

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

15 April 2022

Information Documents  
ODGP/DPAER/Inf(2022)3

---

**Quarterly report of Council of Europe Offices**

**January - March 2022**

---

## **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 and other meetings or events between the Council of Europe and the relevant international organisation(s) or institution(s);
- promote effective co-operation between the Council of Europe and the relevant international organisation(s) or institution(s);
- identify opportunities for joint activities and provide advice and support in planning, negotiation, implementation and reporting on these activities;
- conduct a proactive media policy in order to raise the visibility of the Organisation.

The present document covers the reporting period January - March 2022. 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**

### **Highlights**

- Commissioner Johansson (migration) and Commissioner Dalli (discrimination) intervened in the PACE January 2022 session.
- Commissioner Reynders participated in an exchange in the Committee of Ministers on the occasion of International Data Protection Day (28 January).
- Roberta Metsola was elected President of European Parliament.
- Visit by Human Rights Commissioner Ms Mijatović, 8-9 February.
- Visit by PACE Rapporteur Rukavishnikova on the misuse of Schengen, 7-8 February.
- Visit by PACE Rapporteur Corlăţean on the CoE-EU Strategic partnership, 23-24 February.
- Commission VP Jourová opened the conference on the media freedom act and the public service media, organised by the CoE's European Audiovisual Observatory, 23 February.
- Visit by SRSF for migration and refugees Kayacik, 7-8 March.
- Scoreboard meeting on CoE-EU co-operation through joint programmes, 18 March.
- Participation of ECRI Chair Marouda in the second EU Anti-Racism Summit, co-organised by the EU, the CoE/ECRI and the EP, 21 March.

### **Main features - statistics**

Some 582 information messages and documents and 12 weekly reports were prepared and sent to Strasbourg by the Information Officer. 62 notes for the file were sent from the Office, in addition to the information messages sent by the Deputy Head of the Office directly.

### **Meetings involving the Office**

The Office focused in particular on the launch of the French Presidency of the Council of the EU (January - June 2022). Contacts were maintained with the French Representation to the EU on issues of direct CoE interest, such as initiatives on gender-based violence and the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention, the EU accession process to the ECHR, developments on media freedom and the profession of lawyers, as well as on hate speech, hate crime and racism.

As of the end of February, much of the Office's work focused on the consequences of the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The Office liaised with the EU institutions so as to keep them informed of the reactions and decisions of the various CoE bodies leading to the cessation of Russia's membership of the Organisation and the consequences thereof. It also informed the Brussels-based international organisations and civil society/human rights networks. It ensured proper liaison as regards the related implications for programmatic co-operation in the region.

The Office was also involved in the following events and visits:

- The Office met newly-appointed EEAS Director for Values and Multilateral Relations/Deputy Managing Director of Managing Directorate Global Kokkinakis, 2 February.
- The Deputy Head of the Office facilitated the organisation of consultations between the Commission and the CoE Secretariat on the rule of law situation in the EU (in the framework of the preparation of the annual rule of law report).

- The Deputy Head of the Office facilitated the invitation to DGI to the EU "COSCE" Working Group (relations between the CoE and the OSCE), focusing on developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence, 4 February.
- The visit by PACE Rapporteur Rukavishnikova on the misuse of the Schengen Regulation, 7-8 February.
- The visit of PACE Rapporteur Corlăţean on the CoE-EU strategic Partnership, 23-24 February.
- The Office liaised with the OHCHR Regional Office in Brussels for the CoE's participation (DGI) in the UN-EU High-Level Political Dialogue on "protecting the safety of journalists, media freedom and pluralism", 24 February.
- The Deputy Head of the Office represented the CoE in a programme organised by a Brussels-based Turkish civil society organisation, addressing EU-CoE matters, for Turkish university students in Turkey, 2 February.
- Liaison with CoE colleagues following the visit in Strasbourg of EEAS Managing Director for Europe Eichhorst, 3-4 February.

The visit by SRSB on Migration Kayacik to Brussels on 7-8 March allowed the SRSB to present her mandate and an overview on the CoE Action Plan to the EU institutions and to exchange on assistance to refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.

The Office also hosted a delegation from the Congress (7-9 March) which was carrying out a monitoring mission to Belgium. The Office was also informed of the official visit to Belgium by ECtHR President Spano on 10-12 March.

The Office facilitated the co-operation on rule of law-related matters. It liaised with DGI colleagues in Strasbourg and with the Commission and EEAS on, in particular:

- the transmission of the CoE (DGI) contribution to the Commission's annual rule of law report (31 January) and the subsequent consultation (4 February online).
- DG NEAR and EEAS consultations on recent developments in some of the EU's neighbours, in particular states from the EU's Eastern Partnership (20 January).
- EEAS's exchange on Kazakhstan and Turkey, including in relation to the Kavala case.
- DG JUST activities on violence against women.
- the preparation of the anti-racism summit in co-operation with DG JUST and the EP.
- co-operation on the preparation of the draft text on SLAPPs.

The Office liaised in particular on the proposal to include hate speech and hate crime as "euro-crimes", on the Council conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism, on the initiative by the French Presidency to discuss the idea of an EU-wide status for the profession of lawyers ("*avocats*") and on co-operation in the criminal law field, in particular with Russia and Belarus.

On freedom of expression, the Office continued to be in regular contact on the SLAPPs initiative, as well as on the preparation of the European Media Freedom Act, to which the CoE Secretariat also contributed with a written paper.

The Office was also involved in the organisation of the annual Scoreboard meeting (18 March).

It maintained regular contacts with DG REFORM in view of the new framework agreement, as well as with DG JUST for thematic co-operation (children, LGBTI).

The Office also continued to be involved in the preparation of the next phases of the geographical facilities, in particular PGG III.

The Office contributed to the preparation of the exchanges that the Deputy Secretary General, the Secretary General of PACE and other CoE high officials had with Ms Kokkinakis regarding her visit to Strasbourg on 24-25 March. The visit was organised in the context of the launch of reflections within the EU on the future **priorities** of co-operation between the EU and the CoE, 2023 - 2024, due to be adopted in the EU in the course of this year.

The Office hosted:

- a meeting on developing human rights narratives against hate speech (in the framework of "We can", a DGII-run project), 28 February - 1 March.
- the meeting of the CDPC-Bureau, 15-16 March.

In addition, the Office reported on major developments, including:

- The EP plenary debate on the situation in Kazakhstan (Strasbourg, 19 January).
- The Foreign Affairs Council (Brussels, 24 January).
- The sixth meeting of the EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Council (Brussels, 25 January).
- The visits of HR/VP Borrell and Commissioner Várhelyi to Ukraine on 4-6 January and 25-27 January.
- The situation of migrants at the Belarus borders: discussed at the Home Affairs Council, 3 February.
- The fight against hatred, discussed at the EU Justice Ministers Council, 4 February.
- Rule of Law: hearing of Poland under the Article 7 procedure in the General Affairs Council (GAC), 22 February, and opinion of the EUCJ on the Regulation on Conditionality.
- The Conference on the Future of Europe: European Affairs Ministers discussed (22 February) the Conference and the next steps leading to the closing of the Conference (9 March).
- The EP's debate "EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against Ukraine" (16 February); the EP's fact-finding mission to Ukraine (31 January - 1 February); the EP's DROI Subcommittee: exchange of views on the human rights situation in Azerbaijan (7 February).
- The special meeting of the European Council (Brussels, 24 February); Foreign Affairs Council meetings on 21, 22, 25 and 27 February; the EU's participation in the meeting of G7 Foreign Ministers (19 February) and the Munich Security Conference (18-20 February).
- The conference "EU-Turkey: How to Increase Co-operation in the Area of Foreign, Security and Defence Policy", 7 February.
- The visit of VP Dombrovskis to Ukraine, 31 January.

As of March 2022, the Office reported extensively on the discussions and the decisions taken by the EU as regards the Russian aggression against Ukraine through its various institutions: the European Council (informal in Versailles, 10-11 March and 24-25 March), the Council of the EU Foreign Affairs council 4 March (extraordinary) and 21 March, the General Affairs Council on 3-4 March (informal) and 22 March (regulation on the statute and funding of European political parties), the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 3-4 March (temporary protection for persons fleeing the war in Ukraine, EU conclusions on combating antisemitism and racism and pending decision on Article 83 hate speech/hate crime) and 28 March and the European Parliament, in its three plenary sessions (1 March, 7-10 March and 23-24 March: refugees from Ukraine, the shrinking space of civil society in Europe, golden passports, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the destruction of cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh). It covered the

Commission's communication on "Welcoming those fleeing war in Ukraine" (23 March) and the EP's Ukraine Solidarity Days on 21-24 March.

The Office also reported on other developments in the EU in March 2022. Amongst many other things, it reported in particular on: Georgian President Zourabichvili's visit to Brussels (1-2 March); HR/VP Borrell's and Commissioner Várhelyi's visit to Moldova (2-3 March); the Commission's proposal on EU-wide rules to combat violence against women and domestic violence (8 March); the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council on 14 March; and the visit of HR/VP Borrell to North Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina (13-16 March). Reports also covered EP Committee meetings and think-tank events dealing with topics such as the Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the state of democratic space and civil society in Russia; migration with a focus on children and Moldova: exchange of views with Frontex, to name but a few.

### **The EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership**

The Youth Partnership took part in the following events/meetings:

- The joint meeting of the Bureaux of the Council of Europe's statutory bodies in the field of youth (CDEJ and CCJ) on 20 January and presentation of its workplan for 2022-2023.
- The EU Youth Conference in Strasbourg (24-26 January) under the French EU Presidency.
- An expert meeting on the impact of COVID-19 on young people and the youth sector (31 January).
- The third and fourth meetings of the stakeholders and national co-ordinators group of the European Year of Youth (EYY), held by the European Commission (DG EAC) (9 February and 29 March).
- The inter-institutional exchange organised by the European Parliament, within the framework of the EYY (10 February), together with the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.
- Meetings with the Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe (21 February) and with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (25 February) on co-operation in the field of youth and in the context of the EYY.
- The meeting of the two networks of the Youth Partnership – the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYP) correspondents and the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) on 2 February.
- The steering group and preparatory meetings on the future Symposium "Navigating transitions: adapting policy to young people's changing realities", to be held in Tirana, Albania, 8-9 February and 4-5 April.
- The meeting of the core group of the European Platform on Learning Mobility (EPLM) on the activities of the Platform for 2022.
- The second and third meetings of the Sub-group on Youth Work (under the EU Expert Group in the Youth Policy Field) of the European Commission (1-3 March and 4-5 April).
- The planning for the tenth cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue with the upcoming Trio - Spain, Belgium and Hungary; and an exchange of good practices on youth participation in view to the future Youth Action Plan in the EU external action (DG INTPA) on 3 March.
- The steering group for the research on young people and Artificial Intelligence (15 March).
- The Advisory Group of the European Training Strategy supporting Erasmus+ and the ESC Programme implementation (17 March).

- The Council of Europe's statutory bodies on youth (CDEJ, CCJ and CMJ) on 21-23 March in Strasbourg.
- The first meeting of the steering group on the European Youth Work Agenda (29-30 March).

In terms of publications:

- A new [podcast](#) episode discussing youth work policy goals of the European Commission and the Council of Europe was recorded and the fifth edition of the "[Insights](#)" series focusing on youth knowledge networks and resources in Europe was published.
- Two new studies - the report on the "[COVID-19 Impact and Looking Forward](#)", bringing data from over 25 countries and a [meta-analysis of research on the impact of COVID-19 on the youth sector](#); and a paper on the [limitations of digital youth work](#) - were published.
- [Podcasts](#) were recorded on the priorities of the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth for 2022 and on the upcoming publication on youth work.
- Directors Eriksson Waterschoot (European Commission) and Gruden (Council of Europe) launched the [study](#) on meaningful youth political participation in Europe on 9 March.
- A special series of [under 30-minute podcast episodes](#) dedicated to the impact on and solidarity with young people and the youth sector in Ukraine regarding the crisis was recorded.
- A [paper](#) describing the current context of the youth sector in Ukraine was published.

Other publications:

- The study "[Technology and the new power dynamics: limitations of digital youth work](#)" and a [podcast episode](#) on digital youth work.
- A paper and [podcast](#) on [Radical Education](#): a pathway for new utopias and reimagining European democracies; and an [Exploratory study](#) on sustainability and learning mobility.

## Visibility and relations with media

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

- In January: the Parliamentary Assembly's winter session - in particular the election of the new PACE President and Assembly debates and reports on LGBTI rights, migration and football governance - as well as the annual report and statistics from the European Court of Human Rights, the Human Rights Commissioner's statement on Hungary, International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the new HELP course on violence against women.
- In February: the situation in Ukraine, the decision to suspend the Russian Federation's rights of representation at the Council of Europe, the new time limit for applications to the European Court of Human Rights, the new factsheet on the execution of ECHR judgments concerning Roma and Travellers, the ECSR decision on unpaid internships in Belgium and the European Audiovisual Observatory conference on the EU's Media Freedom Act.

- In March: the situation in Ukraine - especially including the extraordinary PACE session, the Committee of Ministers' decision to exclude the Russian Federation and the resolutions from the CM and the Court on the consequences of that decision - as well as the annual conclusions and findings from the European Committee of Social Rights, Congress reports on Turkey and the UK, the GRETA statement on the dangers of trafficking among refugees from Ukraine, the GRETA report on technology-assisted human trafficking, the new factsheet on the execution of ECHR judgments concerning domestic violence and International Women's Day.
- Continuously: various judgments and decisions from the European Court of Human Rights.

