

European Union and Council of Europe Partnership for Good Governance

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Strengthening justice
Countering economic crime
Promoting equality and non-discrimination
Advancing women's access to justice and combating violence against women

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by the Council of Europe

The European Union and the Council of Europe are working together with Eastern Partnership countries* to promote stronger governance, rule of law and to improve the lives of citizens. In 2014, they launched a common initiative, the Partnership for Good Governance programme for the Eastern Partnership countries. The programme provides support in the implementation of the countries' domestic reforms to strengthen justice, counter economic crime, promote equality and non-discrimination, advance women's access to justice and combat violence against women in line with European standards. It was designed in close consultation with the European Union and the national stakeholders, in line with the Council of Europe's country-specific Action Plans and the European Union's priorities for the Eastern Partnership region. The current phase of the programme, running from 2023 to 2027, builds upon the results and progress achieved under the previous phases: 2015-2018 and 2019-2022. Progress in the implementation of the EU accession priorities is in focus for Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The Partnership for Good Governance programme will continue supporting Armenia and Azerbaijan. Co-operation activities with Belarusian democratic forces and civil society may be organised as appropriate.

THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER THE PREVIOUS PHASE INCLUDE:

- ▶ Advanced implementation of key judicial reforms and strengthened independence, effectiveness, and efficiency of the judiciary.
- ▶ Strengthened harmonisation of legislation with the European Convention on Human Rights and improved enforcement of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.
- ▶ Improved access to justice in particular for women, children and the most vulnerable groups.
- ▶ Strengthened co-operation amongst bar associations improving their functioning and advancing their independence to ensure better legal protection of citizens.

Bringing policies, institutions, and practices further in line with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, and the opinions of the Venice Commission and standards of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ).

* While the Partnership for Good Governance does not include activities with the participation of the Belarusian authorities, in line with the EU policy of non-engagement with Belarusian public bodies and state-owned enterprises enshrined in the European Council Conclusions of October 2020, activities may be organised with the representatives of Belarusian civil society and democratic actors as appropriate, in line with the European Council Conclusions of February 2022 and the Decision of the Council of Europe Ministers' Deputies of March 2022.

- ▶ Strengthened policies and legislation against corruption, money laundering, financing of terrorism and asset recovery in the beneficiary countries.
- ▶ Enhanced institutional capacities of anti-corruption and money laundering special bodies to implement Council of Europe recommendations and European standards in fighting and preventing corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing.
- ▶ Strengthened regional co-operation to address national shortcomings and regional challenges to fighting and preventing corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing.

Addressing shortcomings identified in the evaluations by the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) and the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

- ▶ Improved alignment of anti-discrimination policies and legislation with European standards.
- ▶ Strengthened capacities of equality bodies and civil society organisations in the beneficiary countries to assist persons belonging to vulnerable groups in pursuing discrimination complaints through relevant redress mechanisms.
- ▶ Improved systems of data collection on discrimination, hate speech and hate crime in the beneficiary countries.
- ▶ Strengthened access to justice for women and women victims of violence, in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and thus contributing towards the signature/ratification of the Istanbul Convention.
- ▶ Increased involvement and capacities of civil society in the development of instruments to combat discrimination and provide access to justice for women.

Implementing recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) as well as those emanating from the monitoring of the Framework Convention on National Minorities (FCNM) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) and implementation of Council of Europe standards relevant to gender equality and women's rights, including the Istanbul Convention, the European Convention on Human Rights.

■ Guidance was provided to beneficiary countries through the Quick Response Mechanism on drafting legislation and policies linked to priority related reforms to respond to requests for legislative analysis from the European Commission in close co-operation with the participating countries in the areas of competence of the Venice Commission such as legislation in the field of elections (Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova), constitutional amendments (Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine), law on political parties (Armenia), constitutional review of the law-making procedures in Parliament (the Republic of Moldova), as well as in the media area (amendment of the Code of Audio-visual Media Services – the Republic of Moldova) and a legal expertise on amendments to the law on mass media (Armenia) issued by the Media Department of the Council of Europe.

WHAT DOES THE PROGRAMME AIM TO ACHIEVE?

- ▶ To **enhance** evidence-based policymaking through improved data collection and analysis mechanisms in the field of justice reforms.
- ▶ To **strengthen** rule of law, human rights, gender equality and anti-corruption mechanisms and advance the implementation of key judicial reforms.
- ▶ To **contribute to substantial improvement in the lives of citizens** through its actions.

HOW WILL THE PROGRAMME ACHIEVE THIS?

- ▶ Through tailor-made and demand-driven support, provided to further **improve legal and policy frameworks and build institutional capacities**, for an increased alignment of the Eastern Partnership countries' national legislation and practice with European standards.
- ▶ To this end, the programme activities include technical support and expertise, legal expertise, sectoral assessments, awareness raising and capacity development in all four thematic fields.
- ▶ The **main focus in the third phase** of the programme is the sustainability and ownership by the beneficiary institutions.
- ▶ The **gender mainstreaming approach** is a key element of the programme and is further reinforced across the Partnership for Good Governance activities.
- ▶ **Regional interventions** provide a platform for peer-to-peer exchange of good practices to overcome common challenges, facilitate creation of networks and reinforce regional co-operation.
- ▶ The programme will continue applying several good practices deployed under the second phase, such as the flexibility which was key in addressing emerging needs and adapting to the numerous challenges, promoting participatory and a multi-stakeholder's approach of the projects.

CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Through the implementation of the Partnership for Good Governance and its projects, the Council of Europe is contributing to the **UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** by supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably **SDG 5** to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, **SDG 10** to reduce inequality within and among countries, and **SDG 16** to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AT A GLANCE

17 country-specific and four regional projects are implemented across Eastern Partnership countries.

The **themes** covered by the Partnership for Good Governance include:

- ▶ strengthening justice
- ▶ countering economic crime
- ▶ promoting equality and non-discrimination
- ▶ advancing women's access to justice and combating violence against women

The **budget** allocated for the programme amounts to 19,3 million EUR (15 million EUR provided by the European Union and 4,3 million EUR by the Council of Europe).

The Partnership for Good Governance follows a two-fold approach:

- ▶ **Technical assistance**, tailored to support beneficiary countries in achieving an increased compliance with European standards. Whenever considered beneficial for the outcome, national interventions are encompassed with regional projects (covering all beneficiary countries) or multi-country (covering some of the beneficiary countries).
- ▶ The **Quick Response Mechanism**, a tool through which the Council of Europe provides ad hoc legislative expertise and policy advice in response to requests made by the beneficiary countries. These requests may address one of the four thematic areas of the programme but can also focus on other issues falling under the mandate of the Venice Commission and areas covered by other Council of Europe bodies.



The Partnership for Good Governance is a regional programme, organised around the alignment of the national legislation and practice with European standards according to the individual needs of the Eastern Partnership countries, running from 2023 to 2027.

The programme covers projects in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. The beneficiary countries are supported through technical co-operation to implement the domestic reforms in accordance with the strategic goals defined in the European Union and Council of Europe Statement of Intent signed in 2014.

MORE INFORMATION

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The member states of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

www.europa.eu

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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