

PACE Cooperation with the Parliamentary Assemblies with a view to achieving legislative improvements

What is the goal?

- ▶ to better implement standards of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in the legislation of the beneficiary countries;
- ▶ to enhance the role and capacity of Parliaments to supervise execution of European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) judgements by their governments;
- ▶ to increase awareness of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff of ECtHR case-law and systemic cases in their country, and the need for action to verify and improve existing laws so as to avoid recurrent violations and reduce the number of cases before the ECtHR;
- ▶ to foster legislative norms regarding the independence of media.

Who benefits from the action?

- ▶ lawmakers and related staff in the parliaments of the beneficiary countries;
- ▶ Government Agent's Offices before the European Court of Human Rights of the beneficiary countries;
- ▶ media professionals and journalists;
- ▶ citizens in the Western Balkans countries, by improving justice and ensuring protection of human rights

How will the action work?

- ▶ through peer to peer exchanges between the Court Registry, Execution and Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) specialists, lawmakers and parliamentary staff, to improve their understanding and knowledge of the ECHR, of practices and case-law of the Court, and of the procedures of execution of ECtHR judgments;
- ▶ by introducing a handbook to guide parliamentarians in their daily work - "National parliaments as guarantors of human rights in Europe". Available in local languages, the handbook provides tools to help parliamentarians and their staff comply with obligations to protect human rights in their country;
- ▶ through close consultations and joint regional events, members of the PACE Committee on Culture; Science, Education and Media and its Sub-Committee on Media and Information Society representatives from media regulatory bodies, public service broadcasters and journalists can exchange views and discuss key reforms with lawmakers and staff of the specialised parliamentary committees.

What do we expect to achieve?

- ▶ members of Parliament and parliamentary staff would be able to better apply the ECHR provisions in the legislation and develop necessary mechanisms for the supervision of the implementation of the ECtHR judgments;
- ▶ higher implementation the ECtHR judgments and strengthened awareness on the role of parliaments in the protection of fundamental human rights;
- ▶ improvement of media independence by revision of the legislation in the beneficiary countries.

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How much will it cost?

- ▶ The total budget of the action is 285 000 EUR;
- ▶ The budget allocated to the overall Horizontal Facility programme amounts to ca. 41 Million EUR (85% funded by the European Union, 15% by the Council of Europe).

How to get more information?

- ▶ PACE Parliamentary Project Support Division: <https://pace.coe.int/en/pages/parliamentary-projects>
- ▶ Gabriela Matej, PACE PPSD Project Officer, Gabriela.MATEI@coe.int, + 33 (0)3 88 41 2328
- ▶ Horizontal Facility website: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/horizontal-facility/home>
- ▶ Marija Simić, Horizontal Facility Communication Officer, Marija.SIMIC@coe.int, +381 63 601 337
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About the Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey

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

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

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

www.coe.int

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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