The Spokesperson/Media Officer co-ordinated communications work around:

- the Committee of Ministers' decision to refer the Kavala v. Turkey case to the European Court of Human Rights, under Article 46.4 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- the forthcoming presentation of the GRECO annual report.
- the revised ECRI General Policy Recommendation on anti-Muslim racism and discrimination and the ECRI conclusions on Ireland.
- the March CM-DH meeting and the annual report for 2021 on the execution of judgments and decisions from the European Court of Human Rights.

In addition, the Spokesperson/Media Officer represented the Council of Europe's Directorate of Communications in the latest regular meeting of the "C-9" group of senior communications staff from a number of different international organisations working on human rights, and he worked on important DC projects including the re-organisation of the Council of Europe's social media architecture and the ongoing communications project highlighting the impact of the European Convention on Human Rights.

### **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 ensured the liaison between the Geneva-based organisations and the relevant MAEs of the Council of Europe.

She facilitated the organisation of the annual "United Nations - exchange of views" (human rights questions) with experts from capitals which took place during the Deputies' 1424<sup>th</sup> meeting on 10 February (videoconference).

She dealt with the participation (video message) of the Secretary General in the High-Level Segment of the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council on 28 February. The SG's participation was subsequently cancelled due to the situation in Ukraine which outdated the SG's pre-recorded statement.

She participated online in:

- the Informational Meeting on Conference Services at UNOG on 27 January.
- the KAS-GMF (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and German Marshall Fund) Human Rights Expert Dialogue - Strengthening the Voice of Europe at the United Nations on 2 February where she represented DGI.
- the welcome meeting with the Human Rights Council incoming and former Presidents on 9 February.
- the Universal Periodic Review information meeting of 14 February.
- the consultation on the UN Secretary-General's Draft Action Agenda on Internal Displacement on 16 February.
- the Human Rights Council Intersessional Panel Discussion on the human rights of migrants in vulnerable situations on 21 February.
- the IOM International Dialogue on Migration (28 February to 2 March) where she represented the SRSG on Migration in two panel discussions.
- the virtual briefing on the UNHCR for staff of Permanent Missions and intergovernmental, international and non-governmental organisations in Geneva on 22 February.
- the Informal Briefing on the Global Compact on Refugees, 30 March.

She informed the relevant departments of the results/conclusions of such meetings.

## **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**

- OSCE Special Permanent Council, first meeting under the Polish CiO, 13 January.
- OSCE Permanent Council, 20 January.
- OSCE Permanent Council, 27 January.
- OSCE Permanent Council, address by the Chairperson of the CM of the CoE, Italian Deputy Foreign Minister Della Vedova, 3 February.
- OSCE Permanent Council, 10 February.
- OSCE Permanent Council, 17 February.
- OSCE Reinforced Permanent Council, 22 February (ministerial level attended by several Foreign Ministers of the OSCE participating States).
- OSCE Reinforced Permanent Council, (ministerial level attended in online format by 39 Foreign Ministers of the OSCE participating States), 24 February.
- OSCE Special Permanent Council, 27 February.
- OSCE Permanent Council (address by the Mayor of Zhytomyr, Ukraine, and Special Representative of the CiO in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group Kinnunen), 3 March.
- OSCE Special Permanent Council, 7 March.
- OSCE Permanent Council (address by UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Griffiths and Special Representative of the OSCE CiO on Gender Palihovici, 10-11 March.
- OSCE Permanent Council (address by UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner Mazou and World Food Programme Executive Director Beasley), 17 March.
- OSCE Permanent Council, 24 March.
- OSCE Permanent Council (decision on the non-extension of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, SMM, mandate), 31 March.

### **Participation in other meetings, including expert committees and conferences**

- Economic and Environmental Committee Meeting, 26 January.
- Inauguration of the OSCE Renewed European Security Dialogue by the Polish CiO, Foreign Minister of Poland Rau, 8 February.
- Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) dialogue on the OSCE: "War in Ukraine: Break-down of the European Security Architecture?", 4 March.
- 65<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the UNODC, 14-18 March.
- Meeting of the OSCE Advisory Committee on Management and Finance. Announcement by the Russian Federation that it would not agree to extend the mandate of the SMM, 25 March.
- First Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting of the OSCE dedicated to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in the context of the conflict in Ukraine, 28-29 March.
- OSCE Preparatory Committee meeting, 30 March.

The Office submitted a total of 18 spot reports about activities and events related to the OSCE.

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

**High-level visits/meetings**

18 February - HoO meeting with EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Johansson.

**Activities of the Office**

**a) Enhancing the co-operation with the OSCE/ODIHR**

The HoO remained in regular contact with both OSCE/ODIHR staff members and Warsaw-based human dimension experts from the Polish OSCE Chairmanship taskforce in order to report on the human dimension plans and events for 2022 and to discuss possible joint activities in the framework of the wider co-operation with the CoE. The Office facilitated consultations between the OSCE/ODIHR Rule of Law Unit and the Legal Cooperation Division on plans for concrete co-operation in 2022. The Office also participated in preparations for the visit to Strasburg of the Personal Representatives on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination of the OSCE Chairperson, scheduled for April 2022. To this end, the HoO held regular consultations with, *inter alia*, Sabrina Saoudi, Adviser on Intolerance Against Muslims in the ODIHR Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, Ghenadie Barba Chief of the Rule of Law Unit in the ODIHR Democratisation Department and Carolyn Hammer, Adviser in said Unit and Piotr Chmiel, responsible for human dimension in the Polish OSCE chairmanship taskforce.

In connection with the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the Office regularly reported on the activities undertaken by ODIHR in co-ordinating the OSCE response to the human rights and humanitarian repercussions of the armed conflict. In this regard, the HoO regularly consulted Andrea Huber, Head of Human Rights Department in ODIHR, responsible, *inter alia*, for the implementation of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism, and Alice Szczepanikova, Migration and Freedom of Movement Adviser in the ODIHR Democratisation Department.

Furthermore, the HoO and CoE experts attended numerous meetings and consultations convened or facilitated by ODIHR. These included, *inter alia*, the launch of the OSCE/ODIHR Handbook on National Referral Mechanisms - Joining Efforts to Protect the Rights of Trafficked Persons: A Practical Handbook; and the ODIHR virtual side event during the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women - Addressing vulnerabilities of women and girls to trafficking in persons.

**b) Continuation of the co-operation with the Community of Democracies (CoD)**

The Office maintained regular working relations with the Permanent Secretariat of the CoD and reported on the activities undertaken, in particular on two meetings of the CoD Governing Council. During the first Council meeting in January 2022, the keynote address was delivered by Secretary of the Venice Commission Granata-Menghini.

**c) Establishment of closer co-operation with Frontex**

The HoO remained in constant contact with Jonas Grimheden, Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer, in order to discuss and organise further meetings to exchange experiences and share with Frontex the CoE's standards. As a result, meetings of the Frontex Fundamental Rights Team with the GRETA delegation and with representatives of the ECtHR (meeting devoted to

the case-law of the Court on migration-related issues) were scheduled for the second quarter of 2022.

The Office closely followed and reported on developments related to the OLAF (EU European Anti-Fraud Office) investigation into Frontex and its repercussions, as well as the European Ombudsman inquiry and recommendations.

## **B. FIELD AND PROGRAMME OFFICES**

## **Baku**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 5, Project staff – 6, Total staff – 11.

The Office implements 4 projects, 3 in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, and 1 funded through a voluntary contribution from Sweden.

### **State of implementation of projects**

1. EU/CoE-PGGII “Strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in Azerbaijan”: (i) The Azerbaijani judicial authorities were supported in building a national portal of judicial statistics with an expert report on “The establishment of the national portal of judicial statistics – roadmap and potential solutions”. (ii) The report on “Consultations to define the indicators and track records able to demonstrate the effect of judicial reforms in Azerbaijan” was presented and discussed with national stakeholders. The proposed indicators would allow the Azerbaijani authorities to introduce a unified approach to monitor the effect of judicial reforms on the national level and on the level of individual courts.

2. EU/CoE-PGGII “Strengthening Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery in Azerbaijan”: (i) Capacities of law enforcement, judiciary and financial intelligence officers were enhanced in tracing, evaluation, seizure and confiscation of criminal proceeds, and in cooperation mechanisms on asset recovery. (ii) During the third Steering Committee Meeting of the project representatives of national partner institutions described how the support received from the project benefited their efforts and the ongoing national processes in the areas of anti-money laundering/countering terrorism financing and asset recovery; the list of planned activities until the end of the project was adopted.

3. EU/CoE-PGGII “Raising Awareness on the IC and other Gender Equality Standards in Azerbaijan”: (i) The project published a new video and a brochure on “Myths and facts about the Istanbul Convention”. They are expected to promote fight against sexism, to raise awareness about the CoE standards on gender equality, and to dispel misconceptions around the IC. (ii) Through the HELP course on VAW/DV some 20 representatives of Azerbaijani state authorities increased their knowledge on VAW/DV and the IC. (iii) The project delivered presentations during two events organised by national stakeholders, thus raising awareness on the IC and other CoE standards on gender equality among up to 50 women entrepreneurs and about 80 law students and professors.

4. VC Sweden “Reinforcing gender equality and media freedom in Azerbaijan”: (i) Some 25 lawyers enhanced their knowledge on international legal standards on data protection and privacy as a result of trainings delivered by international and local experts. (ii) 60 representatives of the local online and offline media based in the regions of Azerbaijan enhanced their conflict reporting skills through the training sessions based on the Handbook on “Conflict Sensitive Journalism” (developed as part of the project activity). (iii) 20 representatives of the local online and offline media based in the regions of Azerbaijan enhanced their knowledge and skills through the training sessions on mitigation of hate speech in the media.

Other relevant activities

- On 26 January, the HoO opened a training for prosecutors on combating money laundering.
- On 3 February, the HoO met with the Head of the Media Development Agency to discuss, among other things, the recently adopted controversial law "On Media".
- On 16 February, the HoO met with AmCham (American Chamber of Commerce) representatives.
- On 17 February, the HoO met with Ms. Aysel Yagubova, Head of Department on Cooperation with International Human Rights Institutions of the MFA.
- On 23 February the HoO met with MP Mr Samed Seyidov, Head of Azerbaijani PACE delegation
- On 25 February, the HoO co-chaired the PGG II Local Steering Committee meeting for Azerbaijan.
- On 28 February, the HoO opened the Launching event of the Council of Europe HELP course on Access to Justice for Women.
- On 11 March, the HoO participated in the Third Steering Committee Meeting of PGGII-AZ Project "Strengthening Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery in Azerbaijan".
- On 12 March the HoO opened the Training for young lawyers on "Data Protection and Privacy" organized within the "Reinforcing gender equality and other ethical standards in Azerbaijani media" project.
- On 15 March, the HoO attended the round table on presenting and discussing the Report on "Consultations to define the indicators and track records able to demonstrate the effect of judicial reforms in Azerbaijan" within the "Strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in Azerbaijan" European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) project.
- On 15 March, the HoO chaired the Development Partners Sub-group meeting on Good Governance, Just and Inclusive Society.

## **Belgrade**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 7, Project staff – 27, Horizontal Facility Coordination Hub (HFCH) – 1, Total – 35.

The Office is currently implementing 13 (country specific and regional) projects: 12 jointly funded with the EU (9 under the Horizontal Facility Phase II (HF)), Human Resource Management in Local Self-Government (HRM/LSG), ROMACTED, Support for the implementation of judicial reform in Serbia and 1 project through Voluntary Contributions (VC) of the Swedish Foreign Ministry/SIDA on Anti-Money-Laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing (AML/CTF).

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

- EU/CoE HF "Quality Education for All-Serbia": Official Guidance for implementation of RFCDC in curricula was translated into English and presented to the beneficiary. Sixth action Steering Committee Meeting took place in March. Three schools organised Days of Democratic Culture in March with more than 1000 people present including the State Secretary in the Ministry of Education. The action completed the process of equipping project schools with computers for Democratic School Classrooms to be used for development of Competences for Democratic Culture. Schools continued with the implementation of the action plans for the second half of the school year.
- EU/CoE HF "Promotion of Diversity and Equality in Serbia": The Action continued to provide support to the work of the inter-ministerial working group tasked for the development the new Action Plan for Realization of the Rights of National Minorities (APNM), based on the latest EC Report on Serbia, 4th Opinion of the AC FCNM, as well as Ex post Analysis of the implementation of the APNM prepared by the Action. The Action completed the preparation of the Commentary to the Law on National Councils of National Minorities. The Action supported the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue and the Ombudsperson institution with organizing and conducting six capacity building workshops for Councils on Inter-Ethnic Relations across the country.
- EU/CoE HF "Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia": The action supported adaptation of the new HELP module on preventing trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation to the Serbian strategic and legal framework. The module will be implemented in next quarter with participation of labour inspectors, police officers and trade unions. Aiming to contribute to the capacity building of journalists and media representatives to report on human trafficking in ethical and fact-based way, the action organised training for 30 participants on 31 March 2022 in Belgrade. ECHR case of V.C.L. v. the United Kingdom was translated into Serbian and widely shared it with beneficiaries, consultants and partners. The action is purchasing IT equipment for Centre for Human Trafficking Victims' Protection and NGO Atina (total value 8.350 EUR).
- EU/CoE HF "Enhancing human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons": With the Action's support, the interviewing manual for police officers was drafted. Support to MoI task force mandated to improve custody regime was further continued. Further, standardising between medical screening in police custody and improvement of cooperation between MoI and MoH is also being supported. Expertise on supervising prison treatment

programmes was provided to the Prison Administration. Moreover, peer-to-peer trainings as well as piloting of specialised treatment programmes were evaluated.

