

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

16 October 2023

Information Documents
DPC/DPAER/Inf(2023)3

Quarterly report of Council of Europe Offices

April-June 2023

* 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.

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 April-June 2023. 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

During this reporting period, the Head of Office gave priority to the preparation of and follow-up to the Council of Europe's 4th Summit in Reykjavik (16-17 May). The first visit to Brussels (EU) of the Director of Political Affairs and External Relations on 4-5 May was also conceived in this context.

The Head of Office liaised with the Cabinets of key commissioners, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Parliament and with Ambassadors/ Permanent Representatives to the EU representing the presidencies (past, current, incoming) of the EU Council. He also maintained close contact with international organisations represented in Brussels, such as the UN (in particular the OHCHR, UNFPA) and the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*. He developed diplomatic contacts with representatives of Council of Europe member states, observer states and non-member states, as well as with the representative of the Belarusian democratic forces. He also contributed to the Secretary General's participation in a breakfast organised in the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council in Luxembourg on 24 April.

He closely followed and liaised on the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and the deposit of the ratification instrument in Strasbourg on 28 June.

He welcomed the Secretary General of the Congress. He also participated in various events, including, in particular: a conference on the reconstruction of Ukraine organised by the Committee of the Regions and the regular EU (CATS, Commission, EEAS)/Council of Europe consultation meeting in Strasbourg. He addressed the Group of French-speaking Ambassadors in Brussels, as well as the EU Council Working Group on relations with the Council of Europe and the OSCE (COSCE). He initiated the first consultations between the Council of Europe's DHR and EEAS on teleworking and new ways of working. He welcomed colleagues from the PACE Secretariat participating in an event organised by the European Parliament on assistance to Russian democratic forces.

The Office ensured further liaison between the Council of Europe and the EU on topical matters, such as: the rule of law, migration, media, journalists, AI, the protection of lawyers, the EU's accession to the ECHR, the protection of the cultural heritage in Ukraine, the EU's anti-corruption package and sport. The Office welcomed Council of Europe representatives on mission to Brussels and facilitated Council of Europe/EU meetings and discussions in a number of areas, including, notably, on: the developments in the 10 EU candidate countries, Roma and social rights. The Office reported on relevant daily developments in the EU institutions on all matters of Council of Europe interest, including political and normative developments. The Office also liaised with civil society, including with representatives of philanthropic associations, further to the Secretary General's participation in their forum in Croatia.

Visibility and relations with media

The Brussels-based Spokesperson/Media Officer co-ordinated communication work around the presentation of the annual report on the execution of judgments of the ECtHR, the high-level conference on the environment, the June CM-DH meeting, the presentation of the GRECO annual report and the publication of CPT reports on the Netherlands and the UK.

DPC/DPAER/Inf(2023)3

He also carried out media, online and social media work on various issues, notably including the April and June PACE sessions, the Reykjavik Summit, the elections in Türkiye, the ECRI annual report, the Venice Commission's June session, the Council of Europe's annual penal statistics (SPACE), the annual reports from GRETA and ECRI and various judgments and decisions of the ECtHR.

He represented the Council of Europe at the regular "C-10" meeting of communications staff from various international organisations and networks and continued to manage the ongoing communications project highlighting the impact of the ECHR.

Geneva - Council of Europe Office/Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva

The *Chargée d’Affaires a.i.* continued to ensure the liaison between the Geneva-based organisations and the relevant MAEs of the Council of Europe and held relevant bilateral meetings with officials of UNOG, UNHCR and OHCHR.

The Office attended the United Nations opening ceremony of the 15th Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy on 16 May, organised by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN.

It also attended the Second Preparatory Meeting of the Global Refugee Forum (GFR) on 17 May, which was co-chaired by Mr Jürg Lauber, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, and Ms Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner (Protection, UNHCR).

The Office facilitated the organisation of a side-event on “The Istanbul Convention in practice - holistic care for victims of sexual violence”, which took place in the *Palais des Nations* on 1 June. The event was organised by the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the UN in Geneva, the Permanent Representation of Kazakhstan to the UN in Geneva and the Council of Europe. A staff member of the Council of Europe was invited to speak as one of the panelists.

The Office followed the online organisational meeting in relation to the 53rd regular session of the Human Rights Council (19 June - 14 July).

Starting on 19 June, the Office attended selected parts of the 53rd regular session of the Human Rights Council (online for the most part, with some selected sessions in person).

Throughout the reporting period, the Geneva Office maintained contacts with partners in Geneva, both in person and virtually, including with the Chief of Protocol of UN Geneva, the Office of the President of the HRC and various colleagues of the secretariats of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

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

- 12 April: Special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, address by Adviser and Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for the Rights of the Child and Children's Rehabilitation.
- 19-20 April: Visit of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to Vienna, address of the Secretary General to the OSCE Permanent Council on 20 April.
- 27 April: OSCE Permanent Council meeting, address by the Head of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova.
- 4 May: Permanent Council meeting - Moscow Mechanism report dedicated to the forcible deportations of Ukrainian children by the Russian Federation; Report by the Head of the OSCE Mission to Kosovo*.
- 11 May: Permanent Council meeting - Biannual report of the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media (RFOM), Ms Teresa Ribeiro; Moscow Mechanism Report on the serious threat to the OSCE human dimension in Belarus since 5 November 2020.
- 18 May: Permanent Council meeting - discussion of the outcomes of the Council of Europe Summit in Reykjavik.
- 25 May: Permanent Council meeting - Report by the Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek.
- 1 June: OSCE Permanent Council meeting dedicated to the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, the situation in Kosovo* and the pending decision about the OSCE Chair for 2024.
- 6 June: OSCE Special Permanent Council meeting - address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Mr Jeyhun Bayramov.
- 6 June: OSCE Special Permanent Council meeting - the Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam.
- 8 June: OSCE Permanent Council meeting - address by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Volker Türk.
- 22 June: OSCE Permanent Council meeting - Report by the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Report by the Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Astana.
- 29 June: OSCE Special Permanent Council meeting - extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova.

Participation in other meetings including expert committees and conferences

- 11-21 April: 5th session of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes, UNODC, in Vienna.
- 21 April: Council of Europe-OSCE Co-ordination Group Meeting in Strasbourg.
- 24-25 April: 2nd OSCE Human Dimension Meeting on the topic of Torture and Other Grave Breaches of International Humanitarian Law and Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law.
- 22-26 May: 32nd session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).
- 19-21 June: Council of Europe Study Visit to Vienna for members of the Serbian judiciary and meeting with the Head of the Council of Europe Head of Office in Vienna.
- 26 June: Commission on Narcotic Drugs Special Event - launch of the World Drug Report 2023, UNODC, in Vienna.

- 26-27 June: 3rd Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) on the topic of the role of civil society in the promotion and protection of tolerance and non-discrimination; the Head of Office delivered a statement on behalf of the Council of Europe.
- 28-29 June: OSCE Chairpersonship Security Review Conference 2023 on the topic of the security situation in the OSCE area.

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

Activities of the Office

Enhancing the co-operation with OSCE ODIHR – Following the launch in March of the Academy for the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Polish Cities, a joint OSCE ODIHR-CoE-UNHCR-OECD inter-agency project (a three-day intercultural integration training for Polish cities), organised by the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Programme, took place in Lublin in June. The Office supported the organisation of this training and provided information on other events organised by partner organisations within the framework of the Academy.

The Head of Office regularly attended meetings and consultations convened or facilitated by ODIHR. These included i.a. expert meeting on judicial independence and the rule of law in Poland and a training for Polish cities on good practices in migrant integration. The Head of Office also remained in regular contact with ODIHR staff members to discuss possible joint activities in the framework of the wider co-operation with the Council of Europe. These discussions included i.a. meetings with: Mr Kishan Manocha, Head of the ODIHR Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, ahead of his visit to Strasbourg on the occasion of the April Council of Europe-OSCE Co-ordination Group meeting; Mr Jacopo Leone, Special Adviser to ODIHR Director, Andrea Huber, and Head of Human Rights Department, and Ms Iryna Ivankiv, Belarus Project Officer, to discuss the activities of both organisations towards with regard to Belarusian civil society; Ms Alice Szczepanikova, Migration and Freedom of Movement Adviser in the ODIHR Democratisation Department (to co-ordinate the implementation of the Academy for the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Polish Cities) and Ms Carolyn Hammer, Adviser in the Rule of Law Unit in the ODIHR Democratisation Department.

