

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Quarterly report of Council of Europe Offices

October - December 2020

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 October-December 2020. 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 863 information messages and documents and 12 weekly reports were prepared and sent to Strasbourg by the Information Officer. 174 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 Office facilitated the organisation of several high level CoE-EU discussions, notably:

- Secretary General, Ms Pejčinović Burić, discussed with Commission's Vice-President for values and transparency, Ms Jourová, on 3 December. PACE President, Mr Daems, and former Vice President of the ECtHR, Judge Fr Tulkens, for the online conference "Human Rights for the Planet", organised by the ECtHR, 5 October 2020.
- DG Giakoumopoulos and SRSG Štefánek, with Deputy DG Luchner, DG Home, and Head of the task force migration, 19 November, on human rights aspects of the new EU Pact on Migration, and possible co-operation.
- Human Rights Commissioner, Ms Mijatović, intervened in a webinar organised by Amb. Kuneva, Head EU Delegation in Strasbourg, on the EU's Action Plan on Democracy and Human Rights, 7 December.
- PACE President, Mr Daems, participated in a similar webinar organised by Amb. Kuneva on the EU Democracy Action Plan, 14 December.
- EEAS Deputy SG, Mr Sannino, as well as two MEPs, and a representative from the Commission (JUST) intervened in a hearing organised by the PACE/Pol Committee on CoE-EU co-operation 10 years after the Lisbon Treaty.

In addition, the Office was involved in the following occasions of CoE-EU co-operation:

- Discussions with the Cabinets of the Commission's Executive Vice President, Mr Timmermans, and Commissioner Dalli on their possible participation in the World Forum for Democracy.
- Discussions with Commissioner Dalli's Cabinet on co-operation as regards the implementation of the EU Anti-racism Action Plan.
- Discussions with VP Jourová Cabinet, in view of the publication of the European Democracy Action Plan and the EU Strategy on the implementation of the fundamental Rights Charter (2 December).
- Discussion with Commissioner Reynders on a contribution by the commissioner to the GRECO's General Activity Report 2020.
- Discussions with DG HOME on the "Integration and Inclusion Action Plan for migrants" and with the EU co-ordinator on antisemitism, Ms von Schnurbein, in view of the preparation of the EU Anti-Semitism Action Plan (to be published in 2021).
- GRECO participated in the CONT EP Committee.
- GRETA President participated in the EP/LIBE event on trafficking in human beings (26 October).
- The anti-discrimination Director, Mr Schokkenbroeck DG II, participated in the German Presidency High-Level-Conference launching the new "Strategic EU-Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation until 2030" (12 October).
- The President of the European Committee of Social Rights, Mr Palmisano, participated in the DE EU Presidency conference 'Strengthening Older People's

Rights in Times of Digitalisation – Lessons learned from Covid-19', (28-29 September 2020).

- Mr Penninckx, DGI, in the EU-Human Rights NGO Forum, 10-11 December, on human rights challenges of information technologies.
- 49th meeting of the CoE Secretariat with the Chair of the EU's CATS Working Group, on matters of criminal law primarily, 8 December.

The Office reported on important EU developments, of direct interest to the Organisation, such as:

- Rule of Law in the EU member States: Art 7 discussions in the General Affairs Council, discussions held in the European Parliament, and discussions on the "rule of law conditionality" in the framework of the multiannual budget. It reported on the follow-up to the Commission's first Rule of Law report from September: discussions in the European Parliament, and in the General Affairs Council in October and November, and discussion with the Justice Ministers in December.
- Human rights issues linked to violence against women (including cyber-violence) and gender issues, women human rights defenders, abortion rights, LGBTQIs; freedom of expression, safety of journalists, media freedom, the Digital Service Act, impact of measures against the Covid-19 pandemic. It reported on the newly adopted EU global human rights sanction regime. It also reported on:
 - a. The FRA event on 7 December on the future of Fundamental Rights in the EU
 - b. The EU EU-Human Rights NGO Forum, 10-11 December, on human rights challenges of information technologies.
- Migration: the Office reported on the discussions on the newly proposed Commission's Migration Pact held in the European Parliament, including a EP High Level Conference, in the EU Council as well as in different Brussels-based Think Tanks. Lately, the attention focused on the issue of pushbacks and on the role of FRONTEX.
- Security issues: the EU security strategy, fight against terrorism and violent extremism; radicalisation.
- Political developments: enlargement policies, in particular Northern Macedonia and Albania, situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 25 years after the Dayton Agreement; relations with Turkey, Cyprus; dialogue with Russia's opposition (including A. Navalny) and civil society in the EP, situation in Ukraine; Brexit, human rights, and women rights in Belarus, human rights in Algeria, situation in Kyrgyzstan.

The Office facilitated bilateral consultations and contributions to the following policy documents launched by the Commission:

- Anti-racism Action Plan
- European Democracy Action Plan
- Integration and Inclusion Action Plan
- Gender Equality Action Plan
- The EU's Strategy in the implementation of the FR Charter
- DGI contributed to the EU's public consultation on social rights

The Office stayed in close contacts with various parts of the Commission so as to strengthen programmatic co-operation, such as with DG NEAR on the Partnership for good governance (PGG), for the Dashboard programme in the Eastern Partnership, and on the IPA III instrument. It was also in contact with DG Reform on various co-operation projects within the EU, as well as with DG Just and DG Home. Contacts with the EEAS were maintained on a very regular basis.

The Office contributed to the organisation of the on-line event 'Improving the lives of citizens through better Governance' organised in the framework of the 'Partnership for Good Governance (PGG) 2019-2021', 5-7 October 2020, with high-level interventions (Commissioner, DG) and interviews.

The Office took part in the Youth Forum "Brussels Dialogue-2020"; it addressed the role of international co-operation within the Council of Europe in ensuring and promoting peace in Europe after the WWII.

The Office closely followed the 7th meeting of the "47+1" Group on the EU's accession to the ECHR (24-26 November). It also participated in the meeting of the Council of Europe's Heads of External Offices meeting (17-19 November).

The Team of the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership hosted on 28-29 October a [Youth Knowledge Forum, with participation of the competent Directors from DGII and the Commission. It](#) also launched its Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) on the Essentials of youth work.

On 1 December, the Youth Partnership Management Board meeting was organised, with the participation of the competent Directors from the DGII and the Commission. The Directors agreed to reinforce the youth partnership and the Commission proposed to increase its financial contribution as of 2021. On 7-10 December, the youth partnership was also involved in the large-scale digital Youth Work Convention, hosted by German Presidency of EU and Chairmanship of Council of Europe Committee of Ministers and co-organised with the European Union and Council of Europe. The youth partnership published several studies and a new Podcast series.

The Brussels-based Secretariat of the Pompidou Group notably organised the 7th annual meeting of the expert group on Drugs Online as well as the 13th annual meeting of the international network on the control of Precursors' Diversion.

Visibility and relations with media

The Spokesperson/Media Officer co-ordinated communications work around the Committee of Ministers meetings (CM-DH) on the execution of ECHR judgments and on specific days on HR matters, such as: Death penalty, anti-trafficking, Justice, Protection of Children, Elimination of Violence against Women Corruption, and Human Rights Day (10 December).

He also maintained regular contacts with Brussels-based media and carried out social media work on specific events such as the PACE Standing Committee meetings, the Venice Commission plenary, the 70th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights (including the event in Berlin). He covered the informal conference of education ministers, the Annual Regional Rule of Law Forum on COVID-19 and the ECHR, conferences on "Human Rights for the Planet" and LGBTI issues at the European Court of Human Rights, the World Forum for Democracy event on climate justice.

He did media work related to CoE reports, in particular from CEPEJ, CPT, GRECO, the FCNM, MONEYVAL and the Human Rights Commissioner's memorandum on the situation of LGBTI people in Poland. He covered the Council of Europe's participation in a webinar organised by the Centre for European Policy Studies on the rule of law in the EU, interventions from the

Human Rights Commissioner concerning Hungary and the UK as well as various judgments and decisions from the European Court of Human Rights.

The Spokesperson/Media Officer also took part in the co-ordination meeting with communications professionals from several different international organisations and continued work on the on-going communications project highlighting the impact of the convention. He worked on communication over the link between human rights and the environment, the launch of a new thematic factsheet on the independence and impartiality of judicial systems and on the updated Memorandum of Understanding with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

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 facilitated the participation of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees in the 71st session of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR High Commissioner's Programme (5-9 October) and arranged his meetings with IOM Director General, Antonio Vitorino and with the appointed UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Gillian Triggs. She also enabled the virtual meeting between the SRSG and the High Commissioner on Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, on 26 October. She participated in the opening session of the UN Social Forum on 8 October.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she participated online in the Annual Meeting of the Focal Points on the Regional Human Rights Mechanisms (RHRMs) on 9 November and in the (European) Regional Review of the Global Compact on Migration (IOM/UN) on 13 November. She followed online the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges (5 half days), the Geneva Peace Week from 2 to 7 November, the GAAMAC (Network for the prevention of atrocities (genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing) meeting on 16 November and the UN Minority Forum on 19 and 20 November.

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

Participation in OSCE Permanent Council Meetings

Leadership at the OSCE

At the Ministerial Council in Tirana on 3 and 4 December 2020, the following were appointed: Secretary General, Helga Maria Schmid; Director of ODIHR, Matteo Meccaci; High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), Kairat Abdrakhmanov; and, Representative on Freedom on the Media, Teresa Ribeiro. In addition, a total of eleven texts by the AL CiO were approved and the OSCE Chairmanship in 2023 for North Macedonia was agreed upon.

Participation in OSCE Permanent Council Meetings

- OSCE Permanent Council with the proposal of the Unified Budget, 2 October
- OSCE Permanent Council with the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Ambassador Heidi Grau, 8 October
- OSCE Permanent Council with the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Valiant Richey, 15 October
- OSCE Permanent Council with a report by the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Dr. Neukirch; and, Commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 by Melanne Vermeer, 22 October
- OSCE Permanent Council dedicated to Conflict Prevention due to the Covid-19 pandemic, report given by Tuula Yrjölä, 29 October
- OSCE Permanent Council with Ambassador Žugić – Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental activities; the invocation of Professor Benedek's Moscow Mechanism regarding the 2020 Belarus elections, 5-6 November
- OSCE Permanent Council with the address by the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions: Rudolf Michalka, Special Rep of OSCE CiO for S. Caucasus; Toivo Klaar, European Union Special Representative for the S. Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia; and, Cihan Sultanoglu, UN Rep to Geneva International Discussions; Review of OSCE Cooperation with the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation provided by: Ulrika Funered, Chair of Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group; and Luca Fratini, Director of Office of Secretary General, 12 November
- OSCE Permanent Council with the address by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group – Russian Federation, United States of America, France, 19 November
- OSCE Permanent Council address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, H.E. George Tsereteli, 26 November
- OSCE Ministerial Council, formal opening by Chairperson-in-Office, Mr Edi Rama, 3-4 December
- OSCE Permanent Council, address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms Marija Pejčinović Burić, 10 December
- OSCE Permanent Council, dedicated to the Minsk Agreement and Human Rights, 17 December

Participation in expert committees and conferences

- Albanian CiO presented the draft for the **OSCE's Unified Budget for 2021**, representing an increase of 2.8% or 3.8 million Euro over the 2020 UB, 1 October
- United Nations, second intersessional meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 8 October
- The 2020 OSCE Asian Conference (via zoom) addressing "Multilateral Responses to Global Security Challenges", 12 and 13 October
- INDICO Geneva briefing for Permanent Missions, 20 October
- CCPCJ, Informal Consultations, 22 October
- Annual OSCE Mediterranean Conference, 3 November
- Office of the Secretary General Briefing – Luca Fratini, 4 November
- 32nd Meeting of the Coordination Group between the Council of Europe and the OSCE (by video conference), 13 November
- The Steering Committee under the International Partnership Against Corruption in Sport (IPACS), 16 November
- 2nd Intersessional meeting of the COP to the UN Convention against Corruption, 19-20 November
- The 30th Anniversary of the Charter of Paris: A Parliamentary Perspective, 20 November
- Tirana Ministerial Council, 3-4 December

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 and meetings

14 October – HoO virtual meeting with the Executive Director of European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), Mr Fabrice Leggeri.

22 October and 13 December – HoO co-ordination meetings with the First Deputy Director/Director's Alternate of OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Ms. Katarzyna Gardaphadze.

Activities of the Office

a) Enhancing the co-operation with OSCE ODIHR – The HoO participated in events organised in the framework of ODIHR Human Dimension webinar series as a substitution for the 2020 HDIM and as the commemoration events marking OSCE 2020 anniversaries. These included i.a. meetings on Combating Racism and Discrimination against the Roma and Sinti; Defending and promoting rule of law principles: challenges and ways forward; Access to information and freedom of the media; Democratic law-making: principles of law-making and public consultations; The evolution and practice of multilingual education. From the Hague Recommendations to the digital era and the role of human rights defenders and civil society in promoting and protecting human rights. The HoO took also part in the Third 2020 Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting - Freedom of Religion or Belief: The Role of Digital Technologies and Civil Society Actors in Advancing This Human Right for All.

Apart from the specific HD meetings mentioned above the HoO and CoE representatives attended numerous meetings and consultations convened by ODIHR. These included i.a. (i) OSCE ODIHR and International IDEA online panel - Democracy, human rights and the pandemic: impact and opportunities (ii) ODIHR virtual round table - Gender, Diversity and Justice in South Eastern Europe and (iii) ODIHR Seventh Expert Roundtable on the Laws on the Judiciary in Poland.

