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| **MINISTERS’ DEPUTIES** | CM Documents | **CM(2024)77** | 18 April 2024 |

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| **133rd Session of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 16-17 May 2024)****4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Reykjavík, Iceland, 16-17 May 2023) – Follow-up*****The Council of Europe’s outreach beyond membership and the promotion of the Organisation’s instruments*** |

1. **The new impetus of the Reykjavík Summit to the Council of Europe External dimension**

The **European system of human rights protection** embodied by the Council of Europe (CoE), with its unique European Court of Human Rights and conventional set-up, is the **incarnation *par excellence* of the CoE contribution** to the international order and global governance, first and foremost on the European continent. In addition, all CoE activities contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In light of the **unprecedented challenges** facing Europe and multilateralism, the contribution of the Organisation to the international order and global governance, in its European and external dimensions – has become more important than ever. As concerns the external dimension, in May 2023, Heads of State and Government, in the Reykjavík Declaration, considered that *(emphasis added)*:

“Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine has forced us to re-evaluate how we can best respond to the challenges facing us within Europe’s multilateral architecture and the international rules-based order. We therefore commit to strengthening the role of the CoE in the evolving European multilateral architecture and in global governance **by enhancing its external dimension**, through its liaison offices and through a new engagement based on its core values with democracies in the world and its southern neighbourhood. We will in particular strengthen our dialogue with our observer States, with which the CoE and its member States share a set of fundamental values and common principles. We will also promote increased ratification of CoE conventions that are open to non-member States through targeted universalization campaigns, to advance compliance with the Organisation’s ambitious standards beyond European borders. Through the active contribution of the observer States, our outreach can be further extended to non-member countries.

The European Union is the main institutional partner of the CoE in political, legal, and financial terms. We underscore the importance of joint programmes between the European Union and the CoE as a key expression of this strategic partnership and mutual commitment to promoting common values. We welcome the unanimous provisional agreement on the revised draft accession instruments as an important accomplishment in the process of accession of the European Union to the Convention, and we express our commitment to its timely adoption.

This will set the relations between the CoE and the European Union on a new path of reinforced co-operation. We call for more political dialogue with other international organisations, including the UN and the OSCE, to strengthen the partnership between these organisations and the CoE. We believe that further synergies are possible, notably when it comes to the implementation of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and underscore the need to avoid duplication of work and possibly competing standards.” […][[2]](#footnote-2)

The Reykjavík Declaration has given an unprecedented highlight to the CoE external dimension. In practice, it has given **a new impetus to political dialogue and co-operation** with other international organisations, in particular the European Union and the UN, and with observer states. **Outreach efforts** have focused on the **support to Ukraine** and the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine (hereinafter “Register of Damage” or “Register”), as well as on the **promotion of CoE values and conventions open to non-member States** (“open Conventions”), beyond the European continent.

Against this background, it is proposed to report on the follow up given to the Reykjavík Declaration through three main reports. This first report presents, below, the follow-up given to the **outreach beyond membership and to the promotion of CoE open instruments, first and foremost the Register**. Another report will be specifically dedicated to the co-operation with the European Union which has also reached a new intensity. A further document will focus on the outreach towards other international organisations, in particular the UN and the OSCE. These three reports shall serve as a basis for further devising strategic implementation policies with respect to CoE external relations.

The present, first, document therefore describes the ongoing strengthening of the relationship with the observer States, then relations with CoE neighbours in the context of the Organisation’s Policy towards neighbouring regions, as well as other progress in promoting CoE values and instruments, notably through other international organisations and CoE Liaison Offices.

1. **Strengthening relations with observer States as major global actors**

The CoE and its observer States – Canada, the Holy See, Japan, Mexico and the United States of America (USA) - have strong historical and cultural links and share a set of fundamental values and common principles, including a commitment to multilateralism and to the promotion of the highest standards in human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Throughout 2023 and early 2024, co-operation with observer States has reached **a new intensity**, focusing on the promotion of common values and support to Ukraine. This closer relationship included a strengthened dialogue, an increased participation of observer States in CoE activities and instruments, and an increased role in the promotion of CoE values and instruments beyond Europe.

Relations and contacts with observer States now cover almost the **whole spectrum** of the CoE’s activities. Through these contacts, a mutually-beneficial exchange of experiences and good practices takes place, in particular in the intergovernmental sector of activities. In terms of treaties acceded to and/or signed, there is a growing interest in instruments in the field of legal co-operation and relating to new technologies and challenges, in particular cybercrime and artificial intelligence. Partial agreements also play a significant role in attracting the attention and participation of observer States, most recently the Register (see below). Particular mention should also be made of the Venice Commission, of which Canada, the USA and Mexico are members and the Holy See and Japan are observers. Observer States contribute financially to the work of the CoE in a regular manner, in different fields. In 2023, the observer States have contributed 495 424 Euros (as of 6/12/2023) to CoE projects. The CoE is most grateful for observer States’ voluntary contributions.

* **Strengthened dialogue and co-operation with observer States**

The Reykjavík Summit was held with the **active engagement of all CoE observer States**[[3]](#footnote-3), demonstrating the strength of the co-operation and the global reach of CoE work. As an illustration of the unity in the support for CoE values and Ukraine, the Resolution establishing the Register of Damage was adopted with representatives of the European Union, Canada, Japan and the USA, which joined the Register as Associate Members on 16 May 2023.[[4]](#footnote-4) In the margins of the Summit, the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General had bilateral meetings with representatives of observer States (see below). Further high level and working contacts have then been established with observer States in the context of the follow-up to the Reykjavík Summit, in particular support to Ukraine and accountability for the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine. The elements below illustrate the closer relationship that has been built recently.[[5]](#footnote-5)

- **Canada**: Active co-operation has continued on issues such as the fight against cybercrime, artificial intelligence and Intercultural Cities. Several meetings also took place with the Permanent Observer of Canada in Brussels to address Canada’s accession to other CoE instruments and its support to CoE Actions plans and co-operation activities. To note, in June 2023, Canada signed the Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence. It is also working on accession to the Additional Protocol concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems. In August 2023, preliminary contacts were established with the GRECO secretariat. In addition, Canada is actively and constructively participating in particular, in the ongoing negotiations in the CAI of a Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence. Active co-operation has also continued in the context of its parliamentary status with PACE. In addition, voluntary contributions are under discussion.