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 relevant activities, in particular on the outcome of the 36th meeting of the CoD Governing Council and on the CoD activities in the margins of the 53rd UN Human Rights Council.

Establishment of closer co-operation with Frontex – In addition to supporting the visit to Warsaw of the SRSG on migration and refugees on the occasion of her participation in the Frontex Consultative Forum, the Head of Office was in contact with interlocutors from the Frontex Institutional Partnership Unit (Mr Michał Narojek, Head of Unit, and Mr Konstantinos Pantelis, expert in charge of the co-operation between Frontex and the Council of Europe) to discuss potential plans for a meeting at the level of the organisations' leadership. The Head of Office was also in regular contact with Mr Jonas Grimheden, Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer, to establish plans for joint activities in the second half of the year. Preliminary arrangements were made for the continuation of the study visits to Strasbourg for Frontex Fundamental Rights Observers which have taken place annually in November since 2021.

Ensuring the visibility of the CoE – The Office provided ongoing support for Council of Europe activities in Poland, including the visits to Poland of the SRSG on migration and refugees and the organisation of Council of Europe events in Warsaw (GRETA Seminar on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for the Purpose of Labour Exploitation; Workshop on Psychological Support to Refugees: Strengthening Capacities for Professionals working with children and adolescents who experience war or conflict trauma).

B. FIELD AND PROGRAMME OFFICES

List of abbreviations used for the naming of projects

AP	Action Plan
HF	European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye
NP	Neighbourhood Partnership
JP	Joint Programme
PGG	European Union/Council of Europe Partnership for Good Governance for Eastern Partnership countries
VC	Voluntary Contribution

Baku**Situation of the Office**

Core staff – five, Project staff – 10, Total staff - 15.

The Office implemented six projects, four in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, one project funded through voluntary contributions from Germany, one project funded through the Human Rights Trust Fund and voluntary contributions from Belgium.

State of implementation of projects

- **AP VC, “Promoting media professionalism and freedom of information in Azerbaijan (PRO-M-FEX)”**: (i) the Project completed development of a curriculum on conflict-sensitive journalism (national and international experts were involved in this work). This curriculum is anticipated to be implemented in three Azerbaijani universities that offer educational programs on journalism. (ii) The Project concluded the assessment of the Azerbaijani legal framework on freedom of information and access to information. A comprehensive report comparing the national legislation with relevant international standards was produced. It provides a series of recommendations for further enhancing of the national legislation and its practical implementation.
- **AP VC, “Support for the improvement of the execution of the European Court judgments by Azerbaijan”**: (i) 26 lawyers and members of academia enhanced their knowledge of the European Convention on Human Rights, the “Convention system”, and strengthened their skills in training methodology. (ii) 13 staff members of the analytical departments of the relevant domestic agencies got acquainted with best practices on research, analysis, and data processing at the European Court of Human Rights, as well as with Georgia and Slovenia’s experience in that regard. (iii) A needs assessment report on harmonisation of judicial decisions was prepared. It contains recommendations for the improvement of the domestic legal, regulatory framework and practices in line with the European Convention on Human Rights. (iv) The project results attained, planned activities for the next period were reviewed during the Steering Committee meeting.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, “Preventing and fighting economic crime in Azerbaijan”**: the first Technical Project Committee Meeting (TPC) was convened in April to launch the project. During the meeting national stakeholders reaffirmed their strong commitment to continue co-operation to build on and retain the momentum in the light of the newly introduced legislative and institutional frameworks and processes in the area of anti-corruption, anti-money laundering and recovery of illicit assets.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, “Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Azerbaijan”**: (i) the project team had bilateral meetings with the project partners to discuss further implementation of the project and strengthen effective communication, co-ordination and collaboration among them. (ii) During the first Technical

Project Committee Meeting the project partners, including members of the CSOs, assessed the current situation and agreed on the concrete actions to be taken within the new project. (iii) The project team presented the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights on violence against women and domestic violence at the Faculty of Law of Baku State University and raised awareness of some 30 law students. (iv) The project submitted the Azerbaijani translation of the draft platform on multi-agency co-operation developed under the previous project to the State Committee for Family, Women and Children of the Republic of Azerbaijan's review.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Fostering mediation in Azerbaijan":** (i) the project's objectives, its action plan, and the methodology envisaged for three-year co-operation were discussed with national partners and approved during the first Technical Project Committee Meeting on 13 April. (ii) On 19-21 June the Project organized an experts' mission with the aim of gathering information and discussing possible improvements of the current case management, monitoring and evaluation of the results of the mediation system through data collection, and the perspectives of online mediation services. The visit will be followed by an expert report with recommendations on the digitalisation of the mediation system in Azerbaijan based on the relevant CEPEJ guidelines.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Promoting equality in Azerbaijan":** (i) on 6 June, the project team met with the Ombudsperson and discussed the necessary capacity building measures for the Ombudsperson's Office staff, with a view to enhance their ability to effectively protect human rights and promote freedoms. (ii) The first Technical Project Committee Meeting took place on 7 June. During the meeting representatives from various key project stakeholders came together to discuss upcoming activities, expected outcomes, and implementation timelines. The meeting also facilitated the initiation of collaboration between the Ombudsperson's office and CSOs.

Other relevant activities

- On 4 April, HoO met with Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
- On 12 April, HoO participated in the first Technical Project Committee Meeting within the EU/CoE PGGIII project "Preventing and fighting economic crime in Azerbaijan".
- On 13 April DHoO participated in the first Technical Project Committee Meeting within the EU/CoE PGGIII project "Fostering mediation in Azerbaijan".
- On 18 July, HoO participated in the PGG III Local Steering Committee meeting and launched, together with the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan and national partners, the new, third, phase of PGG.
- On 18 May HoO met with Samed Seyidov, MP, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign and Interparliamentary relation, Head of the National delegation of to the PACE.
- On 19 May, HoO met with Hikmet Hajiyev, Assistant of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Head of Foreign Policy Affairs Department of the Presidential Administration.
- On 24 May, HoO attended the 1st Technical Project Committee Meeting of the project "Ending violence against women and domestic violence in Azerbaijan".
- On 2 June, HoO attended the conference on Gender Equality as part of the International HR Conference organized by the Azerbaijani Bar Association.
- On 19 June DHoO attended the High-Level Conference of Statelessness organised by UNHCR and Azerbaijani authorities.
- On 20 June, HoO met with Aysel Yagubova, Head of Department for Cooperation with International Human Rights Organizations of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan,

- and with Marat Kangarlinski, Head of Department for Humanitarian and Social Issues of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to discuss the results of co-operation and future plans.
- On 21-24 May, Christos Giakomopoulos, Director of DG I and Miroslav Papa, Director of DPAER, paid a working visit to Azerbaijan and met with representatives of the authorities and CSOs.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 3-7 June Ian Liddell-Grainger and Lise Christoffersen, co-rapporteurs of the PACE Monitoring Committee, paid a working visit to Azerbaijan and met with Speaker of the Parliament, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Internal Affairs, Minister of Justice, Prosecutor General, Commissioner for Human Rights, representatives of the Supreme Court, as well as with representatives of NGOs and civil society.

Belgrade

Situation of the Office

Core staff – seven, Project staff – 24, Horizontal Facility Co-ordination Hub (HFCH) – one, Regional Finance Officer -one, Total – 33.

The Office implemented 11 (country specific and regional) projects: nine jointly funded with the EU (six under the Horizontal Facility Phase III (HF), ROMACTED, Support for the implementation of judicial reform in Serbia, HELP in the Western Balkans and two projects through Voluntary Contributions (VC) of the Swedish Foreign Ministry/SIDA on Anti-Money-Laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing (AML/CTF) and of the Kingdom of Belgium Citizenship and human rights education with young people in Serbia.

