

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Information Documents
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Quarterly report of Council of Europe Offices

January - March 2021

A. LIAISON OFFICES

Introduction

The Council of Europe Offices in charge of liaison with one or more international organisations or institutions:

- represent the Secretary General vis-à-vis international organisation(s) or institution(s);
- follow the activities carried out by the relevant international organisation(s) or institution(s) and report on developments relevant to the Council of Europe activities and policies;
- provide support for the organisation of and follow-up to high level co-ordination meetings and other meetings or events between the Council of Europe and the relevant international organisation(s) or institution(s);
- promote effective co-operation between the Council of Europe and the relevant international organisation(s) or institution(s);
- identify opportunities for joint activities and provide advice and support in planning, negotiation, implementation and reporting on these activities;
- conduct a proactive media policy in order to raise the visibility of the Organisation.

The present document covers the reporting period January – March 2021. Following decision [CM/Del/Dec\(2013\)1175/1.6E](#) of 3 July 2013, activity reports have been published every three months, starting with July-September 2013.

Brussels - Council of Europe Office in charge of liaison with the European Union

Key features and statistics

Some 750 information messages and documents and 12 weekly reports were prepared and sent to Strasbourg by the Information Officer. 123 notes for the files were sent from the Office in addition to the information messages sent by the Head of Office directly.

Meetings involving the Office

The Head of Office and the colleagues in the Office held consultations with the European Union on many aspects of co-operation, including, in particular, the following:

On general aspects of co-operation

Close liaison was maintained with the **EEAS**, including in view of some changes in the EEAS leadership (Mr Sannino as new EEAS SG) and among contact persons (Ms de Peyron as Director/Deputy Managing Director on HR, global and multilateral issues and charge of the CoE).

On 16 March 2021, the draft report on **Council of Europe-EU co-operation** was presented in the **GR-EXT** by the Director of External relations and Head of the Brussels Liaison Office, Zoltan Taubner. Ms de Peyron participated in the discussion (by video). An addendum on the Council of Europe -EU joint programmes was presented by ODGP Director V. Taylor. The GR-EXT discussed draft decisions on the Council of Europe-EU co-operation, to be adopted by the CM at its next ministerial session in May 2021.

At the same meeting, the **GR-EXT** also discussed proposals on the implementation of the "**strategic framework**" proposed by the Secretary General, in the field of co-operation with other International Organisations, including the EU.

The Office developed its contacts with the **Portuguese Presidency** of the EU, notably the Chairs of some Council configurations where co-operation is envisaged (violence against women, anti-racism summit, rule of law, social rights summit, (e-)justice, artificial intelligence, children rights).

The Office reported on the adoption of the joint declaration (Presidents of the European Parliament, Commission, and Council) on the "**conference on the future of Europe**", 10 March. This paves the way for the initial steps leading to the official launch of the Conference's work (Strasbourg, 9 May 2021). Commission's VP, Ms **Šuica**, addressed the **PACE** Political Committee on 30 March 2021; she provided with some details on the Conference's process and further presented the newly adopted commission's Strategy on the rights of the child".

On human rights

The Office closely followed the 8th and 9th negotiating session on the EU's **accession** to the ECHR (in February and in March 2021) and liaised with the EEAS on the matter.

The Office reported on the adoption, by the EU Council, of **Conclusions** on the strategy on the implementation of the **Fundamental Rights Charter** in the EU member States (11 March). The conclusions welcome the Commission's initiative to publish an **annual report**

on a specific fundamental rights thematic and commit the Council to organise an **annual debate** on fundamental rights issues.

The Office followed EU discussions and statements on the occasion of 8 March "International **Women's Day**". It also liaised with the Commission (NEAR and JUST) on reactions to the withdrawal by **Turkey** from the Council of Europe "**Istanbul Convention**" (20 March). It reported on discussions in the Foreign Affairs Council (22 March), the General Affairs Council (23 March) and in the European Council (25 March) where the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention was mentioned.

And it reported on discussions in the EP with Commissioner Dalli on the "**disability strategy**" and on "**binding pay transparency**" measures. Contacts were maintained with DG JUST and Cabinet Dalli about the **CSW65** Session.

The Office reported on the publication of the Commission's new **Strategy on the Rights of the Child**, 24 March, and noted that the Strategy refers to the Council of Europe on many instances where co-operation would therefore be possible.

The Office facilitated the participation of Council of Europe representatives in the "**EU anti-racism Summit**", 19 March, where the Chair ECRI and a representative of the ECRI Secretariat contributed to the discussions.

It liaised with the EEAS on exchange of information in view of the preparation of **EU-HR dialogues** with Council of Europe member States (in March 2021: Armenia).

On the rule of law

Contacts were established in view of Commissioner **Reynders** addressing the **PACE** on 26 January. DG Giakoumopoulos discussed matters of co-operation with the competent Director in the Commission (JUST), in view of the preparation of the Commission's annual RoL report.

Following Commissioner Reynders 's letter to the secretary General, asking for the **CoE's contribution to the Commission's 2021 rule of law report**, the Secretariat sent its written early March. And on 1st March, the Office facilitated the organisation of **consultation day** between the Services of the Commission in charge of the preparation of its 2021 Rule of Law report, and the corresponding Council of Europe Services.

Contacts with the Commission (JUST) and with the Portuguese Presidency were taken in view of the informal meeting of the EU Ministers of Justice, 29 January, where they decided to promote the ratification of the CoE **Medicrime Convention**.

The Office facilitated the organisation of a meeting between the **EP** rapporteur on the Commission's 2020 rule of law report (and shadow rapporteurs) and the Secretaries to, respectively, **Venice Commission** and **GRECO** (15 March). It also liaised with the Commission to facilitate discussion and possible cooperation on the respective EU and Council of Europe normative initiatives on **environmental crimes**.

It closely followed the discussions in the **European Parliament** on various aspects of the Rule of Law in the EU, in particular, the Resolution adopted on 24 March with regards to the situation in **Poland**, and asking the Commission to apply the "**rule of law conditionality**" regulation (entered into force on 1 January). It also followed the EP (LIBE Committee

monitoring group) debates on the rule of law (media) situation in **Slovenia**, including, on 26 March, in presence of PM Jansa. And the EP plenary held a discussion on the rule of law situation in **Malta**.

The Justice Ministers, in the Council meeting of 11 March, adopted conclusions on **judicial training**. The Conclusions ask to address, as compulsory components of trainings they (MS) offer, "...the common values of rule of law,.. and the Charter's interplay with the **ECHR**".

The Office continued deepening co-operation with DG JUST and DG CONNECT in the field of **media** and protection of **journalists** (safety of journalists and **SLAPPs**). DG Connect offered a presentation on the newly presented « digital service act » to various Council of Europe Secretariat Services (26 March). A contribution from the Council of Europe on the EU's initiative on transparency in political advertising is also being prepared. The Office reported from 3 days discussions on media, journalism and safety (23-25 March).

Liaison with relevant Services in Strasbourg allowed for the preparation of Council of Europe contributions on EU new initiatives, respectively on **environmental crimes** and on **digitalisation of Justice**.

On democracy

Contacts were taken with the Commission's Director for Union citizenship (JUST) on further co-operation with the CoE (Venice Commission) on **electoral** matters in the current Covid 19 pandemic. The Office also followed and reported on discussions related to the protection of democracies against **interference** and manipulation, and against growing authoritarianism.

On migration

Contacts were maintained with the Commission (HOME), on possible areas of political and programmatic co-operation, as well as exchange of information.

The Office facilitated the organisation of a discussion between the **SRSG**, Amb Štefánek, and **DG Pariat** (Home), following the visit of the former in Bosnia and Herzegovina (January), and in anticipation of the visit of Commissioner Johansson in February.

The Office also reported on the meeting of the 27 Interior Ministers, 28 January (informal) and 12 March, where Ministers discussed cooperation with third countries and returns and readmissions. Ministers were updated by the Commission on the state of play of negotiations on the asylum and migration Pact and they also discussed EU-North African countries cooperation. It also participated in the exchanges between DG HOME and Council of Europe in relation to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Office also reported on the launch of a public consultation by the Commission on **migrants smuggling** and on discussions in the EP (LIBE) on FRONTEX (investigation on push back allegations) and on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On co-operation through programmes

The Office participated in the Scoreboard meeting (19 January 2021).

It also participated in several co-ordination meetings

- with DG NEAR (PGG) and DG REFORM on the new projects to be included in the 2021 umbrella agreement.
- with the Commission - DG SANTE in view of possible co-operation following the presentation of the new COVID-19 health-related project in the CM.
- with DG HOME on migration and children's rights.
- with DG DEVCO (Central Asia) and with DG REFORM.
- with regards to regional facilities (HF in relation to Turkey), PGG and Central Asia.
- with DG EAC on various matters of joint projects.
- and with DG JUST about the new programming cycle on issues relevant to Council of Europe.

An exchange was organised on **Cultural Heritage** with the EEAS.

The Office **reported** on important EU developments, such as the visits of EU leaders to Lisbon on the launch of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Foreign Affairs Council (25/01, 22/02, 22/03), General Affairs Council (18/01, 23/02, 23/03) and European Council (21/01, 24-25/02 and 25-26/03) as well as the visit of HR/VP Josep Borrell to Russia (4-6/02). Reports highlighted in particular discussions on the EU's relations with Turkey and with the Russian Federation, **EU and North Macedonia high level talks**, the visit of European Council President Charles Michel to Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine (28/02- 03/03), **EU-UK relations**, the situation in **Nagorno-Karabakh** and EU – Bosnia and Herzegovina dialogue, as well as debates on enlargement reports on Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo¹ at the EP Plenary (25 March).

Contacts were also maintained in view of reporting to Strasbourg on several different topics: Turkey with DG NEAR, EU participation in CSW session (March 2021) with DG JUST, as well as discussions between HQs on violence against women also with DG JUST.

Reports also covered initiatives and developments on matters such as: Rule of law related initiatives by VP Jourová, recent developments in Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Tunisia, the renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood and the EU-Tajikistan Co-operation Council, LGBTI rights (Hungary), upholding social rights (Commission, Portuguese Presidency), the political situation in Georgia, the situation in Crimea, 7 years after annexation by Russia, the EP's AFET discussion with the PM of Montenegro, an EPC event on North Macedonia.

The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership held a meeting to exchange on the workplan, programme and budget of the EU- Council of Europe youth partnership for 2021 and on planning the future biennial 2022-2023 work plan. The signature of the 2021 grant agreement, including additional 200.000 contribution by the European Commission, will follow the procedures of adopting the legal grounds for the new Erasmus + Programme.

The meeting of the PEYR Advisor Group of the youth partnership was held on 25 February 2021, in order to strengthen youth partnership's think tank function and improve the quality of research outputs. Youth partnership also participated in the follow-up meetings for the European Youth work Convention and consultative meeting and Task Force meeting of the youth department on the climate crisis and its impact on young people.

The [Youth Policy Evaluation Review](#) was published and analytical papers linked to the priorities of the EU presidencies and Access to Rights Recommendation Review, including: [Shrinking democratic civic space for youth](#), [Review of the documents on young people's access to rights and non-discrimination: A Desk Research Study](#), and [Young people's right to assemble](#)

¹All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

[peacefully. A mapping study, in preparation of the first review of the recommendation CM/Rec \(2016\)7.](#)

The youth partnership was invited to contribute to the **EU Council's Youth Working Party meeting** (1 March) and made the keynote input to the EU Youth Conference (12 March), in the framework of the Portuguese EU Presidency. It contributed to the jury of the Hackathon, a side-event of the youth conference. The partnership was also invited to deliver the keynote input to the **Eastern Partnership youth conference** on for supporting youth policy and youth work development in the region. The Youth Partnership also organised a reflection meeting on COVID-19 impact on the youth sector, including with the EC and the EU Portuguese Presidency. Finally, the partnership presented its activities at the 44th meeting of the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ).

The seventh episode of the youth partnership Podcast series [Under 30'](#) discusses the results of its research on young people's access to rights. [Insights into youth policy evaluation](#) and [Insights into social inclusion and digitalisation](#) were published in March. Toolkit 8 on Social inclusion of young people was printed in French.

The Pompidou Group's law enforcement Secretariat in Brussels organised the preparatory meetings for the 4 annual "law enforcement" meetings. The preparatory meetings discussed the organisation of the annual meetings, the themes to be focused on, and the expert speakers who will be invited.

Visibility and relations with media

The Spokesperson/Media Officer maintained regular contacts with journalists and carried out social media work on topics including:

- In January: the PACE session, the publication of the annual report and statistics for 2020 from the European **Court** of Human Rights, the on-going World Forum for Democracy, the publication of a new GRETA guidance note on human trafficking for labour exploitation, the 40th anniversary of Convention 108 on data protection and the publication of new guidelines on facial recognition.
- In February: the statement from the Chair of the Committee of Ministers on Crimea, the Secretary General's statement on recent developments in Armenia, statements from the Commissioner for Human Rights on Hungary and Russia, Congress reports on the situation of LGBT+ people, the on-going World Forum for Democracy, the new factsheet on the execution of ECHR judgments relating to children's rights and the GRECO report on Austria.
- In March: Turkey's denunciation of the Istanbul Convention, the March plenary session of the Venice Commission, the publication of the annual conclusions from the European Committee of Social Rights and a separate ECSR decision concerning Ireland, the latest ECRML evaluation concerning the UK, the GRECO report on Austria and compliance reports on Turkey, the Human Rights Commissioner's report on media freedom in Hungary, International Women's Day and Zero Discrimination Day, as well as various judgments and decisions from the European **Court** of Human Rights.