- **Holy See**: High level dialogue and co-operation with the Holy See has developed over the past years. To recall, the Secretary General visited the Holy See in April 2022; she had a meeting with His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See and a private audience with H.H. Pope Francis. The Secretary General also had a meeting with Cardinal Pietro Parolin in the margins of the Reykjavík Summit. She stressed that for more than 50 years, the Holy See has contributed significantly to the work of the CoE on various issues, such as culture, inter‑religious dialogue, education and the protection of the environment. The Secretary General and His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin discussed current challenges in Europe and agreed on the importance of pursuing inter-religious and intercultural dialogue.

- **Japan:** Since the Reykjavík Summit, CoE co-operation with Japan has reached an unprecedented intensity. As pledged by the Japanese representative at the Summit, Japan has demonstrated its strong will to support Ukraine and, more globally, multilateralism and the rules-based international order, in particular in the context of its **G7 presidency** in 2023. On 7 September 2023, Mr Nakamura, Deputy Assistant Minister for European Affairs (Ministry for Foreign Affairs) held consultations with CoE senior officials in Strasbourg. In addition, the Deputy Secretary General had several meetings with the Japanese authorities in Kyoto and Tokyo, on 8-10 October 2023. He pointed out the excellent co-operation with Japan for more than 25 years. The subject of artificial intelligence figured prominently during the meetings. Support for Ukraine, cybercrime, as well as data protection, were also discussed in particular. The Deputy Secretary General also participated, *inter alia*, in the 18th annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum held in Kyoto. He underlined the important contribution that the CoE provides in the field of internet governance, including on artificial intelligence, data protection and cybercrime. Also, on 5 October, Mr Irie Akira, Attorney, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice of Japan addressed the GR-EXT meeting. He outlined in particular the conclusions of the Tokyo Declaration adopted by the G7 Justice Ministers. He underlined that the Ministers discussed the assistance that could be provided to Ukraine in the field of law and justice, including through an Anti-Corruption Task Force for Ukraine. It should be noted that Japan is currently the only Asian associate member to the Register of Damage. Also, on 10 August 2023, Japan accepted the Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence.

In addition, at the initiative of the Japanese Observer, ASEF Executive Director Toru MORIKAWA held an exchange of views with the GR-EXT on 18 April 2023. He called for unity around common values in the current geopolitical context and stressed the need for more understanding and co-operation between Europe and Asia. On 15 June 2023, the Deputy Secretary General discussed present and future co‑operation with Permanent Observer Ambassador Uchida, including resumed contacts with ASEF.

It should also be noted that Japan provided voluntary funding for the Register of Damage, the Octopus project, the Venice Commission, and the project for ASEAN countries (Enhanced action on cybercrime and electronic evidence in Southeast Asia) to support the Council of Europe’s 2024 budget.

- **Mexico**: Co-operation with Mexico was further developed. On 15 May 2023, in the margins of the 4th CoE Summit, in Reykjavík, the Deputy Secretary General met Ms Carmen Moreno Toscano, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico. The meeting highlighted the common willingness to enhance the strategic partnership with Mexico, based on the Joint declaration between the CoE and Mexico on a Strategic Partnership (October 2020). Co-operation and support to CoE work has so far also focused on artificial intelligence, gender equality and the fight against terrorism, cybercrime and Intercultural Cities.[[6]](#footnote-6) Moreover, several contacts have developed with the Mexican Mission in Strasbourg and the Mexican PACE delegation with respect to the Istanbul Convention. Active co-operation has also continued in the context of the parliamentary status with PACE. President Kox’s visit to Mexico in November 2023 illustrated this parliamentary cooperation. It should be also noted that 2024 will mark the 25th anniversary of Mexico’s observer status with the CoE and observer status of the Congress of Mexico with the Parliamentary Assembly.

- **The** **USA**: Co-operation with the USA has also intensified, building on the Secretary General’s fruitful visit to Washington in December 2022 that gave a new impetus to the relationship. The Secretary General then had a meeting with Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, member of the Cabinet of the President of the USA, in the margins of the Reykjavík Summit, which illustrated the importance of the co-operation and interest of the USA in CoE work, in particular support to Ukraine and accountability for the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine. In addition, the Deputy Secretary General had meetings with US officials in Washington in December 2023. The visit highlighted in particular the need to further strengthen the relationship in view of the ever-increasing challenges facing us within Europe’s multilateral architecture and the international rules-based order.

It should also be mentioned that the USA provided an initial voluntary funding to support the Register, when joining as an associate member in May 2023. Thematic co-operation and support have continued to focus on the fight against cybercrime, counter-terrorism, artificial intelligence, fight against money-laundering, tolerance and non-discrimination and Intercultural Cities.

* **Observer States as vectors of CoE values and promotors of CoE instruments**

The CoE’s **outreach** has been further extended to non-member countries through the active contribution of the observer States. As important partners of the CoE, they play an increasing role in promoting its instruments and values externally and can inspire other countries to co-operate with the CoE. Dialogue with observer States highlighted, *inter alia*, their role in promoting CoE conventions, for example the Cybercrime and Nicosia Conventions and CoE Enlarged/Partial Agreements, such as the Register.

1. **Relations with CoE neighbours in the context of its Policy towards neighbouring regions**
* **Building a common legal space through a flexible approach**

The CoE Policy towards neighbouring regions (the CoE “Neighbourhood Policy” or “the Policy”) was developed in 2011 and reviewed by the Committee of Ministers (CM) in November 2021.[[7]](#footnote-7) The Neighbourhood Policy aims primarily at extending co-operation beyond the continent and at developing a common legal space based on CoE values and instruments. At present, in the framework of this Policy, there are:

- CM bilateral **Neighbourhood Partnerships** with Morocco and Tunisia[[8]](#footnote-8) (2022-2025), combining, in principle, an enhanced political dialogue and co‑operation;

- CM bilateral **Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities** with Kazakhstan (2024-2027). It should be noted that Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities with the Kyrgyz Republic (2024-2027) are under discussion;

- **regional activities** and targeted **ad hoc** co-operation with other countries of the Southern Mediterranean and Central Asia. Regional frameworks (Joint Programmes for the Southern Mediterranean and for Central Asia) have notably allowed for better awareness about CoE conventions. They have also offered a flexible framework to respond to ad hoc needs of neighbourhood countries; and

- **other forms** of co-operation developed to cover other countries/situations, notably Israel (see below).

