

RESULTS FACTSHEET

Partnership for Good Governance in Armenia

March 2023

What is the Partnership for Good Governance?

The “Partnership for Good Governance” (PGG) is a joint initiative of the European Union and the Council of Europe for strengthening good governance in the Eastern Partnership region.

PGG provides tailor-made support to Eastern Partnership countries to bring their legislation and practice closer to European standards in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy. It supports, in particular, Eastern Partnership 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.

This factsheet presents examples of results achieved so far under the Partnership for Good Governance (PGG). The Programme has three successive phase PGG I (2015-2018), PGG II (2019-2022) and PGG III (2023-2027), which started in March 2023. In addition to the country specific projects mentioned below, Armenia benefits from regional interventions.

Project: Strengthening institutional capacities to fight and prevent corruption (Jan 2019-Feb 2023)

*The PGG II closely accompanied and supported the Armenian government in its efforts to **set up a strong legislative and institutional framework to tackle corruption.***

- The Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan for 2019-2022 were adopted in October 2019. The Anti-Corruption Committee - a specialised anti-corruption investigative body - was established in 2021, to increase the effectiveness of the investigation of corruption-related crimes.
- The National Assembly adopted a legislative package in 2021 establishing a specialised Anti-Corruption Court and creating a separate division within the General Prosecutor's Office to exercise control over the legality of pre-trial criminal proceedings of corruption-related cases.
- Key amendments to the Law on the Corruption Prevention Commission (CPC) - a new anti-corruption body, established in November 2019 with the Programme’s support - incorporating most of the Council of Europe's key recommendations, significantly expanded the role and mandate of the CPC. After assessment of the Armenian legal framework and with recommendations from all stakeholders, a template for asset declarations was developed and used by the Corruption Prevention Commission to collect declarations from public officials for analysis.

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- Following the adoption and application of the methodology for Integrity checking of judicial nominees, the CPC endorsed and adopted a new version of the integrity checking methodology, based on the lessons learnt during the first year of implementation and best international practices.
- The new Law on Civil Forfeiture of Illegal Assets, a major step towards strengthening the Armenian national framework for asset recovery, was adopted in April 2020, taking into account the majority of recommendations provided by the Council of Europe.
- The Armenian Parliamentarians progressed towards the development of enhanced internal corruption prevention mechanisms, including a Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament (MPs) and legal amendments to establish an Ethics Commission and its working procedures, addressing national priorities and GRECO's strong recommendations from its Fourth Round Evaluation.
- A model Code of Conduct for Public Servants was prepared in co-operation with the Corruption Prevention Commission after raising awareness of multiple stakeholders on integrity systems and corruption prevention for civil servants. The Code of Conduct was adopted by the Armenian authorities in 2022 following public consultations.
- The national legislative framework regulating the conflicts of interest and incompatibilities was updated taking into consideration Council of Europe recommendations.
- Legislative advice was provided on the Draft Law on Digital Assets and related amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Law. Further guidance on the regulation and supervision of virtual assets and virtual assets service providers was made available to the Financial Monitoring Centre of Armenia.
- Capacities of the national authorities were enhanced in using international co-operation means during the investigation of economic crimes, in particular towards more effective asset recovery. Investigators and prosecutors improved their knowledge and skills through training and a handbook on investigation and prosecution of Money Laundering and terrorism financing cases. The Council of Europe's e-learning course on corruption prevention was translated into Armenian and made available through the HELP platform.

A background information sheet on this project is available on the website.

Project: Implementation of judicial reforms (Jan 2019-Feb 2023)

Component 1: Support to the Judicial Reform - enhancing the independence and professionalism of the judiciary in Armenia

*The PGG supported Armenia in **strengthening the integrity and effectiveness of the judiciary** to ensure that Armenian citizens have access to and benefit from an independent and impartial judiciary.*

- The Government of Armenia adopted the Draft Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy for 2022 – 2026, guiding further justice reform steps in the country, developed with the support of the PGG.