The Spokesperson/Media Officer also took part in the latest planning and co-ordination meeting of the "C-9" group of communications professionals from several different international organisations working on human rights and continued to work on on-going communications projects highlighting relations between the Council of Europe and the

European Union, the impact of the **ECHR** system and the link between human rights and the environment.

The Spokesperson/Media Officer co-ordinated communications work around the March meeting of the Committee of Ministers on the **execution of judgments** from the European Court of Human Rights and the publication of the annual report for 2020, as well as the participation of the British judge at the inaugural Goldsmiths Annual Human Rights Lecture on human rights and climate change.

Geneva - Council of Europe Office/Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva

The Chargée d'affaires of the Permanent Delegation of the Council of Europe to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva participated online:

- in the organisational meeting for the preparation of the 46th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), on 8 February, to ensure a smooth participation of the Secretary General in the High-Level Segment of the session, on 23 February (video message).
- She then followed the 46th session (22 February to 24 March) and reported accordingly, among others on the adoption of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) outcomes of Andorra, Bulgaria, Croatia and Belarus.
- She followed (online) the UNHCR briefing for delegates on 4 March and the 80th session of the Standing Committee on 24 March and informed DGI accordingly.

Furthermore, she facilitated:

- the organisation of the annual United Nations exchange of views (human rights questions) with experts from capitals which took place during the Deputies' 1395th meeting on 11 February 2021 (videoconference).
- the online participation Mr Salvioli, Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, in a meeting of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) that took place on 15 March.

Vienna - Council of Europe Office in charge of liaison with the OSCE, United Nations Office and other international organisations in Vienna

Leadership at the OSCE

Since January 2021, the top four mandates at the OSCE have begun as follows: Helga Maria Schmid as OSCE Secretary General; Matteo Meccaci as Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR); Kairat Abdrakhmanov as High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM); and Teresa Ribeiro as Representative on Freedom on the Media (RFoM).

Participation in OSCE Permanent Council Meetings

- OSCE Permanent Council with the address of the Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ann Linde, 14 January.
- OSCE Permanent Council with inaugural remarks by the new OSCE Secretary General H.E. Ms. Helga Schmid and the address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly H.E. Lord Peter Bowness, 21 January.
- OSCE Permanent Council with the address by the Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance on the occasion of the commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, 28 January.
- OSCE Permanent Council with the report by the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and update by Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), Ambassador Heidi Grau, 4 February.
- OSCE Permanent Council with reports by the Chairpersons of the Security Committee; the Economic and Environmental Committee; and the Human Dimension Committee, 11 February.
- OSCE Permanent Council with the report by the Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission at two Russian Checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, 18 February.
- OSCE Permanent Council with reports from the OSCE Mission to Montenegro and OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 4 March.
- OSCE Permanent Council with the report on the activities of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) and special relevance by the Chairpersonship-in-Office to activities on International Women's Day, 11 March.
- OSCE Permanent Council with the report from the OSCE Mission to Serbia, 18 March.
- OSCE Permanent Council with the report from the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, 25 March.
- Special Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, dedicated to the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, 31 March

Participation in expert committees and conferences

A change in trainee occurred in the Vienna Office on March 1st, 2021. Ms. Olena Dobrunik, the new trainee, has been fully accredited at the United Nations in Vienna as well as at the OSCE.

- The German Embassy and the Council of Europe office in Warsaw presented (via zoom) "Unpacking the black box – What AI means for human rights and how we are tackling this", 16 March.
- Chairpersonship virtual launch of the photo exhibition "Gender Equal World", 24 March.

- Briefing for delegations by the Austrian MFA on the Austrian vaccination strategy and other relevant information on COVID-19, 25 March

Warsaw – Council of Europe Office in charge of liaison with international organisations or institutions in Warsaw, in particular with OSCE/ODIHR and the Community of Democracies

High-level visits/meetings

29 January – HoO coordination meetings with the First Deputy Director of OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Ms Katarzyna Gardapkhadze.

18 March – HoO meeting with the Director of the OSCE ODIHR, Mr Matteo Mecacci.

Activities of the Office

a) Enhancing the co-operation with OSCE ODIHR – Apart from the high-level meetings mentioned above, the HoO conducted a series of meetings on expert level to discuss the possibilities and plans for CoE – ODIHR cooperation in 2021. These discussions included i.e. meetings with Ms Andrea Huber, the Head of Human Rights Department, Mr Andrew Gardner, Deputy Head of HR Department, Mr David Mark, Human Rights Adviser in HR Department, Ms Augusta Featherston, ODIHR Youth Focal Point and Democratic Governance Officer in Democratisation Department and Ms Carolyn Hammer, Rule of Law Expert in Democratization Department.

The HoO took part in the First OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting of 2021 devoted to Media Freedom and Gender Equality. Apart from the specific Human Dimension meetings, the HoO and CoE representatives attended numerous meetings and consultations convened by OSCE ODIHR. These included i.e. (i) virtual launch event of ODIHR Advisory Council of International Survivors of Trafficking, (ii) Violence Against Women in Politics: Experiences and Ways Forward for Women Leaders - online event organised by OSCE ODIHR and UN Women Europe and Central Asia and (iii) OSCE ODIHR meeting on the Situation of judges and prosecutors in Poland.

b) Continuation of the co-operation with the CoD – The HoO maintained regular working contacts with staff of the Permanent Secretariat and took part in meetings and discussions organized by the PS, including in CoD virtual events devoted to the situation in Belarus (In Solidarity with Belarus: Youth for Democratic Change and Six Months of Protest: An Update from Belarus) and a virtual meeting on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society in Armenia.

c) Establishment of closer co-operation with Frontex – The Office followed closely the developments in Frontex in the wake of allegations concerning the involvement of Frontex staff in the incidents of push-back in Eastern Mediterranean. In particular, the Office reported on the outcomes of the internal investigation conducted by Frontex Management Board as well as on external attempts to clarify the allegations, including by establishing Frontex Scrutiny Working Group in the European Parliament. The HoO maintained contacts with Frontex staff and the representatives of other international organisations, working with Frontex, including with Ms Aydan Iyigüenoer, FRA Project Manager - Asylum and Migration and the Co-Chair of Frontex Consultative Forum.

d) Ensuring the visibility of the CoE – The Office, together with the German Embassy in Warsaw, co-organised an online event on linkages between Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights (Unpacking the black box - What AI means for human rights and how we are tackling this), which presented efforts to establish legal framework for the development, design and application of artificial intelligence, based on CoE's standards on human rights, democracy and

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the rule of law. The event was organised as a part of German Chairmanship in the CoE Committee of Ministers.

B. FIELD AND PROGRAMME OFFICES

Introduction

On the basis of Resolution [CM/Res\(2010\)5](#) Council of Europe offices in member States and non-member states

- represent the Secretary General vis-à-vis the national authorities of the host country;
- promote and support the policies and activities of national authorities, as well as those of the Council of Europe bodies, related to membership of the Council of Europe;
- provide advice, support and overall *in situ* co-ordination with national authorities in planning, negotiation and timely implementation of targeted Council of Europe co-operation activities, including Joint Programmes with the European Union and other donors;
- facilitate the identification of needs for capacity-building, in co-operation with national authorities;
- conduct fundraising activities for specific projects;
- co-ordinate activities in the country with other international organisations and institutions (EU, OSCE, UN), as well as other international and local partners active in the country;
- in close cooperation with the Directorate of Communication, conduct a proactive media policy, in order to raise the visibility of the Organisation, its values and activities among the general public.

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Working methods and staff presence in the Council of Europe external offices have had to be adapted to the pandemic situation in their host countries and are subject to change. Nevertheless, the offices work at capacity and continue to achieve results. This covers all offices and is therefore not mentioned in individual reports. Where new projects have been launched during the pandemic this is pointed out in the activity report of the office concerned.

Baku**Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 5, Project staff – 7, Total staff – 12.

The Office implemented five projects, three in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, one EU/CoE Joint Programme and one funded through voluntary contributions.

State of implementation of projects:

- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in Azerbaijan”: (i) An online workshop with up to 30 representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Judicial Legal Council, Justice Academy, Supreme Court, and five pilot courts from the previous phase of the project, was organised to develop and present an action plan for implementation of the Road map on the dissemination of CEPEJ efficiency and quality measurement tools in all courts of Azerbaijan. (ii) Expert advice on the development of ICT solutions to support the national enforcement system of Azerbaijan was finalised.
- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery in Azerbaijan”: (i) The Project produced a legal opinion on the national legislative framework in relation to beneficial ownership to support the national authorities’ efforts in increasing beneficial ownership transparency. (ii) An initial report on holistic analysis of the institutional and legislative asset recovery framework in Azerbaijan was developed with a view to assist the government in setting up a more comprehensive and effective system for recovering and managing the proceeds of crime in line with international standards.
- EU/CoE - PGG “Raising Awareness on the Istanbul Convention and other Gender Equality Standards in Azerbaijan”: (i) The second draft of the gap analysis on policy and the legislative framework in line with the IC, and a preparatory report on development of a twinning methodology in the field of VAW/DV were prepared. (ii) The Project carried out a series of webinars with broad media coverage on the IC with the participation of about 60 representatives of authorities, civil society, and journalists. (iii) The presentation of several publications on the IC in Azerbaijani in the newly created section on VAW/DV on the Office’s website contributed to a tripling of website visits, with a leaflet on the IC being the most visited page.
- EU/CoE JP “Further Support to the Penitentiary Reform in Azerbaijan-2” (SPERA-2): The project was extended until 31 October 2021. (i) Two online coaching sessions on dynamic security for prison managers of the pilot prisons were carried out. (ii) The development of a mental health risk assessment tool, Risk and Needs Assessment (RNA), and integrated sentence management were launched. (iii) The second discussion on the draft Code of Ethics for Prison Staff in Azerbaijan was arranged with the participation of national partners and an international consultant. It focused on the benefits of such a Code for the penitentiary system and its place in the ongoing penitentiary reforms in Azerbaijan.
- VC Sweden “Reinforcing gender equality and media freedom in Azerbaijan”: The preparation of the textbook on Gender Equality and Media Freedom was completed with contributions from local and international experts. The textbook will be distributed among universities, libraries, and media organisations, and is expected to be used during formal and informal teaching of journalism to coach students to apply ethical principles and standards in media reporting of events.

Other relevant activities

- 28 January: The HoO met with the Head of EUD in Azerbaijan, Ambassador Kestutis Jankauskas;
- 1 February: The HoO participated in the PGG Local Steering Committee meeting for Azerbaijan;
- 8 February: The HoO attended the opening and closure of the online workshop on implementation of the Roadmap on dissemination of CEPEJ efficiency and quality measurement tools in all courts of Azerbaijan;
- 9 February: The HoO met with Hungarian Ambassador Viktor Szederkenyi to discuss issues related to the upcoming Hungarian chairmanship of CM;
- 17 February: The HoO participated in the first online Steering Meeting of the project on "Raising Awareness on the Istanbul Convention and other Gender Equality Standards in Azerbaijan";
- 19 February: The HoO met with Head of Department on Human Rights and Democracy of the Azerbaijani MFA, Zaur Ahmadov;
- 26 February: The HoO attended the conference dedicated to the Khojaly massacre, organised by the Azerbaijani MFA;
- 2 March: The HoO participated in an online discussion of the new proposed structure of development cooperation organised by the UN RCO;
- 5 March: The HoO met with Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov;
- 16 March: The HoO met with the Head of the Azerbaijani Delegation to PACE, MP Samad Seyidov;
- 18 March: The HoO made opening remarks for the series of webinars under the PGG II Project "Raising Awareness on the Istanbul Convention and other Gender Equality Standards in Azerbaijan".

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 18-20 January: Christos Giakoumopoulos, Director General for Human Rights and Rule of Law and Alexandre Guessel, Director of Political Affairs, paid a working visit to Azerbaijan.

Belgrade

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 6, Project staff – 27, Total staff – 33.

The Office implemented 12 projects, nine in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey”, two country-specific EU/CoE Joint Programmes, and one project funded through voluntary contributions.