During the reporting period, dialogue and co-operation have **developed unevenly**, through institutionalised bilateral relations with the Committee of Ministers, and/or Parliamentary Assembly and/or Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (see appendices). The Policy framework has remained “**demand-driven”** and **flexible**, under a more coordinated framework. In addition, the CoE human rights-based approach to technical assistance has remained an important complement to existing international programmes of assistance, and the Organisation’s “multi-layer” approach involving state authorities, local authorities and civil society has also remained an **added value**.

* **In the Southern Mediterranean region**

Morocco has the most developed institutional relations with the CoE (see Appendix 1).

**Morocco** and **Tunisia** are currently beneficiaries of bilateral CM Partnership documents. It should be noted, however, that dialogue with these partners, in the context of these Partnerships during the reporting period, was limited to a technical level. Co-operation activities, on the other hand, have continued to develop and achieve results, sometimes in an increasingly challenging context, as in Tunisia. It remains to be seen to what extent current developments in the Middle East might impact the co-operation in the Southern Mediterranean region.

Technical dialogue with CM Partners has continued to develop mostly through intergovernmental/experts committees. This participation is a less visible but important dimension, as it contributes to partners’ institutional participation in the Organisation’s activities. Partners have also expressed continued interest in joining other conventions and have continued to prepare their national legislation accordingly.

Since the Reykjavík Summit, a large number of bilateral activities has been implemented with Morocco and Tunisia (see Appendix 2), as well as regional co-operation activities, in the framework of the EU/CoE joint programme “Protecting Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Democracy through Shared Standards in the Southern Mediterranean” (South Programme V), other Joint Programmes and voluntary contributions.

With a view to further increase institutional coherence and co-ordination of bodies involved in the Neighbourhood Policy, synergies between this Policy, the **European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity** (“North-South Centre” or “Centre”) and the South Programme were further strengthened.[[9]](#footnote-9) The North-South Centre also adopted a “[medium-term” Strategy (2024-2027](https://rm.coe.int/nsc-ec-2023-10-nsc-strategy-2024-2027-en/1680ad4fdc)) to better link its contribution to the Reykjavík Declaration and position [itself](https://rm.coe.int/nsc-ec-2023-10-nsc-strategy-2024-2027-en/1680ad4fdc) as a key instrument of the CoE in the Southern neighbourhood.[[10]](#footnote-10)

It should be stressed that there is a multifaceted co-operation with Israel. Dialogue has continued throughout the period under review with the Ambassador of Israel to International Organisations in France and the Deputy Head of the Mission of Israel to the European Union. In August 2023, exploratory contacts were also established with a view to a possible accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Animals during International Transport (Revised).

* **In Central Asia**

**Kazakhstan** is currently a beneficiary of a CM bilateral co-operation document, i.e. Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities (NCPs).

Kazakhstan has remained the leading Central Asian partner within the framework of CoE Policy towards neighbouring regions. Bilateral co-operation has developed through the NCPs for 2019-2023 and through the new NCPs for 2024-2027 approved by the CM on 18 October 2023. Political dialogue has continued to develop with Kazakhstan authorities, in particular with the visit of the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs to the CoE in October 2023. During his exchange of views with the GR-EXT on
5 October, he pointed out that Kazakhstan aimed at acceding to further CoE conventions and initiating co-operation in new priority areas. He also had a meeting with the Deputy Secretary General on the occasion of his visit.

In addition, a new draft CM bilateral co-operation document with the Kyrgyz Republic has been prepared for 2024-2027. The document is under discussion. Also, on 9 June 2023, the Union of Local Self-Government Bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic was granted “guest observer” status with the Congress. In May 2023, the European Pharmacopoeia Commission granted observer status to the Kyrgyz Republic.

Co-operation has also continued in the context of the **regional** EU/CoE joint programme “Central Asia Rule of Law Programme 2020-2024”. For example, seminars on CoE conventions were organised in Strasbourg for representatives of the Kyrgyz Republic on 30 May – 1 June 2023 and of Tajikistan on 19 – 21 September 2023.[[11]](#footnote-11)

1. **Promotion of CoE values and instruments beyond membership - the outreach through CoE bodies and other international organisations**
* **Actors and “relays” of the promotion of CoE instruments[[12]](#footnote-12)**

Over 100 non-European states are bound by CoE treaties[[13]](#footnote-13) or are members of, observers to or participants in partial/enlarged agreements (“Partial Agreements”). Accession to CoE conventions beyond membership has continued to increase. States most closely linked to CoE instruments (in terms of ratifications of conventions and participation in Partial Agreements) are mainly in the CoE South Neighbourhood (i.e. Israel, Morocco and Tunisia) as well as observer States. Three open conventions, have been ratified by a significant number of non‑member States: the Convention (of the CoE and the OECD) on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters; the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons and the Convention on Cybercrime (“Budapest Convention” – see below).

CoE Enlarged/Partial Agreements are privileged tools to develop co-operation with non-European States and international organisations. The European Pharmacopoeia, as well as the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission[[14]](#footnote-14)) have the most developed external relations, covering all other continents. As indicated above, the North-South Centre has also been a useful tool to open new fields for the CoE’s external relations. It contributes, *inter alia*, to the CoE Neighbourhood Policy and, more globally, as an instrument for the CoE’s contribution to the international order and global governance, as well as to the achievement of the SDGs.

It should be stressed that **all CoE organs/institutions** contributed to the promotion of CoE open instruments, in particular the Secretary General/Deputy Secretary General, the CM, PACE and Congress, in their respective political dialogue and work. In geographical terms, the most systematic promotion efforts are carried out within the framework of the CoE Neighbourhood Policy and relevant CoE Offices, when resources, especially financial, allow. Bilateral and regional **co-operation projects** have remained most useful tools, as the establishment of a common legal space is one of the main priorities. As indicated above, the role of **observer States** is also a key feature of the CoE’s global outreach. In thematic terms, promotion efforts remain largely dependent on the resources available in the sectors concerned.