- EU/CoE HF “Enhancing penitentiary capacities in addressing radicalisation in prisons in Western Balkans”: More than twenty (20) prison managers coming from the detention facilities across Serbia attended “The Training on Radicalisation and Violent Extremism, Right-wing Extremism and VEP-specific Tools/Program” (in Belgrade) and have increased their awareness on phenomena of radicalisation and violent extremism, its different forms/specificities, the latest regional and global trends, right-wing extremism, good practices in management of VEPs in penitentiary systems in Europe.
- EU/CoE HF “Independence & Accountability of the Judiciary”: 10 Judicial Academy trainers were equipped with skills on preventing undue influence on the work of judges following two ToTs. 50 court and prosecution office spokespersons enhanced their digital media skills in a series of trainings. Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils were supported to organise a workshop for 20 journalists on European standards concerning respect for judicial decisions. The results achieved on improving judicial and prosecutorial ethics, including confidential counselling, were presented in Podgorica at the conference organised by EU/CoE HF “Accountability of judicial system in Montenegro”.
- EU/CoE HF “Strengthening the effective legal remedies to human rights violations in Serbia”: 45 prosecutors and prosecutorial assistants from Belgrade and Novi Sad took part in the working meetings on interpretation and citation of the ECHR and ECtHR case-law. Guidelines on standards for using biometric data based on facial recognition following the case-law of the ECtHR were developed and presented to responsible ministries, independent human rights bodies and CSOs. Around 30 representatives of national training institutions and bar associations from the Western Balkans took part in an online presentation of the new Council of Europe HELP course on Judicial Reasoning and Human Rights.
- EU/CoE HF “Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Serbia (JUFREX 2)”: The knowledge and professional skills of 21 judges and prosecutors and 25 police officers were developed on how to improve the protection of journalists, in two tailored training sessions organised, respectively by the Judicial Academy of the Republic of Serbia within a grant under the Action and in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia and the same Judicial Academy. 22 lawyers increased their understanding of European standards on freedom of expression (presumption of innocence, defamation, freedom of expression on the Internet and safety of journalists) in a training session organised in cooperation with the Bar Associations of Serbia and Vojvodina.
- EU/CoE HF “Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX 2)”: At the 2<sup>nd</sup> (online) Steering Committee of the Action on 24 February, beneficiaries and partners of the European Union and the Council of Europe analysed the results of the Action and confirmed their future efforts and commitment to strengthening freedom of expression and freedom of the media in the Western Balkans, in line with European standards. In a hybrid Conference organised on 17 March by the Action’s Grantee South-East Europe Law Schools Network/SEELS, 13 academics of the region shared their experience on the inclusion of freedom of expression and freedom of the media in higher legal education and discussed options for the future.
- EU/CoE HF regional “HELP in the Western Balkans”: 7 HELP online courses (on Admissibility Criteria, Asylum, Environment and Human Rights, Data Protection, International Cooperation in Criminal Matters, Procedural Safeguards and Violence against Women) were

adapted to domestic legislation and launched in the framework of the regional action in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. The regional HF40 reached 6.940 users from the region in the HELP e-learning platform, increased by 5% in the reporting period. Additionally, a course on Asylum and Human Rights was launched regionally for all six beneficiaries that gathered close to 400 participants and a regional Training-of-Trainers, which equipped 30 more legal professionals with necessary skills for tutoring of the HELP courses.

- EU/CoE JP "Human Resources Management in Local Self-Government - phase 2": The programme focused on the delivering trainings to the LSGs in cooperation with National Academy for Public Administration. So far 15 trainings were delivered with more than 300 participants from the LSGs. The Programme developed the Ex-post Analysis of the Law on Employees in Autonomous Provinces and Local Self-Governments. The Ex-post Analysis focuses on provisions of the Law related to the professional development system, and its findings will be presented to the stakeholders in April. The Programme completed the Micro-grants in 20 LSGs. The Grants were awarded to LSGs for implementation of Special training programmes.
- EU-CoE regional JP "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED)-phase 2": 13 facilitators in 14 partner Cities and Municipalities carried out activities at local level, including info sessions on COVID-19 related to prevention, vaccination and recovery; establishment of three Community Action Groups with Roma returnees and assessment of their short and long-term needs and priorities. Establishment of Municipal Taskforce Groups (composed of representatives of Roma communities and local authorities) in all partner local self-governments is foreseen to be completed by the end of April 2022.
- EU/CoE JP "Support for the implementation of judicial reform in Serbia" – the project started on 1 January and is currently in inception phase. Preparatory activities for the first SCM and the launching event are under way. The project is already supporting development of the Action Plan of the National Judicial Development Strategy through working groups and provision of expertise. The project also started with development of a roadmap for justice sector reform by supporting the Ministry of Justice to develop the guidelines for drafting a set of judicial laws.
- VC (Swedish MFA) "Preventing money laundering and terrorist financing in Serbia": Project delivered advice for the update and development of new indicators for identifying suspicious transactions and persons related to virtual assets and money transfer services to be used by the National Bank of Serbia and Securities Commission. In addition, the project delivered online training on investigation of criminal abuse of virtual assets to Serbian prosecutors, judges, and police officers, as well as finalised assessment of policy and legislation related to asset recovery system in Serbia.

#### Follow-up action

- The JP on the support to the judiciary reforms will be publicly launched through a thematic conference, following the completion of the inception reform (May/June). In addition, the project will be separately presented together with other three projects dedicated to Chapters 23 and 24, supported by the EU, with an intention to send a strong political message about the relevance of these projects for the accession negotiations related to these two most challenging chapters for Serbia.

- A stocktaking conference on the progress of the Republic of Serbia in preventing anti-money laundering will be organised under the SIDA sponsored CoE project on Preventing the AML/TF, in presence of the Ambassador of Sweden in the Republic of Serbia.
- Director of ODGP will pay a visit to Belgrade office in May on the occasion of the inauguration of new office premises.

#### Other relevant activities

- On 10 February, the Third Meeting of the Beneficiary Steering Committee of the Joint Programme of the EU and CoE "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey" (Phase II) in Serbia, took place in Belgrade, gathering representatives of beneficiary institutions, CoE and EUD.
- From 1 to 4 March; Delegation of the pre-election observation mission of the PACE visited Belgrade. The delegation was headed by MP Aleksander POCIEJ, and met with representatives of the parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties, civil society, media and ODIHR, speaker of the Parliament and President of the Republic Electoral Commission.
- On 10 and 11 March, International conference dedicated to the Observatory of History Teaching in Europe (OHTe) named "Challenges of history teaching in Europe" was held in Belgrade, jointly organised by CoE Office in Belgrade and University of Belgrade under the Month of Francophonie.

#### **Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations**

- Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić paid an official visit to Serbia from 7 to 9 March. During her visit she met with the Prime Minister, Speaker of the Parliament, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of European Integration, Minister of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue and Minister of Justice. She also opened the conference on the occasion of the International Women's Day, together with the Commissioner for Protection of Equality.

**Chisinau****Situation of the Office**

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

The Office implemented eleven projects, two in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, two funded through voluntary contributions from Switzerland and the Netherlands respectively and seven funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan level, as detailed below. Three projects were launched on 1 January 2022.

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

- VC Switzerland “Education for Democracy in the Republic of Moldova”: 20 local education professionals were trained on the use of the child-rights-based approach in implementing democratic school governance in the Republic of Moldova during an online Training of Trainers course. Together with the participants, the experts reflected on the benefits, limitations and challenges associated with different mechanisms for implementing child-rights-based democratic school governance.
- VC The Netherlands “Enhancing diversity and equality in the Republic of Moldova”: the project trained 70 judicial professionals, including court clerks on European standards and ECtHR case-law in the field of hate crimes. A project baseline study was produced, assessing the potential for engagement in the regions to pilot the network of local services and civil society organisations on combating hate crimes. Educational materials on the topic were adapted to the training needs of the General Police Inspectorate. Work started to provide a legal opinion on the proposed draft amendments to the legislation encompassing hate crimes and hate speech.
- EU/CoE – PGG “Strengthening the capacities of the justice sector actors to deliver justice in line with European standards, in particular to fight discrimination, in the Republic of Moldova”: through an online workshop, Equality Council’s staff enhanced their knowledge and skills on different sanction systems in cases of discrimination. This workshop supported them on better formulating their recommendations in discrimination cases and strengthened their work in this area. In addition, 98 employees of the judicial system strengthened their knowledge on national and international remedies in cases of discrimination through an online training.
- EU/CoE - PGG " Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova": in the framework of two working groups, the project is finalising the amendments of the communication policy documents of the judiciary and the draft Regulation on the annual contests on court performance. The activities contributed to raising knowledge among the leadership of the judiciary on the necessary improvements of internal and external communication and ways to increase court performance.
- AP “Strengthening the human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova”: 16 representatives of the People’s Advocate Office enhanced their capacities in the realisation of the institution’s mandate in influencing public policies and legislation from a human rights perspective. 47 criminal justice actors discussed the findings and the

recommendations of the assessment reports for improving the normative framework and practices on detention and escort as well as on the investigation of cases of torture and ill-treatment in police custody. 89 legal professionals enhanced their knowledge and skills on non-custodial preventive measures in line with the Convention standards.

- AP “Strengthening the prison and probation reforms, provision of health care and treatment of patients in closed institutions in the Republic of Moldova”: policies and Standard Operating Procedures in key areas for the prison system were developed. The Evaluation Workshop to present the conclusions on piloting the Risk and Needs Assessment tool in prisons and probation offices, and a consolidation training session on the use of the tool were organised. The Romanian translation of the CoE publication "Organisation and Management of Health Care in Prisons" was printed and distributed. The project also held two rounds of Working Group meetings for the development of a Curriculum for the initial training of probation counsellors.
- AP “Support for Media Pluralism and Freedom of Expression in the Republic of Moldova”: a policy workshop on regulating disinformation in the media field was organised for the national audiovisual regulatory authority while 25 journalists were trained on reporting and developing journalistic materials sensitive to conflict. In addition, the project launched a 2-month national campaign on debunking disinformation, jointly with the widest-read newspaper in the country, Ziarul de Garda. At the request of the Parliament, the Project finalised the review against EU and CoE standards of a draft law aiming to counteract disinformation.
- AP “Improving Electoral Practice in the Republic of Moldova, Phase II”: the project finalized an experts’ opinion for the introduction of e-voting in the legislation of the Republic of Moldova. A roadmap for the accreditation of the Electoral Training Centre as an educational institution was delivered whereas a new functionality for the Central Electoral Commission internal record management application “Antechamber” was completed. This functionality will improve the flow of data to ensure a better public access and prevent the leakage of sensitive information.
- AP “Preventing and protecting children from violence including in the digital environment”: the first Steering Committee meeting took place on 17 February; as a result the workplan for the project (2022-2023) was agreed with the members. The Guidelines for the practical application of the intersectoral cooperation mechanism provided in the Government Decision 270/2014 were printed and disseminated to community social workers. The expert review of Law 299 on the measures and services provided to children in conflict with the law was initiated, along with the adaptation of the Romanian version of the training module on online child sexual exploitation and abuse investigation to the Moldovan legal context.
- AP “Supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova”: administrative steps were taken in order to launch the project and the project team was hired. The project supported the coordination efforts of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection by contributing inputs to the Road Map on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. In addition, the project became an observer to the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Council, a platform at national level including all relevant stakeholders working in the field of violence against women and domestic violence.

Follow up action

- On 1 January 2022, three projects were operationalized: "Supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova", "Preventing and protecting children from violence including in the digital environment" and "Support for Media Pluralism and Freedom of Expression in the Republic of Moldova".

Other relevant activities

- On 1 and 3 February, the Head of Office held meetings with the newly appointed Chairperson of the Audiovisual Council and with the Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration respectively, with the aim to discuss possible areas of cooperation with the Council of Europe.
- On 4 February, the Head of Office had a meeting with the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament to exchange views on the Parliament's legislative priorities in the fields of justice and media.
- In January 2022, a 5-minute video showcasing the stories of the end beneficiaries of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova was disseminated. The storytelling featured three project beneficiaries who explain how they were able to make a difference in their communities thanks to the support of the Council of Europe. The video was disseminated through social media reaching about 32K people on Facebook, including 294 likes and 42 shares, as well as 553 impressions on LinkedIn.

**Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations**

- Between 6 and 8 March, the Office facilitated the organisation of the mission of the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights to the Republic of Moldova in the context of the refugee crisis following the conflict in Ukraine.

## **Bucharest**

### **Situation of the Office**

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

The office was responsible for the implementation of five capacity building projects on cybercrime with a combined budget of over 37 million EUR. Four projects are jointly funded with the European Union (EU) and one is funded by voluntary contributions (currently Canada, Japan, Hungary, Italy, United Kingdom and USA).

Given the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the project activities were delivered on-line/hybrid; however, we resumed the in-person organisation of few activities under the iPROCEEDS 2, CyberSouth, Octopus and CyberEast projects.