State of implementation of projects

- EU/CoE - HF “Quality Education for All (Quality ED-Serbia)”: Regional online training courses on Competences for Democratic Culture were organised for 60 schools and 200 education specialists in March. Manuals on Fostering a Democratic Culture in Families were completed in February. The second workshop for the policy working group that is connecting the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) and national curricula was organised in March. The RFCDC was included in the Education Strategy 2030. Two regional democratic chatrooms for more than 80 pupils from Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, were organised in February and March.
- EU/CoE - HF “Promotion of Diversity and Equality in Serbia”: The Project provided expert advice to the Serbian Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue related to the draft legislation aimed at amending the provisions on discrimination, as well as the draft law on same-sex partnerships. It is expected that ECRI country-specific and general recommendations, which together with the case-law of the ECtHR form part of the technical support and backstopping provided by the CoE, will be reflected, integrated, and implemented within the revised anti-discrimination law and other relevant legislation. The Action has also launched, together with the EU, the joint regional campaign “Block the Hatred, Share the Love”, including the pop singer Sara Jo who volunteered as a No Hate Speech Ambassador on behalf of Serbia.
- EU/CoE - HF “Independence & Accountability of the Judiciary”: After two meetings of the High Judicial Council WG, the work on amending their Rules of Procedure and provisions on undue influence, was completed. Likewise, amendments to the State Prosecutorial Council’s RoP regulating the Commissioner for Autonomy of the Prosecution are ready for adoption. The SPC WG tasked with developing the Code of Ethics met twice. The Judicial Academy ran a public call for future trainers on preventing undue pressure. The production of recommendations for establishing a mechanism of confidential counselling for judges and prosecutors, and of guidelines on ethical usage of social media is under way.
- EU/CoE - HF “Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia”: The strengthening of the capacities of different groups of professionals (judges and prosecutors (HELP), labour inspectors etc.) on combating trafficking in human beings (THB) was organised on multiple occasions through webinars during January-March. Almost 100% of labour inspectors in Serbia are now able to detect THB and refer victims for assistance. The Action has also supported the fight against child trafficking through the development of a practice-oriented guidance for child-sensitive communication for the Centre for Human Trafficking Victims’ protection and assistance providers and by awarding grants to CSOs for awareness-raising campaigns to be implemented during 2021.
- EU/CoE - HF “Enhancing penitentiary capacities in addressing radicalisation in prisons in the Western Balkans”: Twenty-five prison and probation professionals from Serbia were prepared for the HELP Radicalisation Prevention course in Serbia which is currently being implemented. The online HELP launch took place on 18 March. The ToT Curriculum for Prison Staff in Serbia on the application of the VEP-specific tool/instruments and rehabilitation

methodology has been approved by the beneficiary and its implementation was set for May 2021.

- EU/CoE - HF "Enhancing human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons": Acting on the Action's recommendations, the MoI established a task force to further develop the roadmap and draft the necessary documents for the introduction of specialised custody officers in police units. Following a CoE assessment of the current materials used for police officers' training on conducting interviews, a task force for developing a manual on conducting interviews in line with European standards was created. The Action continued to support the work of the WG tasked with drafting the new 2021-2027 Prison Strategy, and the first draft is ready to be presented for public scrutiny. A network of CSOs for post-release assistance to former prisoners was supported in revising and adjusting its mentoring programme. The National Preventive Mechanism was assisted in revising the methodology and questionnaires for conducting visit to places of detention.
- EU/CoE - HF "Strengthening the effective legal remedies to human rights violations in Serbia": The working group tasked with the development of the HELP online course on the reasoning of judicial decisions in civil and criminal proceedings held two 2-day meetings in January and March. An expert meeting on the topic of execution of the ECtHR judgment *Zorica Jovanovic v. Serbia*, focusing on establishing a DNA database, provided a platform for discussion and co-ordination between competent authorities with respect to creating a DNA registry and implementing it in order to execute the judgment. A gender analysis conducted within the project was completed in February.
- EU/CoE - HF "HELP in the Western Balkans": Eleven HELP online courses (on Anti-discrimination, Bioethics, Child-friendly justice, Family law, Introduction to the ECHR and the ECtHR, Procedural safeguards in criminal proceedings) were launched in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. In light of the transversal nature of the action, ten additional HELP online courses (on Anti-discrimination, Combating trafficking in human beings, Radicalisation prevention, Violence against women) were launched in the framework of several HF actions and CoE projects in the Western Balkans.
- EU/CoE - HF "Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)": The JUFREX/HELP online course on Freedom of Expression has been made available in Western Balkans languages - Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Serbian, and will be used by national judicial training institutions and universities to supplement traditional educational materials in legal education. Also, the publication "Regulation of Political Advertising: A Comparative Study with Reflections on the Situation in SEE" has been translated into Western Balkans languages and will be used by JUFREX beneficiaries as a tool to generate positive change in this field.
- EU/CoE - HF "Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Serbia (JUFREX)": In cooperation with the Judicial Academy and the MoI, a Training of Trainers "Protection and Safety of Journalists" was organised on 27-29 January. The 36 participants were judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and police officers, who will pass their acquired knowledge onto their peers through cascade trainings in 2021 and contribute to implementation of European standards in the daily practice of all involved actors. The Handbook for Trainers on Freedom of Expression (standards and methodology) prepared in 2020 has now been printed and delivered to the participants and partners of the JUFREX project.
- EU/CoE JP "Human Resources Management in Local Self-Government - phase 2": The Programme focused on the completion of Municipal Support Packages in 50 pilot LSGs, including a closing focus group on 18 March where the pilots could exchange their experience and best practices. According to the HRM Index of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, the average HRM capacity of supported LSGs stands at over 70%, exceeding the original Programme target. Ninety-two Special Training Programmes and annual training plans for local government employees for 2021 have been developed through

Programme support and most programmes have already been accredited by the National Academy for Public Administration.

- EU/CoE regional JP "ROMACTED Programme "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level": Phase II officially started on 1 January and it will be implemented over a period of four years (48 months) in the seven Beneficiaries in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The currently on-going inception phase aims to finalise the selection of support organisations, facilitators, thematic consultants, as well as the selection of partner municipalities. From 1 April, the CoE Office in Belgrade will serve as the operational hub of the Programme. Thus, the activities of the seven beneficiary support teams will be co-ordinated in close co-operation between Strasbourg HQ and Belgrade CoE Office. The implementation of the Programme will officially start as of 1 May.
- VC Sweden "Preventing money laundering and terrorist financing in Serbia": The Project developed comparative analysis on supervision methodologies of virtual assets and virtual assets service providers and held an online workshop for the new supervisors in this sector. Additionally, an online workshop on CoE methodology for virtual assets risk assessment has been organised. The training manual for lawyers on PML/TF compliance has been developed. In order to improve the beneficial ownership disclosure system, a series of assessments meetings were held with relevant institutions, obliged entities, and civil society.

Other relevant activities

- 9 March: The second Meeting of the Horizontal Facility II Beneficiary Steering Committee took place in hybrid form, with some 60 participants live and online. It was opened by the Minister of European Integration, Head of EUD and HoO, and keynote speeches were delivered by the Minister of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue and the Assistant Minister of Justice;
- 16 March: The 20th anniversary of the CoE Office in Belgrade was marked, and included a visit to the office by the Minister of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue;
- The HoO continued a series of meetings with newly appointed officials, following the elections in Serbia: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of European Integration, Minister of Justice, Minister of Human and Minority Rights and Social Justice and Minister of Youth and Sport.

Bucharest

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 0.5, Project staff – 31, Total staff – 31.5.

The office implemented six capacity building projects on cybercrime, four EU/CoE Joint Programmes, one funded by voluntary contributions (currently Canada, Japan, UK, and USA) and one by End of Violence Against Children (EVAC) of the UK.

State of implementation of projects

- VC "Cybercrime@Octopus": The Project focused on supporting the T-CY in the finalisation of the 2nd [Additional Protocol](#) to the Budapest Convention resulting in the first full version of the protocol being published for [consultations](#). The reinforcement of the legislation on cybercrime and e-evidence was supported in [Montserrat, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago](#). The legal framework and capacities of 10 countries to fight against online child exploitation were assessed together with EndOCSEA@Europe and are to be published on the [Octopus platform](#). Progress was made in the development of a dedicated global platform for online training on cybercrime and e-evidence.
- EU/CoE JP "iPROCEEDS-2": The capacities to conduct investigations and collection/handling of electronic evidence under domestic legislation were assessed and comprehensive guidelines were provided to all countries/areas. Business analyses on cybercrime and cybersecurity were implemented in Serbia, Kosovo*² and Albania. The knowledge of Turkish magistrates on fighting online child sexual exploitation and handling of e-evidence were reinforced. The growing concern of cyber-bullying was addressed through a webinar organised jointly with the EndOCSEA@Europe project.
- EU/CoE JP "GLACY+": Two new priority countries ([Brazil](#) and [Colombia](#)) were added to the project. The capacities of Law Enforcement Agencies were strengthened through technical training (e.g., [Malware Analysis Training](#), [technical webinars on crypto for law enforcement](#)). The knowledge of magistrates on cybercrime and e-evidence from [Cape Verde](#) and [Philippines](#) as well as of the members of the [International Network of National Judicial Trainers](#) were reinforced. The partnership with the African Data Protection Authorities' Network was enhanced through the organisation of a series of monthly online workshops. The achievements of the project and future activities were assessed during the Steering Committee meeting.
- EU/CoE JP "CyberSouth": Law enforcement authorities from Algeria, Lebanon and Morocco were supported in the development of their domestic standard operating procedures on e-evidence. Criminal justice authorities from Morocco, Jordan and Algeria were supported in the development of their capacities to assess national cybercrime threats and prepare an annual cybercrime situation report. The judicial training was mainstreamed, and the development of the judicial training materials was supported in Tunisia, Lebanon, and Morocco. The capacities of the priority countries to seize online crime proceeds were reinforced, as well as the enhancement of international cooperation on cybercrime and e-evidence through 24/7 Networks.
- EU/CoE JP "CyberEast": The capacities of criminal justice authorities of priority countries were reinforced through a series of online activities addressing themes of cyberviolence, development of [Standard Operating Procedures](#) for cooperation between CSIRTs and law enforcement, training of investigators and judges on [international cooperation](#), targeting online crime proceeds, data protection and public-private cooperation. Reforms of

² This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

criminal procedure legislation and [strategies/action plans](#) on cybercrime have been assessed with the region's countries.

- VC "EndOCSEA@Europe": The capacities of criminal justice authorities were increased through the following capacity-building activities: [First webinar on OCSEA for the National Police, Judges and Prosecutors in the Republic of Moldova](#); [OCSEA Training for Turkish future magistrates](#); [When Cyber-Bullying Becomes a Crime Against our Children](#). Increasing the awareness of very young children through the translation and adaptation of '[Kiko and the Manymes](#)' for 4-6 years old children and their parents in 12 languages. The Ukrainian legislation on online child sexual exploitation (OCSEA) was assessed with the view of preparing a country profile.

Follow up action

- Adaptation and implementation of the project workplans for Q2 2021;
- Organisation of the 7th anniversary of C-PROC;
- Support the establishment of the International Network of Judicial Trainers and the organisation of the its first Steering Committee meeting;
- Provide support to the establishment of a regional training centre on cybercrime and electronic evidence and certification programmes for criminal justice authorities in Latin America (Argentina);
- Organisation of the Steering Committee meetings for CyberSouth, EndOCSEA@Europe, iPROCEEDS-2 and CyberEast projects;
- Support T-CY activities related to the finalisation of the 2nd Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention;

Other relevant activities

- The Riksdag of Sweden approved ratification of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, as well as its Additional Protocol on Xenophobia and Racism committed through computer systems.

Chisinau**Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 7, Project staff –22, Total staff – 29.

The Office implemented nine projects, two in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, one funded through a voluntary contribution from the USA and six funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan level.

State of implementation of projects/programmes/Action Plans/co-operation documents