Since the Reykjavík Summit, the promotion of the **Register of Damage** has been prominent in the context of high‑level political dialogue. Outreach efforts have continued[[15]](#footnote-15). In that respect, the CoE’s strengthened co-operation with other **international organisations, in particular the European Union and the UN**, has become a privileged framework for the promotion of CoE instruments with a global vocation, by offering visibility and/or support. As an example, a side-event was organised in New York on 25 October 2023, on the margins of Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly (“international law week”), to present the Register of Damage, with the participation of representatives of non-European states, including Canada, Japan and Mexico. In general, outreach efforts have also built on the UNGA Resolution on co-operation between the UN and the CoE that has remained a valuable vector for this purpose.

The European Union has continued to support the ratification of CoE instruments by non-member States[[16]](#footnote-16), in particular via joint programmes and its relevant structures and work. Promotion of CoE instruments has also been regularly discussed with the European Union during (CoE-EU) institutional coordination meetings. In addition, the European Union has continued to facilitate visits of representatives of non-European states to the CoE to study its conventional system (in 2023, from Lebanon, Nepal, Bangladesh, Ecuador, Singapore, Mongolia, Jordan and from ASEAN experts from Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia.

**CoE Liaison Offices,** particularly in Brussels and Geneva, have accordingly played an increasing role in the global outreach and the promotion of CoE instruments in particular. For example, on 19 June 2023, the Brussels Office had an exchange with the OIF Group of French Speaking Ambassadors to the European Union to promote the Register of Damage. It also had a meeting on 19 July 2023 with relevant EEAS representatives concerning the Convention on the transfer of sentenced persons since the increase of the number of third countries acceding to the Convention would strengthen the consular protection of the European Union citizens in third countries. The Liaison Office in Geneva also actively contributed to the promotion of the Register of Damage. For example, in July 2023, the Office participated in a thematic lunch on the Register of Damage for Ukraine, organised by the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the UN in Geneva. The Office also facilitated a side-event in UN Geneva on “The Istanbul Convention in practice-Holistic care for victims of sexual violence” on 1 June 2023, jointly hosted by the Belgian and Kazakh representations in Geneva. The event was very well attended by a broad range of States, including non-European States.

To recall also, the promotion of the respective instruments is foreseen in some memoranda of understanding. For example, the agreement with the **International Organization of La Francophonie** (OIF) – and the relevant co-operation programme, aims to promote the dissemination in French of CoE standards and their promotion (in practice, notably the Lanzarote and Istanbul Conventions). Information on the Register of Damage was also transmitted to the OIF. Also, on the occasion of its exchange of views with the GR-EXT on 5 October 2023, the representative of the OIF stressed that the OIF has a number of frameworks and tools to promote CoE instruments, such as the Groups of French-Speaking Ambassadors. The Memorandum of Understanding between the CoE and the **Organization of American States** (OAS) also provides that each organisation encourages the accession of its members to instruments of the other organisation. On that basis, the OAS encouraged its members to accede to the Budapest Convention of the CoE, and joint capacity-building activities were organised for this purpose. During his recent bilateral meetings with the CoE Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General, the OAS Secretary General has expressed interest in the work of GRECO and in the Register of Damage. Contacts in this respect are ongoing. On 30 November-1 December 2023, the CoE also shared its relevant standards in an event on Gender-Based Violence Against Women, organised by the OAS.

In addition, other international organisations have caried out study visits, for example the Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) on 4-6 October 2023. The 11th World Forum for Democracy ([Democracy= Peace?](https://www.coe.int/en/web/world-forum-democracy-staging/forum-2023)) has also remained a unique Platform for a global outreach.

It should be noted that in the context of the support to Ukraine and accountability, the Committee of Legal Advisers on Public International Law (CAHDI)[[17]](#footnote-17) continued and strengthened its co-operation and collaboration with international organisations and international tribunals.[[18]](#footnote-18) On 28 and 29 September 2023, it exchanged views on the consequences of the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The CoE is represented in the discussions of the Core Group on the modalities for the establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

* **Other progress with respect to open conventions since the Reykjavík Summit**

Developments below illustrate the increased interest of non-member States (other than observer States mentioned above) in CoE **conventions**:

Interest in the Convention on **Cybercrime** (Budapest Convention) increased considerably following the onset of Russia’s war of aggression.[[19]](#footnote-19) The **Istanbul Convention** has been ratified in 2023 by the European Union, which has become its 38th Party. The Convention entered into force for the European Union on 1 October 2023. Other ratifications/accessions, invitations or signatures by non-member States:

 Accessions:

* **Argentina** -[Protocol of Amendment to the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (CETS No. 223)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=223);
* **Brazil** - [Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons (ETS No. 112)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=112);
* **Côte d'Ivoire -** [Convention on counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health (CETS No. 211)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=211);
* **Papua New Guinea** and **Viet Nam** - [Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters as amended by the Protocol of 2010 (ETS No. 127)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=127) ;

Signatures:

* **Congo -** [Convention on counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health (CETS No. 211)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=211) ;
* **Cabo Verde** - [Protocol of Amendment to the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (CETS No. 223)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=223);

Invitations:

* **Côte d'Ivoire and Palau** - [Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters as amended by the Protocol of 2010 (ETS No. 127)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=127) ;
* **Cameroon and Senegal** - [Convention on counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health (CETS No. 211)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=211).

A number of initiatives have also been carried out for the promotion of the **Istanbul and Lanzarote** Conventions, including in the margins of UN events, and **Sport** Convention. Also, **MONEYVAL** is actively involving several CoE observer States. Kazakhstan is currently seeking observer status with MONEYVAL. The **European Committee of Social Rights** developed its meetings with the UN relevant committee (CECSR). Promotion of the ratification of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (**Bern** Convention) is also planned.

In addition, the Committee on **Artificial Intelligence** (CAI) is actively involving third countries in the ongoing negotiations of a draft Framework Convention on AI systems, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Currently the following third countries (in alphabetical order) participate: Argentina; Canada; Costa Rica; Holy See; Israel; Japan; Mexico; Peru; United States of America and Uruguay. More third countries have indicated their interest in participating in the negotiations which are aimed at establishing a potential global legal framework for regulating human rights, democracy and rule of law aspects of AI systems by early 2024. The CoE is in this way playing a key role by providing a platform for co-operation on legally binding standard-setting between CoE member States and like-minded third countries.