### **State of implementation of projects (January-March 2022)**

**Octopus Project:** Enhanced policy dialogue on cooperation on cybercrime was supported through [exchange of views with the diplomatic community](#) in Bucharest, a series of [parliamentary webinars](#) and other activities promoting human rights and rule of law requirements in the cyberspace. The reinforcement of cybercrime legislation in Barbados was supported as well as the capacities of prosecutors and magistrates from Caribbean region to address the challenge of cybercrime and electronic evidence. Capabilities of the Asian countries to respond to the COVID-19 related cybercrime were assessed and recommendations formulated in the study discussed at a [regional workshop](#) in Sri Lanka. [Digital partnerships](#) were fostered through a dedicated session on combating crime in cyberspace. A mission to Tunis was undertaken to assess the progress of Tunisia towards accession to the Budapest Convention.

**iPROCEEDS-2:** Cooperation between cybersecurity and cybercrime communities was enhanced through the organisation of a [Regional Cyber Exercise](#) in Athens, Greece. The capabilities of law enforcement were reinforced by the organisation of the specialised training on cybercrime and digital forensics in an online format. The implementation of the Second Additional Protocol into domestic legislation was supported by translating its operative text into Bosnian, Montenegrin, Macedonian, Serbian and Turkish. The authorities from Bosnia and Herzegovina were assisted in getting acquainted with the EU legal framework and standards on lawful interception and access to telecommunication data.

**GLACY+:** The harmonisation of the cybercrime and e-evidence legislation was supported in [Uganda](#) as well as the cyber-related legislation (data protection) in [the Gambia](#) and [Vanuatu](#). The development of National Cybercrime Strategy in [Philippines](#) was supported. The Budapest Convention was promoted through [webinars targeting policy makers organised jointly with the Octopus Project and Parliamentarians for Global Action](#) as well as its Second Additional Protocol through webinars targeting [criminal justice authorities organised jointly with the Octopus Project and International Association of Prosecutors](#) and civil society and private sector in LATAM region. The community of national judicial trainers was reinforced by the organisation of the [new series of practitioners-to-practitioners workshops](#) and the [2022 Plenary of the International Network of Judicial Trainers](#). The project progress was reviewed and the 2022 workplan was agreed during the [11th Steering Committee](#) meeting of the project.

**CyberSouth:** The development of strategic approaches to fighting cybercrime was supported in all priority countries through the organisation of national workshops on cybercrime statistics. The capacities of LEA to respond to cybercrime were reinforced by supporting the development of domestic toolkit for first responders to cybercrime investigations. The competences and skills of the Lebanese and Algerian magistrates were strengthened through the delivery of the train the trainers course on cybercrime.

**CyberEast** – The analysis of amendments to the Georgian Law on Information Security was completed in cooperation with the EU Delegation in Georgia and the CyberSecurity East project, and international cooperation was enhanced by the translation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime into Georgian. The capacities of prosecutors and law enforcement were reinforced through series of [training activities](#), focusing on cybercrime investigations and financial investigations/Darknet. The cooperation between cybersecurity community and law enforcement was enhanced through the development of Standard Operating Procedures in the Regional Meeting in Istanbul, Turkey and hands-on [Regional Cyber Exercise](#) in Athens, Greece.

In the context of CyberEast, the invasion of Ukraine by Russian Federation and related state of emergency in Moldova had significant impact on project planning and delivery.

#### Follow up action

- Support T-CY activities and working group on undercover investigations and extension of searches.
- Organisation of the T-CY Plenary and the subsequent international conference and opening for signature of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime (10-13 of May 2022).
- Publication of the Guide for law enforcement training strategy on cybercrime and e-evidence.
- Finalisation and publication of the HELP course on cybercrime.

#### Other relevant activities

- T-CY Secretariat facilitated the participation and common positions of the Parties to the Convention in the UN [Ad hoc committee to elaborate an international convention on countering the use of ICTs for criminal purposes](#).
- The concept notes for the no-cost extension of the iPROCEEDS 2 project and the new iPROCEEDS 3 project were proposed to the European Commission.
- The extension of GLACY+ project by 30 months with a top up of 5 million Euro was approved by the European Commission.
- Ecuador was invited to accede to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.
- Italy made a voluntary contribution (10,000 Euro) to the Octopus project.

**Kyiv****Situation of the Office**

- Core staff – 11, project staff – 52, total staff – 63.
- The Office implemented 19 projects, including 14 projects funded by voluntary contributions, one funded under the CoE/EU PGG, three funded under the joint CoE/EU and one project funded by HRTF.

**State of implementation of projects/programmes**

*Please note that certain projects launched procurement procedures but were not able to complete them in order to carry out some activities due to the security situation and the ensuing military conflict. Such projects were omitted from the reporting below.*

- **AP CoE Project "Combatting violence against women in Ukraine"**: Project Annual report finalised; reporting documents from the grant projects on increasing awareness raising on the Istanbul Convention (IC) reviewed and approved for NGO La Strada Ukraine and NGO Faith.Hope.Love; input provided for the SCM for the CoE Action plan for Ukraine (2018-2022); preparatory work completed for the anticipated event on promotion of the IC ratification hosted by the Swedish embassy and organised for the embassies in Ukraine and international organisations; preparatory work conducted for gaps analysis in current legislation and policy regarding VAW and DV; project SCM prepared (scheduled for 24 February and postponed due to start of war in Ukraine).

- **AP CoE Project "Enhancing decentralisation and public administration reform in Ukraine"**

On 26 January, the project organised the Council of Europe's presentation of the Policy Advice on legal personality at local level in Ukraine to the international community. In addition, it supported the initiative of the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development (MinRegion) to establish a task force to implement the recommendations laid out in the Policy Advice. On 12 February, the project carried out the Training of Trainers session for a pilot training for representatives of State administrations on legality supervision over local authorities' acts. It brought together civil servants, lawyers and judges and was planned to run until the end of 2022 in order to develop a new comprehensive training programme, taking into account novelties in the legal framework. However, the initiatives mentioned above were put on hold in connection with introduction of martial law as a follow up to aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

Throughout the reporting period the project provided policy advice to the MinRegion and specialised Task Forces in the Parliament to ensure incorporation of the Council of Europe recommendations and standards into draft legislation. Moreover, it supported the MinRegion with local expertise in developing guidelines to local authorities on the exercise of their functions under martial law. Following the initiative of the MinRegion, and in order to enable meaningful interaction between local authorities in Ukraine and beyond, including media, the project co-organised a series of online conferences "Local Governments Unite for Welfare and Peace". Four conferences in March brought together over 1000 participants and speakers online, among them (deputy) mayors of numerous European municipalities including Athens, Bergen, Cannes, Chernihiv, Dublin, Freiburg, Kharkiv, Krakow, Kyiv, Mariupol, Riga, Strasbourg, Tampere, Vienna, Vilnius, Wrocław and Zürich.

- **AP CoE Project "Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase II":** On 26-27 January [the planning bi-lateral meeting of the project](#) took place in Kyiv in a hybrid format. Representatives of the Council of Europe project team and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine discussed the result of the evaluation of the capacity building activities of the first phase of the project in 2021 and drafted the work plan of the project until December 2023. On 5 February partners of the first phase of the project presented experience on strengthening youth participation at the IV National Dialogue of Youth Councils of Ukraine. Within the framework of the development of the professional standard "Youth Specialist (Youth Worker)" in Ukraine the project conducted participatory research, translated the professional standards on youth work of England and Austria. Since March, the project follows the current situation in the field of youth policy and youth work in a war time providing a survey on needs assessment of youth workers and organising [a series of meetings for youth](#) workers.
- **AP CoE Project "Supporting the transparency, inclusiveness and integrity of electoral practice in Ukraine – Phase III":** Presentation of the CoE study on European practices of decentralised election management was held for representatives of the CEC. Project annual work plan was developed in consultations with national partners and stakeholders. Preparations to the Project Steering Committee meeting scheduled on 24 February were held, though the meeting was cancelled due to the Russian aggression on Ukraine.
- **AP CoE Project Strengthening local democratic governance in Ukraine:** Regional round table was organised for 120 representatives of national and local decision makers and civil society from Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to enhance the contribution of local authorities in all steps of national open government policy making and to share experiences, strategies and solutions for improved partnership between central and local authorities. Representatives of 150 municipalities from urban and rural areas increased their awareness and understanding of open government principles thus ensuring expansion of the OGP Local programme in Ukraine. Assisted in the development and launching of a new online platform, [Cities4Cities](#), in coordination with national partners to help Ukrainian cities to get in direct contact with European municipalities to share their needs related to local infrastructure, know-how and expertise in recovery policies.
- **AP CoE Project "Strengthening civil participation in democratic decision making in Ukraine"** provided legal expert support as to the development of the draft Law of Ukraine as regards the amendments to the law "On Local Self-Government in Ukraine" and other legislation on democracy at the level of local self-government". Following the continued tailored support provided by the project to 8 Ukrainian municipalities that earlier adopted the regulatory frameworks for participatory tools, 8 brochures "Guidelines for civil participation" for citizens, NGOs and public authorities explaining the use of the newly adopted statutes and the regulations for civil participation as well as training curriculums aimed at equipping citizens and NGOs with practical skills and awareness in using the new participatory tools were developed. Because of the war of Russian Federation against Ukraine all other previously planned activities of the project were suspended.
- **AP CoE Project "Protecting national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine" – Phase II:** Contacts were established with the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine. It was agreed to hold webinars and other activities for civil servants on non-discriminatory services for vulnerable groups, including the

Roma. The first webinar was conducted on 23 February, 266 participants attended the webinar. The Manual for Local Initiative Groups on National Minorities was finalised. A draft research on "Political participation and ensuring the electoral rights of national minorities, including Roma, in Ukraine" was prepared in cooperation with the Council of Europe project "Supporting the transparency, inclusiveness and integrity of electoral practice in Ukraine". The presentation of Romani language curricula was scheduled for 24 February but was not conducted.

- ***AP CoE Project "Human Rights Compliant Criminal Justice System in Ukraine"***: 162 (5 female and 157 male) heads of district public prosecutors' offices improved their knowledge on practical application of Articles 2, 3 and 5 of the ECHR in the prosecutorial activities during 7 training sessions co-organised with the Prosecutors' Training Centre. Expert comments to the amended regulations regarding recruitment and promotion of prosecutors were provided to the members of the Body in Charge of Disciplinary Proceedings of the public prosecution service and expert consultations regarding these amendments were facilitated. 50 legal professionals (31 male and 19 female) enhanced their knowledge on application of pre-trial detention and house arrest in Ukraine during five focus group discussions held.
- ***AP CoE Project "Supporting constitutional and legal reforms, constitutional justice and assisting the Verkhovna Rada in conducting reforms aimed at enhancing its efficiency. Phase 3"***: During the 1-quarter of 2022, the focus of the work of the project was on strengthening the capacity of the Verkhovna Rada. Moreover, the Project has provided expert assistance for improving the electoral legislation in terms of legislation on local referendums and worked on the scientific-practical commentary to the Election Code of Ukraine. On February 18, 2022, a round table "Legislative support for the organisation and conduct of local referendums in Ukraine" was held. The event was organised by the Verkhovna Rada Committee on the Organization of State Power, Local Self-Government, Regional Development and Urban Development with the assistance and support of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine (Venice Commission) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems IFES. On February 25, 2022, an online presentation of the publication "Electoral Code of Ukraine. Book I. General part. Scientific and practical commentary" was planned to take place but was postponed due to military aggression of the Russian Federation on Ukraine.
- ***AP CoE Project "Support for judicial institutions and processes to strengthen access to justice in Ukraine"***: The Project presented a translation into Ukrainian language of the Guidelines and explanatory memorandum regarding Online Disputes Resolution Mechanisms in Civil and Administrative Court Proceedings, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 16 June 2021. On 25 and 26 January 2022 in the city of Lviv (Ukraine) the Project in the cooperation with the National School of Judges of Ukraine organised a final meeting of the working group on the development of a one-day training course "Application of the principle of legal certainty in administrative proceedings". On 11 and 12 February 2022 in the city of Odesa (Ukraine) the Project in the cooperation with the Public Union "Ukrainian Academy of Mediation" organized one consultation with Ukrainian stakeholders with the aim to draft a road map on implementation of the pre-trial mediation in civil and administrative cases in Ukraine. The Project presented an Analysis by the international expert, Mrs Marina Naumovska Milevska, regarding the Ukrainian Regulatory Framework on the Status of the Assistant Judge and its Compliance with the Standards and Recommendations of the Council of Europe.