- VC Norway “Promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova”: Component 1 – Eighteen representatives of the People’s Advocate Office (PAO) exchanged their experience on the enforcement of the torture prevention mandate and 21 PAO representatives strengthened their skills in examining complaints and ex-officio cases based on the PAO programme for professional development. The results of research on the application of criminal sanctions in the Republic of Moldova, carried out during August 2020 – February 2021, demonstrated the overall compliance of domestic legislation with international standards, but also a need to improve the application of the criminal sentencing framework by judges, prosecutors and lawyers. The development of a commentary on the Code of Ethics of Prosecutors created a solid foundation for a better application of the ethics principles by prosecutors. Component 2 - The Probation Service was provided with a feasibility study and guidelines for the creation of a pilot day centre for the reintegration of offenders, aimed at improving the range and quality of its interventions. An analysis of reports of the CoE’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on its periodic and ad-hoc visits to the Republic of Moldova (2015 – 2020) was undertaken thereby providing the authorities with further guidelines to improve detention conditions and health care services in prisons and psychiatric institutions. On 17 February, a high-level conference concluded the 3-year Programme “Promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova”.
- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening the capacities of the justice sector actors to deliver justice in line with European standards, in particular to fight discrimination”: The Equality Council (EC) finalised its monitoring strategy through a series of activities aimed at strengthening this core function. In addition, the EC was provided with concrete solutions to increase the efficiency of its recommendations in the context of existing resources, and also to contribute to cultural and systemic changes within the institution. Thirty representatives of the courts and prosecution offices of the Republic of Moldova increased their knowledge in the field of non-discrimination. The Programme also carried out a national survey, and its results showed that the general population considers discrimination a widespread problem in the country.
- EU/CoE – PGG “Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova: Two half-day workshops were held on 20 January to present and discuss the assessment Report of the judicial communication policy documents and the expert Report on strengthening the access to justice for vulnerable groups in the Republic of Moldova. The first workshop introduced good communication practices to the judiciary of the Republic of Moldova and identified future steps towards transparency. The second event introduced its audience to the main issues faced by vulnerable groups in need of access to justice and possible institutional and legislative improvements, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- VC Switzerland "Education for Democracy in the Republic of Moldova: Teachers' training capacities were strengthened during online workshops on the practical application of innovative tools and techniques in teaching the new civic education subject "Education for society" in line with the CoE's Framework of Competences for a Democratic Culture. Circa 1300 teachers from gymnasiums, lyceums and vocational schools throughout the country successfully completed four rounds of seminars organised by the project in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research between August 2020 and March 2021.
- AP "Combating violence against children in the Republic of Moldova: Thanks to videos produced by the Programme, 35,301 internet viewers increased their awareness of potential child sexual abuse. Children from 20 schools were exposed to targeted messages through mobile Kiko billboards. Several professionals increased their knowledge via numerous online training courses and events on combating child sexual abuse: 360 parents on online prevention; around 694 doctors on detection; 465 social workers, police officers and medical workers on intervening in such cases; 60 sport representatives on child sexual abuse in sport and 102 legal professionals on online child sexual abuse investigations.
- AP "Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova": The Programme developed a policy paper on alternative voting mechanisms and presented it during two webinars dedicated to the Central Electoral Commission, the Training Centre, relevant ministries, and civil society. In addition, in February, a post-election review conference following the November 2021 Presidential elections was organised.
- AP "Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova": The Project has strengthened the capacities of the Audiovisual Council (AC) to identify and tackle information disorder through a series of workshops. A comprehensive and detailed Technical Report on the IT, software and equipment needs of the AC has been developed to assist the institution in its modernisation efforts. Additionally, to strengthen the mass media's understanding of the national media legislative framework, a tailored Guide for media service providers on common misunderstandings of the Audiovisual Media Service Code has been prepared.
- VC USA "Action Against Corruption in Republic of Moldova": The Project carried out an assessment of the legislative and institutional framework governing the mandate of the National Integrity Authority (NIA) through consultative meetings which will result in recommendations to improve institutional effectiveness in line with GRECO findings. Moreover, 20 NIA integrity inspectors consolidated their knowledge and skills on the identification of fictitious transactions and presentation of evidence in courts. At the same time, the results of the assessment on the composition and operation of the Superior Council of Magistracy were presented and discussed during an online round table with justice sector institutions, development partners and civil society representatives.
- AP "Reinforcing the culture of dialogue and consultation of local authorities in the Republic of Moldova": The Project is in the process of finalising the development of the Preliminary Draft Strategic Plan for CALM (2021-2027), taking into account the recommendations of the Baseline Assessment of the institutional position of the association developed in 2020. The preparatory work, including three working group meetings with CALM members and its Secretariat on the development of the Theory of Change, have been completed. With a view to contributing to a closer alignment of local government with the standards set out by the Congress, key texts on Public Ethics adopted by the Congress were made available in Romanian.

Other relevant activities

- 5 March: The Head of Office participated in a meeting with the Speaker of the Parliament, the Chairman of the Parliament's legal committee for appointments and immunities and the interim Minister of Justice on the developments regarding justice sector reform;

- The School of Political Studies of the Republic of Moldova organised a seminar on “Democracy and Good Governance”. Welcome remarks were provided by the Head of Office;
- 17 March: The Head of Office also met with the Bashkan of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, Irina Vlah. This meeting provided the opportunity to present and discuss the new CoE/Republic of Moldova Action Plan 2021-2024;
- 19-20 March: Following a request from the Constitutional Court, an Amicus Curiae brief was issued by the Venice Commission and the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law at its 126th Plenary Session. The Amicus Curiae focused on three questions concerning the constitutional review of law-making procedures in the Parliament;
- 24 March: The Venice Commission issued an Opinion on the Draft Law amending some normative laws relating to the incorporation of an additional Ombudsperson for the Protection of Entrepreneurs' Rights within the existing structure of the Office of the People's Advocate.
- In March, the Office started three new programmes, which are a continuation of previous efforts in the following respective areas: 1 - Strengthening the human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova, 2 - Strengthening the prison and probation reforms, provision of health care and treatment of patients in closed institutions in the Republic of Moldova and 3 - Improving electoral practices in the Republic of Moldova, Phase II.

Kyiv**Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 11, Project staff – 56, Total staff: 67.

The new Head of Office took up his duties on 1 March.

The Office implemented twenty projects, two in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, three EU/CoE Joint Programmes, fourteen funded by voluntary contributions at Action Plan level and one funded by the HRTF.

State of implementation of projects/programmes

- AP “Support to the implementation of the judicial reform in Ukraine”: The Project provided its legal expertise in the analysis of the two key draft laws for the judiciary sector, notably draft law no. 5068 on appointment and vetting members of the High Council of Justice and draft law no. 3711–d on re-establishment of the High Qualification Commission of Judges.
- AP “Human Rights Compliant Criminal Justice System in Ukraine Project”: The Project raised the awareness of members of the Parliament and Justice Ministry officials on the practical application of criminal misdemeanours by conducting research and sharing its results with the respective stakeholders. In addition, the Project enhanced transparency and public accountability of the public prosecution service by facilitating a meeting between the Prosecutor General and representatives of civil society organisations. The knowledge of PGO staff of CoE standards with regard to the selection to managerial positions within the prosecution system, was increased by providing expert comments on the draft Decree on the Procedure for Appointments to Administrative Positions. Finally, the Project improved the skills of the Prosecutorial Training Centre (PTC) trainers in adult education by conducting a training of trainers, in which 16 PTC trainers participated.
- AP “Decentralisation and local government reform in Ukraine”: The Project’s legal advice was taken on board by the specialised Parliamentary Committee on local self-government in the context of preparing a draft law on metropolitan governance. This happened at a joint round-table discussion with key national stakeholders, where it was agreed to improve the draft law in line with recommendations provided through CoE legal expertise and advice issued in 2020. The professional capacities on human resources management and leadership of more than 1200 local officials were enhanced through 19 online training sessions, including in the framework of the Training Marathon on Good Governance initiated by the Project in co-operation with the Ministry for Territorial Development and National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service (NAUCS). The latter benefited from the Project’s local policy advice and incorporated its recommendations into the adopted Order of the Cabinet of Ministers #165-p dd 3 March 2021 regarding the Concept of the National Training System Reform and its action plan.
- AP “Strengthening democracy and building trust at local level in Ukraine”: Further improvements to the national electoral legislation were proposed by the Project following the 2020 local elections and the respective consultation process was enhanced by a contribution from Stewart Dickson (UK, ILDG), Congress Spokesperson, at a virtual national conference in January. Moreover, Nikolaos-Komninos Chlepas, member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government (GIE), contributed to the round table on the new draft law on local self-government, which took place in the Parliament in March. A new online tool, bE-Open, was launched to support local and regional governance actors in their efforts to improve the quality of local democracy. This online tool is designed to allow quick and easy access to relevant international standards and the domestic context, legislation, case law, guidelines, and good practices in Ukraine.

- AP "Promoting civil participation in democratic decision-making in Ukraine": The Project continued assisting 15 municipalities in developing and establishing a local legal framework on citizen participation. Furthermore, continuous remote support was provided to local authorities concerning civic engagement in urban planning under Covid-19 restrictions through the establishment of effective mechanisms for public consultations. The Project also provided expert support to city councils with regard to the development of the innovative Regulation on Public Space and Citizen Engagement and the Regulation on School Participatory Budgeting, based on the CoE toolkit adapted to local needs and context. As a result, 358 school students and teachers from 56 schools of Nova Vodolaha, Vynnitsya and Mukachevo gained knowledge and skills on the basics of civic engagement and the implementation of School Participatory Budgeting through a series of online training courses. Fifty-one public officials from the Lviv region state administration strengthened their capacities on how to create and operate public councils and ensure effective engagement of NGOs in the decision-making process.
- AP "Supporting constitutional and legal reforms, constitutional justice and assisting the Parliament in conducting reforms aimed at enhancing its efficiency": The Project focused its work on the organisation of consultations of Venice Commission experts with key national stakeholders in order to prepare expert opinions on the 'draft law on political parties' and 'draft law on constitutional procedure'. Furthermore, the Project provided its expert assistance to improve electoral legislation after the local elections in Ukraine and strengthen the institutional capacities of the Parliament and the High Anti-Corruption Court. The Project has continued working on the practical commentary on the Electoral Code following the conclusions and recommendations of the last local elections in 2020.
- AP "Supporting the transparency, inclusiveness and integrity of electoral practice in Ukraine": The Project contributed to the creation and functioning of the online platform on lessons learned from the results of 2020 local elections, serving more than 300 electoral stakeholders. In addition, recommendations on how to improve local election legislation and practice were summed up by the Project experts and forwarded to the national authorities concerned. The Project has developed a curriculum for an online training course on election observation and launched a survey/study on national court practice in the application of the gender quota at 2020 local elections. Possible modes of cooperation with the National Agency on State Service on the improvement of knowledge and skills of state servants on elections/referenda related issues were launched by the Project and discussed with involvement of key national stakeholders.
- AP "Internal displacement in Ukraine: building solutions": The Project held its Steering Committee Meeting, which endorsed the Project's work plan for 2021. Thirty-four officials from the relevant Ministries and the Ombudsperson's Office strengthened their knowledge and practical skills on internal displacement after completion of the CoE tutored distance learning course on Internal Displacement. The Project welcomed the fact that a draft Law of Ukraine was finalised and submitted to the Parliament. The 'draft law on protection of property and other property rights of victims, affected by armed aggression' was developed within the Working group on compensation of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights in consultation with the expert community. The Project continuously provided on-demand expert support, shared international experience and good practices, and contributed to parliamentary discussions to highlight relevant CoE standards.
- AP "Promoting social human rights as a key factor of sustainable democracy in Ukraine": The Project presented a report on the assessment of training needs on social rights, providing recommendations on the integration of the study of the European Social Charter into the curricula of higher education institutions. The Working Group on improving legislation on the development and regulation of the social services market in Ukraine took place with the support of the Project. A compilation of thematic expert articles on social rights protection by the Administrative Court was finalised and published.

- AP "The Istanbul Convention: a tool to advance in fighting violence against women (VAW) and domestic violence (DV) in Ukraine": The Project completed its inception phase in January-February, and it supported the governmental advocacy campaign aimed at the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in March. Preparations were also made for the organisation of a round table for members of the Parliament in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration and the Government Commissioner on Gender Policy, which has been scheduled in May. The Project has translated and published the Declaration of the Committee of the Parties to the CoE Istanbul Convention to mark the International Day of Women's Rights.
- AP "Supporting institutions to combat ill-treatment in Ukraine": In January, the Project published a new tool for Ukrainian authorities in the field of investigative interviewing. Moreover, the book "Introduction to the European Convention on Human Rights" was translated and legally proofread. In March, research work on the selection and recruitment procedure of law enforcement personnel of the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI), based on comparisons between existing procedures and European standards and best practice, was completed. Within the next reporting period, a two-day training for SBI staff who recruit and select personnel will be carried out based on the recommendations provided by this research. The Project also provided the SBI with educational materials, such as video lectures and electronic books, intended for completing the distance learning Moodle platform that was created for initial and in-service training of SBI staff. The proposed materials are aimed at enhancing the knowledge and professional competencies of SBI staff.
- AP "Protection of national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine": The Project facilitated and supported three meetings of the Working group established under the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights to finalise the draft law on national minorities. The Project has also continued to provide its expert support to the State Service of Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience in the development of a new Roma Strategy, in line with CoE standards. In this regard, a two-day online training/study visit on "CoE standards and monitoring for combating discrimination" for the staff of the Service was organised in March. Finally, five partner municipalities, Nizhyn, Lutsk, Melitopol, Perechin, and Krasnosilka village, were selected by the Project to establish and launch the activities of local initiative groups on promoting effective consultation mechanisms between local authorities and representatives of the national minority groups.
- AP "Combating violence against children in Ukraine": Forty-seven participants from different departments of the National Police of Ukraine (Juvenile prevention, Investigation, Cyber Police) enrolled in the Child-Friendly Justice HELP course. The process of obtaining the certificate from the Ministry of Education for the character "Kiko" and the Training for Trainers manual started in February. Furthermore, a thematic factsheet on Children's Rights developed by the Department for the execution of judgments of the ECtHR was translated into Ukrainian and disseminated (Link to the factsheet). Also, an online presentation of the CoE Legal analysis on the operation of Barnahus in Ukraine (Link to the news item) was organised by the Project to share conclusions and recommendations of this analysis with key stakeholders at central and local levels.
- AP "Youth for Democracy in Ukraine": Two hundred and ninety-nine youth workers, and representatives of the authorities in charge of the implementation of youth policy from ten partner communities, took part in research on mapping needs in the local youth policy field with a focus on promoting youth participation and civic engagement at local level. Furthermore, 14 youth centres were selected out of 24 for the partnership to review their approaches and ensure that their strategies meet the needs of young people, in line with CoE standards on youth participation and youth work. Thirty-seven staff members and 105 young people from these youth centres took part in a study on current challenges in their work and their capacity to involve young people in their activities. A new glossary on youth work and non-formal education and a curriculum on capacity-building activities for experts in the

field of youth policy, youth work and non-formal education were designed and published. The second meeting of the Project's Steering Committee approved the project's work plan until the end of 2021.