The SRSG on Migration and Refugees has also developed contacts with the authorities of Morocco and Japan on CoE standards and activities.

A specific project for the promotion of the CoE’s instruments aiming at a more strategic and efficient approach would be desirable, subject to available resources/capacities.

* **Other development: Promoting the global abolition of capital punishment:**

The Ministers’ Deputies, in the context of its thematic discussion on the abolition of the death penalty held on 27 September 2023, *inter alia*, reiterated the CoE’s readiness to share its experience on the abolition of the death penalty and encouraged the pursuit of initiatives from the CoE and its member States to promote the global abolition of capital punishment.[[20]](#footnote-20) In that respect, the Deputy Secretary General took the occasion of his visit to Japan in October 2023 to encourage Japanese partners to promote an open and democratic debate about the abolition of the death penalty, in line with the Deputies’ decisions taken on 27 September 2023. The Deputy Secretary General also took the occasion of his visit to the US in December 2023 to encourage further steps towards the abolition of the death penalty at the federal level, in line with these decisions. On European and World Day against the Death Penalty, the European Union and the CoE also jointly reiterated their unequivocal opposition to the death penalty at all times, in all places and in all circumstances. In addition, among other planned initiatives, on 18 October 2023, the CoE secretariat was instructed to explore the possibility of co-operation on advocacy in favour of the abolition of the death penalty, as a first step, within the framework of the ad hoc interventions envisaged in the co-operation programme with the OIF.

1. **Conclusion**

The present document has highlighted the **effective impetus** given to the CoE external dimension, its richness and diversity - which goes far beyond the Neighbourhood Policy - as well as the potentiality for further development.

A further strengthening of the relationship with **observer States** is more necessary than ever. While in the recent period we have witnessed important and concrete strengthening of co-operation, including in the context of the outreach beyond membership, there is a possibility for further steps in this regard. Ways and means to additionally strengthen synergy with the observer States in the context of the outreach towards non-European states and other international organisations should be explored.

**Promotion** efforts of **CoE values and instruments** have been encouraging. Voluntary contributions and new initiatives are most useful. The role of CoE Liaison offices as platforms for the promotion of CoE instruments could be further developed. Strong support for the **Register of Damage** in particular and outreach efforts are further needed.

Despite a challenging environment, the **CoE Neighbourhood Policy** has remained an effective tool for promoting CoE values and instruments. The Organisation has improved its reaction capacities to changing political environments and offered an “entry” and “exit” strategy for bilateral co-operation, in particular through time-limited co-operation documents. Given the ever-increased volatility of political environments, such flexibility and reactivity will remain crucial.

Moreover, over the past years, relations with **other international organisations**, in particular with the OAS and OIF, have been strengthened and the level of institutional co-operation has been raised. Possible broadening of the areas of such co-operation, including the outreach in specific and targeted areas, such as the promotion of the participation in the Register, should be further discussed and actively pursued. Moreover, possible development of co-operation with the African Union and ASEAN, and possibly with the League of Arab States, with which there are currently only limited interaction and contacts, could be equally considered.

**Appendix 1**: **Institutionalised bilateral relations of non-member States with the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers, Parliamentary Assembly and Congress of Local and Regional Authorities: Overview**

* + - 1. **Observer status (State/national parliament)**

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|  | [**Observer status with the Council of Europe**](https://rm.coe.int/compendium-of-texts-related-to-the-observer-status-with-the-council-of/168098c96f) **(**[**Committee of Ministers**](https://www.coe.int/en/web/der/observer-states)**)** | [**Observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly granted to national parliaments (see Rule 63 – observers)**](http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/RoP/RoP-XML2HTML-EN.asp?id=ENtoc_N0A29C3B0N13F9A178#Format-It) |
| **Canada** | [Granted on 03/04/1996](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016804c8f65)  | [Granted on 28/05/1997](http://semantic-pace.net/tools/pdf.aspx?doc=aHR0cDovL2Fzc2VtYmx5LmNvZS5pbnQvbncveG1sL1hSZWYvWDJILURXLWV4dHIuYXNwP2ZpbGVpZD0xNjUzNiZsYW5nPUVO&xsl=aHR0cDovL3NlbWFudGljcGFjZS5uZXQvWHNsdC9QZGYvWFJlZi1XRC1BVC1YTUwyUERGLnhzbA==&xsltparams=ZmlsZWlkPTE2NTM2) |
| **Holy See** | Granted on 07/03/1970  | \_ |
| **Japan** | [Granted on 20/11/1996](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016804da591)  | \_ |
| **Mexico** | [Granted on 01/12/1999](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=090000168050b117)  | [Granted on 04/11/1999](http://semantic-pace.net/tools/pdf.aspx?doc=aHR0cDovL2Fzc2VtYmx5LmNvZS5pbnQvbncveG1sL1hSZWYvWDJILURXLWV4dHIuYXNwP2ZpbGVpZD0xNjcyNCZsYW5nPUVO&xsl=aHR0cDovL3NlbWFudGljcGFjZS5uZXQvWHNsdC9QZGYvWFJlZi1XRC1BVC1YTUwyUERGLnhzbA==&xsltparams=ZmlsZWlkPTE2NzI0) |
| **United States of America** | [Granted on 7/12/1995](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016804c8c35) [Entered into force on 15/01/1996](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016804de1d2) | \_ |
|  |  |  |
| **Israel**  | \_ | Granted to the Knesset in 1957  |