- AP CoE Project "Internal Displacement in Ukraine: Building Solutions – Phase II":** In January 2022 two of five Project partner communities have received IT equipment and software. Based on prior needs assessment done by the Project, executive administrations of 7 district councils of Kryvyi Rih (Dovgyntsiivskyi, Inguletskyi, Metalurgiyni, Pokrovskyi, Saksaganskyi, Ternivskyi, Tsentralno-Miskyi) as well as executive administration of Storogynets city council have received laptops, PCs, multifunctional devices, and specialised software. This support allowed the administrations and social services to reach out to more beneficiaries in Dnipropetrovsk and Chernivtsi regions. On 21-22 February, an on-site high level expert meeting on legislating the mechanisms of ensuring the rights of victims of the armed conflict was held in cooperation with the Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine. Representatives of key national partners elaborated a vision of the system of human rights protection and reparations for different categories of the conflict-affected people. The findings are very relevant for the current victims of the military aggression of Russia against Ukraine. On 23 -25 February the Project launched the second round of capacity building activities for psychologists and social workers on treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and strengthening community resilience. The life training held in Kyiv was interrupted by the start of Russia's war against Ukraine. At the time of war, the Project in close consultations and collaboration with its key national partners contributes to creation of the mechanism of access to registration, basic services, accommodation, reliable information, and digital solutions for new IDPs as well as restitution and compensation tools including the e-register of destroyed and damaged housing and property. A draft manual on human rights-based conduct and corporate responsibility of business in situation of armed conflict has been finalised with the support of the project.
- EU/CoE Project "EU and Council of Europe working together to support freedom of media in Ukraine":** The needs assessment mission in the sphere of freedom of expression in Ukraine took place. International and Ukrainian experience in countering disinformation was discussed during the round table "Effective Counteraction to Disinformation: International and Ukrainian Tendencies" held in partnership with Center for Democracy and the Rule of Law. 80 representatives of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine Secretariat participated in the seminar on practical aspects of access to public information legislation, including the provisions of Tromsø Convention held in cooperation with the Ombudsperson's Office in Ukraine and UNDP Project. 52 judges of the administrative courts of Ukraine acquired new skills in application of access to public information legislation in the light of Tromsø Convention during the training. 80 Ukrainian judges were trained on criminal legal protection of journalists at the training organized on 17 February 2022. Both activities were held in cooperation with the National School of Judges of Ukraine. On 23 February 2022, 50 participants discussed the draft Law No.6177 "On National Commission responsible for data protection and access to public information" at the round table organized in cooperation with the responsible Verkhovna Rada Committee, Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine and several CSOs. The online course "Digital safety of journalists and other media professionals" was developed, recorded, and opened for registration at the educational platform "Prometheus". The expert reports on the Ukrainian courts' case law in the sphere of access to public information were prepared.
- EU/CoE Project "European Union and Council of Europe working together to strengthen the Ombudsperson's capacity to protect human rights in Ukraine":** Legal opinion on the Draft law on "National Commission in the field of Data Protection and Access to Public Information" No.6177 on 18 October 2021 was prepared. The legal opinion has not been provided to the Parliament yet due to the aggression of the Russia

against Ukraine. Strengthening the awareness of the public servants on data protection the Project continued implementation of the "Data Protection" course within the advance training programme of the Ukrainian School of Governance with 90 persons trained within January-February 2022. Assisting the Ombudsperson Office in strengthening their mission to communicate on human rights standards as well as to increase awareness among the public, the Project launched development of the Ombudsperson Brandbook. Brand philosophy (slogan, mission, values, official statement) with two concepts of brand identity with visual elements (logo, colours, fonts) were created. Furthermore, the mind map of the NPM interactive map with all the required features included in accordance with the requirements of the Ombudsperson's Office and standards set for such products by telecommunications authorities were also created. All follow up work to operationalize these products was postponed due to the military aggression.

- ***EU/CoE Project "EU and Council of Europe working together to support the Prison Reform in Ukraine" (SPERU):*** Comments to the draft Penitentiary Strategy till 2026 and its Action Plan 2021-2023 provided to MoJ in cooperation with EUD. Second rehabilitation Programme "Keeping Family Ties in Custody" & Methodological Handbook was presented to the national stakeholders. 110 copies of Handbook disseminated among Ukrainian prisons. Two rounds of training on Risk and Needs Assessment of Reoffending were delivered to staff of 16 prisons. European experience on attracting prisoner labour (German, Romanian and British cases) presented to MoJ.
- ***PGG II Project "Strengthening measures to counter money laundering and financing of terrorism in Ukraine:*** on 27 January 2022, the legal opinion on the proposed draft legislative amendments to the Law of Ukraine "On State Registration of Legal Entities, Individual Entrepreneurs and Public Associations" to improve the mechanism of reporting information on Ultimate Beneficial Owner(s) and the ownership structure of a legal entity (draft Law No. 6131-2) was presented. On 16 February 2022, the legal opinion on the draft Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on Improving Mechanisms for Validation of Information on Ultimate Beneficiary Owners and Ownership Structure of Legal Entities" (draft Law 6003) was presented and discussed with the national partners in an online format. With a view to enhance the capacities of the national stakeholder in conducting risk assessments on 14 and 18 February 2022, online advisory sessions on sectoral risks assessment methodology were conducted for the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the National Securities and Stock Exchange Commission. The Project has also contributed to the annual training of the High Anti-Corruption Court judges in February 2022. Together with the Training Centre of Prosecutors of Ukraine on 09-11 February 2022, the Project delivered online training on procedural guidance and prosecution of money laundering.

### **Gender mainstreaming and gender equality**

All the projects and other activities in the office are supported by the Gender Advisor. Before the war the Gender Advisor supported planning of advocacy related to the Istanbul Convention. This was done in co-operation with the project "Combating Violence against Women in Ukraine" and the Swedish Embassy. The office maintains external presence by active participation in relevant working groups and meetings. The Sectoral Working Group "Gender Equality" met twice during the reporting period: 4 February and 23 March. In the latest meeting, it was discussed how gender perspective can be integrated in the support for Ukraine. The Gender Advisor has also participated in GBV Subcluster meetings to follow conflict-related gender discussions in Ukraine.

**Visibility and outreach**

24 statements by Council of Europe leadership were translated into Ukrainian, published and disseminated during the reporting period. The Ukrainian media published more than 200 news items with key messages from the Council of Europe on condemnation of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, calling for solidarity with Ukraine and excluding the Russian Federation from the Council of Europe. On 3-4 February, the information with key messages on the Steering Committee Meeting on the implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2022 and the preparation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2023-2026 was published and shared through all web-resources. 87 news items were published on the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine website. Users have made 36 782 visits to the website, 59 653 pageviews and 49768 unique pageviews. During 1 January – 31 March 2022, 236 posts on the Facebook page of the CoE Office in Ukraine covering 133 243 unique users were published. The number of followers of the CoE Office in Ukraine Facebook page has increased up to 5 974 (56 new followers). As for the Twitter account at the same period: 106 tweets, 82 new followers, 16 576 profile visits, 29 051 tweet impressions. The number of followers has increased to 989.

**Communication activities of the Joint EU and CoE project "European Union and Council of Europe working together to strengthening human rights in Ukraine"**

During the reporting period, the Project has produced 24 posts on the FB page of the CoE Office in Ukraine covering 52 608 unique users. Moreover, 25 posts were published on the FB page of the CoE Media Projects covering 111 034 unique users. All Project activities were featured on the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine website, with highlights of the events and pictures. During the reporting period, 9 news regarding the Project activities were published at the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine website.

**Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations**

- On 15 March, Secretary General held an online meeting with the Prosecutor General of Ukraine to discuss cooperation in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine.
- On 22 March, Director General for Human Rights and Rule of Law held a meeting with the Prosecutor General of Ukraine at the Polish-Ukrainian border to discuss cooperation in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine.

## **Sarajevo**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 7 (including one trainee), project staff – 20 (the work of one ROMACTED colleague is primarily linked with Strasbourg Headquarters and not the activities of the Sarajevo Office as such), total staff – 27.

The Office implements eleven projects, five of which are funded through the EU/CoE Horizontal Facility (HF Phase II) for the Western Balkans and Turkey, while six are funded by voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level. In addition, the Office is participating in the implementation of one regional project, the EU/CoE Joint Programme on Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED).

### **State of implementation of projects / the Action Plan**

#### **EU/CoE HF 4 “Strengthening human rights treatment of detained persons based on European standards and best practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina”:**

Peer training proceeded with sessions held in March for law enforcement, forensic and prison staff. In this process, 35 professionals continued to improve their knowledge of applicable standards and strengthen their skills in managing people deprived of their liberty in a human rights’ compliant manner. In parallel, police agencies are [cascading this training programme locally](#), thereby demonstrating the sustainability of the Action. The BiH Ministry of Justice appointed new candidates for the peer training accreditation scheme in prisons, similarly to ministries of interior at entity and cantonal levels earlier this year. Fine-tuning and testing of the prison software enabling electronic data exchange between prisons continued.

#### **EU/CoE HF 19 “Promotion of diversity and equality in BiH”:**

The Action supported the Ombudsperson Institution to enhance knowledge about hate speech of 78 civil servants from Trebinje, Tuzla and Bihać. The campaign “*Block the hatred. Share the love.*” was launched and opened by, among others, the HoO and Acting Deputy Head of the EUD. The widely covered event gathered 91 participants, incl. representatives of national and local authorities, CSOs/persons belonging to minorities, and the no-hate-speech ambassadors. An analysis of the current FBiH Law on Protection of National Minorities was provided to relevant authorities and suggested amendments were discussed together with the OSCE and the FBiH Council of National Minorities.

#### **EU/CoE HF 21 “Quality education for all”:**

Three selected NGOs/grantees provided support to 360 teachers and over 320 students in 29 pilot schools to carry out activities that are key for the successful implementation of the Roadmap for Improving Inclusive Education at the school level. Nine students from several pilot schools contributed to developing the didactic materials and manual on critical thinking for school clubs. 29 critical thinking clubs have been established in pilot schools. On the request of interested schools which are not directly participating in the project, one of the pilot school started mentoring and training another school in their municipality on critical thinking. A tender for visibility experts was launched in March.

### **EU/CoE HF 20 Project “Preventing and combating human trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina”:**

The capacity of sixty child education professionals in identification and protection of child victims of trafficking was enhanced through two 2-day basic training events, held in Sarajevo and Banja Luka in March. Due to the high turnout and interest, particularly on the part of teachers, pedagogues, and psychologists from primary and secondary schools, the Ministry of Education of the Sarajevo Canton addressed a request to the Council of Europe for the organisation of additional trainings. A new six-month awareness-raising campaign on child trafficking, to be implemented by the Association “Budućnost”, started in February.

### **EU/ CoE HF33 Project “Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina – JUFREX 2”:**

During the last reporting period, administrative preparations for future activities were pursued with a view to achieving the envisaged JUFREX outcomes. The final reports (narrative and financial) of all six grantees (under component 1, the respective entity-level Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Education and Bar Associations; under component 3, the Association of BH Journalists and the Press Council), that were extended at the end of 2021, were provided in due time, reviewed by the local project team and transmitted for further financial processing. The plan of activities has been set for the next quarter.

### **VC Project “Support to sustainable rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners (VEPs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina”:**

The project was completed on 31 March and the key objectives were reached. Twenty-five prison professionals from eleven prisons developed their competencies through trainings on application of the VEP-specific tools and vocational training/education programmes. The Republika Srpska Ministry of Justice formally endorsed the rehabilitation tools relating to VEPs, developed in accordance with CoE recommendations, while the participants at the Round Table on the gender-responsive prison management discussed the importance of gender perspectives in the development of a strategic policy framework related to the prevention of radicalisation in prisons.

### **VC Project “Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Phase II”:**

The Steering Committee members unanimously adopted the proposed Plan of activities in the first meeting of the Project, held in February. An assessment report is being prepared, focusing on proposals and recommendations for the adoption of concrete measures required for execution of the ECtHR judgment in the case *Hadžimejlić and others v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, along with a comparative analysis of general measures introduced in other jurisdictions regarding similar matters.

### **VC Project “Innovating democratic participation at local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina”:**

At the launching conference held on 23 February 2022, the new project “[Innovating democratic participation at local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)” was presented to more than 110 mayors, members of local councils and other stakeholders. The Handbook on Open Local Government and Public Ethics for Bosnia and Herzegovina, available at the Congress [BeOpen platform](#), and the Congress [publications on public ethics](#) were also presented at the conference. Two

partners' meetings involving the associations of municipalities and cities from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska were held in February and March 2022.

### **VC Project "Support to more integral and inclusive electoral processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina":**

Five Trainings of Trainers were organised for representatives of Municipal Election Committees (MECs), respectively in Banja Luka (21 to 23 January), Tuzla 28 to 30 January, Mostar (11 to 13 February), Zenica (18 to 20 February) and Sarajevo (25 to 27 March). Through the education and certification of trainers, their main goal was to strengthen the overall capacity of the electoral administration, including at municipal level, to administer elections in line with international standards and best practices, including as regards efficiency and transparency. A total of 223 representatives from 109 Municipal Election Committees participated in the training.

### **VC Project "Media and Information Literacy (MIL): for human rights and more democracy":**

Research studies on "Media and Information Literacy in various institutions", "Gender and Media", "Responsibility and Artificial Intelligence" and "Information Disorder" were finalised and will be translated and published. With a view to providing support and capacity-building to the project partner, the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA), a pool of 6 international and 6 local experts was created and their manner of engagement was discussed during a working meeting organised within a mission from DGI (Cooperation on Freedom of Expression).

### **VC Project "Enhancing institutional capacities on freedom of expression and information in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EFEx)":**

The project started on 1 February and is currently in its inception phase. Start-up activities have been taking place, including a mission from DGI (Cooperation on Freedom of Expression) and meetings with relevant stakeholders, including state institutions and agencies, other international actors and civil society organisations, with the aim of finalising and endorsing the project Work Plan during the upcoming quarter.

### **Implementation of regional projects (see also under 'Belgrade Office')**

#### **JP EU/CoE "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level" (ROMACTED):**

Official institutional working groups (IWG), which will also be working in synergy with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees to develop Local Action Plans for Roma inclusion, were established in all 12 programme municipalities. Programme facilitators conducted meetings in Roma communities and in municipalities with a view to formalising municipal working joint action plans and establishing joint action plans for 2022. A workshop on legalisation of Roma settlement - to be organised by the Regional Cooperation Council – and a joint training on Roma sensitive budgeting are scheduled for June.

#### Other relevant activities (examples)

- In addition to speaking at the official launch (28 March) of the campaign "Block the Hatred. Share the Love", the HoO gave interviews to the media, and announced the campaign prior to its launch during a live television programme (25 March) on the public broadcasting channel (BHT1).