- The Judicial Code of Armenia was revised in 2022, taking into account the recommendations of the Joint Opinion of the Venice Commission and the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI) ([CDL-AD\(2022\)002-e](#)) related to the draft introduction of a new “incompatibility requirement” in the Judicial Code which could eventually lead to judges’ dismissal.
- The PGG II contributed to the national legislation’s harmonisation with the GRECO recommendations through the Joint Opinion of the Venice Commission and Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law on the draft amendments to the Judicial Code, namely the system of judicial accountability. The Ministry of Justice of Armenia is currently revising the legislation in line with the Opinion above.
- The National Assembly amended the Law on Mediation following the Council of Europe recommendations.
- PGG II supported the development of five legal acts deriving from the amended Judicial Code, that eventually have been adopted by the Supreme Judicial Council. Following the establishment of the Institute of the performance evaluation of judges, the first round of performance evaluation for 60 judges (23% of all judges) was completed.
- Mediators and arbitrators are better aware of the new legal provisions of the Law on Mediation, the Law on Commercial Arbitration and the new Civil Procedure Code, through the provision of legal and practical solutions related to the establishment of the Arbitration Centre, as well as the improvement of the application of mediation in Armenia. The legislative amendments and policy paper developments initiated by the Armenian authorities followed around 70% of the recommendations provided by the PGG II.
- The Armenian authorities demonstrated their commitment towards gender equality in the judiciary : the percentage of women judges increased from 26,6% to 34% in 2023, and the increase of women judges in managerial positions from 11% to 25% in 2021 (four out of 16 presidents of courts are women). The PGG contributed to this process by conducting research on gender equality and improving leadership skills of 35 women judges (44% of all women judges in 2021).
- The high-level conference: *Judiciary as a Guardian of Democracy* in June 2022 facilitated the dialogue between the Constitutional Court, courts of general jurisdiction and other branches of authority, alongside the international community and civil society.
- The access to the Constitutional Court’s jurisprudence was facilitated for the citizens of Armenia, thanks to the Constitutional Court’s website developed by the PGG in 2022, increasing the number of website visitors by 186,6% compared to 2021.
- Public awareness was raised on alternative dispute resolution methods by developing the website for the Self-regulating Organisation of Mediators of Armenia. Additionally, the Mediation Referral Toolkit for Judges promoted the court-annexed mediation and supported judges in their efforts to encourage parties to consider mediation before further pursuing the litigation.

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Component 2: Supporting the criminal justice reform and harmonising the application of European standards in Armenia

The PGG supported Armenia in **implementing criminal justice reform** through legislative, methodological and capacity-building assistance.

- Following a long-standing process of close co-operation with the Council, the new Criminal (CC) and the Criminal Procedure Codes (CPC) were prepared, adopted in 2021 and entered into force in 2022. Both new codes incorporated about 70% of the Council's recommendations made at the drafting stage. The CC moves from a punitive to a re-socialisation policy, expanding the list of non-custodial sentences and thus viewing imprisonment as an ultimate measure. The new CPC provides for ensuring balanced protection of public and private interests in criminal proceedings, increases the role of the court at the pre-trial stage, and provides for better guarantees of the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of those involved in criminal proceedings, based on European human rights standards. 14 legal acts associated with the new CC and CPC were reviewed to harmonise them with the new codes. Two Guides to facilitate the initial stage of the implementation of the new Codes were prepared and provided to Armenian legal professionals in July 2022.
- The implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy for 2020-2022 was supported by the PGG through a comparative analysis of both international requirements and best practices, as well as national regulations on effective mechanisms to exercise the rights of victims of torture to psychological, social, and legal services. The capacity of the Justice Academy was strengthened through five new courses for judges, and a pool of 20 trainers, based on the results of a thorough needs assessment. The new courses were integrated into the training programme of the Academy, enhancing the capacities of 353 judges (95 women and 258 men).
- 548 legal professionals (182 women and 366 men) gained knowledge on the basis of the new criminal justice legislation to ensure its effective implementation. 91 legal professionals (31 women and 60men), including judges, prosecutors and investigators successfully completed the HELP distance learning courses translated into Armenian and made available for self-learning on the HELP platform.
- Six ECtHR Guides of on Articles 2, 5, 6 (criminal limb), 7 and 8 of the ECHR and Article 4 of Protocol No.7 of the ECHR were translated into Armenian and published. Two volumes of compilation of the summaries of the key ECtHR judgements in Armenian language were prepared, published and disseminated.
- The website of the Cassation Court was developed with the programme's support, ensuring access to the jurisprudence of the court.
- The professional capacity of the judiciary and the Office of the Representative of Armenia on International Legal Matters was strengthened to improve the uniform application of European standards through the provision of access to the resources and training courses made available by the Programme. The legal professionals' access both to decisions of the Court of Cassation, and to the case-law and publications of the ECtHR was increased.
- The inclusion of civil society was ensured notably through the participation of several NGOs in a needs-assessment mission aimed at improving the uniform application of European standards in Armenia and developing new courses for the curricula of criminal law judges in the Justice Academy. Civil society representatives also took part in public discussions on the draft CPC and CC.

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- A gender analysis was carried out under the Programme, aiming at assessing gender mainstreaming in training courses for the Justice Academy. The analysis showed that the content of the five training courses developed under the PGG is fully gender mainstreamed and ensures the consideration of gender equality aspects.

A background information sheet on both components of this project is available on the website.

More information:

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pgg2/armenia>

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