The HoO actively followed the discussions concerning nominations to top OSCE leadership positions, including to the post of ODIHR Director as well as the preparation to the 27th OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Tirana and its implications for ODIHR.

b) Continuation of the cooperation with the CoD – The Office followed closely the run-up to and the discussions during the 32nd meeting of Governing Council of the Community of Democracies. HoO maintained regular working contacts with staff of the Permanent Secretariat and took part in meetings and discussions organized by the PS, including in the Virtual Conference on Safeguarding Democracy and Countering Malign Foreign Influence and the Webinar on Innovative Democracy Participation: Citizens' Assembly.

c) Establishment of closer cooperation with Frontex – Following the decision of the CoE Secretary General to entrust the Warsaw Office with the task to enhance the cooperation with Frontex, HoO met with Frontex Executive Director, Mr Fabrice Leggeri and Mr Götz Brinkmann, Director for International and European Cooperation to discuss the present state of cooperation as well as the prospects for its extension beyond the current framework. Concrete proposals in this regard were put forward to be elaborated in coming months.

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.

The present document covers the reporting period October-December 2020. Following decision [CM/Del/Dec\(2013\)1175/1.6E](#) of 3 July 2013, activity reports will be published every three months, starting with July-September 2013.

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 –8, Total staff - 13.

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 also one funded through voluntary contributions.

State of implementation of projects

- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in Azerbaijan”: An expert report on “Access to justice for vulnerable groups in Azerbaijan”, a training needs assessment report, including a training programme on court management for the Justice Academy, as well as a report on “Setting up a system of enforcement timeframes and recovery rates as indicators on the efficiency of the enforcement system and in view of evaluating enforcement agents’ performance”, were finalised. The Project also assisted the Ministry of Justice (“the MoJ”) in the finalisation of the draft Code of Enforcement by reviewing the compliance of selected provisions of the draft Code with the ECHR.
- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery in Azerbaijan”: (i) The Project supported the national authorities by developing a legal opinion on the new draft Law on Targeted Financial Sanctions and draft amendments to the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code and through reviewing draft amendments to the national beneficial ownership legislative framework. (ii) The Project also enhanced capacities of relevant institutions in tactical analysis and money laundering investigations by means of two training sessions.
- EU/CoE JP “Further Support to the Penitentiary Reform in Azerbaijan-2” (SPERA-2): (i) Preparations were conducted with a view to developing training materials for coaching sessions on prison management. The aim is to ensure the transfer of know-how on practical aspects of adopting a more humane and open approach to prison management. (ii) The Office followed the process of registration before the MoJ of grants provided by the CoE to selected NGOs. In December, the MoJ registered the Grant on “Vocational training to enhance ex-offenders’ professional development”, thus unblocking implementation of the respective grant agreement (three more are pending registration).
- VC Sweden “Reinforcing gender equality and media freedom in Azerbaijan”: (i) Drafting of the textbook on Journalism Ethics was completed. Once printed, the textbook will be distributed among universities, libraries, and the media, and is expected to be used during the formal and informal training of journalists for teaching ethical principles on reporting of events. (ii) A report with quantitative sex-disaggregated values reflecting the current status of gender equality in Azerbaijani media was completed and is pending review by an international expert.
- EU/CoE - PGG “Raising Awareness on the Istanbul Convention and other Gender Equality Standards in Azerbaijan”: (i) In the framework of the wider “16 Days of Activism” social media campaign, the Project translated and promoted publications on combating gender-based violence. (ii) The Project prepared a report on legislative and policy context in Azerbaijan regarding violence against women and domestic violence with a view to providing the background for the upcoming gap analysis of Azerbaijani legislation vis à vis the IC. (iii) The Project translated the HELP course on VaW into Azerbaijani and carried out a webinar on the IC for a group of university students from both Baku and other regions of the country.

Other relevant activities

- 14 October: The HoO met with the Deputy Head of the EU Delegation in Azerbaijan, Zoltan Szalai;
- and 28 October: The HoO attended the briefing on cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh, organised by the ADA University of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- 24 November: The DHoO attended and co-chaired the online meeting of the "Democracy and Governance" working subgroup of the Development Partners;
- 26 November: The DHoO attended the Development Partners' Quarterly Plenary Meeting organised via videoconferencing;
- 30 November: The HoO attended an online training on "Tactical Analysis in Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism" organised within the framework of the EU/CoE Partnership for Good Governance II Project on AML/CFT, and gave opening remarks;
- 7 December: The HoO participated in the thematic video conference with the World Forum for Democracy;
- 7 December: The HoO joined the online meeting of CyberEast: II Steering Committee;
- 16 December: The HoO joined the opening of online training on the latest financial crime trends, money laundering investigations, gathering and use of evidence within the framework of the EU/CoE Partnership for Good Governance II Project on AML/CFT, and gave opening remarks.

Belgrade

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 6, Project staff – 26, Total – 32.

The Office implemented 13 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 two projects funded through voluntary contributions from Germany and Sweden.

State of implementation of projects

- EU/CoE - HF “Quality Education for All (Quality ED-Serbia)”: The first meeting of the policy working group that started connecting national curricula with the Competences for Democratic Culture took place in October. Sixteen online training sessions on the Reference Framework for more than 200 educationalists took place in November. Democratic Chatrooms with more than 120 secondary school students from Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina were organised in December. Two volumes of the manuals for parents, *Fostering a Democratic Culture in Families*, were finalised.
- EU/CoE HF “Promotion of Diversity and Equality in Serbia”: A draft analytical report on the incidence of hate speech in the Serbian media, as well as its forms and the conditions conducive to its use, has been prepared to support the Commissioner for Protection of Equality. The analyses and data contained in the report should serve as a basis for the preparation of a set of recommendations concerned with the ways in which the spread of hate speech in the Serbian media can be tackled, while respecting its independence and ensuring that any control exercised over freedom of expression is as limited as possible. The Action has also supported the Ombudsperson’s Office through completing the assessment and analysis of LGBTIs in local Action Plans in 67 municipalities, and conducting capacity building trainings in 15 selected municipalities.
- EU/CoE HF “Independence & Accountability of the Judiciary”: One presentation on prosecutorial ethics and two meetings of the State Prosecutorial Council’s WG tasked with finalising the Code of Ethics took place. Expertise on preventing undue influence on the judiciary was presented to the Chief Justice and peer-elected members of the High Judicial Council, after which the HJC formed a dedicated WG to tackle the issue. Research, carried out as part of the analysis on social media usage by individual judges and prosecutors, was presented to a diverse group of beneficiaries who requested that guidelines on the ethical usage of social media be produced and published.
- EU/CoE HF “Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia”: Training on strengthening capacities of different groups of professionals (education advisors, labour inspectors, judges and prosecutors (HELP), staff of the Shelter for victims of trafficking) on combating trafficking in human beings was organised on multiple occasions online and offline during October-December. Labour exploitation was addressed through awareness-raising campaigns by grantees, and the NGOs Astra and Atina. A needs assessment report and recommendations for the development of specific documents and training courses on the issue of child trafficking were developed and future steps agreed with beneficiaries.
- EU/CoE HF “Enhancing penitentiary capacities in addressing radicalisation in prisons in the Western Balkans”: The multi-disciplinary project’s WG for Serbia developed methodology for an individual rehabilitation and treatment programme/plan for Violent Extremist Prisoners (VEPs) and finalised Screening and Risk & Needs Assessment Instruments. A Training for Trainers Programme for prison staff on the application of the abovementioned instruments

and methodology has been drafted. Adaptation of the HELP course on Prevention of Radicalisation: towards a legal and institutional framework for Serbia has been completed.

- EU/CoE HF "Strengthening the effective legal remedies to human rights violations in Serbia": National judicial institutions discussed findings and recommendations from the needs-assessment in respect to the execution of ECtHR judgments in Serbia. A baseline study on human rights teaching at law faculties in Serbia provided nine recommendations on improving the human rights curriculum and methodology. The ECHR's 70th anniversary commemoration brought together 30 high-level representatives of the national judiciary and human rights institutions. Around 100 law students attended webinars on human rights protection under the ECHR and national mechanisms, execution of ECtHR judgments and the CoE's role in preventing and combating violence against women. An expert discussion on the execution of the ECtHR judgment *Z. Jovanovic v. Serbia* created the opportunity for a constructive exchange among legal professionals on challenges arising from the implementation of the Law on "missing babies".
- EU/CoE HF "HELP in the Western Balkans": Nine HELP online courses (on Access to justice for women, anti-discrimination, Child-friendly justice, Family law, Introduction to the ECHR and the ECtHR, Labour rights) were launched and completed in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Overall, HELP online courses were implemented for the benefit of more than 350 legal professionals over the reporting period.
- EU/CoE HF "Enhancing human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons": The Action provided the MoI with recommendations for improving the Bylaw on Police Powers, the custody system and medical care in police detention, as well as training curricula and material on police interviewing techniques. The WG sessions on developing a new Prison Strategy were organised and chaired by the Action and resulted in the very first draft of the new 6-year Strategy. Piloting of the post-release programme was initiated during an online WG session and as a result, instructions for implementing the programme in practice were developed. Staff members of CSOs were trained on CPT standards and its mandate, as well as on practical matters related to visiting places of detention within the National Preventive Mechanism.
- EU/CoE HF "Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)": The Project organised the following events: online/hybrid Regional Conference for legal professionals: "Freedom of Expression - Latest Developments" (8/10), Steering committee meeting (16/10) and Training of Trainers on the HELP Methodology, promoting online courses: "Freedom of Expression" and "Safety and Protection of Journalists" (15-16/12). Two publications were prepared: Bulletin on latest developments in ECtHR case-law on freedom of expression and Regulation of Political advertising: A comparative study with reflections on the situation in SEE.
- EU/CoE HF "Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Serbia (JUFREX)": Three online training courses for judicial and prosecutorial assistants from Nis (5-6/11), Kragujevac (12-13/11), and Novi Sad and Belgrade (10-11/2020) were organised in cooperation with the Judicial Academy. Online training on "Accessibility of media content for people with disabilities in light of the revised EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive" for employees of the Regulatory authority for electronic media (REM) also took place (18/11). As a follow up to the event, expert advice to the Serbian regulator on improvement of the existing Recommendation on accessibility of media content was provided.
- EU/CoE JP "Human Resources Management in Local Self-Government - phase 2": The Programme supported the development of Special Training Programmes for local government employees for 2021 in 92 LSGs. Online training courses have been delivered on various topics such as the competencies framework, management working performance of LSG employees and harassment prevention in the workplace (which have been attended by more than 230 representatives of LSGs). Numerous model acts have been developed and implemented in LSGs, such as the "HRM Deceleration" which has been aligned with the CoE principles of good

governance and was approved by the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government (MPALSG) and Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM).

- EU/CoE regional JP "ROMACTED - Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level": In the final quarter, the Project finalised the processing of small grants by completing implementation and submitting reports from all 11 municipalities on the realisation of priorities that have been set by ROMACTED Community Action Groups. The Programme provided research on the existing situation in Roma budgeting aspects at local level and financial impact of the Programme. Additionally, staff from local municipalities and the Roma community extended their knowledge on Romacted's responsive budgeting measures for Roma inclusion.
- VC (Germany) "Strengthening the Judiciary Reform Process in Serbia": A peer-to-peer exchange was held, on the freedom of association of judges in Europe, in co-operation with the Judges' Association of Serbia. Two webinars were organised to present four edited publications containing Serbian translations of standard-setting texts in the field of the rule of law, including recommendations and opinions from the CM, VC, CCJE, CCPE and also the ECtHR and the CJEU jurisprudence. The publications have been delivered to stakeholders via mail. The Project supported an event and a dedicated exhibition on the 70th anniversary of the ECHR, initiated by the Office.
- VC (Sweden) "Preventing money laundering and terrorist financing in Serbia ": The inception phase of the project concluded on 1 November and the report was submitted to the donor. The First Steering Committee of the project was organised on 27 November in a hybrid format in Belgrade, where all members endorsed the Work Plan of the project. UK experts were hired to conduct a comparative analysis on the supervision of digital assets and money value services, as well as to develop a curriculum and training manual for lawyers.

Other relevant activities

- The 70th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights was marked on 4 November with a commemorative event entitled "The European Convention on Human Rights – 70 years of advancing human rights", held in the Rectorate of the University of Belgrade, and an exhibition from 25 November until 18 December at the Gallery of Kolarac endowment in Belgrade;
- Human Rights Day was marked on 10 December with a conference, which was opened by Speaker Dacic, PM Brnabic, and the HoO delivered an opening address alongside the UN Resident Coordinator, the Head of the EUD and Ministers. The Office issued a joint press statement with the UN, EU and OSCE in Serbia.

Bucharest

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 0.5, Project staff – 33, Total –33.5

During the reporting period, the office implemented six capacity-building projects on cybercrime with a combined budget of over 40 million EUR. Four are EU/CoE Joint Programmes, one is funded through voluntary contributions and one by End of Violence Against Children (EVAC) of the United Kingdom.