- On 23 February, the HoO opened the online launching event of the new project "Innovating democratic participation at local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina".
- On 15 March, the HoO opened an online workshop on lawful interception of telecommunication traffic and access to retained data in line with EU regulations and European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) standards, organised by iPROCEEDS-2.
- On 17 March, the HoO addressed the "Forum for sharing best practices of CSOs' and local authorities' cooperation" in the framework of the project "LINK 4 Cooperation".

#### Council of Europe high-level visits and other official delegations

- From 21 to 23 March, the Director of the [Office of the Directorate General of Programmes](#) visited Sarajevo, including the Council of Europe Office. She took part in the third meeting of the Horizontal Facility Beneficiary Steering Committee in the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which attracted a high level of media interest, and met representatives of the authorities and several international partners.

## **Tbilisi**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 8, Project staff – 29, Total staff – 37.

The Office implemented 16 projects, 3 in the framework of EU/CoE Partnership for Good Governance (PGG II), 1 funded through a voluntary contribution from Denmark, and 12 funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level.

### **State of implementation of projects**

- VC-Denmark – “Fighting Discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech in Georgia”: the project closing event was held online on 15 February. The Public Survey “Hate Speech, Hate Crimes and Discrimination in Georgia: Attitudes and Awareness in 2021” was presented. The survey identified positive developments regarding the public perception of diversity, hate crime and hate speech between 2018 and end 2021. Subsequently project partners spoke of the impact of the project on their work and the project achievements. A 10-minute video marking the highlights of the 4-year project was shown. In total 98 participants attended the event, representing IGOs, embassies, state institutions and NGOs.
- EU/CoE PGG Project “Enhancing the Accountability and the Efficiency of the Judicial System and the Professionalism of Lawyers in Georgia”: the findings of the situational analysis of remote electronic hearing practices have been presented, suggesting that practice of remote hearings shall be continued, but Georgian authorities need to take necessary measures to prevent any kind of undue influence over the participants. The staff of the Independent Inspector improved their teamwork and internal communications skills during a training activity. CCJE No.24 (2021) has been presented by the CCJE President, enabling judges, lawyers, civil society to raise awareness on the Councils for the Judiciary and their role in the independent and impartial judicial systems.
- EU/CoE PGG Project “Supporting the Criminal Justice Reforms. Tackling Criminal Aspects of the Judicial Reforms in Georgia”: 12 prosecutors improved knowledge on application of pre-trial measures in line with the ECHR standards and case-law of the ECtHR.
- EU/CoE PGG Project “Enhancing the systems of prevention and combatting corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing” (PGG II-GE): the Project enhanced the professional skills of the Georgian law enforcement agencies to conduct investigation and prosecution of terrorist financing cases effectively mitigating the terrorist financing risks. An expert opinion analysing the Georgian anti-corruption legal framework with a focus on prevention of corruption by law enforcement agencies has been presented. The discussion with the staff of the Civil Service Bureau identified further steps for strengthening of the monitoring of public official’s asset declarations and prevention of conflict of interest
- AP “Promoting an Integrated Approach to End Violence against Women and Enhancing Gender Equality in Georgia”: A conference on Ending Violence against Women: Time for Action held on 25 March, organised by the Embassy of Italy in Tbilisi and the Office of the Council of Europe in Georgia in cooperation with the Government of Georgia, in the context of the on-going Italian Presidency of the Committee of the Ministers of the Council of Europe. Italian Minister of Equal Opportunities and Family Elena Bonetti delivered a keynote speech via video record. The conference facilitated the discussion around the challenges to prevent and combat gender-based violence, through the engagement of Georgian authorities, international and

local experts, CSOs and the local diplomatic community, with a view to assessing the progress achieved and to planning further enhancement of the measures aimed at ending all forms of violence against women.

- AP "Strengthening Freedom of media, Internet governance and Personal Data Protection in Georgia" SMIP-GE: the initiation of the ratification of the CoE Convention on Access to Official Documents (Tromsø Convention) was included in the annual workplan of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia; an inter-agency meeting took place enabling government institutions to assess the benefits of Tromsø Convention. An online conference on Promoting Georgian Language on the Internet was organised in cooperation with Internet Society (ISOC) Georgia. An online media-talk on gender sensitive media coverage was organised in cooperation with the Embassy of Norway and Press Councils of Norway and Georgia. The Parliament of Georgia received information about ECtHR case-law on freedom of expression relevant for adoption of the draft Law on Audiovisual Services.
- AP "Support to the Profession of Lawyer in Georgia": the Georgian Bar Association (GBA) introduced the electronic case management system to the new composition of the Ethics Commission. The system was developed by the project "Support to the Profession of Lawyer in Georgia" in 2021. The GBA also completed selection of Chairs and members of Association's commissions based in Tbilisi. The new system of composition and operation of commissions, including their model statutes were developed by the project.
- AP "Enhanced Access to Legal Aid Services for Marginalised Population": the project was officially launched on 16 March 2022. Representatives of national partners, specifically the Director of the Legal Aid Service and the Chairperson of the Georgian Bar Association were present during at the launch together with other government officials, representatives of diplomatic missions, international technical assistance projects and lawyers from non-government organisations. 1st Steering Committee meeting of the project was also held on 9 March.
- AP "Enhancement of Human Rights and Health-Care Support to Penitentiary System": The carried-out activities include: working group meeting with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to elaborate the Implementation Plan for the Penitentiary Mental Healthcare Standards; working group meeting with MoJ to elaborate Suicide Prevention Programme Action Plan; development of a needs assessment instrument for prisoners with disabilities; training for MoJ staff: Training of Trainers (ToT) on Suicide Prevention, ToT on Intervision Techniques, Training on Case Management and Multidisciplinary Teamwork, training on communication strategies; update of the National Preventive Mechanism's (NPM) Monitoring Tool; a Roundtable Meeting with the Public Defender's Office (PDO) and the MoJ to discuss the recommendations of the PDO/NPM on mental healthcare provision in penitentiary system of Georgia.
- AP "Supporting Transparency, Inclusiveness and Integrity of Electoral Practice and Process in Georgia": At the SC Meeting national stakeholders discussed implementation of the project and approved the annual Workplan. The Toolkit on Combating Hate Speech in Elections was delivered to electoral stakeholders and included into all educational programs of the election administration. The baseline study for local election observer organisations was developed to enhance CSOs and their impact on the electoral environment. At the training, election officials and staff from the CEC and its Information Protection Center have deepened knowledge of the CoE instruments to build resilience to disinformation and cyber-threats in electoral processes.

- AP “Strengthening Protection of Social and Economic Rights in Georgia”: AP “Strengthening Protection of Social and Economic Rights in Georgia”: The Project hosted the first donor coordination meeting on Labour Rights. Two trainings were organised to support the MoIHLSA and PDO staff on preparing national and alternative reports under the reporting procedures of the ESC. A two-day workshop on non-accepted provisions of the ESC vis-à-vis national regulations of Georgia was conducted to promote the ratification of further provisions of the ESC. An online workshop on non-conformity with the ESC was organised. It led to a lively discussion among engaged stakeholders to coordinate the next steps and possible actions to come in conformity with respective provisions.
- VC Austria/AP “Strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level in Georgia” (PMM 2638): A regional round table on open government and renewal at local level was organised to discuss local authorities’ contribution in all steps of national open government policy making. The VII National Congress of NALAG was co-organised to ensure inclusivity and participation. On 25-28 March, the first Forum of Exchange on localising human rights gathered local elected representatives and municipal staff to address challenges for improving social inclusion and promoting equal opportunities. A baseline assessment process was launched to identify local authorities’ own capacities for human rights implementation.
- VC Austria/AP “Strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level in Georgia” (PMM 2802): More than 150 high level representatives of municipalities (mayors, deputy mayors, city councillors) were introduced to civil participation methodologies - Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit and Citizens Assembly. In three municipalities the process of the implementation of these tools has been initiated. Approx. 320 CSOs and local authority representatives from 51 municipalities raised awareness and increased capacities in civil participation standards and tools. 12 local experts trained to apply the Civil Participation Toolkit in practice.
- EU/CoE JP – “Support for a better evaluation of the result of judicial reform efforts in the Eastern Partnership” (Justice Dashboard EaP): Upon the finalisation of the quality check conducted in January – March 2022 by the CEPEJ Secretariat in line with CEPEJ methodology and in close cooperation with the EaP Dashboard national correspondents from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, the first part of the report (or first deliverable) compiling the data collected has been prepared in view of its submission to DG NEAR. This first deliverable is composed of Comparative tables and graphs for all Eastern Partnership beneficiaries with summary overviews per indicator.
- AP “Human Rights Compliant Policing in Georgia”: Middle level managers of MIA, case managers and investigators enhanced their skills to carry out effective investigations. Managers of the Department of Temporary Detention and directors of temporary detention facilities are better equipped to apply safeguards against ill-treatment in their daily work. A report analysing exiting legal framework, gaps and shortcomings in freedom of expression and use of force by the police, together with the recommendations for the future actions has been drafted. A manual on the treatment of the detainees with drug-related problems in TDIs was developed. An analysis of the new law on Special Investigation Service was conducted.

#### Follow up action (i.e. future actions)

- Justice Dashboard EaP: Submit the first deliverable to DG NEAR on 1.04.2022. Proceed with the preparation of the second deliverable/description fiches to be submitted to DG NEAR on 1.06.2022.

- Launch of the new project “Promoting the effective protection of equality and non-discrimination in Georgia” (March 2022 – December 2023) based on the findings of the project “Fight against Discrimination, Hate Crimes and Hate Speech in Georgia” and the Public Survey.
- Start of the Project “Democracy Starts in Schools”.

### **Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations**

- 31 January – 1 February: the Council of Europe Secretariat Delegation visited Tbilisi, in preparation of the 25<sup>th</sup> consolidated report on the conflict in Georgia covering the period between October 2021 and March 2022.
- 21 – 25 February: Commissioner for Human Rights paid a visit to Georgia.

## **Tirana**

### **Situation of the Office**

The CoE Office in Tirana has 21 staff members (4 male/17 female) out of which 7 (4/3) are core staff and 14 (female) project staff. The Office implements eight projects, out of which seven are co-funded by the EU, one by the Swedish Sida. Except for one regional project, the projects implemented by the Office are administratively fully decentralised. Due to Covid-19 pandemic situation in the country the Office continued to alternate teleworking with office presence.

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

1. Within the **HF II Action on Strengthening the Efficiency of Justice (SEJ III) in Albania**, 14 trainers of the School of Magistrates enhanced their capacities on methodological issues of continuous training of magistrates in particular unification of the training needs assessment's methodology in line with international standards. The High Judicial Council was supported in the organization of consultation rounds with the groups of interest on the new judicial map.
2. Within the **HF II Action Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners in Albania**, 26 prison police from Fier and Peqin prisons increased their knowledge on security related topics, as 25 other Albanian prison service's staff enhanced their skills related to immediate reaction to incidents and development of multidisciplinary treatment plans. A video material providing information on prisoner's rights and available complaint mechanisms reached out to over 53 000 people in social media.
3. Within the **HF Action on Economic Crime in Albania**, the new Electronic System of Declaration of Assets and Conflict of Interests, built with the Action's support, became operational as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022, thus addressing one of the key recommendations of GRECO's reports in the fight against corruption.
4. Within the **HF II Action on Supporting effective domestic remedies and facilitating the execution of judgments (D-REX)**, staff and lecturers from the School of Magistrates, the High Judicial Council, High Prosecutorial Council and the High Justice Inspector enhanced their capacities on the CoE [Methodology and Tools for Evaluation of Human Rights Training](#). The Action supported the secondment of two State Advocate staff to the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.
5. Within the **HF II Action on Promotion of Diversity and Equality in Albania**, the launching event of the "LGBTI National Action Plan 2021-2027" was supported in cooperation with the relevant Albanian authorities. The national anti-hate speech campaign "[Block the Hatred. Share the Love!](#)", was officially launched in Tirana to inform and engage citizens and local communities about the dangers of various forms of hate speech targeting vulnerable groups and individuals, such as LGBTI, immigrants, people with special needs or ethnic minorities.
6. Within the **HF II Action on Judiciary and Freedom of Expression (JUFREX)**, a training of trainers for the judiciary focused on standards set by the ECtHR case law on safety and protection of journalists.

7. Within the Swedish Sida funded project on **"Strengthening Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania"** senior academic staff from three universities in Albania committed to apply the [Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture](#) (RFCDC) in higher education settings and teacher preparation programmes. 22 School Development Teams (SDT) are established in new pilot schools, as 100 teachers from the network of professional teachers (TeacherNet) attended Open Talks Events in 4 municipalities from different regional education directorates.

## **Yerevan**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 4, Project staff – 26, Total staff – 30.

The Office implements 13 projects, of which 2 national projects and 2 decentralised regional projects are funded by the EU under the Partnership for Good Governance (PGG), 1 project funded by the Government of Switzerland, 1 project funded by the Government of Austria and 7 projects funded by donors' Action Plan-level voluntary contributions. Also, the Office renders support to MAEs in implementation of other regional projects.

