

Highlights 2 July - September 2023



What should citizens & local communities in North Macedonia know on the use of Free Legal Aid services?

In order to inform the people of North Macedonia on the free legal aid opportunities and how to ensure better use and access to these services, an awareness-raising initiative took place during 16 July 2023 - 30 September 2023, in all the regions of North Macedonia. The series of activities, aimed at informing and promoting the use of free legal aid services in North Macedonia, with a special focus on the vulnerable groups and local communities.

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STRENGTHENING JUSTICE



Raising the capacities of penitentiary staff in North Macedonia through the development of a structured training



Medical and psycho-social staff capacitated to develop multi-disciplinary treatment plans for forensic patients

system

An important focus of the EU and Council of Europe joint support in North Macedonia is to assist public authorities in implementing the prison reform, as well as the protection of prisoners' human rights. In this framework the final draft of Prison Staff Training Strategy and a relevant Programme were designed by a group of experienced representatives from the Directorate for the Execution of Sanctions (DES), probation offices, and various penitentiary institutions.

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24 professionals from 5 prisons of Albania and representatives from the Directorate General of Prison Administration increased their capacities on how to provide an in-depth assessment for the development of a multi-disciplinary Individual Treatment Plan. Both medical and psycho-social staff increased their knowledge on disorders in prisons, such as mood, personality, psychotic and post-traumatic stress disorders and related therapies such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Trauma informed care.

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Agency for Treatment of Property in Albania capacitated to implement new legislation

The Horizontal Facility programme is assisting public authorities in Albania in the process of aligning the domestic legislation and practice in the field of property rights, with the European Court of Human Rights standards. A two-day workshop was organised in Korça with the staff of the Agency for Treatment of Property (ATP). The purpose of the meeting was to support the capacities of the ATP's staff on concrete measures to comprehensively address the outstanding claims for property return and compensation in view of the new legal requirements and contextual challenges.

Public discussions on amendments to the Law on the Right to Trial Within Reasonable Time take place in Serbia

As a part of the public consultation process aimed at adopting amendments to the Law on the Right to Trial Within Reasonable Time a series of roundtables were conducted in Belgrade. They were organised by the Ministry of Justice in Serbia with the support of the Horizontal Facility programme. The reason for amending the Law is to incorporate provisions aimed at the execution of the European Court of Human Rights' judgment in the case *Kačapor and Others v. Serbia* concerning non-enforcement or delayed enforcement of domestic judicial decisions.

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FIGHTING ECONOMIC CRIME & CORRUPTION



Enhancing Montenegrin law enforcement and prosecution's capacities for cryptocurrency transaction analysis and money laundering typology identification

In co-operation with the Ministry of Interior of Montenegro, a three-day training for the police and prosecutors was organised on 25-27 September 2023. It focused on investigation and seizure of cryptocurrencies and digital assets originating from money laundering. The training provided participants from law enforcement, Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and Special Prosecutor's Office with an opportunity to become familiar with the main international standards in this field.

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PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

"Leave a Mark" - a series of awareness-raising events to promote equality was concluded in North Macedonia



"Leave a Mark", the awareness-raising initiative reaching out to young people in North Macedonia to promote diversity, equality and inclusion was concluded. The events were organised by the Institute for Good Governance and Euro-Atlantic Perspectives together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy with the support of the action "Combating hatred and intolerance in North Macedonia".

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Impact of hate speech in public discourse debated in Pristina

High representatives from public authorities, international organisations, policy makers, activists, and media representatives were part of the high-level conference in Pristina entitled “Hate speech in the public discourse”. The participants discussed how to tackle hate speech and had the opportunity to exchange and explore concrete strategies for combating hate speech in public discourse, noting that hate speech at the societal level is a clear violation of human rights that should be addressed.

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Supporting local beneficiaries in the region to advance equality and diversity

Various initiatives in the field of anti-discrimination implemented in the Western Balkans have continued to provide support and assistance to local actors in their efforts to ensure that human rights are protected and respected based on the European standards and values. In this context, important interventions have been organised in [Albania](#), [Montenegro](#), [North Macedonia](#), [Serbia](#), but also [regionally](#) to promote equality and diversity with a focus on vulnerable groups and local communities.

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Empowering labour inspectors in North Macedonia to proactively identify and refer potential victims of human trafficking

Labour inspectors and social workers play a fundamental role in the fight against human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation and assistance for the victims of human trafficking. To support them, the action on “Strengthening anti-trafficking action in North Macedonia” facilitated a multi-disciplinary training of trainers with 30 selected labour inspectors, social workers, police officers and NGO representatives acting to prevent and combat trafficking cases for labour exploitation.

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Increasing lawyers' skills on gender responsive legal aid in Türkiye

The Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) course on "Access to justice for women" has constituted an important tool for legal professionals in Türkiye. About 485 legal professionals were part of the course conducted in [July](#) and [September](#). The lawyers who successfully complete the course will provide legal aid services to women in five pilot provinces.

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Schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina take another step in becoming resource centres for democratic school culture



The action "Quality education for all" continues to support schools across Bosnia and Herzegovina to become resource centres for democratic culture. From 21 to 24 August, parallel activities for students as well as members of school management and pedagogical institutions were organised in different towns. The meetings helped to further develop their understanding of the *Reference Framework of the Competences for Democratic Culture* (RFCDC) and define ways in which they will be incorporated in the education system and the school environment.

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Training on "Human rights and migration" and "How to convey children-friendly information to migrant children" held in Antalya



The first round of the training programme on "*Human rights and migration*" and "*How to convey children-friendly information to migrant children*" was held in Antalya between 18-20 September 2023. The three-day capacity-building activity was organised in the framework of the Horizontal Facility programme. The content of these trainings

was tailored to the needs of the personnel of the Gendarmerie General Command, who deals with and rescues thousands of migrants every year on the western and eastern borders of Türkiye.

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PROMOTING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA



Survey on media literacy among preschool children in Serbia provides important insight

In collaboration with Serbia's Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM), a comprehensive study delving into the media literacy of preschool children has yielded valuable insights, redefining our understanding of how the youngest members of society interact with the digital realm. The research, conducted with the active participation of preschool educators, sheds light on the media habits of Serbia's youngest digital citizens.

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NEW PUBLICATIONS



New publications available online

Check out the latest publications and research materials published in the framework of the Horizontal Facility. They aim to assist professionals in the region with relevant knowledge,

updated information, recent tools, adequate methodologies and related resources covering different aspects surrounding the protection human rights and fundamental freedoms protection in the Western Balkans and Türkiye.

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