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

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Quality Education for All-Serbia”**: the first meeting with the curricula working group to further connect curricular subjects outcomes with the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture was held and the workplan was defined. Mentor schools organised days of education for democratic culture and participated in the CoE week with more than 10000 direct participants. A first peer learning and training with mentor schools was organised in June – new schools selected dissemination packs created, and action plans were completed. Key policy makers, including State Secretary for Education, participated in the panel at the kick-off conference of the North Macedonia education action. Work on the updating of gender analysis for education sector in Serbia was initiated.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Combating discrimination and promoting diversity in Serbia”**: the first Steering Committee meeting was held on 27 April, where an overview of planned activities was presented to the SC members, who were also briefed on the activities of the complementing regional Action. On 30 June the panel discussion on the human rights situation of LGBTI people in Serbia was organized to mark the end of global Pride Month of June and to elaborate the situation of LGBTI community in Serbia one year after EuroPride. During the inception phase meetings with main partners (Protector of Citizens, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue and Coordination Body for South Serbia) were organized to discuss their priorities. The Action continues to provide assistance to the Ministry in developing the final version of the Action Plan for National Minorities.
- **EU/CoE HF III “Strengthening anti-trafficking action in Serbia”**: the Project plans/outcomes were confirmed at the 1st Steering Committee meeting, as a result of bilateral consultative meetings held with key anti-trafficking stakeholders during the inception phase. A training on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation was implemented for 22 newly employed labour inspectors on 10-12 May. A translated CM recommendation on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation was presented. A Senior Project Officer participated at the Regional Conference organised by GiZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) and MARRI (Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative), Skopje, 29-31 May. A Serbian delegation participated at the round table on a mechanism for the participation of THB (Trafficking in human beings) survivors in the antitrafficking action, 19 June 2023, in Sarajevo, BiH.

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Enhancing human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons”**: within the Action’s framework quantitative analysis of survey responses regarding medical screening in police custody and conduct of health workers when examining persons in police detention was conducted. This will be followed by qualitative analysis of the responses thereby forming a scientific base for standardising conduct of both police officers and medical workers. Meetings of working groups for implementation of Mental Health Strategy, development of new treatment programmes in prisons, putting into practice Interviewing Manual for police officers were also supported by the Action. During the meetings future priorities of line ministries and scope of Action’s assistance were defined.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Enhancing co-operation in the Western Balkans in managing violent extremism in prisons and preventing further radicalisation after release”**: the 1st Steering Committee meeting and a co-ordination meeting with the international community partners active in the region were held on 11 May in Podgorica (Montenegro), at which the representatives of Serbian Ministries of Justice and Interior Affairs took an active role. On 22 June, Serbian beneficiaries exchanged the best practices in ensuring prison exit continuum of violent extremist prisoners and marginalized, vulnerable prisoners at the regional conference in Durres, Albania.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Strengthening human rights protection in Serbia”**: Government Agent and advisor from the Government Agent’s Office participated in the conference on “Subsidiarity principle: national implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights”, in Strasbourg on 4 May. A placement programme between the European Court of Human Rights and domestic superior courts was initiated. High level consultations between CoE representatives and Serbian competent ministries on the execution of the European Court of Humans Rights’ judgement Kačapor and others v. Serbia took place on 8 May in Belgrade.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Protecting Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Serbia”**: on 22nd May 2023, the first Steering Committee Meeting was held where beneficiary institutions and partners discussed modalities of implementation of the adopted action plan. On 27-28 June, the first training for the Commissioner for Access to Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection was completed. Relevant staff of the Commissioners’ Office enhanced their knowledge of the applicable standards of the European Court of Human Rights on Article 10, with particular emphasis on the importance of journalists and other actors in their role in “receiving and imparting” information to the public.
- **Human Rights Trust Fund VC, “HELP in the Western Balkans”**: a regional Training of Trainers (ToT) for 60 judges, prosecutors and lawyers from the whole region in co-operation with the HF III project Strengthening Human Right Protection in Serbia was organised. After the ToT session, participants have been asked to complete a final assignment, designed to assess their skills on applying the HELP methodology and the use of the HELP e-learning platform. Additionally, 11 HELP courses (six directly under the project) on Antidiscrimination, Property Rights, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Judicial Reasoning and Family Law were launched throughout the region increasing the number of users of the HELP platform from South-Eastern Europe by 10% since the beginning of 2023.
- **EU-CoE regional JP, “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED)-phase 2”**: the implementation of 26 small grants-scheme projects is on-going in 13 cities/municipalities in Serbia, addressing the needs in various areas such as empowerment of Roma women/ youth, education, infrastructure, health, post-Covid recovery, etc. Total budget of the grants scheme is close to 200 000 EUR. Close to 30 Roma women

took part in the certified Training of Trainers on 'Transformative grassroots leadership and economic empowerment of Roma women/returnees', jointly organised with the World Bank.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Support for the implementation of judicial reform in Serbia"**: business requirements for updating websites of the High Judicial Council and High Prosecutorial Council were developed; presentation of comparative analysis in CoEMS on court and prosecution office staff was organised in April; first report on monitoring of undue influence on the judiciary was produced for the first quarter of 2023 as foreseen by the Sector Budget Support; preliminary Draft multi-annual workplan and Draft Strategy for E-Academy were developed and submitted to the Judicial Academy; participation in the Annual Conference of Judges, organised on 24-27 May in Vrnjacka Banja; presentation of the comparative analysis on case law harmonisation in public prosecution took place in Belgrade on 16 May with participation of over 25 prosecutors from the Appellate PPOs; study visit to Vienna on case law harmonization was carried out on 19 to 22 June.

- **Sweden VC, "Preventing money laundering and terrorist financing in Serbia"**: the Project provided guidance on procedures for targeted, risk-based border controls as well as the training for custom officers/ border police for effective detection and prevention of ML,FT and proliferation. Representatives of Serbian prosecution, judiciary, and law enforcement participated in a five-day visit to Netherlands and Belgium where they discussed enhancing financial investigations, as well as the detection, processing and adjudication of cases of economic crime. Analysis of closed ML cases has been conducted and three module training on processing and adjudicating ML offences developed. The Project supported development and finalisation of the first sectoral risk assessment of real estate in Serbia. A cost benefit analysis of the software for monitoring of crypto currency trade has been provided.

Follow-up action

- The CoE office discussed with the SIDA a possibility for the continuation of the co-operation in the area of economic crime, by developing the second phase of the project, which would build-up on the previously achieved results in regard to the prevention of MLTF. The potential II phase of the project would also have a new dimension of addressing high-level corruption as one of the core predicate-offences for money laundering.

Other relevant activities

- The CoE office has organised a conference on Execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights against Serbia Judgement Zorica Jovanović against Serbia (related to missing babies) on 8/9 May. The key speaker was Christophe Poirel, Director of Human Rights, DGI, who used this occasion to have bilateral meetings with the Minister of Justice and the President of Constitutional Court to discuss the upcoming steps in the implementation of new judicial laws, as well as the dynamics of planned activities in the field of strengthening the rule of law in Serbia.
- The CoE office launched the new Serbian language version of the Compass - Manual for human rights education with young people. The launch of the new Serbian language version of the Compass manual is a landmark for human rights education with young people in Serbia. The event was opened by the HoO and the key-note address was delivered by Antje Rothemund, Head of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

- The Director of Programme Co-ordination, Claus Neurkirch, visited CoE Belgrade Office and met with officials of the Republic of Serbia and Ambassadors of EU, Sweeden and Switzerland to discuss the progress of ongoing projects and future co-operation. He met the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministers of Justice, EU Integrations, Minister for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue and State Secretary of the Ministry of Education. Also, during his visit the DPC Director held a staff meeting with Belgrade Office staff and briefed them on Reykjavik summit and future plans within the DPC.

Bucharest

Situation of the Office

Core Staff – 0.5 Project staff – 37, Total staff – 37,5

During the reporting period the office was responsible for the implementation of five capacity building projects on cybercrime. Four projects are jointly funded with the European Union (EU), one is funded by voluntary contributions.

State of implementation of projects (April-June 2023)

- C-PROC supported the [meetings of the network of Ibero-American prosecutors specialized in cybercrime and Forum of Portuguese-speaking prosecutors specialized in cybercrime](#) (May 2023), concluding on the need for specialized prosecutors' units, as well as to further strengthening the capacities of the existing ones. The events were followed by an International Conference on the Convention on Cybercrime and its Second Additional Protocol, enabling the focal points of the two networks to refine their knowledge on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence, and to discuss the possible implementation of these provisions. Council of Europe participated in RightsCon 2023, the 12th edition of the world's leading summit on human rights in the digital age with a session on ["Safeguards as enabler of effective criminal justice on cybercrime"](#), highlighting the need to continue advancing strategies that strike the right balance between security and the protection of individual rights in the digital age.