1. **Beneficiaries of the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Policy enjoying institutionalised/formalised bilateral relations with the Committee of Ministers and/or Parliamentary Assembly and/or Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Formalised Bilateral Co-operation Document with the Committee of Ministers** | **Status/Agreement with the Parliamentary Assembly**  | **Partner for Local Democracy Status with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities or other status** |
| **NORTH AFRICA**  |
| **Morocco** | Neighbourhood Partnership 2022-2025  | [Parliament granted Partner for Democracy status in 2011](https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=18002&lang=en) | [Partner for Local Democracy status granted in 2019](https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/home/-/asset_publisher/FR3MTvSnicL5/content/morocco-first-partner-for-local-democracy-?inheritRedirect=false)  |
| **Tunisia**  | Neighbourhood Partnership 2022-2025  | - | [Partner for Local Democracy status granted in 2019](https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/-/tunisia-partner-for-local-democracy-at-congress) |
| **MIDDLE EAST** |
| **The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan** | - | [Parliament granted Partner for Democracy status in 2016](http://semantic-pace.net/tools/pdf.aspx?doc=aHR0cDovL2Fzc2VtYmx5LmNvZS5pbnQvbncveG1sL1hSZWYvWDJILURXLWV4dHIuYXNwP2ZpbGVpZD0yMjQzOCZsYW5nPUVO&xsl=aHR0cDovL3NlbWFudGljcGFjZS5uZXQvWHNsdC9QZGYvWFJlZi1XRC1BVC1YTUwyUERGLnhzbA==&xsltparams=ZmlsZWlkPTIyNDM4)  | - |
| **Palestine\*[[21]](#footnote-21)** | *-* | [Palestinian National Council (PNC) granted Partner for Democracy status in 2011](http://semantic-pace.net/tools/pdf.aspx?doc=aHR0cDovL2Fzc2VtYmx5LmNvZS5pbnQvbncveG1sL1hSZWYvWDJILURXLWV4dHIuYXNwP2ZpbGVpZD0xODAyMiZsYW5nPUVO&xsl=aHR0cDovL3NlbWFudGljcGFjZS5uZXQvWHNsdC9QZGYvWFJlZi1XRC1BVC1YTUwyUERGLnhzbA==&xsltparams=ZmlsZWlkPTE4MDIy) | - |
| **Israel** | - | Observer status granted to the Knesset in 1957 | Guest observer status granted to the Federation of Local Authorities in Israel (2020) |
| **CENTRAL ASIA** |
| **Kazakhstan** | Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities 2024-2027 | [2004 Agreement on co-operation between PACE and the Parliament of Kazakhstan](http://assembly.coe.int/CommitteeDocs/2004/FinalAgreement_KAZ-CoEPA-E.pdf) | - |
| **Kyrgyz Republic** | [Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities 2024-2027 under discussion] | [Parliament granted Partner for Democracy status in 2014](http://semantic-pace.net/tools/pdf.aspx?doc=aHR0cDovL2Fzc2VtYmx5LmNvZS5pbnQvbncveG1sL1hSZWYvWDJILURXLWV4dHIuYXNwP2ZpbGVpZD0yMDc0NyZsYW5nPUVO&xsl=aHR0cDovL3NlbWFudGljcGFjZS5uZXQvWHNsdC9QZGYvWFJlZi1XRC1BVC1YTUwyUERGLnhzbA==&xsltparams=ZmlsZWlkPTIwNzQ3) | Guest observer status granted to the Union of Local Self-Government Bodies (2023) |

**Appendix 2: Examples of co-operation activities implemented in the framework of the CoE Neighbourhood Policy after the Reykjavík Summit**

1. **Country specific activities with Morocco and Tunisia**

**Morocco:**

-Participation of Moroccan representatives to 23rd plenary meeting of the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society CDMSI, Strasbourg, 14/06/2023-16/06/2023;

-Study visit of Members of the Moroccan Parliament and civil servants at the Portuguese parliament on participatory democracy, Lisbon, 15/06/2023-16/06/2023;

-Launch of the HELP cybercrime and electronic evidence course for future judges, Rabat/online, 23/06/2023 ;

-Certification workshop for justice officers and simulation of a human trafficking trial, Rabat, 21/07/2023;

-Study meeting on “the conditions and circumstances of implementation of Law No. 103-13 at the House of Representatives, with the thematic group in charge of the evaluation of the said law of the Parliament of Morocco, relating to the fight against violence against women”, Rabat, 03/10/2023;

-Regional event Euro-Mediterranean Approaches on Access to Information, Rabat, 23/11/2023;

-Training session on “the methodology of bibliographic research and the analysis of information collected during thematic visits to places of deprivation of liberty” for the benefit of members and executives of the Moroccan national mechanism for the prevention of torture, 10/10/2023-11/10/2023;

-Advocacy interactive workshop with NGOs on sexual violence against children and the Lanzarote Convention as a mobilising instrument to protect children against sexual violence, Rabat, 24/10/2023;

-Workshop on mechanisms for dealing with child victims of sexual abuse in the light of national judicial action and the principles of the Lanzarote Convention at the Chief of the Public Prosecutor Office : child friendly justice and the Barnahus model, with participation of Maria Jose Castello Branco, Chair of the Lanzarote Committee, Rabat, 25/10/2023;

-Study visit in Spain on combatting violence against women for the Thematic Group responsible for evaluating the conditions and circumstances of implementation of Law No. 103-13 relating to the fight against violence against women in the House of Representatives as well as the civil servants, 25/10/2023-27/10/2023.

**Tunisia:**

-Technical roundtable on policy advice on accession to treaty law: Access to information legal framework compliance with CETS205, Tunis, 31/05/2023;

-Training on performance indicators for Cabinet members, Tunis, 18/05/2023-19/05/2023;

-Training on judicial communication for clerks, Sfax, 25/05/2023-26/05/2023;Seminar on Internal Law Firm Management in the Age of Digitization, Tabarka, 27/05/2023;

-Training workshop for magistrates on cybercrime, Tunis, 29/05/2023-31/05/2023;

-10th meeting of the steering committee of the CyberSouth, Korbous, 01/06/2023;

-Training on judicial communication for clerks, Sousse, 03/07/2023-04/07/2023;

-Seminar on lawyers and professional conduct, Bizerte, 11/07/2023;

-Training on judicial communication for clerks, Hammamet, 14/07/2023-15/07/2023;

-Seminar on Internal Law Firm Management in the Age of Digitization, Sousse, 17/07/2023;

-Information meeting on the CoE Convention on the manipulation of sports competitions (Macolin Convention), Tunis, 27/07/2023;

-Training programme with the ENA - 8th promotion of the AIBG “Governance and prevention of corruption” (thematic: accompaniment, personal data protection, management and change management; team management, communication techniques), Tunis, 06/09/2023-07/09/2023;

 -Training on judicial communication for clerks, Kairouan, 11/09/2023-12/09/2023; Training of Trainers Workshop on Cybercrime and E-evidence for Magistrates, Tunis, 19/09/2023-21/09/2023;

- Statistics Training for Cabinet Members of the Ministry of Justice, Tunis, 21/09/2023-21/09/2023;

- Steering Committee meeting AP -JUST, Tunis, 28/09/2023-28/09/2023;

-Training programme with the ENA - 8th promotion of the AIBG “Governance and prevention of corruption” (thematic: accompaniment, public procurement, audit, reporting, gender approach) Tunis, 04/10/2023-05/10/2023;

-Participation of the representative of the Ministry of the Interior at the Europol conference on cybercrime and the annual meeting of the 24/7 points of contact of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, The Hague, Netherlands, 18/10/2023-20/10/2023.