- EU/CoE JP "EU and CoE working together to support freedom of media in Ukraine": Expertise was provided to the election process of new members of the Supervisory Board of Public Broadcaster through support to the organisation of civil society conferences. Recommendations have been developed for improving the procedure of the Government's responses to the CoE Platform for the safety of journalists and shared with the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy. Due to the Project's efforts, 'the draft media law' was discussed on several public platforms. Two publications on access to public information were produced. European practices and standards on countering disinformation were presented at a two-day seminar held in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy.
- EU/CoE JP "EU and CoE working together to strengthen the Ombudsperson's capacity to protect human rights in Ukraine": The Project provided its expertise to the joint Parliament-Ombudsperson working group developing the new draft law on personal data protection and facilitated public discussions on this draft law with the involvement of various stakeholders. Moreover, training materials on specific data protection issues for law enforcement authorities and judges were created, as well as a promotional video to mark the 40th anniversary of Convention 108 with the participation of the Ukrainian Ombudsperson. In addition, two online courses on data protection and on basic principles of the National Preventive Mechanism have been created by the Project for the staff of the Ombudsperson's Office. Furthermore, the Project prepared a Ukrainian version of the online course on CPT standards which has been available on the HELP programme website since January. Finally, the training needs assessment of both Data Protection and NPM Departments of the Ombudsperson's Office was finalised, providing scope for further capacity development with the Project's support.
- EU/CoE JP "EU and CoE working together to support the Prison Reform in Ukraine" (SPERU): The Project issued legal opinions on the 'draft law on penitentiary system' and 'draft law on the disciplinary charter of the penitentiary system'. Methodological recommendations to prevent suicidal behaviour in the penitentiary institutions were submitted to the Ministry of Justice for further implementation. A three-day interactive training course on dynamic security was developed and presented to national partners. Furthermore, the Project facilitated the creation of a working group on the development of the Code of Ethics for prison healthcare staff. Finally, six prisons were selected as places to train prison staff on the risk and needs assessment tool and preparation of individual sentence plans in 2021.
- EU/CoE - PGG "Strengthening measures to counter money laundering and financing of terrorism in Ukraine": The Project carried out its second Steering Committee meeting, during which its work plan was approved. Twenty-six judges of the High Anti-Corruption Court and the courts of lower instances increased their knowledge and skills on money laundering. Furthermore, the Project prepared a technical paper on the proliferation of finance threats and a technical paper on the assessment of the Government's response to the Requirements of FATF Recommendation 8 and Immediate Outcome 10. The Project also provided its expertise to the process of developing 'the draft secondary legislation for AML/CFT supervision over the gambling sector'.
- EU/CoE - PGG "Strengthening access to justice for victims of discrimination, hate speech and hate crime in the Eastern Partnership": During the reporting period, the Project carried out a training of trainers for the Legal Aid Coordination Centre lawyers on discrimination, and adjusted their methodology on data collection. The Project continued to support the disaggregated data collection by the inter-institutional working group along with the Ombudsperson's office. The Project provided two grants, to the Nash Mir NGO (project on hate crime against LGBTI people) and Lacho Drome (supporting mediators in combating discrimination against Roma people). The Project also kicked off a wide systemic mapping of national responses to hate speech.

- VC HRTF “Further support for the execution by Ukraine of judgments in respect of Article 6 of the ECtHR”: In accordance with a request from the Ministry of Justice, the Project continued to provide its expert support through assessing the national strategic document, which aims to resolve the structural issue of the non-execution of judgments, as well as developing recommendations on how to ensure an effective and timely implementation of the document. Furthermore, the Project assisted the Supreme Court in publishing and disseminating its Annual Report, which highlighted the key facts and figures on the third year of the Court’s work. Finally, the Project involved an expert from CEPEJ to develop proposals for the introduction of effective tools for the collection of data on the length of proceedings and on this basis, it will provide further support to the introduction of an appropriate system at the Supreme Court.

Gender mainstreaming and gender equality

- Gender mainstreaming is supported by the Gender Advisor. During the reporting period, support was extended to three different projects in the office in their research work by reviewing research reports, questionnaires and meeting with project teams and external consultants. The Office continues its active participation in relevant working groups. The Sectoral Working Group on Gender, which is part of the national donor coordination structure, met on 20 January. The 1325 Task Force had a thematic meeting on 10 February about combating sexual harassment in the security sector. The Gender Advisor also develops guidance on gender mainstreaming. In March, a guide for enhancing reporting on gender balance was developed. The Gender Equality Focal Point network was launched during the first quarter and held its first meeting on 26 February. The office Gender Letter with current updates was sent out on 25 February.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 1-4 March: Verena Taylor, Director of ODGP.

Sarajevo

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 8, Project staff – 19, Total staff – 27.

The Office implemented eleven projects, five within the framework of the EU/CoE “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey”, one EU/CoE regional Joint Programme, one funded through voluntary contributions from the UK and the US, and four projects funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan level.

State of implementation of projects / the Action Plan

- EU/CoE - HF “Strengthening human rights treatment of detained persons based on European standards and best practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina”: A resource manual on the rehabilitation of forensic patients is currently being developed, aimed at the harmonisation of local practices with European human rights standards. In parallel, the national human rights training team is developing a manual on investigative interviewing in police custody. The final testing and fine-tuning of the prison software for entities of the Ministries of Justice and prisons is underway. Local prison professionals involved in this process are improving their skills in managing electronic prison data exchange, thereby consolidating local expertise for further peer training. The project team kept the donor representative informed of the risk management policy and consulted regularly with local beneficiaries on how to reinforce project implementation in light of the epidemiological situation.
- EU/CoE - HF “Promotion of diversity and equality in BiH”: The Action developed a methodology to facilitate data gathering for the purpose of monitoring and reporting on developments raised by the relevant monitoring bodies in relation to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages. The above-mentioned methodology was delivered to the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees. The final draft of the LGBTI Action plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina was submitted to both entities and the Brčko District for their review. An online meeting between relevant international and national actors was held on 25 February to coordinate and exchange information on the LGBTI Action plan in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The manual for civil servants on hate speech was finalised and is currently being printed. The third Steering Committee meeting was held online on 9 February and its members approved the six-month work plan.
- EU/CoE - HF “Quality education for all”: An online round table on “Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) and the whole school approach” was held on 25 February. Participants included 54 teachers and school staff from 25 pilot schools. Two chat rooms were held in February and March that brought together 80 secondary school pupils from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia. Each chat room covered a different topic from the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and actively encouraged students to share their experiences and opinions, to discuss what a democratic school culture represents for them and learn how they can use the Competences for Democratic Culture. Three NGOs selected to receive grants for supporting pilot schools presented their projects, the timeframes and expected results to 42 teachers from 28 pilot schools. A report with recommendations for aligning Geography curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina with learning outcomes, the Roadmap on Quality Education in Multi-Ethnic Societies and the CoE’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture was finalised and sent to the EUD for review and comments.
- EU/CoE - HF “Preventing and combating human trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina”: The Action held its second and third multidisciplinary training sessions on human trafficking

for labour exploitation, in coordination with the State Coordinator and with the Anti-Trafficking Coordinator from Republika Srpska, from 25 to 27 January (online) and from 3 to 5 March (in-person, Banja Luka). The training events consisted of presentations on relevant laws/regulations, the current experiences and work of labour inspectors, as well as a discussion and practical exercises that included hypothetical cases. Gender aspects related to human trafficking and examples of practices in labour inspection from Belgium were presented as well. As a result of the training, 42 professionals from Bosnia and Herzegovina increased their capacities to detect, communicate with and refer potential victims of trafficking to the competent authorities. The grant procedure was completed with two NGOs selected for implementing awareness-raising campaigns on child trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The campaigns have already started.

- EU/CoE - HF "Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina – JUFREX 2": Two online seminars, gathering a total of 59 participants, were held for representatives of the media and the judiciary in cooperation with the grantees Press Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina and BiH Association of Journalists. The HELP course on freedom of expression was finalised and is now available in local languages. A translation of the regional publication on the Regulation on Political advertising was published, and two publications on the protection and safety of journalists have also been translated. Hard copies will soon be distributed, and electronic versions will be published in the upcoming period.
- VC UK/US "Structured sentence management for violent and extremist prisoners in Bosnia and Herzegovina": A three-month piloting of rehabilitation tools and individual treatment programmes for violent and extremist prisoners (VEPs) developed under the revised "Manual on Assessment and Rehabilitation of VEPs" was conducted in two prisons, followed by two coaching sessions. Fifty-five representatives of penitentiary establishments and law enforcement agencies from across all administrative levels in BiH received training on the application of the "CMS Manual for VEPs" and of protocols on data-sharing and multi-agency cooperation related to the management of VEPs. Two strategic policy documents were presented to prisons, law enforcement and social welfare professionals. An "expert assessment to record impact and sustainability of the project's implementation proceedings" was conducted in cooperation with the project beneficiaries. The project's closing event and regional conference on "Addressing radicalisation in prisons and managing VEPs" was held online on 25 March, gathering 70 participants from the region.
- AP "Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Phase II": A report was finalised, assessing the remedies - introduced or envisaged - for the violation of the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time. The report provides a comparative assessment of the effectiveness of a similar legal remedy introduced elsewhere in the region, and recommends harmonising future judicial practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in line with the relevant case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. A comprehensive human rights curriculum for the initial and continuous training of the judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently being developed. An online training, held for 16 judges and judicial assistants, enhanced their capacity and skills on reasoning and drafting criminal judgments in light of the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- AP "Building Democratic Participation in the City of Mostar": A meeting was held online on 3 March with the newly elected city councillors and mayor of the City of Mostar, under the banner "Mostar at the vanguard of deliberative democracy". The meeting's participants were introduced to the approach of deliberative democracy, the process involved and specific project activities. A final, tailor-made methodology for applying the deliberative process in Mostar was presented, and the ways in which local authorities could contribute to the upcoming stages of the project were discussed. The partners from Mostar expressed broad support for the project and its methodology. On 26 March, a follow-up meeting was held with Mostar city officials and representatives of two universities from Mostar.

- AP "Support to more integral and inclusive electoral processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina": On 28 January, a meeting was held with the representatives of the Central Election Commission (CEC), including its President, Željko Bakalar, its Secretary General, Goran Mišković, and CEC members Irena Hadžiabdić and Jovan Kalaba. It was confirmed that the CEC will be the main partner of the project and will nominate two of its members, as well as its President, to participate in the project Steering Committee.
- AP "Media and Information Literacy: for human rights and more democracy": An assessment/baseline study was produced, providing a basis for the review, currently underway, of the project workplan and activities, having regard inter alia to limitations linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Project Board was established, and the first meeting of the Board will take place once the workplan is finalised.

Implementation in BiH of regional projects (see also under 'Belgrade Office')

- JP EU/CoE "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level" (ROMACTED): ROMACTED Phase II started on 1 January and will be implemented over a period of four years (48 months). Thematic experts and facilitators were assessed and selected, as well as a support organisation which will act as a partner NGO for the duration of the programme. Two new municipalities (Kalesija and Doboje) were chosen in cooperation with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR), making up a total of 12 programme municipalities. A letter of support to ROMACTED II was sent on behalf of the MHRR to all Mayors, reiterating the strong partnership between the government and the programme. Baseline studies are being carried out in all programme municipalities in cooperation with local authorities and the MHRR. A final draft of the new National Action Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021-2025, with the ROMACTED programme included as one of the implementing partners, was submitted for an official public hearing.

Other relevant activities

- 17 February: The HoO received Laura Lungarotti, Chief of Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and IOM Western Balkans Coordinator;
- 25 February: The HoO addressed the participants of an online meeting on the topic "Towards the adoption of the LGBTI Action Plan in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (see above section on the project "Promotion of diversity and equality");
- 26 February: The DHoO attended a meeting of the Gender Equality Focal Points of the CoE external offices.
- 3 March: The HoO addressed the newly-elected authorities of the City of Mostar at the presentation of the project "Building Democratic Participation in the City of Mostar" (see relevant section above);
- 4 March: The DHoO attended the launch of the new Swiss Cooperation Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2021-24;
- 5 March: The HoO opened an online launching event of the HELP course on Introduction to the ECHR;
- 8 March: The HoO gave an introductory speech at a Conference on the occasion of the International Women's Day;
- 15 March: The HoO was received by the President of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC), Halil Lagumdžija, two of the HJPC Vice-Presidents, a judge who is member of the HJPC and the Head of the institution's Secretariat, for a discussion that covered inter alia support provided to the HJPC by the CoE;
- 25 March: The HoO made introductory remarks at the closing regional conference (held online) of the project Addressing Radicalisation in Prisons and Managing Violent Extremist Offenders, encouraging the adoption of the policy documents prepared in its framework;

- 30 March: The HoO moderated the opening and closing sessions of the Second Steering Committee meeting for Bosnia and Herzegovina of HFII.