The T-CY plenary (27-28 June) was supported by all projects implemented by C-PROC. Several side events were organized on the margins of the plenary, dedicated to priority countries but also to newly invited countries to accede, to facilitate the future co-operation with the capacity building projects.

Expert participation for the fourth session of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes was supported by all projects.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "CyberEast"**: advanced judicial training series have been continued for judges from Azerbaijan and Ukraine, in parallel to [specialised e-evidence and forensics training](#) for Ukrainian investigators and prosecutors. National cybercrime [mock trials](#) involving defence attorneys were held for Georgian and Moldovan legal professionals. The [Regional Cyber Exercise](#) in Iasi (Romania) completed the series of technical simulation exercises for law enforcement, cybersecurity and financial investigations experts; international co-operation on financial investigations and intelligence was further addressed through a [Regional Meeting](#) in Moldova. Interagency co-operation between cybercrime and cybersecurity agencies was improved via series of dedicated [training sessions](#) in region's countries, while civil society engagement, accountability and oversight was addressed in the framework of the [Regional Meeting on Oversight](#) during [EuroDIG 2023](#).

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "CyberSouth"**: in light of the amendments and adoption of new legislation on cybercrime in [Jordan](#) and Tunisia, the project promoted and discussed international standards with relevant national institutions. It also continued working with national judicial training institutions to ensure that cybercrime and electronic evidence modules are integrated into national curricula for magistrates in [Algeria](#), Lebanon and Morocco and delivered a dedicated [Training course for LEA in Morocco](#) and a training course on electronic evidence in [Tunisia](#).

All CyberSouth priority countries could benefit from meetings and exchange of information with multinational service providers, organized by the project to enhance [public-private co-operation](#). In co-operation with the Council of Europe programme "Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals", the project launched the [first on-line course on cybercrime](#) in Morocco for justice professionals. In the next phase, the project will support the contextualization of the course to other MENA countries to ensure compliance with national legislations and effectively increase the number of professionals with basic knowledge on cybercrime and electronic evidence. At the last [10th Steering Committee meeting](#) of the project, the MENA¹ countries took stock of the progresses and identified common priorities and needs for the next phase.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "iPROCEEDS-2"**: capacities of criminal justice authorities were enhanced through judicial training on [cybercrime](#), [electronic evidence](#), [international co-operation](#) and [training of trainers](#) at domestic and regional level. Closer co-operation between incident response teams and law enforcement authorities was achieved by organizing domestic [simulation exercises](#) on effective sharing of data and participation in [FIRST Regional Symposium Europe](#) and [Balkan Cybersecurity Days](#). Police officers in the region were facilitated participation in EUROPOL workshops on investigating cryptocurrencies and online child abuse. The investigation of ransomware attacks and the tools provided by of the Second Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention were the key topics of the [Conference on countries fighting cybercrime](#). The 7th meeting of the Steering Committee took place to review the project's progress and results, but also to explore new capacity building initiative for the region, identifying needs, setting objectives and formulating a clear framework for implementation.

- **EU/CoE JP, "GLACY+"**: GLACY+ extended its support to the legislative reforms in [Nigeria](#) and [Timor Leste](#). In co-operation with Octopus Project, a [high-level workshop was organized with the aim of facilitating Ghana's signature of the Second Additional Protocol](#). [Timor Leste was added as the last priority country](#) of the project. Inter-agency co-operation to effectively trace and freeze the criminal proceeds was strengthened in Senegal, Costa Rica and Sri Lanka through a series of dedicated activities on search, seizure and confiscation of online proceeds of crime. 16 national trainers from Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay were certified as Interpol instructors and national first responders' courses were designed during 2-weeks E-Evidence First Responder Trainers Workshop. The project focused on strengthening the capacities and knowledge of national trainers in, [Nigeria](#), [Peru](#) and [Chile](#). The strategical role of the national 24/7 POC in criminal investigations involving electronic evidence was discussed with around 70 Peruvian prosecutors in an online workshop that benefited from the support of the several 24/7 POCs in the region. The project agreed on the strategic plan for the third phase of the GLACY project during the 14th Steering Committee.

- **8² donors VC, "Octopus Project"**: the Project continued strengthening global criminal justice capacities in combating cybercrime and addressing electronic evidence challenges. Number of legislative assessments were launched, capacities on countering [online child sexual exploitation and abuse in Mauritius](#) strengthened. The Project supported the signing of the [Second Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention by Ghana](#) and provided further assistance to the Government of Barbados in developing cybercrime legislation. International co-operation and expert dialogue were fostered at conferences like the [Botnet and Malware](#)

¹ Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine*, Tunisia *This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe and European Union member States on this issue.

² Canada, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States of America

[Ecosystems Fighting Conference](#), [Cyber Crime Conference in Rome](#), and other events highlighted under cross-cutting major activities. Co-ordination of positions and cybercrime experts' participation from Africa, Asia-Pacific, and South America in the [United Nations Ad Hoc Committee](#) for the new cybercrime treaty, as well as continued support to the work of the [Cybercrime Convention Committee](#) resulted in strengthened impact and expanded membership in the Budapest Convention ([Kazakhstan](#) receiving an invitation to accede and [Canada, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Hungary, Malta, and Mauritius signing the Second Additional Protocol](#)). The project's development of online resources, including the training platform, and the maintenance of the [Cyberviolence portal](#) have further contributed to its relevance within the Cybercrime Convention community.

Follow up actions

- [Save the date: Octopus Conference 2023!](#)
- Further focus on compliance with provisions of the Second Additional Protocol and Istanbul Convention in the Eastern Partnership.
- Completion of the series of discussions and training on financial investigations, interagency co-operation, cybercrime reporting and OSINT for the EaP countries.
- Completion of CyberEast project with High-Level Conference and new Declaration of Strategic Priorities for the Eastern Partnership at Octopus Conference 2023.
- Development the Council of Europe webpage with resources on ransomware attacks.
- Evaluation of the progress made in the region and organisation of the closing meeting of iPROCEEDS-2.
- Preparation of the Underground Economy Conference in September.
- Preparation of the Annual Meeting of 24/7 Contact Points in October.
- Finalization of the study on the victims of cybercrime and prepare a guidebook on judicial training strategies and a mapping study on cybercrime legislation and case law.
- Preparation of the co-branded Eurojust – Council of Europe workshop in September.
- Ensuring continued co-ordination of positions at the next sessions of the UN Ad hoc committee to elaborate an international convention on countering the use of ICTs for criminal purposes.
- Reach out to States worldwide and present the Budapest Convention as a framework that stands for a free, open and global Internet where restrictions are limited and subject to rule of law safeguards, including at international fora.
- Assessment of the progress and development in the fights against cybercrime in all CyberSouth priority countries for the period 2017-2023.
- Preparation of new projects, or the extension of ongoing projects, and mobilisation of the necessary resources.

Other relevant activities

- [T-CY Plenary](#), 27-28 June.
- [A new Guidance Note was adopted by the Cybercrime Convention Committee \(T-CY\)](#) confirming broad scope of powers for the collection of electronic evidence and international co-operation, 27 June.
- [Slovak Republic ratified the First Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime](#), on countering xenophobic and racist acts committed through computer systems, June.
- [Mauritius, Canada, Malta, Hungary, Cabo Verde and Ghana](#) signed the Second Additional Protocol.

Chisinau

Situation of the Office

Core staff – six, Project staff – 28, Total staff – 34.

The Office implemented 16 projects, eight funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan level, three in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance” III and five funded through voluntary contributions from Norway, the Netherlands, the United States of America, the Austrian Development Agency and the European Union respectively, as detailed below.

William Massolin ended his mission as Head of Office on 31st March 2023; consequently Giulia Re took up her duties as Head of Office *ad interim* as of 1st April 2023.