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

#### **PGG Project - Component 1 "Support to the judicial reform – enhancing the independence and professionalism of the judiciary in Armenia"**

The Project finalised the review of the Civil Procedural Code of Armenia. Court users' access to constitutional justice has been enhanced by launching the new [website](#) of the Constitutional Court of Armenia with e-filing, e-calendar and advanced search engine features. A team of Armenian students [participated](#) in the 14th edition of the Frankfurt Investment Arbitration Moot Court 2022 online competition. A high-level delegation from the Republic of Armenia, headed by the President of the Constitutional Court Arman Dilanyan [held bilateral meetings](#) with high-level officials from Council of Europe. Mediation development toolkit has been presented to the Armenian counterparts. General public's awareness about the alternative dispute resolution has been enhanced by launching the new [website](#) for the Self-regulatory Organisation of Mediators of Armenia.

#### **PGG Project - Component 2 "Support to the judicial reform - supporting the criminal justice reform and harmonising the application of European standards in Armenia"**

The HELP online course on "Ethics for judges, prosecutors, and lawyers" was adapted to the Armenian legal context. The new Guidebook on "HELP methodology on human rights training for legal professionals" that is a step-by-step overview of the HELP training methodology for developing and implementing HELP online courses was published in 200 copies in Armenian for local trainers. Resulted from the second wave of training activities aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of the legal professionals on the new Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes of Armenia, 48 prosecutors and 40 judges received knowledge on the new legislation via five seminars organised in January – March in the Justice Academy in Yerevan. Moreover, the expert support was provided to harmonise the Code on Administrative Offences of Armenia in line with the new Criminal Code.

#### **PGG Project "Strengthening institutional capacities to fight and prevent corruption in Armenia"**

The EU/Council of Europe PGGII Project on "Strengthening institutional capacities to fight and prevent corruption in Armenia", jointly with the Corruption Prevention Commission of Armenia (CPC), organised a [Conference on Integrity, Corruption Prevention and Codes of Conduct](#). Following previous efforts to establish [Model Rules of Conduct for Public Servants in Armenia](#), the conference provided a platform for broader awareness-raising and consultation, including civil society and all branches of the Armenian state, towards the finalisation and adoption of the Model Rules as well as specific Codes of Conduct for different categories of public officials.

The Project also supported the CPC with the production of the draft Code of Conduct for Public Office Holders.

**PGG Project “Strengthening the profession of lawyer in line with European standards” (regional, decentralised project)**

The project published fifth cross-country review on the access to the profession of advocate and the systems of training for lawyers in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

The country-specific action plans on the further development of mechanisms that provide an effective defense to lawyers were developed within the national working groups in 4 project countries.

The regional network of women lawyers was initiated, starting with an assessment of the existing platforms of cooperation of women lawyers and with developing the concept on supporting the women lawyers’ associations.

**Project “Human Rights and Women in the Armed Forces of Armenia – Phase II”, Action Plan level funding is provided by Germany, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Sweden**

AP “Human Rights and Women in the Armed Forces in Armenia -Phase II”: the Project was granted a no-cost extension until December 2022. The Work Plan for 2022 was approved by the SC. The 6th WG online meeting for the development of HELP model online course on the protection of human rights in the armed forces was held. The development of Comparative study on the whistle-blower protection systems in armed forces in several CoE member states was launched. The Project launched the development of peer review of the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes of Armenia with the view of assessing the extent of taking into consideration the findings of the ECtHR judgments related to human rights violations in the armed forces. The “Study on possible grouping of legal frameworks of Armenia related to housing matters of military servicepersons” developed by the Project was discussed at the MoD with relevant national counterparts.

**Project “Strengthening the Communities Association of Armenia and transparent, participatory local governance in Armenia”, funded by Switzerland**

A Charter of the Communities Association of Armenia has been revised by project experts following the completion of the Territorial Administration Reform of Armenia. The Charter was approved by the Republican Council of the Communities Association of Armenia on 4 February 2022.

The CAA Strategy revision meeting with the working group members held on 4 February and the methodology suggested by the international experts was approved.

On 18 March extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly of the Union of Communities of Armenia took place.

Anti-corruption self-assessment tool was translated into English for sharing with international stakeholders.

**Project “Democratic development, decentralisation and good governance in Armenia”, funded by Austrian Development Cooperation**

In the reporting period, the project launched a call for the production of communication services (a short film and colour booklet) to celebrate the achievements of the small grant component. The project also initiated visits to the communities that had completed grant projects. On 1 March, following the Peer Review held in May 2021, key stakeholders gathered in Yerevan and online at the 6th Community Consultation Initiative meeting to discuss a revised draft Hotel Tax Law. The project marked the start of public accounting trainings for financial

staff of all 72 consolidated communities on 31 March. Two-day trainings are being organised in 4 sessions, with a view of increasing knowledge of and imparting skills to financial officers on how to improve systematic recording of day-to-day financial transactions in municipalities.

**Project “Support the scaling-up of the probation service in Armenia”, funded by donors contributing to the Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenia 2019–2022**

The results of the pilot training sessions, main findings and recommendations for organisation of future trainings were discussed during the half-day hybrid workshop of 25 February 2022. The Tender Board awarded the contract for purchase of IT system for the Probation Service on 16 February 2022. The kick off meeting of the working group on development of the IT system took place on 25 March 2022. A group of 12 probation officers enhanced their knowledge and skills on general rehabilitation programmes designed for general offenders of the Probation service of Armenia. A grant was awarded to Legal Education and Rehabilitation Program’s Implementation Center SNCO for purchase of equipment and supplies, which will support three vocational programmes for probation beneficiaries.

**Project “Enhancing health care and human rights protection in prisons in Armenia”, funded by donors contributing to the Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenia 2019–2022**

Toolkits for screening and risk assessment of mental health and suicide and self-harm behaviour in penitentiary institutions developed with the CoE support and piloted in three penitentiary institutions were revised based on the piloting results and submitted to the MoJ. 40 representatives of the MoJ, directors and deputy directors of the penitentiary institutions, heads of different departments of the Penitentiary Service enhanced their knowledge on toolkits for screening and risk assessment of mental health and suicide and self-harm behaviour. Awareness raising posters on prevention and control of infection in prison health facilities were published and disseminated to ten prison institutions. Practical Guide on managing hunger strike in places of deprivation of liberty is being finalised.

**Project “The Path towards Armenia’s Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence”, funded by donors contributing to the Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenia 2019–2022**

10 trainers from the Academy of Justice participated in ToT for the training course on ensuring gender equality through the practice of judges, prosecutors and investigators, as they start teaching this course in the Academy. Social workers from 12 new domestic violence support centres trained to providing support to victims of domestic violence. Staff of Compulsory Enforcement Service received training about domestic violence and become better equipped as they enforce court decisions of child custody and visitations in the cases of domestic violence. The data analysis to develop baseline survey on domestic violence is carried out.

**Project “Protection of Human Rights in Biomedicine I”, funded by donors contributing to the Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenia 2019–2022**

Special training session on human rights protection in mental health services has been organized for healthcare professionals and lawyers working in the mental health institutions of Armenia. The draft of decision on ethical rules for healthcare professionals developed by the experts of the Project has been adopted by the Government of Armenia on 17 February, 2022. A training session on ethical rules was organized for 50 healthcare professionals.

Special training session on key principles on bioethics has been organized for the Staff of the National Centre for Infectious Diseases. The Project has launched calls for tenders for international consultancy as well as communication tools (video, brochures and etc.)

### **Support for the Execution by Armenia of Judgments in Respect of Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights**

A visit of the high-level delegation of the Representative of Armenia on International Legal Matters was organised to Strasbourg, where meetings were held with the ECtHR, Department for the Execution of Judgments of ECtHR, Venice Commission and DG1. Two two-days expert discussions on re-opening of judicial proceedings following the judgments of the ECtHR and on cross-examination of witnesses were organised each for 20 representatives of law enforcement bodies and NGOs. Two guides on cross-examination of witnesses and re-opening of cases have been finalised by the international and national consultants of the project. The national expert works on finalisation of the draft strategy of interaction for the office of Representative of Armenia on International Legal Matters, as well as on access to justice for mentally incapable persons and late or non-execution of national judgments have been finalised.

### **Strengthening access to justice for victims of discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in the Eastern Partnership countries**

The project is finalizing the content of the Manual for educators on hate speech online. In the meantime, an ECRI GPR 15 e-learning course has been translated into Armenian and will be uploaded on the HELP platform to serve in future as a basis for the trainings on combating hate speech.

The project has two ongoing grants: Armavir Development Center is implementing a project on promoting the right to education for Yezidi girls, while "Equal Rights Equal Opportunities" NGO is carrying out a project on empowering people with disabilities. Both grants are running smoothly and will be concluded by the end of April, 2022.

#### Follow-up actions

No follow up actions during the reporting period.

#### Other relevant activities

No other activities

### **Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations**

15 February – Director of Political Affairs, Alexandre Guessel visit to Armenia (CBMs)

15-16 February - Council of Europe Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) virtual visit grounded on a request for opinion from the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Armenia on the "Constitutional Law on making amendments to the Constitutional Law on the Judicial Code and to the Constitutional Law on Constitutional Court of Armenia".

21-25 February – Monitoring visit of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC-FCNM).

## **Pristina**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 6, Project staff –16, Total staff - 22.

The Office implemented 9 projects, 3 in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey"/South Programme", 1 EU/CoE Regional Joint Programme (ROMACTED), 2 EU/CoE Joint Projects, and 3 funded through non-earmarked voluntary contributions.

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

EU/CoE - HF "*Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media (JUFREX)*": Institutional capacity of the Information and Privacy Agency (IPA) are strengthened through assistance provided in the process of drafting the necessary tools such as templates for access to public documents. In terms of human capacity building, 21 participants from the judiciary and journalism sectors exchanged information and expanded their knowledge from action-supported activities in the field of protection of journalists, defamation, and protection of reputation, etc. The action also contributed to strengthening the media literacy component of the audio-visual media regulator by organising two workshops with students in this field.

EU/CoE – HF "*Ensuring Efficiency and Quality of Justice (KOSEJII)*"<sup>4</sup>. The fourth assessment report on the functioning of the justice system was finalised and launched. It looks at the evolution of the data between 2014 and 2020. The report on the use of Information Technologies in courts in 2020 was finalised together with the KJC. Court users' satisfaction surveys are ongoing in three courts, with the support of the Kosovo Law Institute, with a specific questionnaire for lawyers. CEPEJ international experts provided expertise on providing a long-term and sustainable solution for e-summonses.

#### *EU/CoE – HF "Promotion of diversity and equality in Kosovo"*

On 28 February, 1 and 2 March 2022, a three-day workshop was held on drafting the report on the implementation of Law on Protecting from Discrimination. In total 30 anti-discrimination officers representing ministries and municipalities participated. On 3 - 4 March 2022, a peer-to-peer exchange of experiences between the Police and LGBTI NGOs representatives from Albania and Kosovo\* was organized in Tirana. Three Police officers and two NGO representatives from Kosovo participated. On 25 – 27 March 2022, regional workshop on the concept of counternarratives was organized in Podgorica. Three Young European Ambassadors from Kosovo attended the workshop.

EU/CoE – JP "*Building Capacity for Inclusive Education*" – *INCLUDE*: 65 school professionals from 7 pilot schools were certified in February 2022 on completion of the ten-day training on Inclusive Education, based on the International Classification Framework and Individual education plans. Consequently, the second round of the training started for 80 professionals from 7 new pilot schools. Between 12 – 27 March 2022, 170 school professionals from the pilot schools attended the second and third workshop of the accredited training programme *Creating a Democratic and Inclusive Learning Community*. A concept note for development of a support programme for the learning centres was developed and presented to the Ministry of Education.

*EU/CoE – JP "Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo\*" (PECK III):* The project trained 25 Police officers on whistle-blowers' protection. It also organised a training for 14 Non-Profit Organisations on AML/CFT risks and internal controls. It supported development of Standard Operating Procedures on whistleblowing for Kosovo Police. It developed a Legal Opinion on the Concept Document related to AML/CFT Legislation. It delivered a peer-to-peer training on whistle-blowers' protection for 52 public officials in central and local level. It trained 25 Police Officers and provided guidance on developing a Whistleblowing Policy for Police. It organised expert meetings on cooperation mechanisms in the supervision of AML/CFT area and presented recommendations on cooperation modalities.

*EU/CoE regional JP "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED)":* Meetings with newly elected mayors in several beneficiary municipalities were held in order to inform them about the second phase. One day Participatory Workshop on Strategic planning was organized with two municipalities who joint ROMACTED phase two. The kick-off event was organized on 30th March and had satisfactory participation of the programme target groups, municipal representatives, and the community members. On this occasion, MoUs were signed with 10 municipal beneficiaries. The report on the level of COVID 19 vaccination has been launched and discussed with the programme target groups and civil society organizations.

*VC non-earmarked "Preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings":* The project commenced in January 2022, building on the previous project and recommendations for action identified through 2<sup>nd</sup> GRETA assessment of the compliance of Kosovo\* with the standards of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. During the reporting period, the project team met in Strasbourg to plan and finalise project activities.

*VC non-earmarked "Support to the Constitutional Court in applying and disseminating the European Human Rights Standards":* On 1 January 2022, the project started, building on results of the previous project with Constitutional Court, completed in June 2021. With follow on the epidemiological situation, the first quarter was used for tendering consultancy and support services. The project recruited a pool of 15 local experts and 25 international experts for execution of activities and completed tender for communication and visibility services. Project arranged with European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) 2-month placements of 5 judges and 6 legal advisors of the Constitutional Court, starting from mid-April 2022.