Council of Europe high-level visits and other official delegations

- 24-30 January: The Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, Drahošlav Štefánek, conducted a mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Head of Office accompanied the SRSG on Migration and Refugees at various meetings with officials and international representatives;
- 28-29 January: The Venice Commission held a series of online meetings with representatives of local authorities and international organisations in BiH in preparation of its opinion on the draft amendments to the Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council;
- 15-19 February: The Department for the Execution of Judgments carried out a virtual visit to BiH, comprising a series of meetings with local and international interlocutors with regard to the implementation of the Sejdić and Finci group of cases.

Tbilisi

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 7, Project staff – 20, Total staff – 27.

The Office implemented eleven projects, three in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, seven funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan level and one funded through a voluntary contribution from Denmark.

State of implementation of projects/programmes

- EU/CoE - PGG “Enhancing the accountability and the efficiency of the judicial system and the professionalism of lawyers in Georgia”: Access to electronic academic law libraries was granted to Judges, court staff and civil servants by establishing a sustainable consortium. A practical guide on Constitutional Court submissions was prepared enabling common court judges to challenge the constitutionality of legal norms for individual cases. Recommendations have been delivered to the High School of Justice on candidate judges’ selection procedure. Based on the expertise provided by the Project, the Supreme Court adopted a rule on selecting interns through an inclusive process on the basis of merit. With the involvement of CEPEJ experts, the Strategy and Action Plan of the Supreme Court was developed.
- AP “Support to the profession of lawyer in Georgia”: On 16 March, the Project supported the second meeting of the Justice Coordination Council (bench-bar). Lawyers and judges, including the judge of the Supreme Court of Georgia, participated in the discussion dedicated to modifications to contractual obligations due to changing circumstances (COVID-19-related). In March, the Project contracted a national communication consultant to work on a new communication strategy and improve the GBA’s internal and external communication. On 9 March, the Project organised a presentation of recommendations for the GBA’s Ethics Commission’s confidential counselling mechanism. Recommendations were developed and presented by a project expert based on research conducted by a national consultant. The Project has selected an international expert to assess the model of operation of GBA committees and provide recommendations on composition, management, operation reporting and accountability systems.
- AP “Supporting Transparency, Inclusiveness and Integrity of Electoral Practice and Process in Georgia”: On 5 March, in cooperation with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the Project hosted an online conference on Disinformation and electoral campaigns. A live streaming of the conference, on the Facebook page of the CoE in Georgia, provided the general public with access to the event. To support the further refinement of practices related to the adjudication of electoral complaints and the improvement of the competences of Georgian common court judges and electoral officials, the Project prepared a publication on “Perspectives of development of electoral legislation, challenges of electoral dispute resolution and the role of a judge”. The Project continued to publish a periodic electoral journal “Elections and Democracy” to promote an informed choice by citizens and to deliver transparent information to the public on electoral matters, in cooperation with the Supreme Election Commission of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara.
- AP “Promoting an Integrated Response to End Violence against Women and Enhancing Gender Equality in Georgia”: To mark International Women’s Rights Day on 8 March, the CoE Office in Georgia within the framework of the Project launched a campaign aimed at promoting gender equality and women’s right to live free from violence and fear. The Head of Office and six Ambassadors joined the campaign with short photo stories and seven photo stories were published on social media. A four-day specialisation training course on combatting sexual violence was organised together with the General Prosecutor’s Office and UN Women in

Georgia. On 13 April, fifty prosecutors and nine investigators received their certificates. The CoE, UN Women and Equality Now in partnership with the state agencies developed a manual on criminal cases of sexual violence in 2020. In the reporting period, three validation meetings were held with the aim of presenting the draft manual and seeking feedback on the contents of the manual. In March 2020, the CoE supported three online meetings organised by the Public Defender's Office. The purpose of the meetings was to share key findings and recommendations identified in the study on the administration of justice in sexual violence crimes with prosecutors, investigators, and lawyers.

- VC Denmark "Fight against discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech in Georgia": The General Prosecutor's Office, the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the National Statistics Office of Georgia have published data on hate crime collected in line with the new unified methodology developed with the support of the CoE. A joint presentation was also held to present the data and the methodology. The Project together with the Public Defender's Office marked Holocaust Remembrance Day with an online event. One hundred and forty School Resource officers were trained by their peers in human rights. The newly appointed Equality Ambassadors learned more about the fight against discrimination, activism and planned their initiatives to be implemented throughout Georgia

- AP "Strengthening Freedom of media, Internet governance and Personal Data Protection in Georgia": This report covers only February and March. In February, the new project "Strengthening Freedom of media, Internet governance and Personal Data Protection in Georgia" started. The project is in its inception phase at the moment. One activity has been implemented, the provision of a joint opinion of the Venice Commission and the Division for Cooperation on Freedom of Expression on the recent amendments to Georgian Law on Electronic Communications. The Project conducted consultations with partner organisations and stakeholders in order to further tailor the work plan.

- EU/CoE - PGG "Enhancing the systems of prevention and combatting corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing": The Project, in cooperation with the Financial Monitoring Service of Georgia (Financial Intelligence Unit of Georgia) and the Service for Accounting, Reporting and Auditing Supervision (SARAS), developed a sector-specific Guidance on Anti-money laundering/countering financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) compliance for accountants/auditors. The Guidance is in the process of being finalised and will assist the competent authorities and reporting entities representing the accounting/auditing sector to achieve compliance with AML/CFT international standards and to implement MONEYVAL's recommended action plan in terms of legislation, regulation, and supervision.

- EU/CoE - PGG "Supporting Criminal Justice Reforms - Tackling Criminal Aspects of Judicial Reform": The Project presented an expert opinion on the compatibility of Georgia's Criminal Procedure Code and related legislative provisions with European Standards. The review highlights issues requiring more attention from the executive and the legislator. These are matters relating to the approach to legal drafting, the position of vulnerable persons, the rights of victims, the conduct of undercover operations, the use of alternatives to detention, the conduct of plea bargaining, and the use of modern technology.

- AP "Enhancement of Human Rights and Health-Care Support to Penitentiary System": The Project carried out two online working group meetings with the representatives of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia (PDO) and the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) to discuss the Training Needs Assessment methodology and questionnaire designed for NPM staff and members of Special Preventive Group; two online working group meetings with the representatives of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Special Penitentiary Service (SPS) to discuss the Suicide Prevention Programme and its Action Plan, to review the findings and recommendations for their improvement and discuss the issue of refinement of the training modules for medical and non-medical staff working on suicide prevention in the penitentiary system; two working group meetings with MoJ and SPS representatives to discuss the findings and recommendations regarding the mental health policy documentation and to plan future

steps. Two CoE publications were translated into Georgian: the manual on “Prison Health Care and Medical Ethics: A manual for health-care workers and other prison staff with responsibility for prisoners’ well-being” and a manual on “Organisation and Management of Health Care in Prison: Guidelines”. In response to the beneficiaries’ requests, the Project donated an additional lot of personal protective equipment (PPE) to the SPS and the PDO. The donated PPE supports the efforts of the Georgian penitentiary system and the PDO to follow the CPT Statement of Principles relating to the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other relevant activities

- 27 January: The HoO opened a CoE event dedicated to Holocaust Day;
- 4 February: The HoO participated in the online Annual report presentation of the State Ministry of Reconciliation;
- 5 March: The HoO made opening remarks at a conference on Disinformation and Electoral Campaigns;
- The HoO held introductory meetings with Ambassador of Sweden (28 Jan), the President of the Constitutional Court (4 Feb), Ambassador of Armenia (19 Feb), Ambassador of Israel (4 March), Ambassador of Latvia (15 Mar), Chairperson of the Parliament (24 Mar), Head of the PACE delegation of Parliament (24 Mar) and the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Issues (31 Mar). In addition, the HoO took part in other meetings and briefings on issues falling within the CoE’s mandate, including meetings with the Ambassador of Netherlands (5 Jan), Justice Nino Bakakuri (12 Jan), Ambassador of EU (11 Feb), Head of the Union Century 21 (18 Feb), Head of NATO liaison Office (5 Mar) and representatives of NGOs working on judicial reforms (30 Mar).

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 8-12 February: Venice Commission experts held online meetings with a view to preparing an opinion on the amendments to the Law on Electronic Communications and the Law on Broadcasting in Georgia;
- 11-12 February: Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR experts carried out an online visit in preparation of draft joint opinions on draft amendments to the Election Code, the Organic Law on the Political Associations of Citizens and the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of Georgia and draft Article 79.1 of the Electoral Code of Georgia.

Tirana

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 7, Project staff – 13, Total staff – 20.

The Office implemented eight projects, six in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey”, one country-specific EU/CoE Joint Programme and one funded through a voluntary contribution from Sweden.

State of implementation of projects / programmes / Action Plans / co-operation documents

- EU/CoE - HF “Strengthening the Efficiency of Justice (SEJ III) in Albania”: Fifty-three representatives of the High Judicial Council (HJC) and courts in Albania were capacitated on the new and uniformed guide/methodology on collection and harmonisation of judicial statistics.
- EU/CoE - HF “Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners in Albania”: Sixteen training modules and the first trainers’ workbook were revised/developed, translated and edited for publication. Twelve more modules are under revision to complete the whole training package for induction and continuous training, in line with international standards. A comprehensive assessment on the provision of mental health services in Durres prison was finalised.
- EU/CoE - HF “Economic Crime in Albania”: The Central Election Commission (CEC) adopted instructions on the use of state resources during the electoral period, as well as procedures and tools for reporting and monitoring election campaign finances. In partnership with the Academy of Political Studies, 150 relevant representatives of the CEC, monitors, civil society organisations (CSOs) and media were capacitated on how to effectively use the aforementioned monitoring tools.
- EU/CoE - HF “Supporting effective domestic remedies and facilitating the execution of judgments (D-REX)”: An information campaign involving a helpline, brochures, radio spots and posters, was organised in partnership with the Law Faculty of Tirana University and TLAS (Local NGO specialised in free legal aid) to inform the general public on the procedures of registration of agricultural titles.
- EU/CoE – HF “Promotion of Diversity and Equality in Albania”: The Central Election Commission (CEC) was supported in the preparation of three informative posters in eight minority languages in the run up to the parliamentary elections on 25 April 2021. The No Hate Alliance was supported in drafting a code of conduct for political parties to counter hate speech during electoral campaigns. Two hundred manuals on efficient police response to hate crimes were distributed to the main police stations in Tirana.
- EU/CoE - HF “Judiciary and Freedom of Expression (JUFREX)”: Ten journalists attended a mentorship programme on constructive journalism and how to build trust among audiences while maintaining the quality of reporting, conducted in collaboration with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Albanian Media Council (AMC). Thirty-five lawyers were capacitated on the safety and protection of journalists. The Albanian version of the online course on Freedom of Expression was launched on the HELP Platform and a study on political advertising for media regulators was published.
- EU/CoE regional JP “ROMACTED”: Bilingual “Guidelines on Roma and Egyptian Responsive Budgeting at Local Level”, seven local Action Plans for the Integration of Roma and Egyptian Minorities and a contextualised ROMACTED Handbook “A manual for development of local resources, joint action and empowerment of Roma communities”, were published and distributed to relevant authorities and partners.

- VC Sweden "Strengthening Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania": A professional network of 125 teachers was established and launched by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth to exchange good practices, to discuss ideas and solutions as well as to promote democracy in and through education. The second Steering Committee meeting of the project was organised on 27 January.

Other relevant activities

- Two hundred young people participated in three thematic webinars named You(th) Talk organised by the CoE Office in Tirana in cooperation with the German Embassy in Tirana and the National Youth Congress within the frame of the German Presidency of the CM. Senior diplomats, experts and civil society representatives had exchanges with young people on the priority areas of the German Presidency and some of the most pressing challenges that Europe is facing today.

Yerevan**Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 5, Project staff – 25, Total staff – 30.

The Office implemented thirteen projects, four in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, one funded by the UK, one funded by Switzerland, one funded by Austria, and six projects funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level.