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

- **AP VC, “Education for Democracy in the Republic of Moldova II”**: the main achievements, challenges and lessons learned in the process of the gradual implementation of the civic education curriculum were discussed during a national conference organised on 12 May in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Research. The conference was attended by about 200 people: representatives of district education departments, civil society, international organisations, school directors, teachers, students, etc. As a result, the participants identified further needs for the integration of the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture in primary and secondary cycles, including the upper secondary technical education and vocational education and training.
- **AP VC, “Strengthening the prison and probation reforms, provision of health care and treatment of patients in closed institutions in the Republic of Moldova”**: 42 prison staff enhanced their knowledge on the dissociation of juveniles from the criminal subculture and reducing violence in prisons, based on the new Policies and SOPs, and 23 probation counsellors employed in 2022 enhanced their skills in assistance, counselling and supervision of offenders in the community, based on the Curriculum for the initial training developed earlier within the Project. Additionally, recommendations for the revision of dietary and food substitution standards for prisoners were provided. The development of a Strategy to prevent and reduce overcrowding and a Programme for the rehabilitation of prisoners with alcohol addiction were launched.
- **AP VC, “Support for Media Pluralism and Freedom of Expression in the Republic of Moldova”**: a Guide on the European Court of Human Rights case-law related to Access to information with relevance to the Republic of Moldova was elaborated. Also, a new methodology on monitoring sexist speech and behaviour in media, particularly during electoral periods was finalized. The premiere of the three documentaries created by young filmmakers in co-operation with Telefilm Chisinau took place in June. Two representatives of United Kingdom Office of Communications (OFCOM) offered technical expert assistance to the Audiovisual Council as part of an on-going peer-support activity.
- **AP VC, “Improving Electoral Practice in the Republic of Moldova, Phase III”**: the Central Electoral Commission was provided with four new regulations on electoral dispute resolution, certification of electoral officials, on media coverage of the electoral campaign and

on the status of representatives of electoral candidates. 270 electoral officials of all 66 precinct electoral bureaus and over 80 young people from the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia participated in electoral trainings and info sessions. A study visit to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg was organised for 17 electoral staff, and a three-day BRIDGE training - delivered for 26 electoral staff. A citizens awareness raising campaign on combating sexism in elections was launched together with a video-teaser.

- **AP VC, "Preventing and protecting children from violence including in the digital environment"**: 25 probation officers participated in two events aimed to identify the challenges encountered in supervising and working with minors who committed child sexual and exploitation crimes and to train them on work techniques to support this category of underage offenders. 23 prison officers also attended a similar training focusing on minors in detention. 47 representatives of national authorities and civil society attended the presentation of the joint Council of Europe/ECPAT International Country Overview on ending child sexual abuse and exploitation, together with the presentation of the Handbook on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse in crisis situations. The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights was provided with copies of the Guidelines for independent monitoring of services for children while the "Kiko and the Hand" book and its training manual were distributed to trained educators.

- **AP VC, "Supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova"**: 32 police officers completed a three-month online HELP course on combating violence against women. Aiming at consolidating the response mechanism to serious cases of family violence, 20 members of the Femicide Commission increased their understanding of the set-up and operation of a similar body through a study visit organised in Tbilisi, Georgia. Support was provided for the development of the National Program on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in the Republic of Moldova for 2023-2027, which was endorsed by the Government on 31 May 2023. Based on GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women, a comprehensive study was conducted, with concrete recommendations endorsed by the Inter-ministerial Coordination Council for the prevention and fight against domestic violence.

- **AP VC, "Reinforcing the culture of dialogue and consultation of local authorities in the Republic of Moldova – Phase II"**: the reporting period marks a pivotal moment for the Republic of Moldova in terms of closer co-operation between central and local authorities on open government. For the first time since 2011, local authorities are represented in the National Co-ordination Council by their national association as fully fledged partner in multi-level governance. Almost 100 representatives of local authorities and State Chancellery improved their awareness of the principles of open, transparent and inclusive governance to support the development of the fifth National Open Government Partnership Action Plan. In addition, expert support was provided to CALM with the development of tools to improve their capacities for effective data collection and analysis of the local democracy situation.

- **AP VC, "Strengthening the human rights protection of refugees and migrants in the Republic of Moldova"**: three representatives of the migration, education and social protection authorities participated in an international event in France on supporting migrant and refugee children in transition to adulthood. Also, 36 psychologists, from 32 different districts across the country, enhanced their knowledge on providing psychological support and assistance to children and adolescents who have experienced traumatic events, in a two-day training seminar. A public lecture on refugee rights was held for candidate judges and prosecutors. An art workshop on the World Refugee Day 2023 was organised. Additionally, 20

migration and border staff participated in a two-day training session on the EU basic Directives on asylum and migration.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Combating discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in the Republic of Moldova"**: an international conference marked the 10th anniversary of the Equality Council, presenting its main achievements throughout a decade of activity. The first Technical Project Committee meeting was carried in June 2023 and preliminary findings of the project baseline study on non-discrimination mechanism were presented. The Audio-visual Council of Moldova approved the methodology for monitoring hate speech, developed under the previous regional initiative. Representatives of the Equality Council, People's Advocate and Agency for Interethnic Relations, participated in two regional events in Albania on combating racism in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions, and for marking the international day to counter hate speech with equality body representatives.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Support to further modernisation of court management in the Republic of Moldova"**: on 26 May 2023, the Project, together with national authorities, launched the JUSTAT Automated Information System (AIS). The JUSTAT AIS offers important judicial statistics and shall help improving the efficiency and transparency of courts and facilitate the access to data on court performance for professionals and the public. A Moldovan delegation consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Justice, Agency for Court Administration and Superior Council of Magistracy took part in the 40th CEPEJ Plenary meeting in June and was involved in discussions related to CEPEJ co-operation and approval of a number of documents on judicial time management and backlog reduction.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Enhancing anti-money laundering and asset recovery regime in the Republic of Moldova"**: the inception phase of the project was finalised which resulted in a final workplan of activities discussed and agreed with the beneficiary authorities. Project support in the field of anti-money laundering and financing of terrorism was agreed upon based on institutional priorities and emerging needs in these sectors.
- **Norway VC, "Strengthening the human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova"**: following the experts' recommendations of the Council of Europe, the Moldovan authorities set up, under the auspices of the General Prosecutor's Office, a multi-agency working group tasked with the prevention and fight against torture and ill-treatment. The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted, in the first reading, the amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code and the Criminal Code in order to align the pre-trial detention and criminal sentencing framework with European standards. 40 legal professionals increased their knowledge and practical skills on the application of non-custodial preventive measures, while 30 legal professionals – on evidence collection and presentation in courts for different types of offences.
- **The Netherlands VC, "Enhancing diversity and equality in the Republic of Moldova"**: 32 public order and prosecution officers built their knowledge and skills in recognizing the specific elements of hate crimes and determining the impact of prejudices and stereotypes on the victims, community and society during peer-to-peer trainings organized in Balti, in partnership with the General Police Inspectorate. Work with local authorities to create a support network for victims of discrimination and hate crimes is on-going.
- **United States of America (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) VC, "Action Against Corruption in the Republic of Moldova II"**: corruption risk assessment practices and management of risks in the law enforcement sector were discussed with the national authorities as part of a review aimed at better implementation

of the existing system and development of effective strategies. Results and suggested improvements will be further presented in July 2023. At the same time, the legislative framework on ethics and integrity rules applicable to persons entrusted with top executive functions was discussed with the national counterparts.

- **Austria VC, “Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova”**: the project was launched on 17 May 2023 with the participation of about 100 people representing various stakeholders. Consequently, the project Work Plan was approved at the first Steering Committee. Eight Vocational Education and Training institutions were selected as project beneficiaries following an in-depth assessment. In addition, 21 inspectors of the State Labour Inspectorate participated in a three-day training which developed their knowledge and capacities on the promotion of the social and employment rights.

- **EU/CoE JP, “Support to the justice reform in the Republic of Moldova”**: the project started in May 2023 and is being operationalized.