State of implementation of projects

- VC “Cybercrime@Octopus”: The Project supported the organisation of Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) meetings, as well as meetings of the Protocol Drafting Plenary/Protocol Drafting Groups, and thus the negotiations and preparation of the 2nd Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention. Consultations for setting up a dedicated global platform for online training on cybercrime were initiated and the proof of concept prepared. An online HELP course on cybercrime is being developed, whilst the cyberviolence online resource is being restructured.
- EU/CoE JP “iPROCEEDS-2”: Multiple online workshops aimed at enhancing cooperation and exchange of information between cybercrime and cybersecurity officials but also at improving the skills, set-up and competencies of 24/7 points of contact were organised. A training course on online child sexual exploitation (OCSEA) delivered to over 200 Turkish magistrates helped increase their knowledge on the topic. A guide on freezing and confiscation of virtual currencies and related assets that will serve as a toolbox for cybercrime investigators was developed.
- EU/CoE JP “GLACY+”: The Project supported legislative developments and cybercrime policy reviews in an increasing number of countries, including Botswana, Gambia, Ghana, Kiribati, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, and Sudan. Capacities of Law Enforcement Agencies were strengthened through technical training (e.g. the E-First course, the Digital Security Challenge, the Malware Analysis Training, the technical webinars on crypto for law enforcement) and handbooks (e.g. Guide on Cybercrime Statistics). A specific focus was placed on the establishment of an international network of national judicial trainers and training was provided to prosecutors and magistrates in Ghana and Chile. Global and regional partnerships were strengthened through the organisation of online joint events with Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG), the Pacific Islands’ Law Officers Network (PILON), the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP), INTERPOL, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), and the African Data Protection Authorities’ Network. One highlight in terms of visibility was the presentation of the project as a Good Cyber Story at the Paris Peace Forum.
- EU/CoE JP “CyberSouth”: Law enforcement authorities from Algeria, Lebanon and Jordan were supported in developing their domestic standard operating procedures on e-evidence. The establishment of the CyberSouth Judicial Network was reinforced, and all countries have designated their permanent representatives to the Network. The procedural powers for conducting cybercrime investigations and handling of e-evidence and their compliance with international standards and conditions and safeguards were assessed in all priority countries. Criminal justice authorities from Tunisia and Lebanon were supported in developing their capacities in assessing national cybercrime threats and preparing an annual cybercrime situation report. The fifth Steering Committee meeting was organised to assess the achievements of the last six months and frame the Workplan for 2021.

- EU/CoE JP "CyberEast": The capacities of criminal justice authorities of priority countries were reinforced through a series of online webinars and workshops addressing themes of cyberviolence, development of Standard Operating Procedures for cooperation between Computer Security Incident Response Services (CSIRTs) and law enforcement, tracing and investigating crime proceeds online, as well as elections interference and enforcing preservation and production orders with internet service providers in real-time exercises. The mutual legal assistance process of the priority countries was assessed and the promotion of the Second Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention was ensured through an online conference organised jointly with Eurojust.
- VC "EndOCSEA@Europe": The capacities of criminal justice authorities were increased through the organisation of the following online capacity-building activities: webinar on OCSEA for the national police, judges and prosecutors in Ukraine, 5 October; Training Course on Countering Online Child Sexual Exploitation for Turkish Magistrates, 7-9 October 2020; Pilot Training on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse for Judges, Prosecutors, and the National Police in Ukraine, 8-11 December. An international webinar on educational measures to prevent risks associated with child self-generated images took place on 12 November with a key focus on the need for a comprehensive sexuality education. An awareness campaign on Self-generated images was launched in November, with the publication "Kiko and the Manymes" video, a storybook for children of the age of 4-7 and a parental guide.

Follow up action

- The launching of the new Octopus Project aimed at supporting implementation of the Budapest Convention and its Second Additional Protocol;
- Organisation of the Annual Planning Meeting for C-PROC;
- Organisation of the Steering Committee meeting for Glacy+ project;

Other relevant activities

- Canada, UK and Japan have made voluntary contributions to the new Octopus Project.

Chisinau**Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 7, Project staff –21, Total staff – 28.

The Office implemented nine projects, two in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, one funded by 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 - Nineteen middle-level managers from the Ombudsperson Institution enhanced their knowledge and skills in organisational leadership and management. To support this institution, a mechanism for the primary examination and investigation of human rights-related complaints was developed to improve processing. A conference, co-organised with the Ombudsperson Institution, gathered more than 50 participants from national authorities to discuss the impact of CoE instruments on the respect of human rights in the Republic of Moldova. A series of events were organised, and several publications developed, with the aim of strengthening the mechanism for mediation in criminal cases. Component 2 - The Programme further enhanced the quality of health care in prisons and doctors’ capacity (83 persons) towards a more ethical and efficient treatment of patients. The newly developed Inter-prisoners’ Violence Strategy and Prison Management Manual fostered a more secure, human, and efficient administration of prisons. The Probation Service was provided with roadmaps for improving its offender behaviour programmes and reintegration, targeting a higher reintegration rate. At the same time, to increase the professionalism of probation staff, a pool of trainers on Motivational Interviewing was constituted, and guidance for building an internal training and professional development system provided.
- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening the capacities of the justice sector actors to deliver justice in line with European standards, in particular to fight discrimination”: As a result of five online training courses, 123 lawyers and intern lawyers increased their knowledge in the field of equality and case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. The staff of the Equality Council gained new knowledge and skills thereby making their recommendations more efficient and effective. Trainers of the National Institute of Justice increased their knowledge on how to structure and deliver HELP courses.
- EU/CoE – PGG “Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova”: The Project finalised a report on strengthening access to courts for vulnerable groups in the Republic of Moldova. The document will increase the knowledge of a variety of actors and guide future policy making. Judiciary policy documents of the Republic of Moldova in the field of communication were reviewed in order to bring them in line with CEPEJ guidelines and to increase the skills and knowledge of judges and court staff in the field of communication, thus improving transparency and confidence in judiciary.
- VC Switzerland “Education for Democracy in the Republic of Moldova”: The Democratic School Governance Methodological Guide was finalised in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, and approved for piloting in 50 schools in the Republic of Moldova in 2021-2022. The Guide will boost beneficiaries’ understanding of the process of democratic school governance, will support them in gauging the level of involvement of the various stakeholders in school life, and will assist in planning more effective and meaningful forms of participation.

- AP "Combating violence against children in the Republic of Moldova": The Project reached out to 365,939 viewers and 73,288 children and made them more aware of potential child sexual abuse with the "Kiko and the Hand" video. More than 1400 school managers and 88 teachers increased their knowledge about online child sexual abuse prevention. A video spot on detection for doctors was produced and the "Kiko and the Hand" manual for trainers in English was launched for 15 key stakeholders and partners. A peer-review report on two governmental decisions on local interagency mechanisms and training materials for social workers were prepared for further dissemination.
- AP "Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova": Through the Association Promo-LEX, the Project strengthened citizens' monitoring capacities during the November 2020 Presidential elections in over 50 polling stations outside of the Republic of Moldova. With the re-engineered E-learning platform and its new features, the Training Centre was able to carry out online electoral trainings while the new IT tool for record keeping of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) boosted its transparency allowing the online publication of non-classified documents. Similarly, the CEC benefitted from new modules developed within its electronic electoral management system "Elections", reducing processing time for documents from 50-60 working hours to about 10 minutes.
- AP "Promoting European standards in the audio-visual regulation of the Republic of Moldova": The Project strengthened the capacities of over 60 journalists from the National Public Broadcaster on ethical and impartial media reporting in the pre-electoral period. Moreover, to support the institution's modernisation efforts, the Project developed a Newsroom Convergence Strategy and Action Plan for the Public Broadcaster and further assisted its Ombudsperson Service with a series of recommendations to increase visibility and effectiveness. In the media regulatory field, an expert analysis of the secondary legislation adopted by the Audiovisual Council prompted further concerted actions in improving the legislative framework.
- VC USA "Action Against Corruption in Republic of Moldova": The Project carried out four assessments of the legislative and institutional framework governing the functioning of the Superior Council of Magistracy and of the Superior Council of Prosecutors, the disciplinary liability of prosecutors and integrity controls during the selection and promotion of judges. For this purpose, over 15 consultative meetings were organised with justice sector institutions and civil society organisations which will result in recommendations to improve the legislative framework and institutional practices in line with GRECO's 4th round evaluation and compliance report findings.
- AP "Reinforcing the culture of dialogue and consultation of local authorities in the Republic of Moldova": A baseline assessment of the institutional position of the Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova (CALM) was developed. CALM decision-makers started reflecting on recommendations for organisational changes in workshops with the evaluators. Moreover, members of the CALM decision-making bodies improved their advocacy and policy influencing skills through a capacity development path. This included workshops, a webinar on "Advocacy for policy change - experiences of local government associations" that gathered 100 participants, and the development of infographics on advocacy and thematic processes of CALM.

Other relevant activities

- Starting in October, the Office has issued three monthly newsletters covering project activities and results, as well as CoE news. The newsletter is shared internally and with donors, partners, and beneficiary institutions;
- 2 October: A Steering Committee Meeting on the CoE Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020 was held in an online format. Representatives of 27 institutions of the Republic of Moldova, together with representatives of the CoE programmes, exchanged views

on the impact of completed and on-going projects, as well as on future priorities that will form the basis of the Action Plan for 2021-2024. In his opening speech, the MFAEI highlighted the importance of the CoE reform agenda in the Republic of Moldova, as well as the concrete results achieved by technical assistance projects. Notably, on 25 November, the Committee of Ministers adopted the Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova for the years 2021-2024, which will be launched publicly in January 2021;

- 13 October: GRECO published its Second Compliance Report of the 4th Evaluation Round for the Republic of Moldova, as adopted at its 85th Plenary Meeting. No major progress was identified, therefore several recommendations remain outstanding;

- 17 November 2020: An Amicus Curiae opinion was issued by the Venice Commission and the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, following the request of the Constitutional Court (CC), addressing three questions in respect of the constitutional amendments (pending for approval before the CC) regarding the composition of the Superior Council of Magistracy. Consequently, the CC gave a positive opinion on these amendments on 3 December;

- 3 December: GRETA published its 3rd evaluation round report for the Republic of Moldova urging the country to guarantee access to justice for victims of trafficking by ensuring that they receive specialised assistance and free legal aid at an early stage, information about their right to compensation, and protection from intimidation during or after investigations and court proceedings;

- In order to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Republic of Moldova becoming a member of the Council of Europe (13 July 1995), the Office organised a competition for children that focused on social rights with the title "I have the right too". The Office received 135 applications from all over the country. On 11 December, the winners were awarded in an online ceremony where their videos were presented to the public. Furthermore, the Head of Office gave an interview to Radio Free Europe on CoE/Republic of Moldova cooperation to mark the anniversary;

- 14 December: The Local Steering Committee Meeting for projects funded by the EU/CoE Partnership for Good Governance was organised in an online format, with the participation of the main beneficiaries of both country-specific and regional initiatives. Participants presented the state of implementation and the results of each programme and discussed plans for 2021. Special emphasis was placed on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the mitigation measures undertaken;

- 15 December: The Head of Office had a meeting with President-elect Maia Sandu and discussed a number of issues regarding justice reform, ensuring human rights, as well as the need to strengthen local governance. The President-elect reiterated her commitment to strengthening relations between the CoE and central and local authorities, representatives of civil society and the media;

- 17 December: The Head of Office held a meeting with the leadership of the Central Electoral Commission to discuss achievements made under the implementation of the CoE Project on electoral practice and to further cooperation in the electoral field;

- 17 December: The Head of Office opened the Exhibition on European Heritage Days at the National Library;

- 18 December: The Head of Office participated in a TV programme on "Teleradio Moldova", on the occasion of celebrating the European Day for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse;

- The Head of Office had several meetings with the German Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova to discuss possible joint activities in the framework of German Presidency of the CoE Council of Ministers;

18 December: The Head of Office met the outgoing President Igor Dodon for a courtesy visit, together with other representatives of the international community and international organisations.

Kyiv**Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 10, Project staff –52, Total staff – 62.

In the framework of the CoE Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2021, the Office implemented 19 projects, including 14 projects funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan level, one in the framework of the EU/CoE Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, three EU/CoE Joint Programmes, and one project funded by the HRTF.

State of implementation of projects/programmes

- VC HRTF “Further support for the execution by Ukraine of judgments in respect of Article 6 of the ECtHR”: The Project produced six expert documents with recommendations for the improvement of Ukrainian legislation and case-law referring to CoE standards, ECtHR case-law and good practices in the areas of simplification of the execution process via the electronic processing of execution writs; bankruptcy of state-owned or controlled enterprises and moratoriums; enhancement of socially-oriented legislation; introduction of effective judicial control over the execution of judgments and effective mechanisms of parliamentary oversight. These recommendations were discussed at the Third Annual Forum on the execution of national judgments in Ukraine, which was organised by the Project. As an outcome of the event, a list of general recommendations was prepared and shared with all respective Ukrainian stakeholders for their further implementation. The Project also organised two events with the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on the execution of the ECtHR judgments in the framework of the preparation for the first parliamentary hearings “Problems of the execution by Ukraine of the judgments of the ECtHR”. In December, the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Policy held its hearings on the implementation of the ECtHR’s judgments with the Project’s support. Furthermore, the Project jointly with the PACE organised two events for defining effective institutional cooperation within various structural subdivisions of the Parliament and with other key national authorities and international partners. Finally, the Project provided recommendations to the Supreme Court, appellate, and district courts on improvement of access to justice and ensuring the right to an impartial trial.
- AP “Support to the implementation of the judicial reform in Ukraine”: More than 500 lawyers, representatives of central and local authorities, and civil society, increased their knowledge in applying principles of effective administration in the light of CoE standards based on the CoE Handbook “Administration and you” which was translated into Ukrainian and presented at five thematic events organised by the Project. Analysis of criminal liability of judges for unlawful decisions was prepared by project experts and shared with key partners. Three televised expert discussions were held to promote CoE standards on independence, impartiality, and competence of judges. In addition, more than 150 judges received information about the ECtHR case-law in 2018 and 2019. Furthermore, up to 400 judges and legal professionals took part in the All-Ukrainian conference on the uniformity of the case-law in order to define major challenges and ways to overcome them. In November, the Project jointly with the Ukrainian Bar Association held a two-day Judicial Forum to discuss various issues related to the implementation of the judicial reform. Moreover, the Project jointly with the think tank Razumkov Centre delivered a sociological survey on the level of trust in the judiciary and presented its results to public. Finally, the Project contributed to the Venice Commission opinions on the draft laws related to judiciary reform, the reform of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, and anti-corruption legislation.
- AP “Human Rights Compliant Criminal Justice System in Ukraine”: The Project carried out research on the application of criminal misdemeanours. Expert assessments of various

draft laws affecting the public prosecution service (PPS) and the criminal procedure in general were provided by project experts. The HELP course on the Right to Liberty and Security was completed in cooperation with the National School of Judges. Nine training courses for newly recruited lawyers of the free legal aid system (FLA) were conducted through the allocation of a grant to a NGO. The Project contributed to strengthening institutional capacities of the Prosecutors' Training Centre (PTC) through delivering various training activities. In addition, the Project jointly with the Office of the Prosecutor General (OPG), PTC and PricewaterhouseCoopers Advisory organised a brainstorming session on functions, organisational structure, and territorial distribution of local prosecutors' offices. Furthermore, expert comments to the OPG Strategy for the PPS development for 2021-2023 and an expert assessment of the draft regulation of the OPG on disciplinary matters were provided. The Project has also supported the OPG in developing important documents and strengthening capacity with respect to communication matters.

