EC Progress reports, the reports by the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) and other relevant reports produced by human rights monitoring bodies detect serious and consistent shortcomings that could lead to ill-treatment of imprisoned persons. The CPT Report on the 2014 visit to the country noted that in many aspects the situation has further deteriorated since 2011, especially in the area of ill-treatment of inmates and inter-prisoner violence. The CPT’s delegation also found that the lack of training and support provided to staff is linked to problems highlighted in the report such as ill-treatment, inter-prisoner violence and a lack of activities for inmates. In several reports, the NPM has been pointing to the poor management, lack of rehabilitation and educational activities, as well as corruption, ill-treatment of inmates by prison officers and inter-prisoner violence.

In order to provide an efficient and professional approach in organisation and supervision of the work of the penitentiary institutions, the CoE supported the devise of a comprehensive National Strategy for Development of the Penitentiary System, within the Joint Programme “Capacity Building of the Law Enforcement Agencies for Appropriate Treatment of Detained and Sentenced Persons”, funded by the European Union, and implemented by the Council of Europe in the period 2012-2015. The main aim of the project will be to support the implementation of the comprehensive National Strategy.



## Expected Project Results

The **overall objective** of the project is to strengthen the protection of the rights of sentenced persons in line with the Council of Europe standards.

The **first specific objective** is to introduce effective prison management and mechanisms for combatting inter-prisoner violence, and further enhance the internal prison inspection system. This specific objective shall be accomplished through the achievement of the following **results**:

- ✓ The capacity of prison managers and staff to address inter-prisoner violence is enhanced
- ✓ The dynamic security concept is introduced and established in the penitentiary institutions
- ✓ The professional capacities of prison managers and DECS structures is strengthened
- ✓ The capacities of the prison inspection mechanism improved

The **second specific objective** is to improve the treatment of sentenced persons through introduction and implementation of specific treatment programmes. This specific objective shall be accomplished through the achievement of the following **results**:

- ✓ The treatment of the sentenced persons improved through introduction and implementation of specific treatment programmes
- ✓ A Specific treatment programme for violent offenders is developed and introduced into the penitentiary system

The **third specific objective** is to strengthen the protection of the rights of sentenced persons through introducing effective mechanisms for dealing with cases of ill-treatment and corruption in prisons. This specific objective shall be accomplished through the achievement of the following **results**:

- ✓ The protection of the human dignity and integrity of sentenced persons in a non-discriminatory and impartial manner improved
- ✓ More effective mechanisms for prevention or dealing with cases of ill-treatment or corrupt practice by prison staff are set in place.
- ✓ An effective discipline system that will contribute to successful rehabilitation of sentenced persons is developed.

## Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey

Funded  
by the European Union  
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Implemented  
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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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

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