Follow up action

- Following the start of the third phase of the EU/CoE Partnership for Good Governance III, representatives of national authorities and civil society took part in the Local Steering Committee for the Republic of Moldova, held in Chisinau on 26 April 2023. At the event, results achieved during the previous phase and plans for both national and regional initiatives were presented and discussed.
- At the request of the Parliamentary Committee on social protection, health care and family, the project “Strengthening the prison and probation reforms, provision of health care and treatment of patients in closed institutions in the Republic of Moldova” initiated the delivery of an expert opinion on the draft Law on Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Other relevant activities

- The Venice Commission adopted the Joint Follow-up Opinion of the Venice Commission and the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI) of the Council of Europe to the Opinion on the draft Law on the external assessment of Judges and Prosecutors, adopted by the Venice Commission at its 135th Plenary Session (Venice, 9-10 June 2023) and the Final Opinion on limiting excessive economic and political influence in public life (de-oligarchization), adopted in the same session mentioned above.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 19 June, a delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities carried out a final post-monitoring visit to Chisinau, in order to assess the development of the [Revised Roadmap signed in 2021](#) by the Congress and the Government of the Republic of Moldova. Meetings were held with representatives of relevant institutions, as well as with international organisations.

Kyiv**Situation of the Office**

Core staff – 10, project staff – 54, total staff – 64.

The Office implemented 20 projects funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level and two projects in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Partnership for Good Governance.

State of implementation of projects/programmes

- **AP VC, "Strengthening Ukrainian Law Enforcement Agencies During War and Post-War Period"**: in April the Project gathered all beneficiaries and interested stakeholders for its first Steering Committee Meeting and presentation of the intensified co-operation action in the sphere of criminal justice and law enforcement in the war-context in Ukraine. The meeting of expert group on the execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights organised by the Council's Department for the Execution of Judgments was supported by the Project in April to help streamline co-ordination in the context of execution of judgements related to effectiveness of investigations into torture and ill-treatment. In May consultation sessions on the practical issues related to investigation of war-related crimes delivered to the Security Service of Ukraine, covering qualification of crimes, international search and damage compensation. In June the working meeting on the execution of the Counter-Torture Strategy in the Criminal Justice System of Ukraine supported to discuss further steps and challenges. Two working group meetings on the implementation of performance evaluation system for investigators of the State Bureau of Investigation held in June. The work in the sphere is aligned with provisions of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Reform of Law Enforcement Agencies as part of the Security and Defense Sector of Ukraine approved this year and pursues transfer to quality - based evaluation of performance.
- **AP VC, "Combatting violence against women in Ukraine– Phase II"**: the first project steering committee meeting was held on 30 April 2023. Under the capacity development component, the project started working on preparation of a Guide to the Istanbul Convention evaluation procedure; Practical tools for implementation of the CoE Recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls and application of IC Articles 60+61 Preparation of publication and check list on preventing violence against women through formal and informal education (Art 14 of the Istanbul Convention) for the Ministry of Education and Science have started. Under awareness raising component the project launched Research conducted on public misunderstanding of the IC. Ministry of Social Policy has been supported with translation of GREVIO monitoring report.
- **AP VC, "Protecting the rights of Ukrainian children during and in post-war context"**: on 13 April 2023, the Project held an online event to present the "[Analysis of the system of justice for minors in conflict with the law in Ukraine](#)". This study results from the research conducted in 2021 as part of the Council of Europe Project "Combating violence against children in Ukraine, Phase III", and was adapted in 2023 by the team of national experts to reflect the current realities in the context of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine. The presentation event gathered more than 50 law enforcement officials, representatives of local authorities, civil society organisations, government officials,

experts. The report contains recommendations to all agencies from among state authorities, which are involved in the system of child-friendly justice ([link to the news item](#)). On 1 June 2023 on the occasion of the International Children's Day in Ukraine, the Order on the implementation of child-friendly justice standards was signed by Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko, Justice Minister Denys Malyuska and First Deputy Minister of social policy Daria Marchak. The project will be piloted in five regions and in Kyiv. The CoE project "Protecting the rights of Ukrainian children during and in post-war context" is supporting the development and delivery of a training course for professionals of multidisciplinary teams in the regions where the project will be implemented ([link to the news item](#)). A new [Recommendation](#) to member States on human rights principles and guidelines on age assessment in the context of migration was translated into Ukrainian. The Recommendation, with its [Explanatory Memorandum](#), is the first international legal instrument setting human rights standards on age assessment in the context of migration ([link to the news item](#)).

- **AP VC, "Strengthening multi-level governance, democracy and human rights at local level in Ukraine"**: the First Ukrainian Summit of Open Civic Hubs was organised jointly by the Congress and the City of Kyiv in April 2023. Around 400 local elected representatives, public officials and local activists gathered to share and disseminate across all regions of Ukraine new approaches to enhance citizens engagement and non-discriminatory practices at local level through civic hubs.

The experience and successes of more than 100 Ukrainian municipalities in responding to most pressing problems faced by their citizens' and addressing their needs was promoted during the "open government marathon" as part of the global initiative Open Gov Week. Participants shared best practices in applying innovative and resilient open government approaches in times of war. Ten municipalities received special recognition for implementing the best youth engagement, digital governance, social cohesion and inclusion initiatives.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in April 2023 between the Congress and the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) to strengthen efforts for joint advocacy, democratic stability and resilience of local authorities.

The Congress, as an institutional partner of the European Committee of the Regions, is contributing to meetings of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine, and voiced the key role of local and regional authorities at the Ukraine Recovery Conference held in London in June 2023.

Follow-up actions:

- Participation of the President and Secretary of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in the Ukrainian Municipal Forum, which will take place in November 2023 (exact dates to be set)
 - Launch of a call for grants to support the implementation of local initiatives on open government, deliberative democracy and inclusive governance; organisation of thematic webinars for potential and shortlisted candidates, Grant to the Association of Ukrainian Cities.
 - Participation of local elected representatives in the Open Government Partnership Global Summit in Tallinn, Estonia in September 2023.
- **AP VC, "Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase III"**: in co-operation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Agency on Civil Service and the All-Ukrainian Youth Councils Association, the project ran research on needs and state of activity of authorities responsible for youth policy and youth councils at local, regional and national level within the

component “Participatory Youth Policy”. The project launched a series of five-day training seminars for youth workers on social cohesion and on how to remove barriers to ensure young people’s contribution to, and participation in social cohesion based on [the developed manual](#). The project strengthens co-operation of youth centres in Ukraine with youth centres bearing the Council of Europe Quality Label in other member states and organised the participation of a Ukrainian delegation in the 14th Platform of Youth Centres held May 2023 in Strasbourg; [a new webpage](#) has been launched to support the co-operation. Representatives of eight youth centres developed competencies on trauma informed youth work at an advanced training of trainers. 61 organisations working with young people joined the All-Ukrainian Networking Week for psychological support of young people, a first of its kind activity organised in June in co-operation with seven partner youth centres. Videos on youth work in Ukraine in a wartime was shown at the opening session of the Summits of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in Reykjavik, (Iceland) on 16 May 2023.

- **AP VC, “Supporting democratic post-war elections in Ukraine”**: completed the series of online peer-to-peer exchanges on post-war election related issues for the Ukrainian authorities (profile Parliamentary Committee, CEC) with the CEC of BiH (2), and with the SEC of Croatia (2) that culminated in (i) development of two analytical overviews on the BiH and Croatian experience in organisation of post-war elections and elections in times of crises that have been shared with Ukrainian stakeholders; (ii) three-days onsite visit and trilateral peer-to-peer exchange in Sarajevo, BiH, for more than 30 representatives of Ukrainian/BiH/Croatian authorities. Expert analysis of the Roadmap developed upon the results of the 2022 High-level dialogue in Strasbourg was produced with regard to the post-war election-related issues.