- AP "Decentralisation and local government reform in Ukraine": The project was completed in September and a new project aimed at ensuring the effective functioning of the local self-government system in compliance with European standards and good practices, and provision of high-quality public services to the population, was launched on 1 October under the title "Enhancing decentralisation and public administration reform in Ukraine". The Project prepared a legal expertise of the draft Law on local administrations and continued its support to the Reform Support Office at the MinRegion. Immediately after the local elections of 25 October, a set of methodological materials for local and sub-regional authorities in the transitional period was prepared and published, and the number of downloads reached 60000. In co-operation with the Anti-Discrimination Department, a comprehensive assessment dedicated to the impact of the "decentralisation reform" on national minorities was finalised. A series of thematic radio programmes was also completed: two programmes aired in talk show format on the National Broadcaster's First Channel, reaching out to almost 150,000 listeners. The 5th Local Self-Government Forum, organised by the Project, was widely attended by more than 1000 representatives of national and local authorities from all regions, and brought together almost 70 speakers and four CoE projects. Support continued to be provided to the on-going reform of the national training system for local civil servants. More than 620 local officials strengthened their capacities in the implementation of modern Leadership and Human Resources Management (HRM) tools. The HRM Digest №4 for local self-government on labour rights and social guarantees was developed and published. A manual on i) "Equal rights and opportunities for women and men in local self-government (handbook)" and "The handbook for local councillors" were presented and published. The Project delivered a number of activities to raise awareness among national stakeholders and the general public about the progress and present challenges of the decentralisation reform.

- AP "Strengthening democracy and building trust at local level in Ukraine": As a result of the continued support provided by the Project, three Ukrainian municipalities (Khmelnitsky, Ternopil and Vinnytsya) became new members of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Local Programme. In addition, the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers, and the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) agreed to establish a Platform for National-Local Dialogue on Open Government in Ukraine, in line with the OGP Local Strategy. Following distant coaching support, 13 Ukrainian local authorities successfully implemented local initiatives on ethical, innovative, and inclusive policies and practices. Four online thematic webinars addressed digital solutions and models developed by local authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate citizen engagement through targeted gender-sensitive local programmes and e-tools, with particular attention to under-represented groups and youth. In partnership with the AUC and the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS), the online course on "Gender Mainstreaming at Local Level in Ukraine" was launched in November. So far 90 local elected representatives, municipal officials, and staff members of the AUC, have completed the course. The findings of the Congress Information report on the local elections

in Ukraine were presented and discussed in the framework of the Forum on “Efficient local government as a background of democratic and rule-of-law state” in December.

- AP “Promoting civil participation in democratic decision-making in Ukraine”: The Project promoted the establishment of effective civil participation mechanisms in 15 municipalities. An online course for local officials on participatory decision-making “Academy of Civil Participation 2.0” was developed and tested in partnership with the National Agency for Civil Service of Ukraine – the course will be widely rolled out as part of the new CoE 2021-2022 project on civil participation in Ukraine (to date 12 requests for support and co-operation were received from local and regional authorities). Furthermore, civic leaders in eight communities strengthened their advocacy skills through taking part in the mentoring programme for NGOs “Mentoring for Change”. The toolkit on U-change game-based training on civil participation was developed. Expertise was provided to develop draft Law on Local Self-Government and the National Strategy for Civil Society Development in Ukraine.
- AP “Supporting constitutional and legal reforms, constitutional justice and assisting the Parliament in conducting reforms aimed at enhancing its efficiency”: following an urgent request of the Ukrainian President, the Bureau of the Venice Commission decided to issue two separate urgent opinions on anti-corruption legislation and reform of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, no visit to Kyiv was possible, but the rapporteurs had virtual meetings with the representatives of the Ukrainian authorities and civil society. These two urgent opinions were endorsed by the Venice Commission at its 125th online Plenary Session, 11-12 December. Furthermore, a presentation of the methodological handbook “Rule of law checklist at the national level: case of Ukraine” took place in November, which was attended by more than 80 participants. The main purpose of this publication is to structure the components of the rule of law and their practical orientation in view of the peculiarities of Ukrainian national legislation and the practice of rulemaking. In addition, in December, a seminar “Rule of Law Checklist for Ukraine” was organised for judges and representatives of the Supreme Court of Ukraine to promote principles and criteria of the rule of law and different approaches of its implementation were discussed on the basis of CoE documents. Also in December, the first meeting of the working group on the development of scientific and practical commentary on the Electoral Code of Ukraine discussed conclusions and recommendations of the last local elections in Ukraine. It is planned that the scientific and practical commentary on Chapter 1 of the Electoral Code of Ukraine will be prepared by experts by April-May.
- AP “Supporting the transparency, inclusiveness and integrity of electoral practice in Ukraine”: An awareness-raising campaign before the 2020 local elections was held covering the preparation and publication of 129 infographics, which reached over 1 million views, and ten thematic radio programmes, with more than 1.5 million listeners. Furthermore, a training course (12 modules) was developed by the Project and launched on the “CEC:prosvita”. It was attended by more than 80,000 participants. A study on young voters’ awareness and attitudes towards elections was prepared based on feedback provided by twelve focus groups conducted in different regions. In addition, a strategic session on further development of the “CEC:prosvita” was held with the Project’s support. The Ukrainian translation of the Media monitoring toolkit and ECHR Guide on Article 3 were finalised.
- EU/CoE JP “EU and CoE working together to support freedom of media in Ukraine”: Two high-level discussions were held in partnership with the Parliamentary Committee on Humanitarian and Information Policy, national media regulator and UA:PBC, devoted to the allocation of adequate financing for the UA:PBC and election of the professional Supervisory Board according to CoE standards. The latter was supported by an awareness-raising campaign with developed infographics on social media. Also, with the support of the Project, nation-wide sociological research for the UA:PBC (8000 respondents) aiming to assess the perception of UA:PBC by its audience was carried out and the marketing strategy for the regional broadcasting of UA:PBC was prepared and presented. The monitoring of media coverage of

local elections was completed by the coalition of five civil society organisations in cooperation with the project. In partnership with the National School of Judges, the adaptation of the course "Criminal legal protection of journalists" for judges, to be included to the obligatory programme of training for candidates for the position of judge, was commenced. The press conference dedicated to the entering into force of the Tromsø Convention was held. Eighty-five judges were trained on application of the national legislation in light of Tromsø Convention provisions in the course of the two webinars held. The training session on the ECtHR case law in the sphere of access to public information was held for the judges of the Administrative Court of Cassation of the Supreme Court.

- EU/CoE JP "EU and CoE working together to strengthen the Ombudsperson's capacity to protect human rights in Ukraine": The Project prepared a legal analysis of the draft Law on data protection. In addition, an interactive online course "Data protection" was developed in close coordination with the Ombudsperson's Office and the Ukrainian School of Governance. Data protection staff of the Ombudsperson's Office deepened their knowledge about the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and its practical implementation at European level via a series of seminars carried out by leading international experts in the field. Furthermore, the draft Code of Conduct for the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) monitors was finalised including recommendations of the Ombudsperson Office and civil society monitors. An online course on basic principles of the NPM has been developed by the Project. All necessary preparations have been made to prepare the final report on the Training needs assessment for the NPM and Data Protection staff of the Ombudsperson Office in February 2021.
- EU/CoE JP "EU and CoE working together to support the Prison Reform in Ukraine (SPERU)": The Project issued legal opinions on the two draft Laws "On the Penitentiary System of Ukraine" and "On Disciplinary Charter of the Penitentiary system of Ukraine" and provided them to the Justice Ministry. Methodological recommendations to prevent suicidal behaviour in penitentiary institutions were submitted to the Justice Ministry 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 the prison healthcare staff. Finally, six prisons were selected to train prison staff in the risk and needs assessment tool and making individual sentence plans in 2021.
- EU/CoE PGG "Strengthening measures to counter money laundering and financing of terrorism in Ukraine": The Project contributed to increasing the knowledge and skills of 25 prosecutors on FATF standards on money laundering criminalisation and Ukraine's obligations under the Warsaw Convention. Furthermore, the Project has prepared a technical paper on the virtual asset service providers AML/CFT framework in Ukraine aimed at supporting the Ministry of Digital Transformation with its new role of AML/CFT supervisory authority and a technical paper on AML/CFT preventive measures addressing the issues raised by the National Bank while developing secondary legislation for non-bank financial institutions. Finally, the Project provided its expertise in the process of development of the draft secondary legislation for AML/CFT supervision over the gambling sector.
- AP "Internal displacement in Ukraine: building solutions": The Project provided its expertise and support to the preparation of the first thematic report "Exercise of the Right of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to Housing" by the Ukrainian Ombudsperson. Moreover, the Project contributed to a webinar for over 120 judges of the administrative jurisdiction on the social rights protection of IDPs and other vulnerable groups to demonstrate and promote visible progress in national courts' protection of IDPs' rights in line with CoE standards. Furthermore, the Project finalised the HELP Course on Internal Displacement, which contains comprehensive national materials and a unique module on gender aspects of internal displacement. Several interdisciplinary groups of professionals gained better qualifications to advance the quality of social and psychological services provided for IDPs and the conflict-affected population in Ukraine. Considering the progress achieved and the demand on the side

of national partners, the decision was taken to launch the project's second phase for the period of 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2022.

- AP "Promoting social human rights as a key factor of sustainable democracy in Ukraine": The Project provided support to the First Moot Court Competition on the European Social Charter which gathered 15 teams from different universities. One hundred and twenty-nine judges and staff of the national courts increased their knowledge on CoE standards and best European practices in relation to the protection of social rights of internally displaced people and other vulnerable groups. The draft report and road map on protection of rights of older people were prepared within the framework of the project and presented to key national partners. The CoE became a co-chair, jointly with UNICEF, of the Inter-Governmental Sectoral Working Group "Social Policy".
- AP "The Istanbul Convention: a tool to advance in fighting violence against women (VAW) and domestic violence (DV) in Ukraine": Sixty lawyers completed the HELP course "Access to Justice for Women" thereby increasing their knowledge and professional skills in providing assistance to victims of VaW and DV. Media guidance for development of self-regulatory standards for reporting on VaW and DV Cases based on CoE standards, was finalised and presented at a project event in November. Information materials for the campaign "16 days of activism against GBV" were developed and widely disseminated at central and local levels. The Project also produced a promotion video and introductory video on the Istanbul Convention. The analytical report on restraining and protection orders taking into consideration court cases, international standards, and an overview of national practice was presented and discussed at a project event in November. The updated operational guidance for police officers was shared with project stakeholders. It is currently available in English and will be made available in Ukrainian in 2021. The project Resource Toolbox in support of preventive and protective mechanisms on VAW has been updated and complemented by additional information materials and publications. In December, the third Project Steering Committee Meeting took place, attended by 25 project stakeholders and partners, who positively evaluated the results and achievements of the project.
- AP "Supporting institutions to combat ill-treatment in Ukraine": In November, the Project presented the Thematic Factsheet "Effective Investigations into Death or Ill-Treatment Caused by Security Forces" to key stakeholders in the field of effective investigation and coordination on execution of judgments of the ECtHR in Ukraine. As a result of six face-to-face human rights training courses conducted for 83 investigators of the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI), 88% of trainees rated their usefulness and relevance to their profession with the highest score, with 99% planning to implement practical changes in their professional activities and make use of new knowledge acquired during the trainings. In addition, in November, the SBI approved for institutionalisation Initial and In-Service Training Standards for their staff developed with project support. Full adoption is pending finalisation of the respective SBI legal regulation, but the Project was officially assured that the "SBI is already being governed by principles set out in the Standards when training staff" by the SBI leadership. Three workshops on Effective Investigation into Ill-treatment, held throughout the reporting period for 28 investigators of the SBI and 29 prosecutors from 14 regions of Ukraine, helped 89% of participants reconsider current practice in this sphere. Participants confirmed their readiness to introduce changes in the discharge of their duties by applying their newly acquired knowledge.
- AP "Protection of national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine": Thanks to project support, a working group on the codification of the Romani language developed the lexical minimum of Romani language for primary schools. Under the Project's facilitation, the Parliament Committee on human rights and the Parliamentary caucus on NMs held two meetings of the working group and four consultations on the draft Law on National Minorities. The Project provided its expert support to the State Service of Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience to develop the post 2020 Roma Strategy, which was submitted to

the Minister of Culture and relevant Ministers for approval. A training course "Protection of vulnerable groups in policing" was presented at national level. Fifty-three university teachers and 30 Kharkiv university students were familiarised with the course modules and completed two-days online trainings in December. The Project continued to support the communication platform and communication strategy for the protection of national minorities in the Odessa region. An assessment report on "The impact of decentralization of power on national minorities in Ukraine in selected regions: Zakarpatia, Odesa and Chernivtsi regions" was completed and presented in December.