State of implementation of projects/programmes/Action Plans/co-operation documents

- EU/CoE - PGG Component 1 “Support to the judicial reform – enhancing the independence and professionalism of the judiciary in Armenia”: Legal drafting of judicial decisions was the key topic of a two-day training organised on 23-24 February. Seventeen national judges and judges’ assistants, representing civil and administrative courts of different instances participated in the training programme. The content of the training was based on CoE standards with a particular emphasis on CoE documents on the quality of justice. On 26 February, an online discussion of the “Post-adoption review of the Judicial Code of Armenia” took place, the objective of which was to agree with Armenian stakeholders the preliminary findings and conclusions of the post-adoption review with regard to the Judicial Code. On 30 March, an online discussion was held, with the aim of presenting the results of the “Assessment of the methodology and the procedure for the performance evaluation of judges”.
- EU/CoE - PGG - Component 2 “Support to the judicial reform - supporting the criminal justice reform and harmonising the application of European standards in Armenia”: A piloting group of 22 legal professionals, including judges, prosecutors and investigators, successfully completed the HELP distance learning course on “Procedural safeguards in criminal proceedings and victims’ rights”. During the webinar, a group of 20 judicial servants of the Court of Cassation improved their knowledge and skills on specific aspects of Article 8 of the ECHR. During another webinar, a group of 25 participants, including staff of the Representative of the Government of Armenia at the ECtHR, prosecutors, investigators, and advocates improved their knowledge and skills on the latest case-law of the ECtHR on Articles 2 and 3 of the ECHR. The handbook on “Detention as a measure of restraint - justification for its application and extension”, which was adapted to the Armenian legal order, was published online. Two other publications of compilations of the summaries of the key ECtHR judgements in the Armenian language and of decisions of the Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation for 2019 were completed, and 500 copies of each were distributed to legal professionals of Armenia.
- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening institutional capacities to fight and prevent corruption in Armenia”: On 6-7 February, the CoE organised a workshop with the Deputy Speaker and 60 Members of the Armenian National Assembly to discuss and promote a Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament, based on the proposed Code of Conduct previously developed with the CoE’s support. This addresses both national priorities and GRECO’s strong recommendation from its Fourth Round Evaluation (GrecoRC4(2019)21). The workshop on “Integrity checking: Armenian experience, achievements and prospects for improvement” on 26 February, organised through the joint efforts of the Project and the Corruption Prevention Commission (CPC) of the Republic of Armenia, provided an opportunity to learn lessons from the first round of practical implementation of integrity checking and to suggest improvements to the methodology used, based on feedback from different national authorities and international experts. A workshop on “International cooperation in criminal matters and Mutual legal

assistance in Armenia” on 11-12 March was organised to discuss practical questions from the Armenian authorities related to asset recovery, pre-MLA enquiries and requirements for formal MLA requests.

- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening the profession of lawyer in line with European standards”: During the reporting period, the Project organised the Second Technical Project Committee Meeting (TPC). Along with the members of the TPC, the meeting was attended by representatives of the governments, EUDs and CoE external offices of the five participating countries. The Project finalised the second and third cross-country reviews on the internal structure of bar associations and on procedural safeguards for lawyers in the five participating countries of the project (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine). The reviews are pending conclusive validation by the project’s main stakeholders before publication. The Project delivered the fourth cross-country review on the system of legal representation of advocates. The findings of the review were validated by relevant stakeholders and institutions in the five participating countries during bilateral online meetings/interviews with project experts organised by the project. In total, 22 online meetings were held. The website developed within the project as an online regional cooperation network for the bars and lawyers’ professional associations was launched during the TPC meeting.
- AP “Human Rights and Women in the Armed Forces of Armenia – Phase II”: On 8-9 February, the second working group online meeting for the development of HELP model online course on the protection of human rights in the armed forces was held. The Manual “Legal framework for human rights monitoring in the armed forces by the human rights defender” developed by the Project for the HRDO was published and provided to the HRDO. The analysis for the MoD on “The legal framework for the social and health rights of servicemen, their family members, disabled servicemen, military pensioners, in terms of compliance with European human rights standards, identification of legal gaps or obstacles in terms of full realisation of those rights” was developed and provided to the MoD for processing further. An animated film on “Legal remedies for military servicepersons” was developed by the Project and broadcasted on public TV. On 22-24 March, the Project held the first ToT for the personnel of military universities in Armenia based on the Human Rights course developed by the Project.
- VC Switzerland “Strengthening the Communities Association of Armenia and transparent, participatory local governance in Armenia”: The Project provided support to the meetings of the Communities Association of Armenia (CAA), namely the CAA Board meeting on 19 February, and the CAA thematic committee meetings on 25 February and 18 March. The Project also provided its expert support to the CAA through its legal advice on changes and additions in the RA Law on Local self-governance on the extension of powers of the Head of Community and the Community Council under the conditions of an emergency situation, martial law or the impossibility to hold elections. On 30 March, the Project held a meeting of the Community of practice on public integrity and ethics in local governance in Armenia. The meeting aimed at wrapping-up 2020 activities and discussing recommendations for 2021. The members of the CoP agreed to continue activities through two working groups to test and promote the deliverables of last year on the ground.
- VC Austria “Democratic development, decentralisation and good governance in Armenia”: At the 4th Project Steering Committee meeting on 15 January, the SC participants took note of the activity report for 2020 and approved a plan of activities for 2021. They were informed of the implementation of 25 grant projects and the results of the survey on Covid-19’s impact on consolidated communities. Under the legal component, comprehensive analyses of legal and financial frameworks for local government in the context of the constitutional amendments were carried out. On 19 February, draft guidelines on “Organising and Implementing Community Economic Activities at Local Level” were discussed at the 2nd Community consultation meeting. In the reporting quarter, the preparatory work for the peer review on financial decentralisation and fiscal autonomy in Armenia started.

- AP "Support the scaling-up of the probation service in Armenia": The package of draft amendments on probation was presented and discussed during a workshop on 25 March, and the feedback received was analysed and included in the final version that was sent to the MoJ. Revised training modules and the trainers' manual was presented and discussed during a workshop on 24 February. The consultant team held many meetings with various stakeholders on e-probation, as a result of which the draft ICT part of the report was submitted. The role of the probation service was raised among Armenian advocates via online training that was held on 12 March. The desk report was developed on training needs for the introduction of a training course on probation for judges and prosecutors of the Academy of Justice of RA. A series of two-day skill-based training sessions was launched to introduce the revised risk and need assessment tool to the Armenian probation officers (the first training session of the series was held on 2-3 March). The baseline report on reintegration and vocational programmes for probation beneficiaries in Armenia was developed in line with questions and a short methodology prepared by an international consultant. A testing plan for revision of the software component of the RNA tool was presented.
- AP "Enhancing health care and human rights protection in prisons in Armenia": A workshop on "International practices on the telemedicine in penitentiary institutions" was organised online on 29 January to discuss the best practices on applying telemedicine, as well as the advantages and challenges of introducing e-health systems in the penitentiaries. The workshop was followed by first online WG meeting held on 15 March with the aim to discuss and decide on the requirements for piloting telemedicine in penitentiary facilities. The recommendations of an assessment report on "Psychiatric Assistance in the Penitentiary Institutions of the Republic of Armenia" were presented during an online workshop on 25 February. A CoE HELP course on CPT standards was launched on 9 March. A group of 24 professionals from the MoJ, the Prison Medicine Centre and the Human Rights Defender's Office will become acquainted with CPT standards over the course of six weeks. Further to technical assistance provided by Project, the Government of Armenia amended Decision No 825-N "On procedure for organising medical, sanitary and medical-preventive assistance to detained and convicted persons" by introducing a new chapter on requirements for the examination and reporting of allegations of ill-treatment cases. A programme for the prevention and control of infections in prison health facilities was developed along with the training manual. The training curriculum and manual for nurses and caregivers working in penitentiary institutions has been developed based on the assessed training needs of the "Penitentiary Medical Center" SNCO. RNA tools on (i) suicide and self-harm prevention and (ii) mental health assessment, were developed along with the roadmap for piloting.
- AP "The Path towards Armenia's Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence": The project results and activities planned for 2021 were discussed with its Steering Committee members in February. A large-scale awareness-raising campaign on preventing and combating domestic violence (including the campaign website, 2 TV ads, interactive video promotion on social media, posters, urban installation, social experiment) was launched on 8 March and two news stories on Public TV promoted the campaign. A "Gender Equality" course for legal professionals developed by the project will be included in the curricula of the RA Academy of Justice. An expert analysis of the complaints submitted to Human Rights Defender's Office (HRDO) related to domestic violence and analysing how the COVID-19 pandemic affected DV has been submitted to the HRDO. A call for small grants projects to promote awareness on combating violence against women and domestic violence, as well as empowering women, has been launched. Through the direct grant provided to Yerevan State University, capacity building for 240 social workers from the State Integrated Social Services operating in Armenia will be implemented during the year. The two courses (Gender Sensitivity in Social Work, and Prevention of Domestic Violence) that will be taught to social workers and other professionals are aligned with the standards set by the CoE Istanbul Convention. The handbook "The

Istanbul Convention - a Powerful Tool to end Gender-Based Violence” was translated into Armenian to be distributed at an awareness-raising event planned for parliamentarians in autumn.

- AP “Protection of Human Rights in Biomedicine I”: An Online HELP training-of-trainers (ToT) course on Bioethics was organised on 18-19 January with the participation of 17 legal and healthcare professionals of Armenia, including representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Human Rights Defender’s Office, and National Assembly, as well as judges, advocates, lawyers, prosecutors and other professionals. The ToT was followed by a two-month intensive training with a tutor and. On completion of the course, nine participants will become certified tutors of the HELP course on Bioethics. Mixed teams of local and international experts have started to work on a comparative analysis of the compliance of national legislation in the field of biomedicine with European Human rights and ethical standards enshrined in the Oviedo Convention in February. The analysis will be presented in the form of a written report with corresponding recommendations on possible amendments to be used as a "roadmap" by the Armenian authorities. The second Steering Committee meeting of the Project was held online on 23 February and was dedicated to the discussion of the project’s progress assessment, greater involvement of stakeholders, as well as the active participation of the Project’s experts. On 11 March, the discussion on the topic of “Human Rights Protection in Biomedicine” was organised, in close collaboration with Faculty of Law of Yerevan State University, to discuss all aspects of the Oviedo Convention and raise awareness on the principles of the Convention.
- AP “Support for the Execution by Armenia of Judgments in Respect of Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights”: January-March marked the Inception phase of the Project, during which meetings were held with its main stakeholders (Government Agent, Ministry of Justice and the Court of Cassation) to discuss and shape the activities of the Project. The tender for local consultancy services was organised and conducted, and the launching event and the first steering committee of the project were held. In addition, the workplan of the project and the 3-month financial workplan of activities were prepared, the latter has been already confirmed and adopted.
- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening access to justice through non-judicial redress mechanisms for victims of discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in the Eastern Partnership countries”: The Project made significant steps on combating hate speech with 20 participants taking part in a training course for teachers and youth workers in February, all of whom carried out follow up awareness-raising actions in March that reached over 200 young people. A brochure on hate speech was produced in Armenian. The Project also kicked off a systemic mapping process on hate speech in Armenia. It provided two grants for local anti-discrimination projects, to Right Side Transgender NGO and UNISON, working respectively on empowerment against discrimination of transgender people and disabled people.

Other relevant activities

- 15 January: The DHoO gave an opening speech for the 4th Steering Committee meeting of the Project “Democratic Development, Decentralisation and Good Governance in Armenia”;
- 18 January: The DHoO gave an opening speech for the meeting of the ToT on the HELP course on Bioethics;
- 3 February: The DHoO gave an opening speech for the Project Committee meeting, PGG Project “Strengthening the profession of lawyer in line with European standards”;
- 8 February: The DHoO participated in annual PGG Local Steering Committee meeting for Armenia;
- 11 February: The DHoO had meetings with the Deputy Prosecutor General of Armenia, the Chairman of the Court of Cassation of Armenia;

- 23 February: The DHoO gave an opening speech for the 2nd Steering Committee meeting, Project "Protection of Human Rights in Biomedicine I";
- 9 March: The DHoO gave an opening speech for the Kick-off conference of HELP course of the Project "Enhancing health care and human rights protection in prisons in Armenia";
- 16 March: The DHoO participated in a meeting on "Informal Donor Coordination on Justice and Anti-corruption";
- 17 March: The DHoO participated in the online conference "Perspectives for Armenia in the framework of Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement";
- 19 March: The DHoO participated in an online roundtable discussion on public's priority concerns and perceptions regarding public institutions, elections and electoral reform;
- 22 March: The DHoO gave an opening speech for the ToT, Project "Human Rights and Women in the Armed Forces of Armenia – Phase II";
- 25 March: The DHoO participated in online roundtable discussion "Armenia's electoral reform process";
- 30 March: The DHoO gave an opening speech for the "Community of practice" meeting, and the Project "Strengthening the Communities Association of Armenia and transparent, participatory local governance in Armenia".

Pristina

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 6, Project staff –18, Total staff – 24.

The Office currently implements ten projects, three in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Horizontal Facility”, three EU/CoE Joint Programmes and four funded through voluntary contributions at the level of the Overview of co-operation activities document.