- **AP VC, “Strengthening Good Democratic Governance and Resilience in Ukraine”**: in April, the project finalised the opinion on **the local self-government part of the roadmap** on good democratic governance and discussed it with national stakeholders in Kyiv on 18 April 2023 at the [High-level Round Table](#). It led to common understanding on further measures needed to complete decentralisation. On this occasion, a [Joint Declaration](#) signed by Deputy Secretary General Bjorn Berge and First Vice Speaker Oleksandr Kornienko was presented. Furthermore, the project provided its consultancy assistance to the profile Parliamentary Committee to improve the [draft law on public service at local level](#) prior to its adoption (on 2 May) in line with recommendations of the Council of Europe’s Opinion of August 2022 ([CEGG/LEX\(2022\)1](#)); organised its public presentation and produced a dedicated infographic. The project also prepared three **explanatory articles** for local authorities in regard to application of legislation on local democracy, starosta institute and labour relations under martial law. Moreover, jointly with the Association of Ukrainian Cities on 6 and 7 June 2023 it conducted **two webinars** for local authorities and military administrations on the governmental service “eRecovery” and legal aspects of charitable (humanitarian) aid receipt, thus strengthening capacity of some 800 officials. It also enhanced grass-root initiatives on **metropolitan governance** in Lviv sub-region facilitating six focus groups’ and six project teams’ meetings to elaborate Lviv Agglomeration Development Strategy. It also (i) co-organised the meeting of the dedicated Steering Committee on 13 April under Lviv regional military administration bringing together leaders and senior officials of 18 local communities including the Lviv City, (ii) finalised and presented the report on findings of a public sociological survey (opinion poll) in Lviv Agglomeration on public administration in wartime with the focus on commuting, (iii) conducted a dedicated peer visit of local leaders from Lviv metropolitan area to the Upper Silesian and Krakow metropolitan areas in Poland. With the project’s consultative assistance, (iv) the first in Ukraine inter-municipal co-operation agreement involving a regional capital was concluded, thus enabling access to educational services for children with special needs from Bibrka community in Lviv, hence creating a template solution

for further replication. The project also supported the first visit of the Deputy Minister of the **newly established Ministry** of Communities and Territories Development and Infrastructure to Strasbourg to participate in the meeting of the European Committee on Democracy and Governance as well as a co-ordination session dedicated to mapping co-operation within the project.

- **AP VC, "Strengthening democratic resilience through civic participation during the war and in the post-war context in Ukraine":** 25 representatives of CSOs from 18 pilot municipalities got acquainted with the standards of democratic governance, the role of civic participation and CSOs' engagement during the first module of the training course for CSOs "Democratic stability, inclusive recovery and community development". In addition, the project implemented a series of 10 workshops for the residents of Lviv amalgamated community: as a result, up to 200 citizens mastered the skills to solve typical community problems and implement ideas using available civic participation tools. In the framework of the workshop which gathered 24 local officials from 18 municipalities from across Ukraine, participants shared their experiences and good practices of participatory governance and inclusive recovery and development of communities during the war. To launch the processes of participatory development and updating of community strategies in four Ukrainian municipalities, the project organised the workshop "Strategy is the key to inclusive community development" for 15 representatives of local authorities and civil society from target municipalities.

- **AP VC, "Support the reform of the national minority legal framework and the resilience of the national minorities and Roma in Ukraine":** following request from the State agency of ethnic policy and freedom of conscience (DESS), provided expert support on the development of the State Programme "Diversity in Unity". Six working meetings of the CoE experts with DESS and the office of the Deputy Prime Minister on European Integration were held. The project provided technical support in organizing a meeting on the implementation of legislation on national minorities (communities). The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine with the participation of the Head of DESS, representatives of the MoE, Ombudsman office, international organizations, and diplomatic missions of EU member states. The project supports the working group on ID registration for the Roma people. The two field visits of the Ombudsperson's office representatives to Transcarpathia were held. As a result, 100 Roma without IDs were identified, all cases were analysed, and with the WG support, 30 people submitted their documents to the SMS. 19 passports and 18 birth certificates were issued in June 2023. The Local Initiative Groups on the national minorities (LIGs) conducted 12 events: on social mediation, access to quality education for Roma IDP children, art therapy for IDP children and women, dialogue and communication and regional recovery plans. The events covered 320 representatives of the NMs. The project contributed to a two-day training for the police officers from 12 regions of Ukraine. 25 police officers were trained on the CoE standards on non-discrimination.

- **AP VC, "Fostering Human Rights in the Criminal Justice System in Ukraine":**

Throughout the reporting period the project carried out the following activities:

- On 18-19 April 2023, the Project contributed to the meeting of expert group on the execution of the European Court of Human Rights judgments, held in Warsaw. The representatives of key national justice and law enforcement agencies updated on the progress, as well as challenges, while looking forward to finding practical solutions towards the execution of Strasbourg Court's judgments in cases against Ukraine.
- On 6 May 2023, the Project supported the strategic session "Respect. Support. Justice" - "Respect. Help. Justice" as continuation of the "United for Justice" initiative, organised

by the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine. The workshop facilitated developing joint approaches of the public sector and civil society organisations in assisting people affected by conflict-related sexual violence, with particular focus on investigation and prosecution of conflict-related sexual violence.

- On 11 May 2023, the project, in co-operation with the National School of Judges of Ukraine, organised an awareness raising seminar for judiciary on the issues of derogation from the obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights in the context of armed conflicts.
- On 12 May 2023, the project supported training for 33 judges (12 – female, 21 – male) of the Supreme Court. They increased their knowledge regarding the prosecution of international crimes in Council of Europe member states and related case law of the European Court of Human Rights.
- On 19 May 2023, the project supported training for 33 judges (12 – female, 21 – male) of the Criminal Cassation Court of the Supreme Court. Participants increased their knowledge regarding the peculiarities of the criminal proceedings *in absentia*, including in the war crimes cases.
- On 29 May 2023, the project organised jointly with the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine and Prosecutors' Training Centre of Ukraine expert discussion on the issues related to the effectiveness of investigation into deaths in Ukraine. In particular, the discussion focused on issues concerning effectiveness of investigation into deaths as a result of road accidents or perpetrated by private parties in line with the findings of the European Court of Human Rights in *Khaylo* group of cases against Ukraine pending execution.
- On 11 and 19 May, 1 and 15 June 2023, the project supported the organisation of the interregional roundtables for raising awareness of district and regional prosecutors on the role of the Qualification and Disciplinary Commission of Prosecutors (QDCP) and the Council of Prosecutors (CP). The roundtables brought together 93 (82 – male, 11 – female), 78 (65 – male, 13 – female), 64 (54 – male, 10 – female) and 81 (66 – male, 15 – female) prosecutors respectively and focused on the status and functions of the QDCP, various aspects of recruitment and promotion of prosecutors, disciplinary responsibility of prosecutors, as well as international standards of the independence of prosecutors.
- On 16-17 June 2023, the project supported a two-day Workshop for the War Crimes Department of the Office of the Prosecutor General (OPG) on the Strategy and its Implementation Plan on investigation/prosecution of war-related crimes. 11 representatives of the Department of the OPG and nine representatives of regional Public Prosecutors Offices gathered to discuss their strategic vision of prosecution of international crimes committed during armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine by Russian Federation.

The following activities have been also in progress :

- Expert review contribution to the development of the Strategic Plan for the investigation/prosecution of War Crimes, being prepared by the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine.
- Finalisation of the Expert Opinion on the draft law ref. no 7290 on Amending the Ukrainian Criminal Code to harmonise with International Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Law (upon the request of the Parliamentary law Enforcement Committee).
- Preparation of the ToR for the development of the Comparative Study on the Parliamentary Oversight over the work of Prosecution Services and Law Enforcement, based on case studies of several CoE member States (upon the request of the Parliamentary law Enforcement Committee).