- AP "Combating violence against children in Ukraine": A webinar on Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation for 240 national police officers, judges and prosecutors was organised by the project in cooperation with EndOCSEA@Europe in October. In addition, leaflets "Learn about your rights in the digital environment" were printed and disseminated among key stakeholders. A meeting with representatives of the Ombudsperson's Office on methodological guidelines for monitoring international and national standards on child rights was organised by the project in December. A pilot training on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse for Judges, Prosecutors and the National Police was delivered by the Project in December in cooperation with EndOCSEA@Europe and CyberEast projects for more than 80 participants from different regions of Ukraine. The Child-Friendly Justice HELP course was adapted and launched for the National Police in December. The adaptation to the Ukrainian context of the Kiko and the Hand Training for Trainers manual started in December.
- AP "Youth for Democracy in Ukraine": The first meeting of the Steering Committee was held in October. Over 150 representatives of national authorities, youth civil society organisations, and local authorities from different regions of Ukraine attended the official launching event in a hybrid format also in October. To engage youth policy stakeholders in Ukraine in the implementation and dissemination of Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to member States in the field of youth, the Project translated into Ukrainian Recommendation CM/Rec (2015)3 on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights, and Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)7 on young people's access to rights. In view of preparing for the implementation of component 2 of the project, and in coordination with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, a series of publications on the Quality Label for Youth Centres were translated into Ukrainian. This is in addition to a new glossary on youth work and non-formal education and the preparation of the 2nd edition of Compass in respect of national norms for inclusive language. Finally, the Project contributed to the national exchange of views on youth policy and youth work at 4th All-Ukrainian Forum of Youth Centres, 4th All-Ukrainian Forum of Youth Workers, the National Youth Forum "From policy to practice" through promotion of relevant CoE standards, approaches and resources.

Gender mainstreaming and gender equality

- The office took part in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign from 25 November to 10 December. Some of the activities included a joint statement with the EU Delegation to Ukraine and EUAM in Ukraine, an article on the importance of the Istanbul Convention to Ukraine and presentation of a video on the Istanbul Convention in the online forum "Domestic Violence 360° View: Challenges, Opportunities, Actions" in December arranged by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The campaign was also promoted in the office website and social media. The latest Gender Letter was sent in December and it included for example information about new research, events, and the new EU Gender Equality Action Plan.
- During the last quarter, the Sectoral Gender Working Group, which is part of the national donor coordination structure, met on 18 December. The agenda included among other things updates on current gender equality matters and gender mainstreaming practices in the donor coordination structure as a whole. The Gender Advisor also participated in relevant

Elections/Democracy Donors' Coordination group meetings in October and November, which convened more often than usual due to the local elections in October and November. Constant efforts are being made to enhance gender mainstreaming reporting.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 21-23 October: ODGP Director, Verena Taylor, together with DHoO, the Senior Project Officer of the Istanbul Convention project and the Gender Advisor met with the First Lady Olena Zelenska, to discuss cooperation possibilities on combating and preventing domestic violence and advancing the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. The Gender Advisor has also brought up the importance of the Istanbul Convention in other meetings with external counterparts.

Sarajevo

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 7, Project staff - 18, Total staff – 25.

The Office implemented eleven projects, five within framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey”, one project co-funded by the UK Government and US Government (USAID), and three projects funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan level. In addition, the Office implemented one EU/CoE regional Joint Programme on Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED).

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”: Training manuals on human rights in policing and on multidisciplinary approaches to the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners were produced and distributed to law enforcement agencies. During a series of online coordination sessions, a designated training team, comprising 21 members of the country’s various law enforcement agencies, developed a plan for remote/hybrid peer training. The fourth and final reporting module on the electronic prison data exchange software was prepared and submitted for the local beneficiaries’ comments and testing. 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 conducted a mapping and legal analysis relating to recommendations based on the Framework Convention on National Minorities and the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages and the proposal for establishing an institutional system aimed at linking the recommendations. These have been submitted and discussed with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A first draft of an LGBTI Action plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina was prepared and will soon be submitted to the relevant institutions for review and eventual adoption. A survey of civil servants’ knowledge and perceptions of hate speech was conducted, pointing to the need for further capacity building in this regard. The Action awarded six further grants to civil society organisations (up to 10,000 EUR each) to help the police combat hate-motivated crimes against LGBTI persons, tackle hate speech among young people and raise awareness about the situation and rights of national minorities while fighting prejudices and stigmatisation. The Action, jointly with the HF Action “Preventing and combating human trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, supported an online conference gathering human rights experts, that was opened by the HoO in Sarajevo and organised by the Law Faculty “Džemal Bijedic” from Mostar. The second meeting of the Minority co-ordination board was held online in December, gathering together 17 participants with the aim of strengthening communication and co-ordination between relevant actors.
- EU/CoE HF “Quality education for all”: In October, at the third online meeting of the Advisory Board of the Action, the activities implemented in the past six months were discussed, and future steps were agreed on. The difficulties faced by the education sector in these unprecedented times render the principles of inclusion and non-discrimination all the more important. During the reporting period, a call for NGOs was opened, with the aim of selecting joint projects to support the 29 pilot schools covered by the Action in promoting democratic school culture by applying the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture.
- EU/CoE HF “Preventing and combating human trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina”: During the reporting period the Action finalised two research studies: “Trafficking in human

beings for the purpose of labour exploitation" and "Trafficking in children". In addition, awareness-raising campaigns were conducted on trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation, and a guide was developed to sensitise anti-trafficking stakeholders on gender issues. At the third Steering Committee meeting held in October, the main findings of the research studies were presented and discussed, and the work plan for the upcoming period was approved. A training session on applying Guidelines for gender mainstreaming was held online in October for 16 representatives of the various anti-trafficking authorities and local coordination anti-trafficking teams. The first training course on trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation was held in December for 25 participants, including labour inspectors, representatives of law enforcement agencies (local anti-trafficking teams), trade unions, employment agencies and private sector representatives.

- EU/CoE HF "Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina – JUFREX 2": Several cascade training sessions were organised for members of the judiciary (judges, prosecutors, lawyers) and seminars were held for media actors (journalists, editors, public broadcasters, representatives of the Regulatory Authority, Press Council, etc.). Over 85 legal professionals and 88 media actors participated in these activities, and received training on the most up-to-date standards on freedom of expression related topics, such as defamation, hate speech, protection of whistle-blowers, protection of children/minors and media reporting in times of crisis and war. Furthermore, the HELP courses for legal professionals on Freedom of Expression and on Protection of Journalists were adapted to the specific context in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- VC UK/US "Structured sentence management for violent and extremist prisoners in Bosnia and Herzegovina": The "2020-2025 Strategic Policy Document and Action Plan for Management of Violent and Extremist Prisoners (VEP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina" and the "Guidelines for management, education and professional development of staff working with VEPs in Bosnia and Herzegovina" were completed and shared with the project beneficiaries. The Ministries of Justice expressed full commitment towards the adoption of both strategic documents as well as for their implementation in practice. A series of cascade trainings were delivered on the application of the Case Management Manual for VEPs and on the Manual on Assessment and Rehabilitation of VEPs. As a result, 40 prison professionals, 28 law enforcement officials and 10 social workers, including 10 security and treatment officers from the newly opened State prison, have been provided with the tools and capacity to apply a multidisciplinary approach towards managing VEPs while optimising multi-agency cooperation.

- AP "Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Phase II": In October, the first Steering Committee meeting endorsed the planned project activities. For the 70th anniversary of the ECHR, the Project translated the publication "The European Convention on Human Rights – A living instrument" and organised a webinar "Human Rights and the COVID-19 pandemic: Bosnia and Herzegovina" attended by 38 students and teaching staff from the law faculties of Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar. Two training events on legal reasoning (in criminal and civil cases) were organised for judges and legal advisers. In addition, a Report on the protection of the right to a trial within a reasonable time in Bosnia and Herzegovina is being prepared, focusing on a national legal remedy. Human rights curricula of the law faculties in the country are in the process of being evaluated. The capacity and skills of staff working in case law departments in the various courts have been strengthened through two trainings on the ECHR, in particular on hate speech and on the right to a trial within a reasonable time.

- AP "Reconciliation through cooperation between divided municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina": Due to the epidemiological situation, project activities have been postponed to January 2021. Nevertheless, bilateral communication and direct contact with Mayors of the twenty-two municipalities (eleven pairs) has proceeded unhindered.

- AP "Support to more integral and inclusive electoral processes in B&H": In November, two preparatory meetings were held with representatives of the Central Election Commission

(CEC), which is the main partner of the project, to discuss how to redesign activities in order to maximise the impact of the project. In addition, meetings with different stakeholders were held to collect information for further possible activities to combat violence against women in politics and to conduct a baseline study on civil participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- AP "Building Democratic Participation in the City of Mostar": The second meeting with local stakeholders/representatives of civil society in Mostar was held online. The participants, who were informed about the deliberative process and their potential role, including specific topics, demonstrated their active engagement. A working group comprising selected local and international consultants for the development of the specific deliberation methodology for the City of Mostar was established with the support of the project. The final methodology is to be discussed with the mayor and city council following the local elections which were held on 20 December. A communication plan and information package for the deliberative process are currently being developed.
- AP "Media and Information Literacy: for human rights and more democracy": During the inception phase of the project, an assessment study on media literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina is being conducted by one international and one local expert.

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

- JP regional EU/CoE "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level" (ROMACTED): The ROMACTED programme completed the implementation of the small grants in the 10 beneficiary municipalities in partnership with NGOs, which responded to the priority issues identified in each Roma community from these municipalities. Due to the situation created by the pandemic, the initial amount of approximately 86,000 EUR was supplemented by 27,000 EUR to respond to essential needs, including by providing food and hygiene vouchers/parcels. In order to prepare for the continuation of ROMACTED II, calls for proposals were launched for a thematic expert and facilitators, as well as for support organisation(s). Both calls were shared with the National Focal Point in Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, in order to ensure that potential applicants would be reached through official governmental channels and to ensure visibility.

Other relevant activities

- 7 October: The HoO met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Bisera Turković;
- 9 October: The DHoO attended the TAPA coordinators meeting;
- 13 October: The HoO met with the Minister of Human Rights and Refugees, Miloš Lučić;
- On 16 October: The HoO gave an introductory speech at a joint press conference organised to mark the European Day against Trafficking in Human Beings. The event was organised by the Ministry of Security of BiH and the State Co-ordinator against trafficking in partnership with the joint programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey 2019-2022", the Lara Foundation / RING Network, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the International Solidarity Forum-EMMAUS, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID BiH);
- 27 October: The HoO attended an online meeting with the Advisers of the Members of the tripartite BiH Presidency and international representatives in BiH in advance of the 25th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement (GFAP).
- 1 November: The HoO attended a commemoration of "25 Years of Peace" with international organisations and civil society peacebuilders at the War Childhood Museum in Sarajevo, in the context of the visit to BiH by European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / European Commission Vice-President Josep Borrell. The event and accompanying joint statement of the respective Heads of Mission (CoE, EU, UN and OSCE) were very well covered by the media;

- 3 November: HoO opened the online iPROCEEDS-2 Domestic Workshop regarding the Drafting Policies/Strategies for Cybersecurity in BiH;
- 10 November: The DHoO attended the ODIHR closing event of the "Support to Elections in the Western Balkans" project;
- 12 November: The HoO gave an introductory speech at a Webinar for law faculties, organised by the CoE project on the judiciary, and featuring the participation of ECtHR Judge Faris Vehabović;
- 24 November: The HoO and DHoO attended a Public Debate on the Right to Justice 'Pravo na Pravdu!', organised jointly by the European Commission Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and the Delegation of the European Union and EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- 1-2 December: the HoO participated in the online Peace Implementation Council (PIC) Steering Board Political Directors' meeting, organised by the Office of the High Representative on the recent local elections and on reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of the 25th GFAP anniversary;
- 2 December: The HoO took part in an online meeting of the PACE Monitoring Committee co-rapporteurs on Bosnia and Herzegovina together with the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the PACE;
- 7 December: The HoO participated in a videoconference for Heads of Office with the Secretariat of the World Forum for Democracy;
- December: The HoO met with Zoran Tegeltija, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- 10 December: On the occasion of Human Rights Day, the HoO delivered opening remarks at an online conference entitled "Current Challenges Confronting Human Rights" organised by the Law Faculty of Mostar University;
- During the reference period, the HoO met Siniša Šešum, Head of Office, UNESCO Antenna Office in Sarajevo, and had discussions with Ambassador Marianne Berez, Deputy High Representative and Head of OHR Banja Luka;
- 17 December: DHoO opened the Steering Committee (SC) meeting of the project "Structured Sentence Management for Violent Extremist Prisoners".

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 29-30 October: Meetings were held in the framework of a remote observation mission of the local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities;
- 17 December: Online meetings were held for the remote observation by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities regarding the local election in Mostar.

Tbilisi

Situation of the Office

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

The Office implemented twelve projects, three in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance” and nine projects funded through voluntary contributions/HRTF at Action Plan level.