State of implementation of projects/programmes

- EU/CoE JP “Project against Economic Crime ” (PECK III): The Project developed Guidelines on Strategic Analysis and held four training webinars for the Strategic Analysis Unit at the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU). It conducted three virtual bilateral meetings with AMSCA and other related institutions with regard to the Review of the Legal and Operational Framework of AMSCA. It also provided advice to the MoJ on the Regulation on Receiving and Handling Whistleblowers cases and held a virtual meeting with the FIU on typologies for the financing of terrorism.
- EU/CoE JP “Building Capacity for Inclusive Education – INCLUDE”: Following a call for applications, twenty-five schools were selected and included in the project. A needs assessment report for building the capacities of professionals working with *children with Special Educational Needs* (SEN) was finalised. A separate assessment of needs for professionals working with children with hearing impairments was also conducted. Monitoring forms for the implementation of individual education plans for children with SEN in regular schools, including transition forms as well as daily, weekly and bi-monthly plans, were also finalised and approved by the Ministry of Education and Science.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED)”: The Inception for ROMACTED II was extended to the end of April. Contacts were established with two new municipalities for the second phase. At regional level, the ROMACTED Handbook was published, at beneficiary level the Baseline Assessment Report on the capacities and needs of Roma communities and the beneficiary municipalities was published and promoted. A call for the pool of facilitators and consultants was finalised, along with a call for a support organisation to be engaged under ROMACTED II (2021-2024).
- VC “Improving the Protection of European Human Rights Standards by the Constitutional Court IPEHRSCC”: The Communication Strategy and Action Plan of the Constitutional Court 2021-2025 were completed and integrated with an overall strategic vision of the institution for a designated period. The Project completed a series of thematic round tables on different articles of the ECHR by organising a final webinar on Article 1, Protocol 1 of the ECHR, on Property Rights, facilitated by two experts with ECtHR experience. The Project began an upgrade of the case management system of the Constitutional Court to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its working processes, as well as the development of the E-library tool to support the newly established Juris Consult Unit of the court.
- VC “Reinforcing the fight against violence against women and domestic violence”: In order to finalise the quality guidelines for shelters for victims of VAW and DV, and an expert meeting with the working group was organised on 26 January, which generally endorsed the guidelines for their final compilation. A HELP Course on VAW and DV for 25 students of the Law Faculty of the University of Pristina began online on 8 March and is expected to be completed by April. The ToT Curricula on VAW and DV for prosecutors and judges was handed over to the Justice Academy in a small ceremony.

- EU/CoE - HF "Freedom of expression and freedom of the media (JUFREX2)": Two training sessions on FoE were organised for lawyers and journalists during the reporting period. The Independent Media Commission provided comments on the Technical Paper (TP) on the draft-regulation on media ownership, and the Project is in the process of engaging a team of experts to finalise the document. CoE Platform factsheets were translated into both local languages. A Study on political advertising was translated and shared with local partners. The SC meeting was successfully organised. The HELP course on FoE was launched and is now available online in the local languages.
- EU/CoE – HF "Promotion of diversity and equality": The anti-discrimination reporting framework was finalised by an expert and the Office for Good Governance. The draft plan for capacity building for the OGG anti-discrimination units was prepared and will be carried out during the second quarter of the year. The action is part of the working group for amending the Civil Registration Law, with a special focus on addressing legal gender recognition. It also supported the Ombudsperson Institution in producing two ex-officio reports on the use of hate speech in the media and online; and the use of hate speech in schools (bullying).
- EU/CoE - HF "Ensuring Efficiency and Quality of Justice (KOSEJ2)": The Action launched a campaign on social media and TV to raise awareness of the possibility to apply online for criminal record certificates. The MoJ, with the support of the Action, collected the 2020 data from contact points in the relevant institutions for the preparation of the next assessment report on the functioning of the justice system. They are using the new Know-How Guidelines developed by the Action to assist them in this process. CEPEJ experts are also working on the upcoming report on the use of IT in courts. Agender analysis of the Action was finalised.
- VC "Strengthening Institutions in Fight against Torture, Ill-treatment and Other Degrading Treatment IKOS": The Project completed the development of two comprehensive multidisciplinary training modules for the Justice Academy, including Prohibition of Ill-treatment, Combating Impunity, and a UN Manual on Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture (Istanbul Protocol). The Project supplied the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture (NPM) with COVID-19 protective equipment including masks, disinfection sprays and overalls. An assessment of the legislative and institutional framework and referral of cases under Article 3 of the ECHR was completed. Development of the module on Monitoring Corruption and Preferential Treatment in Detention is in its final stage.
- VC "Promoting Local Democracy": The process to assess the conformity of the domestic legal framework and practice with European standards has been initiated with the support of a member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government and a local expert. Focus group meetings are planned for mid-May. The Handbook on Open Local Government and Public Ethics has been developed together with the *Democratic Institute* with a view to capacity-building activities for members of the Association of Kosovo Municipalities and its inclusion in the bE-Open online tool launched by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.
- VC "Preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings": The Project is supporting local authorities to establish and develop a database on Victims of Trafficking. On this note, on 11 February, a meeting of the cross-institutional working group on the database was organised and facilitated, to exchange best practices on the establishment of the THB database with experts from Portugal and Hungary. The Project furthered its efforts in setting up the database with a week-long workshop held from 29 March - 2 April, bringing together experts and representatives of all relevant institutions, which resulted in the agreed instructions and content of the database. The Project also concluded a training needs assessment for the Criminal Justice Sector.

Follow up action

- INCLUDE: Launch the project for working with the pilot schools;
- Anti-Trafficking: During the forthcoming quarter, the Project will organise a round table to present findings from the training Needs Assessment as well as training activities for the beneficiaries of the project;
- KOSEJ II: Promotional video for social media on e-summons (May) and finalisation of the module on CEPEJ tools for the Justice Academy;
- IPEHRSCC: Finalisation of the Case Management System and E-library of the court, launching of ECtHR case law publications, and the final project conference;
- IKOS: Training of Trainers of the Justice Academy on two training modules under Article 3 of the ECHR, launching of two related HELP courses, awareness-raising activities with students and relevant institutional stakeholders;
- VAW&DV: Launching research on setting up treatment programmes for perpetrators of VAW and DV on 29 April.

Other relevant activities

- The Office facilitated an online meeting between the PACE Rapporteur and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Meliza Haradinaj, on 18 January, with the participation of the HoO.

Rabat

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 3, Project staff – 6, Total staff – 9.

The Office chiefly co-ordinates the implementation in Morocco of the EU/CoE regional joint programme "Regional Support to Reinforce Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democracy in the Southern Mediterranean" (South Programme IV) 2020-2022 and the joint European Union/Council of Europe project "Support to the National Preventative Mechanism against Torture in Morocco" (2020-2023). It also provides ad hoc logistical support for the implementation in Morocco of the EU/CoE regional joint programme "CyberSouth – Co-operation on cybercrime in the Southern Neighbourhood Region" (2017-2020), the EU/CoE regional joint project "Global Action on Cybercrime Action Extended (GLACY+)" (2016-2021), a project on combating discrimination in Morocco (VC Norway), a project to promote freedom of expression and media pluralism in Morocco and another in support of personal data protection in Morocco, a project on "Strengthening democratic governance at local and regional levels in Morocco" (VC Norway), a project on "Improving the functioning of justice in Morocco based on the tools developed by the CEPEJ", and other projects implemented under the Neighbourhood Partnership between the CoE and Morocco 2018-2021.

State of implementation of programmes

EU/CoE South Programme IV "Regional Support to Reinforce Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democracy in the Southern Mediterranean" (2020-2022)

- On 4 January, in Rabat, the HELP courses on violence against women and domestic violence and on combating trafficking in human beings were launched in co-operation with the Higher Judicial Institute (ISM) with the aim of training 150 justice officials during 2021.
- The 2nd regional seminar on the challenges of judicial co-operation in the fight against trafficking in human beings in the Mediterranean was held online on 24 and 25 February, with the aim of examining ways to strengthen judicial co-operation against trafficking in human beings in the southern Mediterranean region.
- On 5 March, the HELP programme certified 28 ISM justice officials who had completed the HELP online course on combating violence against women and domestic violence, and a conference on gender equality was held on the same day.
- On the occasion of International Women's Day (8 March), an event aimed at strengthening the role of prosecutors in the fight against violence against women and domestic violence was held in Rabat on 9 and 10 March, in co-operation with the Presidency of the Public Prosecutor's Office (PMP).
- On 18 March, the Council of Europe ran a Training of Trainers session in Rabat for around 20 law professionals from Morocco and Tunisia, including representatives of ministries and independent public bodies.
- In collaboration with the National Observatory for Children's Rights (ONDE) and as part of the "Morocco Cyberconfidence project", capacity-building training for professionals from the ONDE and NGOs on the technical aspects of online child protection was held on Wednesday 24 March.
- On 31 March and 1 April, an event aimed at strengthening the role of prosecutors in the fight against violence against women and domestic violence was held in Tangier, in co-operation with the PMP.
- Work continued on a baseline study on the media treatment of violence against women in the southern Mediterranean region (Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Lebanon).

Joint European Union/Council of Europe project "Support to the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture in Morocco" (2020-2023)

- The joint European Union/Council of Europe project "Support to the National Preventative Mechanism against Torture in Morocco" (2020-2023) was launched online on 26 January, with the participation, among others, of the President of the National Human Rights Council (CNHD). This project is part of the broader framework of the joint programme entitled "Support to the National Preventative Mechanism against Torture in Morocco and the Development of the role of the Parliament in Morocco" (2020-2023) funded by the European Union and implemented by the Council of Europe.

Voluntary contribution

- As part of the project on "Improving the functioning of justice in Morocco using the tools of the CEPEJ – phase II", two meetings were held on 5 January in Rabat. CEPEJ experts and members of the Secretariat met with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and MoJ representatives, then with PMP members, to fine-tune the project's aims and expected results with a view to drawing up a schedule of activities for the beginning of 2021 on the issues of the digitalisation of Moroccan justice and of the PMP's communication with prosecutors.

- An Arabic-French compendium entitled "Combating trafficking in human beings: a collection of legal summaries and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights" was published, providing a compilation of legal summaries of judgments and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights in the field of combating trafficking in human beings.

- Protecting children from online abuse and exploitation: in collaboration with the Moroccan Centre for Polytechnic Research and Innovation (CMRPI), co-ordinator of the local Safer Internet Day Morocco committee, and under the aegis of the Ministry of Industry, Trade, Green and Digital Economy, the Council of Europe held a co-ordination and information meeting with the participation of representatives of institutional partners, NGOs, telecom operators and two international experts on 9 February. This was part of the annual worldwide celebrations of Safer Internet Day, which aims to raise awareness for a safer and better Internet.

- As part of the project "Improving the functioning of justice in Morocco using the tools of the CEPEJ – phase II", a CEPEJ expert spoke at the training sessions held online on 26 January by the PMP on the European system of human rights protection.

- Protecting children from online abuse and exploitation: a new reporting portal was launched in Morocco on 2 February by the Internet Watch Foundation, in co-operation with the CMRPI and the Council of Europe, as part of the "Morocco Cyberconfidence project": <https://cyberconfidence.ma>.

- Protecting children from online abuse and exploitation: on 3 February, the MoJ, in collaboration with the Council of Europe, held an online workshop on "the Lanzarote Convention: a major tool for protecting children in the digital environment" aimed at addressing the contextual challenges to protecting children in the digital environment identified at country level.

- On the occasion of Safer Internet Day 2021, the Council of Europe, in collaboration with the CMRPI, produced an awareness-raising video to warn of the dangers of the Internet for children: https://youtu.be/zwwO9_NAAls and a video to raise parental awareness of the these dangers: <https://youtu.be/u1jeJ1a5xEg>.

- On Wednesday 10 February, the Council of Europe, in collaboration with the CMRPI and the "Morocco Cyberconfidence Space" task force, held an online capacity-building workshop for professionals and NGOs working in child protection.

- Crucial steps were taken for the protection of the fundamental rights of human trafficking victims: on 10 and 11 February, the Council of Europe, with the National Commission for Co-ordinating Measures for Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings in

Morocco, held two capacity-building training sessions for the members of the Commission on the detection and identification of human trafficking victims, with the participation of Council of Europe experts, including the former President of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA).

- As part of Safer Internet Day 2021, the Council of Europe, in collaboration with the CMRPI, held two awareness-raising workshops on responsible use of the Internet for 50 pupils in two schools in Rabat on 16 February.
- As part of the project "Improving the functioning of justice in Morocco using the tools of the CEPEJ – phase II", the CEPEJ held two online working meetings in partnership with the PMP. The meetings took place on 23 February with the prosecutors of the Court of First Instance of Khemisset and on 26 February with the Prosecutor's Office of the Court of Appeal of Safi.
- As part of Safer Internet Day 2021, the Council of Europe worked with the CMRPI to hold an awareness-raising session for several children from the Ibny association on 24 February and one for parents, by the Ibny association, called "Let's fight cyberviolence against children in the Covid-19 era", on 18 March.
- As part of the project "Improving the functioning of justice in Morocco using the tools of the CEPEJ – phase II", CEPEJ experts and PMP representatives met by videoconference on 11 March to co-ordinate the development of specific recommendations aimed at improving the monitoring of prosecutors' activities in the field.
- Hate speech in Morocco: in the context of the study on hate speech in Morocco, the Council of Europe held, in collaboration with the Mediterranean Youth Forum, three discussion workshops with the target groups, namely young Moroccan media professionals, Moroccan students and sub-Saharan students, on 13, 17 and 18 March respectively in Rabat.
- On 15 March, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Moroccan Association of Prefectural and Provincial Councils (AMPCPP), jointly held a national Association meeting on the "reform of the legislative framework related to competences of prefectures and provinces and their implementation".
- As part of the media project: Launch of a field study on the phenomenon of disinformation in Morocco for the Department of Communication.
- As part of the media project: Launch of the contextualisation stage of the HELP course on freedom of expression.
- As part of the media project: Translation of the National Press Council's (CNP) website from Arabic into French.
- As part of the Data Protection project: the National Data Protection Authority (CNDP) held online training seminars on control operations on 5 and 9 March.
- As part of the Data Protection project: Launch of the contextualisation stage of the HELP course on data protection with five tutors.