*VC non-earmarked Reinforcing the fight against violence against women and domestic violence in Kosovo\* - phase III:* During 21 to 25 February 2022, The GREVIO expert delegation on the assessment of Kosovo's\* alignment with the Istanbul Convention held an assessment visit in Pristina and Gjakova. In total 23 meetings were held during the visit, including 15 with representatives of public authorities and 8 with civil society and other bodies. The project contributed to the organization of a joint roundtable with OSCE Mission in Kosovo on eliminating the negative portrayal of women politicians held on 29 March in Prizren. Project launched the HELP course "Violence against Women and Domestic Violence" for 31 students of the Faculty of Law, University of Prishtina.

#### Follow up action (i.e. future actions)

KOSEJ II: CEPEJ training for Court Administrators and Court Presidents are planned for May 2022.

PECK III: III: 3rd Steering Committee meeting.

INCLUDE: Continue with capacity building programme for education professionals in the 24 pilot schools and in the six regional resource centres

Constitutional Court Project: Launching Conference of the project scheduled for 12 April 2022  
Violence against Women: ToT on "Quality Guidelines for Shelters for Victims of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence" will be organized for shelter's and Centers for Social Work staff in April.

Anti-Trafficking: Project Kick-off Meeting has been planned for May 2022.

#### Other relevant activities

On 29 March 2022, the Office co-organised with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo a conference on gender stereotypes and women's participation in politics at local level, with inputs from JUFREX and Violence against Women projects, and Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

#### **Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations**

The Office facilitated the virtual visit of the Venice Commission in relation to the drafting of its opinion on "Concept Paper on the Development of Vetting Process in the Justice System".

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

## **Rabat**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 3, Project staff – 9, Total staff – 12.

The Office implemented or provided logistical support for 6 projects funded by the European Union.

### **State of implementation of projects**

#### **EU/CoE joint project “Support to the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture and to the development of the key role of Parliament in Morocco” (ENI/2020/418-263)**

##### Support for the development of the role of the Parliament in Morocco

- On 3 February, the second meeting of the project’s Technical Steering Committee took place.
- Round tables on the evaluation of public policies were also held on:
  - 23 March, at the House of Representatives, on “Administrative reform, comparative practices: views of legislators and experts”;
  - 30 March, at the House of Councillors, on “Youth policies: preparing and integrating young people into working life”.
- On 8 March: the interview with Ms Nouzha Skalli on women in politics was published.

##### Support for the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture

- On 25 March 2022, the 1st working group meeting was held on drawing up a Prisoner’s Guide and a manual on Moroccan prison law (with the participation of the Presidency of the Public Prosecution Office (PMP), National Human Rights Council – National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture (CNDH-MNP), the General Delegation for Prison Administration and Reintegration (DGAPR), the Council of Europe and various experts).
- On 28 March 2022, the Steering Committee held its 1st meeting. The project will help to build the capacity of the Moroccan National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) and optimise its work, as well as provide opportunities to share experiences and best practices with other European NPMs.

#### **EU-CoE programme “Regional Support to Reinforce Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democracy in the Southern Mediterranean” (South Programme IV)**

##### Combating violence against children

- 8 February: the Safer Internet Day national conference was held at the National Training and Meeting Centre (CFRN).
- 16 February: an awareness-raising workshop and a cyberbullying simulation was run for pupils at Almouqawama School in Salé.
- 16 March: a technical workshop on the legal and convention aspects of online child protection in Morocco was held.

- 22 to 25 March: a four-day training course was provided for teachers on dealing with harassment and cyberbullying in schools. This pilot project will gradually be extended to all 12 regional education and training academies (AREFs).

#### Combating violence against women

- 14 March: a compendium of national case law and legal summaries of the European Court of Human Rights on violence against women and domestic violence was launched with the PMP.

#### HELP Programme / Human rights capacity-building programme for prosecutors (DGI)

- From 28 February to 2 March 2022, a 3rd training session was held for 50 judicial officials in Fez with the participation of Mr Moulay El Hassan Daki, Prosecutor General at the Court of Cassation, President of the PMP.

#### Combating trafficking in human beings

- 15 February: the National Anti-Trafficking Commission's annual report was published.
- 18-19 February: 50 students from the legal clinic of the Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences in Fez attended a training course on combating trafficking in human beings.
- 10 March: the meeting to co-ordinate work of international organisations on trafficking in human beings was held and co-ordinated.
- Round tables on protocols for co-operation between professionals in the field on the identification and care of victims of trafficking took place on:
  - 12 March in Tangier;
  - 19 March in Beni Mellal;
  - and on 25 March in Casablanca.
- 28-29 March: 50 students from the legal clinic of the Faculty of Law of Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech attended a training course on combating trafficking in human beings.
- 31 March: participation in the webinar on the CNDH's annual report.

#### **Council of Europe high-level visits and other official delegations**

- 27-30 March: visit by Pilar MORALES, Co-ordinator of the Neighbourhood Policy with the Southern Mediterranean; Jennifer SCHUETZE-REYMANN, Head of the Transversal Human Rights Responses Unit in the Transversal Challenges and Multilateral Projects Division, and Muriel DECOT, Secretary to the CEPEJ in the Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law, at the Council of Europe.
- 21 March to 1 April: visit by Alessandro Mancini, Deputy Head of the Parliamentary Project Support Division of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).
- 9-17 March: visit by Mehdi Remili, Head of the Capacity Building and Co-operation Projects Unit of the Southern Mediterranean Region in the Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance at the Council of Europe.

## **Tunis**

### **Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 6, Project staff - 16, Total staff - 22

The Office continued providing support to the coordination and implementation of the following country-specific projects, within the framework of the new Neighbourhood Partnership 2022-2025, as well as regional projects, as follows:

- EU/CoE JP "Support to Tunisian independent bodies" (PAII-T)
- EU/CoE JP "Support to justice reform" (AP-JUST)
- EU/CoE JP "Regional Support to Reinforce Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democracy in the Southern Mediterranean" (South Programme IV)
- EU/CoE JP "Cybersouth"

In the reporting period, important results have been achieved notably the launching of HAICA's platform aimed to facilitate professionals' access to information on regulation, self-regulation and media literacy, sharing of news, international standards, documentary and audio-visual resources, in the framework of PAII-T. Under the auspices of the South Programme, possibilities for reinforced cooperation between the Council of Europe and Libya were examined. In this framework, Council of Europe contributed to the process of developing a National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings in Libya, by developing, in cooperation with the Libyan authorities, the list of indicators related to the detection and identification of victims of human trafficking in this country. Furthermore, the process of the accession of Tunisia to the Cybercrime convention has gained additional impetus by the discussions between the Head of Cybercrime division and the national stakeholders. Finally, the high-level meetings of the President of the Venice Commission during her visit on 30 March – 1 April reaffirmed the readiness of the Venice Commission to place its expertise at the service of the Tunisian people and to support the implementation of democratic reforms with respect for the rule of law and human rights.

### **State of implementation of projects / programmes**

#### **Bilateral joint programmes:**

##### EU/CoE Joint Programme "Support to Tunisian independent bodies" (PAII-T)

➤ Co-operation with the Venice Commission, support to independent elections instance (ISIE):

- Two training of trainers (ToT) workshops were organised for 47 members and staff of ISIE on 16-23 March 2022 in collaboration with the National Centre for Training of Trainers (CENAFFIF). As a result of the training, a pool of ISIE master trainers was created.
- Tunisia informed of its intention to request three opinions of the Venice Commission on the draft code on national property, law on confiscation of assets and on the establishment of an Agency in charge of the confiscation and management of confiscated assets.

➤ Freedom of expression, support to media regulatory authority (HAICA) and to national body on access to information (INAI):

- As part of INAI's training plan 2020-2022, 30 officers on access to information of public bodies from the governorates of Jendouba, Béja and Le Kef were trained in line with relevant

national legislation (organic law N° 2016-22). Training, held in Tabarka on 4-5 March 2022, was provided entirely by INAI's master trainers. The PAII-T project has earlier supported the creation of INAI's internal pool of master trainers to ensure sustainability of the capacity building.

- HAICA launched its Resource Centre for Regulation, Self-Regulation and Media Education (CRRM) for professionals in Tunisia and the Francophone Network of Media Regulators (REFRAM) on 15 March 2022 in Tunis. The CRRM is a platform aimed at facilitating access to information on regulation, self-regulation and media literacy, sharing of news, international standards, documentary and audio-visual resources, as well as presenting regulatory bodies worldwide and promoting exchanges between researchers and experts in the field of media regulation.

- On 25 March 2022, INAI's IT department received technical training on the SIEM software and back-up with the objective of redesigning the website of INAI.

➤ Data protection, support to the national body on personal data protection (INPDP):

- A workshop on the Guide to the articulation of data protection rights and the right to access to information was organised on 28-30 March 2022 in Strasbourg, France. Presidents of INAI and INPDP participated in the workshop, which aimed to further strengthen the collaboration and synergies between these two bodies.

➤ Fight against trafficking in human beings / support to the national body combating human trafficking (INLTP) and HELP programme:

- A training on the HELP methodology for a group of professionals specialised in the fight against corruption was organised on 3 February 2022 in Tunis. Following trainings organised on the methodology in late 2021 and 2022, an official ceremony was held on 18 March 2022 in Tunis to certify 30 professionals from different fields as HELP tutors. The pool of HELP tutors in Tunisia constitutes now 75 professionals.

➤ Support to the National body in charge of combating torture (INPT):

- PAII-T continued to support presentations of the Prisoners' Guide, developed in collaboration with national actors for prisoners and prison officers. On 26-27 February 2022, a multidisciplinary team composed of members of INPT, representatives of the prison administration (CGPR) and national experts visited the Monastir prison to present the Guide and distribute it to each prisoner and to prison staff. Particular attention was paid to the specific needs of vulnerable groups.

➤ Fight against corruption and money laundering:

- Consultations with the project stakeholders, namely the Tunisian Financial Analysis Committee, the Ministry of State Domains, Presidency of the Government and the High Institute of the Profession of Lawyers, were held over the reporting period in order to plan upcoming activities in the field of anti-corruption and money laundering.

#### EU/CoE JP « Support to justice reform » (AP-JUST)

- The Venice Commission has organised from 24 to 28 March 2022 a training of trainers for fourteen participants identified by the Ministry of Justice and the Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies (CLJS), who will share their knowledge and expertise acquired in a series of technical workshops on legislative drafting to be held during the second quarter of 2022.

- The ENM/ISM group of experts supported the implementation of the modules on "the investigating judge" and "the prosecutor" and began the preparation of the modules on the "commercial judge" and "the company judge".

- The final version of the good practices manual on judicial expertise was approved by the Ministry and a final review is underway before finalization; a group of national and international experts has started working on a good practice guide on remote trial.
- Having completed the HELP training of trainers, 3 judges and 3 lawyers have been certified tutor and will develop an online training module on mediation.
- Capacity building of lawyers focused on the internal organization of the cabinet.
- A presentation of the quality project was made and meetings with each pilot court (TPI Mannouba, TPI Tunis, CA Tunis) will be organized to define a specific action plan for each of them.
- The proofreading of the Arab version of the study on the organisation and functioning of the commercial justice system in Tunisia has been completed end of January 2022.
- 4 procurement procedures (international call for tenders and competitive bidding procedures) have been finalised and service providers and experts have been selected in March 2022 to launch the activities in support of CEJJ in April 2022 (Centre des Etudes Juridiques et Judiciaires) in the following areas – digitalisation of the publications of CEJJ, upgrade of the CEJJ website, work of national and international experts in support of CEJJ.

## **Joint Programmes**

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

- A training of multisectoral frontline professionals on monitoring and supervising practices on combatting domestic violence took place on 23-24 March 2022 in partnership with the National Office of the Family and Population, Ministry of Health.
- A meeting to reinforce cooperation between the Council of Europe and Libya was held on 21 February 2022 in Tunis with the participation of representatives of the National Council for Civil Liberties and Human Rights in Libya, the Higher Committee for the Rights of the Child, the Ministry of Interior, the Attorney General Office, the Supreme Judicial Council as well as the Permanent Commission for Humanitarian Affairs in the Libyan army.
- As part of the process of developing a National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings in Libya, a workshop was held on 22-24 March 2022 in Tunis on the development of a list of indicators related to the detection and identification of victims of human trafficking in Libya in partnership with the Libyan National Council for Civil and Human Rights and the Organisation No Peace without Justice.

### Follow up actions

#### **EU/CoE PAII-T:**

- Follow-up with the Ministry of State Domains and Land Affairs with provision of legal assistance on the requested legal texts through support of the Venice Commission and capacity building in these areas to be mobilised by the anti-corruption component of the PAII-T.
- A series of technical training courses to be organised for the pool of ISIE master trainers in collaboration with the Venice Commission and ISIE.
- Launching and/or national adaptation of the following HELP courses: Prevention of radicalisation; Prevention of corruption; Fight against hate speech in the audio-visual sector.
- Promotion of the HAICA's CRRM platform through a targeted communication plan.
- Continued support to the INPT for carrying out presentations of the Prisoner's Guide and to the INAI's training plan 2020-2022.

**EU/CoE South Programme IV:**

- Continued cooperation with Libyan counterparts in the fight against trafficking of human beings and in other areas.
- Planification of the South Programme IV regional and thematic steering committees (June).
- Preparation of the South Programme V contractual documents (phase V to be launched in September 2022).

**Other relevant activities**

- Meeting of the Head of Cybercrime Division with the Tunisian stakeholders regarding the accession of Tunisia to the Cybercrime Convention, Tunis, 21 March 2022.

**High-level visits**

- Visit of the President of the Venice Commission Ms Claire Bazy Malaurie to Tunisia, 30 March-1 April 2022.