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

- EU/CoE – PGG “Enhancing the accountability and the efficiency of the judicial system and the professionalism of lawyers in Georgia”: A Consortium of Electronic Law Libraries has been established that enables Constitutional Court, three Law Schools and a State Communication Commission’s access to the electronic academic legal resources (HeinOnline/Westlaw). The Supreme Court’s Strategy and Action Plan has been developed. As per a CEPEJ expert’s recommendations, a non-judge court staff’s evaluation system has been put in place with an electronic mechanism to follow.
- AP “Support to the profession of lawyer in Georgia”: The Project provided international expertise to review the GBA’s electoral framework. The Project completed the handbook for lawyers on obtaining criminal evidence and reasoning. The project completed the grant implemented by the GBA on pro bono legal aid, beneficiaries of which were socially vulnerable single parents identified by the government in the context of the pandemic. Within the framework of the project, 11 lawyers provided free legal aid in five cities and regions. The pro bono project received more than 3000 calls, provided more than 1000 consultations, and took up the cases of 31 beneficiaries. Twenty cases had been completed by the time of submission of this report.
- AP “Supporting Transparency, Inclusiveness and Integrity of Electoral Practice and Process in Georgia”: At the online workshop on “International standards governing political finances – effective control and enforcement”, held on 11 December, the management and staff of the Political Finances Monitoring Department of the State Audit Office of Georgia continued discussions on the mandate and competences of the Department aimed at enhancing their expertise. The Project started work on the publication of “Perspectives of development of electoral legislation, challenges of electoral dispute resolution and the role of a judge”. To increase visibility of the project, a short promo video was produced on mid-term results of the Project. The Project continued publishing a periodic electoral journal “Elections and Democracy” (4th edition), primarily disseminated in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.
- AP “Promoting an Integrated Response to End Violence against Women and Enhancing Gender Equality in Georgia”: In November, in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, a HELP course on violence against women and domestic violence was launched for 20 investigators. On 8 December, in cooperation with the Public Defender’s Office an online conference to present the findings and recommendations of the study “Administration of Justice on Sexual Violence Crimes against Women in Georgia” was organised. To promote ratification of the Istanbul Convention in other member States, a video was produced on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Georgia. In the framework of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence and the aforementioned study launch, 109,894 persons were reached through mainstream and social media, 13 media stories were prepared, including regional and thematic media.
- VC Denmark “Fight against discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech in Georgia”: As the result of the second Equality Week organised together with state and non-state

partners, a number of stories on equality and diversity were shared, more than 41,000 people were reached, 24 small initiatives awareness-raising activities and projects were implemented, 12 winners from two competitions were announced and 4 multimedia products were developed. European Ambassadors also joined the campaign by expressing their support for equality in a video "Ambassadors for Equality". A video with high-level officials was also produced. An adapted Georgian version of the CoE manual "Policing Hate Crime against LGBTI persons: Training for a Professional Police Response" was published online. The HELP online course on Hate Crime and Hate speech was translated into Georgian. The updated English version was made available on the HELP platform.

- AP "Supporting Freedom of Media and Internet in Georgia": The Project organised an online launch of the HELP course on personal data protection and privacy rights for 30 representatives of various government institutions in early November and held the Georgian Internet Governance Forum 2020 in December. The forum was underscored by the signature of the memorandum between Georgian Communications Commission with Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and also pioneered the discussion on new topics in the field, such as the use of AI. The work on the Handbook on Ethical Journalism for Universities continued and the book on analysis of cases of the Charter of Journalistic Ethics was published.

- EU/CoE - PGG "Enhancing the systems of prevention and combatting corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing": On 5-6 November, the Project in cooperation with the Financial Monitoring Service organised an online training on "Efficient implementation of anti-money laundering/countering financing of terrorism requirements". The activity intended to raise awareness of competent authorities and the private sector (commercial banks, microfinance organisations) on current anti-money laundering and countering financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) requirements. On 19-20 November, together with the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Project organised an online training on "Seizure, confiscation and recovery of proceeds of corruption, money laundering and other economic crime". On 23-24 November, the Project in cooperation with the Financial Monitoring Service organised an online training on "Anti-money laundering/countering financing of terrorism compliance in the gambling sector, including land based and online casinos".

- AP "Juvenile and adult detainees support" (JADES): The Department of Temporary Detention received assistance from the Project in the capacity building of 15 medical staff on techniques for interviewing victims of violence. A legal analysis on compliance of the internal regulations of the TDIs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the established standards of the CPT and the Georgian legislation was developed. The Service of State Inspector benefited from the development of the following documents: study on the best practices of European and other relevant countries on non-procedural measures of witness protection and independent investigatory bodies, the research on relevant articles of the Penal Code falling within the investigative mandate of the State Inspector Service and the preliminary research on legislation and practice in Europe regarding access of the investigative services to video recording at police stations (including police body-worn cameras) and detention places.

- VC HRTF "Supporting Parliamentary Oversight over Execution of the European Court Judgments in Georgia": Seventeen representatives of CSOs completed the HELP online course on Introduction to the ECHR and Execution of the ECtHR judgments.

- EU/CoE – PGG "Supporting Criminal Justice Reforms - Tackling Criminal Aspects of Judicial Reform": Two HELP courses on CPT standards and fight against ill-treatment were translated into Georgian and adapted to the Georgian legal order. Thirty legal professionals completed a HELP online course on CPT standards, and a HELP course on ill-treatment was launched for around 50 legal professionals. Furthermore, 15 Prosecutors were trained on open sources of evidence gathering, existing schemes of cooperation with foreign countries, specifics of investigative actions and national and international standards on application of detention with regard to extradition.

- AP "Enhancement of Human Rights and Health-Care Support to Penitentiary System": The first meeting of the Steering Committee took place on 6 October. The Project reviewed the mental health policy documentation in connection to the penitentiary system; the existing suicide prevention programme and mechanisms; developed a methodology for training needs assessment for penitentiary and probation system staff; and developed a methodology for the tailored training needs assessment for the Public Defender's Office and the National Preventive Mechanism.

Other relevant activities

- HoO presented opening remarks at several events, including "Joint pro bono Project for Single Parents Progress review and a way forward" (8 Oct), "Remote Justice during the COVID-19 Pandemic Challenges and Opportunities Georgian and International Experience" (9 Dec), "Concluding Event of the 16-days Campaign against Gender-based Violence Human Rights Council's Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality" (15 Dec) and presentation of the research paper "Provide expertise on the optimum model of substantiating HCoJ decisions on judicial appointments" (16 Dec). She acted as the moderator of the PGG Local Steering Committee Meeting with Georgia (10 Dec), participated in the online signing ceremony of the Agreement between EPA Secretariat, MoE & Kutaisi City Municipality (18 Dec), delivered an online lecture on "Human Rights at times of COVID-19" within the framework of the Human Rights Law University Week organised by the International Black Sea University (8 Dec) and gave a presentation at DataFest Tbilisi 2020 (16 Dec).

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 29 October – 1 November: A 9-member delegation of the PACE visited Georgia to observe the 31 October parliamentary elections.

Tirana

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 7, Project staff – 14, Total staff – 21.

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": A thorough review was provided on the new judicial map and an impact study was prepared to ensure compatibility with CEPEJ guidelines and standards related to access to justice. The guideline and respective templates for the unified collection of judicial statistics were finalised and will contribute towards a more consistent approach to collecting judicial statistics in line with CEPEJ/SATURN Guidelines. Two reports providing recommendations for piloting a dematerialisation process in the courts and enabling online communication were prepared, which address the legal and technical IT issues. Two training seminars, on performance evaluation and time management and fair trial based on CEPEJ tools, were delivered respectively on 4 and 12 November.
- EU/CoE – HF "Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners in Albania": The first trainers' workbook was developed whilst 16 training modules pertaining to induction and continuous training were revised in line with international standards. A legal review on the conduct of prison police, in line with CPT standards and relevant/specific content of ECtHR case-law, corrected a structural problem in the secondary legislation. The 1st working group meeting on the development of a national strategy on education and employment in prisons took place in December. A four-month pilot coaching of rehabilitation staff started in three pilot prisons (Ali Demi, Fier and Peqin). Additionally, pre-release plans and daily regime methodologies were developed based on assessment results concerning the current level and quality of application of the latter. These newly developed instruments will complement the application of the Risk and Needs Assessment (RNA) and Individual Sentence Planning (ISP) as part of improving prisoners' rehabilitation process in the three selected pilot prisons.
- EU/CoE – HF "Economic Crime in Albania": A Legal Opinion on the draft law "On the prevention of conflicts of interest in the exercise of public functions" was provided to the High Inspectorate for the Declaration and Audit of Assets (HIDAACI). Support was provided to the Ministry of Justice in improving the draft law "On the notary services in Albania" in compliance with the Financial Action Task Force Recommendations as well as on the Law no 10193/2009 "On Foreign Jurisdictional Relations", providing more clarity with regard to requests for mutual legal assistance.
- EU/CoE – HF "Supporting effective domestic remedies and facilitating the execution of judgments (D-REX)": A manual and commentary were prepared in relation to the registration of agricultural titles, and 160 law students of Tirana University were trained in relation to the law 20/20 on the registration of agricultural titles and law 111/2018 on the first-registration process. A methodology and a plan of action were prepared to support the cooperation of the State Advocate with the ECtHR Execution Department for efficient and prompt implementation of the current and future compensation claims from property owners. In cooperation with the High Judicial Council (HJC), two court outreach events in Vlora (22-23 October) and Gjirokaster (29 – 30 October) were organised with judges of general and administrative jurisdictions for the harmonisation of judicial practice and court's cooperation. A legal opinion was provided to

the Albanian Assembly on the amendment of the Criminal Code in relation to illegal constructions.

- EU/CoE – HF “Promotion of Diversity and Equality in Albania”: Follow up expertise was provided on minority legislation by-laws. The Law on Protection from Discrimination 124/2020 (as amended on 15 October) and the Census Law (as amended on 26 November) made ample use of the legal expertise and recommendations provided by the Action. Expertise was provided in assessing the LGBTI National action plan 2016-2020 and preparation of the new one for 2021-2027. About 1000 manuals for efficient police response to hate crimes were printed and distributed with the support of police and CSOs in different police stations around Albania. Furthermore, 2000 rainbow anti-Covid-19 masks were produced and disseminated to vulnerable groups through partner NGOs.
- EU/CoE – HF “Judiciary and Freedom of Expression (JUFREX)”: Legal advice was provided to the Albanian Assembly on amendments to the “Media Law” in line with a Venice Commission legal opinion of June 2020. The updated Handbook for training of trainers (ToTs) was completed on the Albanian legal framework and domestic case law. Two model HELP courses were translated, enriched with the Albanian legal framework and jurisprudence. A Legal Clinic was established at the Faculty of Law of Tirana University in collaboration with the European Law Students Association (ELSA) Albania, and 35 students from the Faculties of Law and Journalism were trained in Article 10 standards and ECtHR jurisprudence in two training events. The Albanian Media Council was supported in creating the Board of Complaints, thus making functional the newly established Alliance for Ethical Media. The first training on protection of journalists was organised with the collaboration of the Bar Association.
- EU/CoE regional JP “ROMACTED”: A social media campaign “ROMACTED at a Glance” was launched on 5 November, International Romani Language Day, through awareness videos presenting the main highlights of the first phase ROMACTED Programme in Albania (2018-2020). Inclusive consultative webinars were organised in partner municipalities prior to the finalisation of 2021 municipal budgets identifying priority needs and projects foreseen under the Local Action Plans for the Integration of Roma and Egyptian Minorities.
- VC Sweden “Strengthening Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania”: A videoconference on “Democratic Citizenship Education” took place on 19 November, to launch the project and discuss challenges in citizenship education with over 100 international and domestic stakeholders. Five CoE publications notably, “Lesson Plans on Solidarity”, “Fake News”, “Education Digital Citizenship Handbook” “Manual for teachers - Teaching Competences for Democratic Culture Online” were printed in Albanian and disseminated to relevant partner institutions. Two studies were carried out within the Comprehensive Review of Education for Democratic Citizenship in Albania. The Teacher Network (TeacherNet) was established comprising 125 teachers from the first cohort of 25 schools.

Follow up action

- Explore and coordinate with the German Embassy relevant events in the context of the German Presidency of the Committee of Ministers.
- Explore with DG II areas for cooperation assistance to the Central Election Commission in view of the Parliamentary elections on 25 April 2021. In the same vein, facilitate PACE’s election observation mission as necessary.

Other relevant activities

- Within the Expertise Co-ordination Mechanism, a Joint Opinion, prepared by the Venice Commission on the amendments to the Constitution of 30 July 2020 and to the Electoral Code of 5 October 2020, was adopted at its 125th Plenary Session (online, 11-12 December). The

ODGP/DER/Inf(2021)1

Office facilitated the with the organisation of meetings, legal texts and proofreading the adopted opinion in Albanian;

- The Office facilitated the organisation of online meetings with Albanian stakeholders of the PACE Monitoring Committee's Rapporteurs on Albania.

Yerevan**Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 5, Project staff –22, Total staff – 27.
Deputy Head of Office took up duties on 25 November.

