

# HORIZONTAL FACILITY FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TÜRKİYE

*FOR YOUR RIGHTS:  
TOWARDS  
EUROPEAN STANDARDS*



## Strengthening justice

Fighting corruption, economic crime and money laundering

Promoting anti-discrimination and protection  
of the rights of vulnerable groups

Promoting and protecting freedom of expression and media

Expertise co-ordination mechanism

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Co-funded  
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Co-funded and implemented  
by the Council of Europe

The *Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye (Horizontal Facility)* is a joint co-operation initiative of the European Union and Council of Europe. The programme supports the authorities, in aligning their reform agendas in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy with relevant Council of Europe monitoring and advisory bodies' recommendations which is also a priority for the EU enlargement process.



■ The Horizontal Facility builds upon the results and progress achieved by the programme, since 2016, which include:

- ▶ Implementation of judicial reforms, including in the field of prisons and police;
- ▶ Harmonisation of legislation and practices with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR);

For instance by bringing policies, institutions and practices further in line with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) and the opinions of the Venice Commission and standards of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ).

- ▶ Stronger policies against corruption, money laundering and financing of terrorism;

For instance by addressing shortcomings identified in the evaluations by the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) and the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

- ▶ Better legislation, policies and capacities on inclusiveness and integrity in education, anti-discrimination, protection of minorities, women's access to justice and the fight against trafficking in human beings;

For instance by implementing recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) and the Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as those emanating from the monitoring of the Framework Convention on National Minorities (FCNM) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML).

- ▶ Improved conditions and environment for the exercise of freedom of expression and freedom of the media;

For instance by bringing standards in the field of the freedom of expression and freedom of the media further in line with Article 10 of the ECHR.

- ▶ Guidance provided to Beneficiaries on drafting legislation and policies through the Expertise Co-ordination Mechanism. For example, on the Law on the finalisation of the transitional processes of the property (Albania); *Amicus curiae* brief on the question of the appellate review in the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the Law on the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council; the Law on Life Partnership of Same-sex persons (Montenegro); the Law on State of Emergency (North Macedonia); and the Law on Gender Equality (Serbia).

## HORIZONTAL FACILITY AT A GLANCE

The programme covers actions in the Beneficiaries of the Western Balkans and Türkiye, with a complementary regional dimension.

**The themes** covered by the Horizontal Facility include:

- ▶ strengthening justice;
- ▶ fighting corruption, economic crime and money laundering;
- ▶ promoting anti-discrimination and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups (including LGBTI, minorities and Roma) and
- ▶ promoting and protecting freedom of expression and media.

**The budget** allocated for the programme amounts to ca. 41 million EUR (85% funded by the European Union, 15% by the Council of Europe)

**The structure** of the Horizontal Facility Programme follows a two-fold approach:

- ▶ Technical co-operation, in the form of capacity-building, expertise and other forms of technical support tailored to the needs of each Beneficiary to achieve increased compliance with European standards;
- ▶ The Expertise Co-ordination Mechanism, a flexible tool through which the Council of Europe provides *ad hoc* legislative expertise and policy advice in response to requests made by the Beneficiaries. These requests may address one of the four thematic areas of the programme but can also focus on other issues falling under the mandate of the Venice Commission.



## WHAT DOES THE PROGRAMME AIM TO ACHIEVE?

■ The programme supports the Beneficiaries in meeting their reform agendas and complying with the European standards, therefore contributing to the priorities of the EU enlargement process. Tailor-made and demand-driven support is provided to further improve legal and policy frameworks and build institutional capacities, reinforcing the functioning of institutions.

■ To this end, the programme activities include capacity development, technical support and expertise, as well as awareness-raising in all four thematic fields.

■ The third phase of the programme aims to strengthen the sustainability of results achieved, while ensuring ownership by the beneficiary institutions.

■ The achievements of the programme are communicated with the aim to ensure better engagement with relevant stakeholders and end beneficiaries, while increasing their involvement and empowerment.

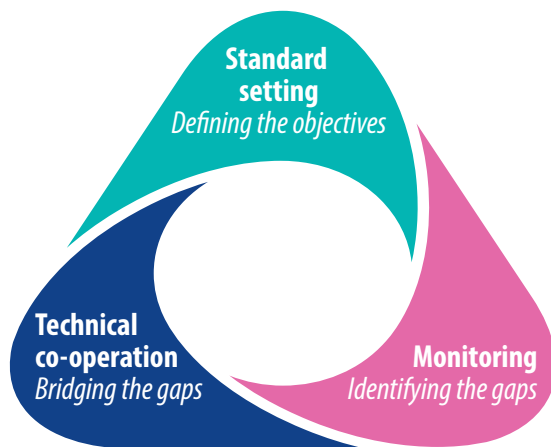
■ The programme brings substantial improvements to people's daily lives.

## A unique approach

- ▶ **Tailor-made** actions address the specific needs in each Beneficiary following consultations with the respective authorities.
- ▶ **The flexibility** of the Horizontal Facility enables the adaptation of the programme to changing circumstances and domestic priorities, while fostering strong local ownership of the results. Resources can be reallocated during the implementation, to respond to emerging needs of the Beneficiaries, in line with the overall aims of the programme.
- ▶ **The regional dimension** allows for exchanges between peers from the Western Balkans on addressing common challenges, sharing best practices and establishing platforms and networks to this end.
- ▶ **Cross cutting issues** are integrated into the actions. All activities are conducted with a human rights approach, incorporating principles of non-discrimination, equality and inclusive participation, but also protection of vulnerable groups and minorities. A particular focus is put on gender equality, in line with the [Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023](#) and based on the [Gender Mainstreaming toolkit for Co-operation Projects](#), while contributing to the implementation of the EU's Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 (GAP III).

Co-operation with civil society organisations is ensured in accordance with the Council of Europe's Guidelines on Civil Society Organisations' participation in Council of Europe co-operation activities and the Practical Guide for Civil Society, as well as the EU Guidelines for Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region.

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



Council of Europe technical assistance programmes form an integral part of the unique strategic triangle of standard-setting, monitoring and co-operation: the development of legally binding standards is linked with their monitoring by independent mechanisms and supplemented by technical co-operation to facilitate their implementation.

## CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)



Through the implementation of the Horizontal Facility and its actions, the Council of Europe is contributing to the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) by supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably SDG 3 (target 8), SDG 4 (targets 1, 5, 7 and 10), SDG 5 (targets 1, 2 c), SDG 8 (target 7), SDG 10 (targets 2, 3 and 7), SDG 13 (target 2), SDG 15 (target 7) and SDG 16 (targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, a and b).

## MORE INFORMATION

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The joint European Union and Council of Europe programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye" (Horizontal Facility III) is a co-operation initiative, running from 2023 until 2026.

The programme covers actions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye. It enables the Beneficiaries to meet their reform agendas in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy and to comply with European standards, which is also a priority for the EU enlargement process.

*\*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 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.

[www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu)

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

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