**2. Examples of regional co-operation activities in the Southern Mediterranean region:**

* MedSPAD meeting on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the launch of the regional project, Rabat, 31/05/2023- 01/06/2023 (beneficiaries: Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Malta, Palestine\*, Tunisia)
* 10th steering committee meeting of the CyberSouth project, Tunis, 01/06/2023 (beneficiaries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine\*, Tunisia)
* Participation of representatives of Morocco and Tunisia in the Meeting of National Anti-Trafficking Coordinators and Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms, 06/06/2023- 07/06/2023 (beneficiaries: Morocco and Tunisia)
* Participation of representatives of Morocco at the 83rd plenary meeting of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC), Strasbourg, 13/06/2023-15/06/2023 (beneficiary: Morocco)
* 40th plenary meeting of the European commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), Strasbourg, 15/06/2023-16/06/2023 (beneficiaries: Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia)
* Regional conference of the southern Mediterranean network of justice inspectorates, Agadir, 03/07/2023-04/07/2023 (beneficiaries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine\*, Tunisia)
* Annual Conference HELP, Strasbourg, 06/07/2023-07/07/2023 (beneficiaries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine\*, Tunisia)
* First coordination meeting HELP with representatives of the Southern the Mediterranean region, Strasbourg, 07/07/2023 (beneficiaries: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia)
* Participation in the 4th Meeting of the Committee of Experts on the Integrity of Online Information, Strasbourg, 18/09/2023-19/09/2023 (beneficiary: Morocco)
* Regional simulation-based training exercise on combatting human trafficking with focus on the justice sector, with the participation of representatives of several branches of related activities such as law enforcement, judges, prosecutors etc, Spain, 25/09/2023-29/09/2023 (beneficiaries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine\*, Tunisia)
* Second Steering Committee meeting of the South Programme V, Online, 10/10/2023 (beneficiaries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine\*, Tunisia)
* 29th edition of the Lisbon Forum - “Human Rights, Environment and Economic Crimes: Youth at the forefront”, Lisbon, 16/10/2023-17/10/2023 (beneficiaries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine\*, Tunisia)
* Meeting of the CEPEJ national correspondents, Strasbourg, 18/10/2023 (beneficiary: Morocco)
* Combatting abuse of virtual asset service providers for illicit purposes (organised jointly with “Promoting Transparency and Action against Economic Crime” in the framework of the Central Asia Rule of Law Programme 2020-2023, and “Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo”), Strasbourg/hybrid online, 24/10/2023- 25/10/2023 (beneficiaries: Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine\*, Tunisia, Morocco)
* Workshop of the General Authority of Monitoring Content Media Libya on developing multi-annual strategy, Tunis, 24/10/2023-26/10/2023 (beneficiary: Libya)
* Regional seminar of the ACT Group - addressing competition manipulation together - Macolin Convention, Rabat, 7-8/11/2023
* Fifth meeting of the Copenhagen Group (Macolin Convention), open session of the Advisory Group of the Convention's Monitoring Committee and practical workshop in close collaboration with INTERPOL and the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Rabat, 7-8/11/2023

**3. Examples of regional co-operation activities in Central Asia:**

-On 30 May – 1 June, the CoE organised a seminar on the CoE conventions for representatives of the national authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic. The participants learnt more about the existing treaty system and the accession procedures to conventions open to non-member States, with a particular focus on the Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185) and the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons (ETS No. 112).

-On 26 – 27 June, the Central Asia Rule of Law Programme held its second Regional Steering Committee meeting in Astana with 75 participants coming from all five countries of Central Asia as well as EU representatives. Further to discussing the achievements of the Programme, sessions focusing on building common legal spaces with Central Asia and specifically promoting conventions open to non-member States were held.

- On 19 – 21 September, a Tajik delegation participated in a three-day seminar on the CoE’s conventions, in Strasbourg. The objective of the activity was to raise the participants’ awareness about the respective conventions open to non-member States, as well as accession processes and benefits and responsibilities of being a party.

- Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) directly contributes to promoting the conventions of the CoE and its standards:

- The Project has overall trained 637 legal professionals in the region on human rights standards (143 prosecutors; 264 lawyers; 230 judges), within the period May-September 2023 – 158 legal professionals from Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic (64 prosecutors; 66 lawyers, and 28 judges) have raised their awareness on CoE standards, mainly related to the prevention of ill-treatment and torture;

- A specific seminar was organised for judges and lawyers in Kazakhstan on individual application procedure as a legal remedy, focusing on the role of Constitutional Court In protecting citizens’ rights;

- A high-level Conference took place in Turkmenistan aiming at examining the role of the national Bar association in strengthening access to justice, drawing from diverse perspectives and good practices of Central Asia countries and CoE member States.

Activities foreseen: The team of the Central Asia Rule of Law Programme is planning three seminars/study visits on CoE conventions and a final Steering Committee meeting to be held in May/June 2024, before the end of the Programme. The seminars will focus on promoting the CoE conventions open to non-member States. The Steering Committee meeting will provide support to assess the results of the Programme and discuss possible follow-up.