The Office implemented eleven projects, three 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 five 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”: To contribute to the better representation of women judges in the judiciary, the Project initiated a comprehensive study to identify and find practical solutions to the challenges faced by women judges in their career development. The study aims to elaborate on ways of dealing with and solving the obstacles that continue to impede women’s full and equal participation in the judiciary and mechanisms to improve women’s representation. The Project also initiated the post-adoption review of the amended Judicial Code of Armenia and other legal acts. The review needs to identify to what extent the recommendations given in the Joint Opinion CDL-AD(2019)024 of the Venice Commission and the Directorate of Human Rights (DHR) of the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI) of the CoE on the Amendments to the Judicial Code and some other laws are incorporated into the amended Judicial Code and related laws.
- EU/CoE - PGG - Component 2 “Support to the judicial reform - supporting the criminal justice reform and harmonising the application of European standards in Armenia”: Additional expertise on the selected issues of draft Criminal Procedure and Criminal Codes, including provisions on Agreement and Co-operation Proceedings, was provided in October. The draft Criminal Code passed the first reading in the National Assembly in December and both Codes are pending adoption in the first quarter of 2021. The new training curriculum¹ on criminal justice and human rights that was prepared with the support of the project was taught to 96 judges via online sessions. Five hundred Armenian translations of each of the ECtHR Guides on Articles 5, 6 (criminal limb), 7 of the ECHR and Article 4 of Protocol No.7 to the ECHR were published and distributed among legal professionals. The handbook on “Detention as a preventive measure - justification for its use and prolongation” that was prepared for Russian judges was adapted to the Armenian legal context with the aim of improving the knowledge and skills of judges and law enforcement bodies in applying detention as an exceptional and very well-justified measure. On 1-2 October, a webinar on “Specific aspects of Article 6 of the ECHR and on reopening of cases” was organised for 16 experts of the legal expertise service of the Court of Cassation. The HELP course on “Introduction to the ECHR and the ECtHR” was adapted to the Armenian legal context and is available for self-learning since December 2020.
- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening institutional capacities to fight and prevent corruption in Armenia”: During the reporting period, the Project continued strengthening the capacities of the members of the Corruption Prevention Commission on verification of assets, income, and interest declarations. Two TPs were developed: “Operational manual for public officials’

¹ 1) Techniques for drafting judgments and decisions,
2) Peculiarities of the victim's status in the criminal proceedings,
3) Interviewing techniques and communication management,
4) Current issues of the cross-examination (confrontation) and
5) Practical skills for applying alternative preventive measures to detention.

property, income and interest declarations processing and analysis”, which is a comprehensive methodology that considers capabilities of the new online system presenting analytical grounds for internal procedures that shall govern the relevant work processes within the CPC in line with applicable legal and administrative rules, and “Practical guidance for public officials’ property, income and interest declarations analysing process”, which was developed by local CoE expert for the daily use of CPC’s staff members based on the above-mentioned comprehensive methodology. Based on these methodologies, the CPC will conduct analyses of the declarations.

- EU/CoE - PGG “Strengthening the profession of lawyer in line with European standards”: The Project delivered the first drafts of the cross-country reviews on a) internal structure of bar associations and b) procedural safeguards for lawyers in the five participating countries of the project (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). The main findings of the reviews were discussed with the project stakeholders during an online presentation of the reviews. Their comments were gathered for further incorporation into the final version of the document. Before the publication of the cross-country reviews, the final versions will be distributed for the final validation of the stakeholders. Moreover, the delivery of the fourth cross-country review on the system of legal representation of advocates is at the stage of desk-studies conducted by two of the projects. The methodology to be used for the country-specific analysis in the participating countries was developed. Also, the website developed within the project as an online regional cooperation network for the bars and lawyers’ professional associations was further improved and shifted from the beta version to the regular domain.

- AP “Human Rights and Women in the Armed Forces of Armenia – Phase II”: During the reporting period, the high-level launching event and the steering committee meeting of the project were postponed due to the military escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Therefore, a written approval procedure of the project workplan was applied, and the workplan for the period of June-December 2020 was approved by the Steering Committee. During the reporting period, the development of the HELP model course on protection of human rights in the armed forces was launched and the first online working group meeting was held on 12-13 November. The Manual “Legal framework for human rights monitoring in the armed forces by the human rights defender”, developed by the Project for the Human Rights Defender’s Office, was edited, and prepared for publication. A working group was established to develop an analysis for the Ministry of Defence 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”. The Project also initiated the development of a short animation film on “Legal remedies for the military servicepersons”. The Project received a new needs request from the Human Rights Defender’s Office, derived from the escalation of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and processed further for the approval of the project’s hierarchy.

- VC Switzerland “Strengthening the Communities Association of Armenia and transparent, participatory local governance in Armenia”: The Project continued the activities of four Working Groups of Community of Practice. A set of documents was developed, to support local authorities in developing their local anti-corruption action plans and conduct corruption risk assessments. In support of local initiatives on promoting transparency, open government and citizen participation, the Project supported the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Secretariat in Armenia in its work with two municipalities (Vanadzor and Gyumri) in their application of the OGP Local Programme, which was accepted in October 2020. The Project also supported the update of the Handbook on Transparency and Citizen participation in support of local authorities. With project support, the CAA strengthened its institutional capacities through hiring two new staff members and purchasing online communication tools. The transparency of the CAA has been supported through developing a framework for financial reporting capacities.

- VC Austria “Democratic development, decentralisation and good governance in Armenia”: In the reporting period, under the policy development component, proposals to introduce new local tax mechanisms, as well as methodological guidelines on organising and implementing community economic activities (from a financial perspective) were developed. Pilot testing of the e-learning course on 12 Principles of Good Governance was finalised, with the participation of 19 learners. On 14 November, a large-scale online debate on issues of civil participation and democratic governance, involving more than 90 young people, “We, the Internet,” was organised by the Information Systems Development and Training Centre. Formal grant agreements were signed with 11 recipients of grants on development of community facilities and 8 beneficiaries of grants on live broadcasting of community council sessions. On 3-4 December, regional workshops on performance management were held online for municipal staff responsible for grant management.
- AP “Support the scaling-up of the probation service in Armenia”: The final version of revised training modules and trainers’ manual were proofread and sent for translation. Technical specifications for development of the software component of RNA tool were developed, shared with international consultants, and feedback was received. The final version of the technical specifications was sent to the MoJ and Probation Service. The Project is following up with the Probation Service on the development of the software component of the RNA tool and the assessment report on introduction of an IT e-probation system.
- AP “Enhancing health care and human rights protection in prisons in Armenia”: A report on “Psychiatric assistance in the penitentiary institutions of the Republic of Armenia” with recommendations on mental health care in the penitentiary institutions was drafted and will serve as basis for discussions and agreement between the WG members. “Strategy for the Prevention of Suicide and Self-harm in Penitentiary Institutions of the RA” and its Implementation Action Plan for the 2021-2022 were drafted and adopted by the MoJ on 11 December. An assessment report “On the policy and legal framework for monitoring and oversight of penitentiary health services in the Republic of Armenia” was drafted, discussed, and served as a basis for the development of an Infection Control Programme for penitentiary institutions. A needs assessment report with recommendations on introduction of telemedicine and an IT system for keeping medical records, as well as the needs of the Armavir prison hospital healthcare services with concrete recommendations, was produced with the view of purchasing equipment within the next reporting period. Guidelines on medical examinations related to ill-treatment were developed and the necessary improvements were recommended to the national authorities. Training methodology, agenda, and a manual on “Medical Examinations of Ill-treatment and Protocoling” were developed with the aim of organising training for medical staff within the penitentiary system and strengthening their capacities in documenting and reporting on signs of ill-treatment.
- VC (multilateral)/AP “The Path towards Armenia's Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence”: The launching of the large-scale awareness-raising campaign on preventing and combating domestic violence (the campaign website, 2 TV ads, an interactive video promotion on social media, posters, urban installation, social experiment) planned in October-November was postponed due to the escalation of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh region during this period. The recommendations on the National Action Plan 2021-2023 on preventing and combating domestic violence were developed and submitted to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Furthermore, 80 journalism students received online training on the role of media in preventing violence against women and domestic violence. A revision of sample school subject curricula/standards on gender mainstreaming has been initiated as part of the technical support to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport. A number of visibility materials related to the Istanbul Convention (IC) were translated into Armenian to be disseminated (Infographics and Brochure about the Istanbul Convention, publications related to Articles 10 and 11 of the IC, visibility materials related to sexism etc.).

- VC (multilateral) "Protection of Human Rights in Biomedicine I": During the reporting period, the Project completed a substantial number of translations planned within the framework of the project and the production of their layouts, in particular: "Oviedo Convention and its protocols" , "Guide on prohibition on financial gain", "Guide for Research Ethics Committee Members", and "Human rights and biomedicine: Biomedical Research". To enhance the visibility of the project, a web platform "Cooperation platform of the Project" was developed and is now available online on the CoE Bioethics page. Work on the production of the list of relative legislation has been completed. The Project launched two calls for tender for local and international consultancy on analysis of the national legislation of Armenia in the field of biomedicine. As a result of assessment procedure, six local and six international experts were selected. The first introductory online meeting of experts took place in late December. The Project team also organised all the preparatory activities for the ToT on the HELP course to be held on 18-19 January.

Other relevant activities

- 3 December: The Deputy HoO attended a meeting called by MFA Aivazian for the international community;
- 4 December: The Deputy HoO had a courtesy introductory meeting with the Head of EU Delegation to Armenia.

Council of Europe high level visits

- 25-26 November: Visit to Yerevan of the Director General of DG II, Director General of DPA and the newly appointed Deputy Head of Office

Pristina

Situation of the Office

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

The Office implemented ten projects, three in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Horizontal Facility”, three EU/CoE Joint Programmes and four funded by Norway and the CoE Ordinary Budget.

State of implementation of projects/programmes

- EU/CoE regional JP “Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo*²” (PECK III): The Project finalised and shared the inception report with the EUD, and held its first Steering Committee meeting. It conducted bilateral meetings with the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) in relation to the Review of internal methodologies on the FIU strategic analyses unit. It provided recommendations to the MoFA on the Law on Targeted Financial Sanctions. It organised a Webinar on “Collective action and AC reform - pursuing protection of Whistleblowers” to mark international anti-corruption day. It also provided comments to the MoJ on the Regulation on Receiving and Handling Whistleblowers cases.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Building Capacity for Inclusive Education – INCLUDE”: The five-year strategic action plan for the resource centres was finalised and approved by the Ministry of Education. The mapping study report analysing achievements of projects supporting access to education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students was launched and published in three languages. A capacity-building programme for the municipal community and education officers was developed. A needs assessment report for Special Educational Needs (SEN) in secondary education was finalised. The training for teachers on inclusive education developed by UNICEF was revised and adapted with additional modules for SEN.
- EU/CoE regional JP “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED)”: Two virtual meetings were held with beneficiary municipalities; one with the local authorities, and the other with the community action group. An overview of the actions during 2020 was discussed and the continuation of ROMACTED II was presented and beneficiary municipalities confirmed their readiness to continue. All nine community projects were implemented during December. Guidance on the project’s reporting standards was ongoing throughout the quarter with all the beneficiary municipalities. A baseline assessment for potential new municipalities in ROMACTED II was carried out.
- AP “Improving the Protection of European Human Rights Standards by the Constitutional Court of Kosovo*-IPEHRSCC”: The Strategic Plan of the Constitutional Court 2021-2025, with an action plan for implementation and budget impact assessment, was completed. The project finalised a mentoring scheme for judges and legal advisors of the court after the last foreseen mentoring assignment held online with former JurisConsult of the European Court of Human Rights. Two thematic conferences were organised to mark the Greek and German Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers respectively, the latter also commemorated 70 Years of the ECHR. The remote access tool (VPN) to the IT network of the court was purchased and installed, facilitating the regular work of its staff despite COVID-19 restrictions.
- AP “Reinforcing the fight against violence against women and domestic violence in Kosovo* (Norway-CoE VC): The ToT Curricula on VAW and DV for prosecutors and judges was finalised and shared with Kosovo*’s Justice Academy. Two high visibility conferences took place (i) on Istanbul Convention standards for awareness raising on VAW and DV, 28 October

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

and (ii) on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Kosovo* in cooperation with OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 9 December. In marking 16 days of activism against Gender based Violence, the Project coorganised a roundtable on safety of journalists and VAW, two discussion sessions with rural women, and ran a social media campaign on preventing and combating sexism.

- EU/CoE - HF "Freedom of expression and freedom of the media in Kosovo* (JUFREX2)": Five training sessions/roundtables covering FoE related topics and targeting judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and journalists were organised during the reporting period. A CoE expert delivered a Technical Opinion (TO) on draft-regulation on media ownership. The TO contains issues for discussion and improvements, including recommendations given to stakeholders during the event organised by JURFLEX. A ToT on HELP FoE courses was organised in cooperation with the regional component of the project. The ToT was dedicated to University professors and lawyers from the region, including those from Kosovo.

- EU/CoE - HF "Promotion of diversity and equality in Kosovo*": The first draft of anti-discrimination reporting framework was delivered by an expert after online meetings and consultations with the Office of Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination (OGG) and anti-discrimination focal point in ministerial and municipal level. The survey on discrimination patterns prepared earlier in the context of the action - the first of this kind in Kosovo - was presented and endorsed at the inter-ministerial Group for Human Rights, chaired by the Prime Minister. Uta Ibrahim, a famous climber (the first Kosovar woman to climb Everest) was selected for the regional no-hate speech campaign.

- EU/CoE - HF "Ensuring Efficiency and Quality of Justice (KOSEJ2)": With the support of the Action, citizens can now apply online for criminal record certificates instead of applying at the court in person. The Court of Pristina received and processed 77 online requests in the first three weeks of December. This online service increases access to justice to court users as well as the efficiency of the court. The Action also completed the Training Needs Assessment report on court efficiency. Two modules will be developed for the Justice Academy: on CEPEJ performance indicators and on the collection and analysis of judicial statistics using the Case Management Information System.

- AP "Strengthening the Kosovo Institutions in Fight against Torture, Ill-treatment and Other Degrading Treatment IKOS": The Project completed adaptation and translation into the Albanian language of the HELP course Standards of the European Committee for Prevention of Torture (CPT). The development of two comprehensive multidisciplinary training modules on Article 3 of ECHR with Justice Academy, Prevention of Ill-treatment, Combating Impunity, and Manual on Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Ill-treatment, is in the final stage. Assessment of the legislative and institutional framework related to Article 3 of ECHR, along with analyses of relevant caselaw in local courts of all instances and flow of the cases in the referral system, is in the final phase.

