

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Partnership for Good Governance for Eastern Partnership Countries online event: Improving the Lives of Citizens Through Better Governance

Recorded Message by Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General, Council of Europe



Dear friends,

Like so many events this year, this one is a little later than expected and happening online rather than in person.

These are the realities of the world today.

But what matters is that it is taking place, recognising the way in which the Partnership for Good Governance has continued to deliver for citizens of the Eastern Partnership countries - even in these difficult times – and providing an opportunity for reflection on what more we can do.

This is important because although the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the tragic loss of life, we must nonetheless prevent it from destroying our way of life:

Our understanding of who we are, what we value, and the rights to which every European is entitled.

The European Union and the Council of Europe share a belief in human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Because of this we have been able to work together with the Eastern Partnership countries to pursue a unique, multi-topic, multi-year, multi-country programme:

A Partnership for Good Governance that helps bring national legislation and practice into closer alignment with European standards and strengthens the capacity of national authorities to implement domestic reforms.

The current, second phase of this work focuses on specific areas:

Justice reform, anti-discrimination, the fight against corruption, and the prevention of money laundering the financing of terrorism.

And it is underpinned by a 17.5 million Euro budget, 80% financed by the EU and 20% by the Council of Europe.

The Programme's work contributes strongly to the implementation of both the Council of Europe's Action Plans for Eastern Partnership countries and the EU's 2020 deliverables.

But the significance of that is what it means for people living their everyday lives.

Our work together delivers tangible results, ensuring the more efficient and effective services that citizens need and which, in turn, increase their trust in state institutions.

That's why the individual countries have expressed their satisfaction with the support that they have received, including for ongoing national reforms during the COVID-19 crisis.

And it also the reason that the European Council called in May for a "renewed and strengthened commitment" to the Eastern Partnership.

They did however note that more progress is needed on ensuring the rule of law.

I know that together we can achieve that.

This event provides an opportunity for you to reflect on the steps that have been taken, and what more can be done, even in times of uncertainty and upheaval.

The current Partnership for Good Governance continues until 2021.

So, I wish you all the best in considering how we can do yet more in that timeframe, and beyond.