-HELP:

* Forum on Securing evidence and adherence to international standards in the investigation of torture cases in Kazakhstan (November 2023);
* Translation and contextualisation of two more HELP courses for the Central Asia region;
* Regional HELP Training-of-Trainers to extend the pool of national HELP tutors in the region;
* Launches of HELP courses in Kazakhstan (Prohibition of ill-treatment and Ethics for prosecutors);
* Specific seminars for legal professionals on CoE standards.
1. See [SG/Inf(2021)14](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?Reference=SG/Inf(2021)14" \o "Review of the policy towards neighbouring regions and the Council of Europe contribution to global governance). To be noted: A dedicated CoE website was created to assist member States in drawing on the Organisation’s work in the preparation of the national reviews to illustrate that their membership of the CoE also contributes to their national implementation of Agenda 2030. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Reykjavik Declaration. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Participants: CANADA: Mr Stéphane DION, Prime Minister’s Special Envoy to the European Union and Europe; HOLY SEE: Cardinal Pietro PAROLIN, Secretary of State; JAPAN: Mr Ryotaro SUZUKI, Ambassador to Iceland; MEXICO: Ms Carmen MORENO TOSCANO, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: Ms Linda THOMAS-GREENFIELD, Representative to the United Nations, member of the Cabinet of the President. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Mexico’s authorities are analysing the possibility of joining the Register. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This report does not aim at offering a comprehensive presentation of the co-operation with observer States but only some illustrations. Relations and contacts with observer States cover almost the whole spectrum of the CoE’s activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Mexico is also party to the CoE Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property (Nicosia Convention), as well as to the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data and Additional Protocol, to the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters and amending Protocol, to the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons and to the Convention on Information on Foreign Law and Additional Protocol. Mexico’s commitment to international cooperation on drug problems is also reflected in its full membership of the Pompidou Group, with it becoming its major financial contributor and the first country in Latin America and the Caribbean to become a full member. Mexico is also a member of the Venice Commission and observer of the European Committee against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) and the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), among others. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. It covers countries in North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia which request CoE assistance, based on the common values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It remains based on the 2011 “Istanbul parameters”, according to which, co-operation with the countries concerned from North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia will be, in particular, demand-driven, tailored and flexible, whilst entirely governed by CoE values and standards. This Neighbourhood Policy has two pillars: a Neighbourhood Dialogue and Neighbourhood Co-operation Activities. It is conditional and develops “step-by-step”. The Policy has developed in close co-ordination with the European Union. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The Deputies “approved the Neighbourhood Partnership for the period 2022-2025 with Tunisia, as it appears in document [CM(2021)145-final](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?Reference=CM(2021)145-final" \o "[1417/2.3c] Policy of the Council of Europe towards neighbouring regions - c. Neighbourhood partnership 2022-2025 with Tunisia), while calling on the Tunisian authorities to respect and guarantee democracy, fundamental rights and the rule of law in Tunisia.”. In addition, as provided in the document, “the Committee of Ministers *will monitor the implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership and take relevant decisions.”* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The NSC developed a “joint work programme (2023-2025) for reinforced synergies between the CoE's Neighbourhood Policy with the South Mediterranean and the CNS”. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Recent activities developed in this context as examples: University on Youth and Development: Youth, peace and climate change (regional), 18-23 September 2023, Mollina. It brought together 230 youth representatives from 70 different nationalities, mainly from Europe, the southern Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa; Lisbon Forum 2023 “Human rights, environment and economic crimes: Youth at the forefront”, held on 16-17 October 2023, in Lisbon, gathered participants from Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia; Contribution to ALECSO’s international conference: “The loss of academic learning”, 24-26 October 2024, Tunis. The NSC also helped organize a children and youth forum in margin of the conference. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See other activities in Appendix 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. To recall, an informal GR-EXT meeting on the promotion of CoE instruments was held on 28 March 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 153 of the total number of 223 conventions are open to non-member States. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. For example, the Venice Commission was instrumental in setting up the Southern African Judges Commission, (SAJC), which has become today the Southern and Eastern African Chief Justices’ Forum (SEAJCF). Itsannual conferencetook place in Arusha, Tanzania on 23-26 October 2023 with the participation of the Special Representative and the Secretary of the Venice Commission. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Contacts have been initiated with Ghana, for example, in the margins of the Ukraine Recovery Conference (London, 21-22 June 2023). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See in particular European Union Council Conclusions of 30 January 2023 on the European Union Priorities of co-operation with the CoE. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. It brings together the Legal Advisers of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the 46 member states of the CoE, the five observer States to the CoE (Canada, Holy See, Japan, Mexico and United States of America), 4 further observer States to the CAHDI (Australia, Israel, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand) and 10 participating international organisations. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. On 28 and 29 September 2023, it held exchanges of views with the President of the International Law Commission (ILC), the Co-Chairs to the ILC’s Study Group on sea-level rise in relation to international law, the President of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC and the Chair of the Diplomatic Conference for the negotiation and adoption of the Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes, and other International Crimes (Ljubljana – The Hague Convention) held in Ljubljana in May 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. For example, since February 2022, Brazil and Nigeria have become Parties to the Convention, and Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and Uruguay have been invited to accede. At present, 91 States participate as members (68 Parties) or observers (23 signatories and States invited to accede) in the work of the T-CY. Thirteen non-member states have so far signed the Second Additional Protocol. Since the Reykjavik Summit, these include Cabo Verde, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Ghana and Mauritius. Japan accepted this Protocol in August 2023. The Cybercrime Programme Office of the CoE (C-PROC) in Bucharest is responsible for assisting countries worldwide in strengthening their legal systems capacity to respond to the challenges posed by cybercrime and electronic evidence based on the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and its Protocols. Between the 4th Summit in May and September 2023, C-PROC organised or supported some 120 activities in all regions of the world to strengthen legislation, the capacities of criminal justice practitioners, or public/private and international co-operation. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See [Result details (coe.int)](https://search.coe.int/cm/pages/result_details.aspx?objectid=0900001680ac93e4). See also **[DD(2023)310](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?Reference=DD(2023)310" \o "1476/4.3 - Abolition of the death penalty – Thematic discussion - Document distributed at the request of Mexico [Anglais uniquement])**and **[DD(2023)309](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?Reference=DD(2023)309" \o "1476/4.3 - Abolition of the death penalty – Thematic discussion - Document distributed at the request of Japan [Anglais uniquement])**. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. \* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of CoE member States on this issue. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)