- AP "Promoting Local Democracy in Kosovo*": The Project commenced on 1 July 2020, while the project team was operational, implementation started from the second week of October. The Project conducted bilateral meetings with its key beneficiary, the Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKM), to define the timeline for implementation of the project activities. Concept papers were prepared for implementation of the two main project components, the assessment of implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and capacity building for municipal officials on political integrity, ethics, and open government. Calls for tender were announced for the pooling of the international and local experts needed to carry out the assessment of implementation of the principles enshrined in the Charter.

- AP "Preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings in Kosovo*": The Project activities commenced with a series of high-level meetings with key local beneficiaries, coinciding with European Anti-Trafficking Day. The Project also supported an awareness-raising animation broadcast nationally for launch of campaign. The Project organised GRETA meetings with local partners to assess the compliance of Kosovo* with the standards of the anti-trafficking convention. The meetings were conducted online on 9-11 December, involving

officials from relevant ministries, agencies, the criminal justice sector, labour inspectorate, social workers, child protection officials, and representatives of civil society and international organisations representatives. The Project held meetings with representatives of partner institutions, to prepare the groundwork for capacity-building activities for criminal justice professionals and the establishment of an anti-trafficking database.

Follow up action

- PECK III: Coaching webinars to the FIU strategic Unit, development of a training module on Protection of Whistleblowers, review of Administrative Instruction on Beneficial Ownership, support establishment and functioning of the Confiscation fund;
- INCLUDE: The second project steering committee will be organised in February 2021;
- KOSEJ II: An awareness-raising campaign with the video to be broadcasted on TV and on social media to encourage citizens to apply online for criminal record certificates (March 2021);
- Violence against women/Domestic Violence: Online Expert Discussion/WG to present the final draft of quality guidelines for shelters of VAW and DV (26 Jan 2021);
- IPEHRSCC: Purchase and installation of specified hardware/software for the Case Management System of the Court;
- IKOS: Training of Trainers of Justice Academy on two training modules under Article 3 of ECHR.

Other relevant activities

- 13 October: The Office participated in Pristina LGBTI Pride event 12 October (vehicle-only parade). Council of Europe-Kosovo* working group meeting took place in the format of a hybrid videoconference (in Pristina, located in Ministry of Foreign Affairs); 16-17 November: The Office organised and supported virtual mission of Venice Commission in preparation of Opinion on Draft Law on Government;
- 14 December: The Office facilitated meeting between PACE Rapporteur for Kosovo* and Prime Minister Hoti.

Rabat**Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 2, Project staff – 5, Total staff – 7.

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. It also provides ad hoc logistical support for the implementation in Morocco of the EU/CoE regional joint programme “CyberSouth – Cooperation 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, another in support of personal data protection in Morocco (VC Norway), the project on “Strengthening democratic governance at local and regional levels in Morocco” (VC Norway), 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)**

- The launch of the joint EU/CoE programme “South Programme IV: Regional Support to Reinforce Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democracy in the Southern Mediterranean” (2020-2022) was streamed live on 23 November. This event marked the official launch of the fourth phase of the programme by bringing together representatives of the Council of Europe and the European Union with representatives of national and international institutions and civil society organisations of the Southern Mediterranean. It provided an opportunity to review co-operation with Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Palestine* to promote human rights, the rule of law and democratic governance in accordance with international and European standards, and present the common objectives for the phase ahead.
- A meeting to present the HELP Programme to universities was held online on 10 December.
- The Council of Europe organised a webinar on regional action against trafficking in human beings in the Southern Mediterranean on 26 November with representatives of the Tunisian anti-trafficking authorities, the President and members of the National Commission for Co-ordinating Measures for Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings and representatives from Morocco, Lebanon and Jordan and from civil society.
- The Venice Commission organised the 12th UniDem Med regional seminar on “Public administration reform: new challenges and new operating modes”, in co-operation with the Presidency of the Tunisian government (15 to 17 December).

Voluntary contributions

- As part of the project on “Combating discrimination in Morocco”: An Arabic translation of the “Bookmarks” manual was made available online thanks to a grant awarded to the Mediterranean Forum for Youth (FOMEJE), the organisation co-ordinating the No Hate Speech Movement in Morocco; an online training course was held for 20 investigators to conduct a survey on hate speech in Morocco on 21 November 2020; Training-of-trainers for the Council of Europe’s online courses on hate speech and radicalisation prevention (HELP) took place on 17 December in Rabat. Participants in the training course included representatives of the Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights, National Human Rights Council, Presidency of

the Public Prosecution Office, FOMEJE, Rabat's Faculty of Educational Sciences, Mohammadia League of Scholars and the Directorate General of Prisons and Rehabilitation. On Thursday 10 December – the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – the Lycée Français International André Malraux (LFIAM) Amalgame Club, in partnership with FOMEJE, held the second edition of its school initiative promoting the Council of Europe's No Hate Speech campaign seeking to combat the spread of hate speech within our societies. The event was attended by Stefano Valenti, Head of the No Hate Speech and Co-operation Unit in the Council of Europe's Directorate of Anti-Discrimination.

- The Congress co-organised, with the Moroccan Association of Prefectural and Provincial Councils (AMPCPP), the first focus group meeting on clarifying the competences of Moroccan prefectures and provinces in the implementation of Morocco's advanced regionalisation reform. The meeting, held online on 19 November, allowed participants to exchange views on the institutional mechanisms put in place, analyse the extent to which they met the principles of governance enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Morocco and discuss the major shortcomings faced by elected councils.
- As part of the Congress co-operation project implemented in Morocco, with a view to enhancing communications on behalf of the Association of Moroccan Regions (ARM) and the AMPCPP, the Congress supported two websites which were launched on 23 November.
- The Congress held a webinar on consultation mechanisms between central and local authorities on 24 November with the participation of Moroccan and Tunisian representatives and international experts.
- The Congress printed two documents (Public Ethics and European Local Democracy Week) to be shared and distributed to their partners.
- The Council of Europe (HELP Programme), the National Council for Human Rights and the Moroccan Bar Association launched the HELP course for lawyers on violence against women and domestic violence on 25 November in Rabat, kicking off the campaign for 16 days of activism to end violence against women.
- The National Commission for the Protection of Women Victims of Violence, in conjunction with the Council of Europe, launched a TV spot in November "to raise awareness of and end violence against women", highlighting the issue of violence against women during Covid-19 lockdowns.
- As part of the project to "Promote freedom of expression and media pluralism in Morocco": In partnership with the Moroccan Forum of Young Journalists, an online training course for young journalists was held on 28 and 29 November on "The role of disinformation in times of crisis" and "Gender, Violence and the Media"; Senior officials from the Department of Communication of the Moroccan Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports exchanged views on Monday 30 November on the legislative mechanisms in place to fight disinformation in Europe.
- As part of projects to "Promote freedom of expression and media pluralism in Morocco" and "Support personal data protection in Morocco", representatives of the Communication Department of the Moroccan Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, National Press Council (CNP), High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HACA), Presidency of the Public Prosecution Office (PMP) and the National Personal Data Protection Board (CNDP) participated in a training session on 15 December to become certified HELP tutors for the courses on Freedom of Expression and Data Protection and Privacy Rights.
- Two online capacity-building sessions for members of Morocco's National Commission for Co-ordinating Measures for Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings took place on 14 and 16 December as part of the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership with the Kingdom of Morocco (2018-2021).

Tunis

Situation of the Office

Core staff - 3, Project staff - 21, Total – 24.

The Office implements country-related activities of two EU/CoE regional Joint Programmes: Regional initiative to reinforce human rights, rule of law and democracy in the Southern Mediterranean ("South Programme IV 2020-22) and the CyberSouth Programme 2017-20; two CoE/EU (2019-21) Joint Programmes "Improving the functioning, performance and access to justice in Tunisia - AP-JUST" and "Project to support independent bodies in Tunisia - PAII-T", and a total of seven projects funded through voluntary contributions (*from France, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, Norway, Portugal and Spain*).

State of implementation of programmes

"Improving the functioning, performance and access to justice in Tunisia - AP-JUST"

- E-justice - Testing of IT applications to facilitate justice actors' access to information was completed, other than the application for defense lawyers, which will be developed in 2021. Following tender, a service provider was contracted for the digitalisation of citizenship files; and updating of Tunisian tribunals' cabling networks commenced in December.
- Access to justice/Support to non-State actors - Collaboration continued with the Court of Cassation (CC) and the 'Centre d'Etudes Juridiques et Judiciaires' on the publication of the High Court's case law in civil and criminal matters, and national experts were selected, initially to develop a methodology for the selection, indexation and anonymisation of CC decisions in civil matters for the years 2016-2020. CoE experts finalised background research for their study on the functioning of commercial justice, presenting preliminary findings at an online meeting in December.
- Access to justice/Support to civil society - The three grant-supported NGOs promoting citizens' access to legal information, continued implementing their respective action plans, and their project staff benefited from online training focusing on enhancing the NGO's financial independence and the sustainability of their actions under the project. An international expert conducted a preliminary analysis of the current legal aid legislation to identify shortcomings and possibilities for joint action with the Bar Association to improve the functioning of the legal aid system.
- CEPEJ - Support continued to the Inspectorate General, with peer exchanges on the transfer and exploitation of data, as well as on internal management responses to the challenges of Covid-19; to the High Judicial Institute (ISM) with the drafting of a first in-service training module for Cantonal judges; to the High Judicial Council (CSM) with the development of an internal and external communication and information strategy; and with the Bar Association (ONA) with regard to judicial delays and IT-facilitated remote court proceedings.

"Project to support independent bodies (IBs) in Tunisia - PAII-T"

- Cross-cutting support/legal basis – At the request of the IBs, in October, the Venice Commission hosted an online workshop 'Communication strategy of and relations with the media: from elaboration to practice'. In December, the Project facilitated a meeting between the Ministry attached to the PM, charged with relations between the constitutional bodies, the Presidents of the IBs and civil society representatives, thus reviving the former Technical Committee, now a Steering Committee, with a focus on accelerating the adoption of legislative and regulatory instruments, and possible cooperation with the Ecole Nationale d'Administration and closer ties with the Académie parlementaire.

- Anti-torture body (INPT) – Collaboration and expertise continued, including directly with the INPT's sub-Committees, broaching issues such as an eventual Guide for Juvenile detainees; operation of the telephone hot/helpline; finalisation, launch and deployment of bilingual Penitentiary Law Manual. The Project provided input and support to the INPT's annual colloquium (18/19 December), which addressed, in distance mode with limited physical presence, specific Covid-19 challenges for national protection mechanisms. It facilitated the participation of the INPT in meetings of the SEE NPM Network; and revised the Arabic version of the Guide on the case-law of the ECtHR.
- Anti-corruption body (INLUCC) – The Project supported the 5th national anti-corruption Congress. Guidance was provided on the partnership between civil society and INLUCC; the operation of the Blog 'Nazaha' and on an anti-corruption awareness TV ad. Support and expertise was lent to the development of guides and manuals on conflict of interest and illicit enrichment, on the management of conflict of interest in the public sector, and on ECtHR case-law regarding protection of whistleblowers. Work began on an international anti-corruption e-course, and the Project is supporting the introduction of corruption risk management tools via Training-of-Trainers and a methodological guide.
- Election Supervisory Body (ISIE) – An online seminar held on 13 November with the support of the Venice Commission on "the press, social media election campaigns – the role of ISIE" allowed the ISIE to share and reflect on its monitoring experience during the 2019 elections, focusing on difficulties and challenges encountered, and to benefit from the input of CoE experts and European experience to elaborate recommendations for improvement to the legal framework and practical and organisational aspects, and for improving the transparency of social networks.
- Data protection body (INPDP) – The CoE Guidelines on the protection of private life in the media have been translated into Arabic and distributed to some 400 targeted individuals and institutions. These will serve as basis for future activities with media professionals. The Project also supported the production of a guide for the promotion of data protection awareness, and the INPDP's 2019/20 Activity Report.
- Media body (HAICA) – The Project facilitated the creation of a long-term secure storage and retrieval system for the archiving of the HAICA's TV and radio recordings, including the provision of equipment to ensure the HAICA's ability to manage this process autonomously, freeing it from dependency on external arrangements.
- Access to information body (INAI) – The Project financed and supervised a diagnostic audit of INAI's information system, identifying current and future needs in this regard, with the aim of digitalising and automating a maximum number of the body's procedures and activities. Three internal training sessions were organised for ISIE managers, together with one for 25 representatives of public bodies subject to the demands of access to information legislation.
- Human trafficking body (INLTP) – On International Humans Rights Day, the INLPT launched the 'List of General Indicators relating to the detection of victims of human trafficking in Tunisia'. This tool, produced with the assistance and expertise of the Project, provides all Tunisian actors, governmental, institutional, and civil society, with practical information and measures to ensure implementation of Tunisia's own legislation, in line with international standards. A complementary toolbox for the identification and support of victims was also finalised, and work began on a national training strategy in the fight against trafficking with a seminar involving the INLPT and local and international experts.

Local and Regional Democracy

- The Congress Project "Promoting local governance in Tunisia" – Continued support was provided to the National Federation of Tunisian Towns (FNCT), with two consultants helping to draft an FNCT communication strategy aimed at enhancing its visibility and that of local matters, as well as to strengthen the FNCT's advocacy capacities for the benefit of

municipalities. Multi-level dialogue between central and local authorities was fostered and developed via a webinar on consultation mechanisms, and Congress tools and European good practices in public ethics and fighting corruption were promoted through peer exchanges involving INLUCC and a wider-reaching webinar.

South Programme IV

- A high-level online event to launch Phase IV of the South Programme took place on 23 November. Two panel discussions on the fight against economic crime and on combating violence against women, involving representatives from beneficiary countries and CoE experts, took place during the launching event.