- **AP VC, "Support to functioning of justice in the war and post-war context of Ukraine"**: in May 2023 the project jointly with the Ministry of Justice organised a discussion of the execution of the group of cases Ivanov/Burmych v. Ukraine concerning the long standing and systemic problem of lengthy execution of the domestic courts' judgments. In May 2023 under the project support members of the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Policy of Ukraine had an official visit to the Council of Europe. In July 2023 the project delivered the analysis of the draft law on the judicial control under the execution of the domestic courts' judgments and organised discussion of its main provisions with the stakeholders.
- **AP VC, "Strengthening judicial and non-judicial remedies for the human rights protection of the war-affected people in Ukraine"**: the Project Work Plan for 2023 – 2024 was discussed and agreed with key national partners and stakeholders at the first Steering Committee meeting. On 7 April 2023 the Government of Ukraine adopted the State Policy Strategy on Internal Displacement until 2025 and developed a respective Operational Plan with the project expert support. In the framework of the Project's co-operation with the National School of Judges of Ukraine the Supreme Court judges gained new knowledge on the case-law on compensation for damage in conflict-affected countries and relevant Council of Europe standards. On 19 June 2023 the project co-organised meetings between the Council of Europe, international organisations and Ukrainian authorities on domestic redress mechanisms for damage caused by the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.
- **AP VC, "Facilitating Housing Solutions for the War-Affected People in Ukraine"**: completed its inception phase. The Project Work Plan for 2023 – 2024 was discussed and agreed with key national partners at the first Steering Committee meeting. The Project finalises an assessment of existing national legal framework on housing solutions and housing rights of the war-affected population in Ukraine with a focus on the Law on compensation for housing damage caused by the Russian armed aggression. Following the request of the Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development, the Project provides expert support to the working group on developing new foundations of housing policies and administration of the housing stock. Following an accession of Ukraine to the Council of Europe Development Bank the Project further provides technical support to national partners facilitating cooperation initiatives with the CEB.
- **AP VC "HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals) for Ukraine including during wartime"**: the project's workplan has been endorsed by the partners at the [Steering Committee meeting](#) held in Kyiv. 45 lawyers and attorneys specializing in migration law and dealing with the protection of the rights of Ukrainians with temporary protection status in EU countries participated in the [joint Council of Europe, EU and UNHCR seminar](#) held in Bratislava on Implementation of the Temporary Protection Status in Europe for people from Ukraine fleeing the war. The co-operation with higher education institutions for training future lawyers has been [strengthened](#), five presentations of the HELP Programme, courses and the project have been held for the representatives of universities and young lawyers. In addition, HELP Programme, project and HELP online courses have been presented within the Europe Week on 10 May 2023 for 92 participants representing civil servants. The second meeting of the working group on developing a new HELP course on international humanitarian law and international human rights was held in Strasbourg.
- **AP VC, "Enhanced social protection in Ukraine"**: provided support to the Ombudsperson's Office to conduct monitoring visits regarding ensuring rights of incapacitated people, access to healthcare, rights to education and rights of older people. Expert support was provided to the working group on the Draft Law on Collective Labour Disputes. The Draft

Law on Employment of People with Disabilities developed in co-ordination with the project team and experts has passed in the Parliament of Ukraine in the first reading. Following the expert consultations provided to the Ombudsperson's Office, an alternative report 2022 on the implementation of the European Social Charter was submitted to the European Committee of Social Rights. The continued support is provided to the implementation of the National Strategy for Barrier-Free Environment at the regional level.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Enhancing anti-money laundering, counter terrorist financing and asset recovery regime in Ukraine" (PGG III Ukraine):** (1) online training on "International standards. Understanding, assessment and mitigation of risks associated with non-profit organizations (NPO). AML/CTF regulatory compliance and cultural competency" for private banks and public authorities; (2) online training on "Applying extradition proceedings in criminal proceedings related to money laundering cases" for the Supreme Court; (3) gap analysis and recommendations on legal amendments necessary to implement the FATF Recommendation 28.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Support to development of the constitutional justice in Ukraine":** as per request of the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, the implementation of the project "Support to development of the constitutional justice in Ukraine" was temporarily suspended until the Ukrainian Parliament adopts amendments (draft law No. 9322) to the law on the Constitutional Court of Ukraine in line with recommendations of the Venice Commission. The Venice Commission opinion was adopted by the Venice Commission at its 135th Plenary Session (Venice, 9-10 June 2023). On 27 July 2023 the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the draft law No. 9322. It introduces changes to the procedure for selecting judges of the Constitutional Court, in order to meet the criteria by the European Commission on Ukraine's EU accession. It was agreed between the Council of Europe and the European Commission to meet in early September and discuss the way ahead.

- **AP VC, "Supporting Implementation of the European Human Rights Standards in Ukraine":** continued its support to the Ombudsperson's office in bringing its legal framework in line with the European standards and demands of the military context of the Ombudsperson's Office work. The Draft law amendments were developed and sent for a legal review of the CoE international consultants with the stakeholders' discussions to follow. Sufficient support has been provided in enhancing the role and efficiency of the NPM via a practically focused training on prevention and reporting on gross human rights violations organised for 22 NPM staff members in Warsaw as well as the assistance rendered in preparation of the NPM annual report 2022 where the leading NGOs members representing the NPM Co-ordination Council were actively involved. The project, in co-operation with the Parliament Committee on Human Rights, De-occupation and Reintegration of the Temporary Occupied Territories, National Minorities and Interethnic Relations initiated the expert consultations on the results of the CoE legal opinion on Draft law of Ukraine on "Personal Data Protection". The positive atmosphere and results achieved by 210 participants representing public, private and NGOs sectors showed the signs of consensus reached as regards a need of more urgent modernisation of the data protection legal framework in Ukraine.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Combating hate speech in Ukraine":** the Project has started in March. Throughout the reporting period, the primary focus was on completing the strategic and operational planning in co-ordination with its key partners following project launching event and first meeting of the technical project committee, held in Warsaw, Poland in March. Preparatory work has been launched by the project to prepare assessment of equality body function within the mandate of Ombudsperson.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, “Promoting equality and non-discrimination: towards more resilient and inclusive societies” (PGG III):** the Project has started in March. Baseline study for assessing the national non-discrimination mechanism in Ukraine was initiated, including interviews with key stakeholders and desk research. Representatives of Ministry of Justice, State Service of Ukraine for Ethno-Politics, Freedom of Conscience and National Minorities and Ombudsperson office participated in the project launching [seminar](#) on addressing issue of combating racism and racial discrimination and [seminar](#) on responses to forms of hatred and intolerance (Ombudsperson representatives only) held on 13-14 June and 15-16 June respectively in Albania for representatives of Governments and equality bodies from the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions.
- **AP VC, “Safeguarding Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Media in Ukraine”:** as a part of its inception phase, the recruitment of the project team was finalised, over 10 bilateral meetings with the key project stakeholders and civil society representatives were held and, as a result of the input provided, a detailed Project Work Plan for 2023-2024 was developed. The first Steering Committee of the project was organised on 13 June 2023 in the hybrid format (Kyiv/online), attended by 38 representatives (17 male/21 female; 19 online/19 offline) of 12 Project’s key stakeholders and civil society observers. Also, the Project carried out the following activities: contributed to the organisation of the Communication Forum of the MIA on 15-16 May 2023, attended by 122 communication officers of the Ministry and other defence and law enforcement bodies (71 male/51 female); provided a grant to the European Broadcasting Union contributing to the development of the Video Archives of Russia’s War Against Ukraine; finalised and published the Ukrainian translation of the Legal Opinion of the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI) on the Law “On Media” of Ukraine, developed earlier under the Project and released on 6 March 2023.

Other Relevant Activities

- On 24-25 April 2023, Claus Neukirch, Director of Programme Co-ordination at the Council of Europe, visited Ukraine to launch the new [Action Plan for Ukraine “Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction”](#) (2023-2026) and hold the first Steering Committee meeting in Kyiv. The event gathered more than 150 representatives of the government, national and local state administrations and self-governing bodies, members of the Ukrainian parliament, stakeholders of judiciary, criminal justice and law enforcement areas, mass media, members of NGOs and civil society organisations in Ukraine. Also, on 24 April he visited the Ivanivska territorial community in the Chernihiv region, which has suffered greatly due to the Russian military aggression. On 25 April 2023, DPC Director held meetings with representatives of national authorities and international partners to discuss co-operation within the framework of the new Action Plan for Ukraine. He met with Oleksandr Kornienko, First Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, Dmytro Lubinets, the Ombudsperson, Andriy Kostin, Ukraine’s Prosecutor General, Oleksandr Banchuk, Deputy Minister of Justice, Kateryna Pavlichenko, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Mykola Povoroznyk, First Deputy Head and Maryna Khonda, Deputy Head of the Kyiv City State Administration, as well as EU Ambassador Matti Maasilta and Ambassadors/Chargé d’affaires of Member and Observer States of the Council of Europe.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 3-4 April Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić conducted a working visit to Ukraine to conduct bilateral meetings with President Zelensky, Speaker Stefanchuk, PG Kostin, etc.
- The President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Leendert Verbeek and Congress Secretary General, Mathieu Mori, paid a visit to Ukraine from 18 to 20 April 2023 to take part in the International Summit of Cities and Regions thereby reaffirming the Congress political support to Ukraine and commitment through targeted co-operation projects and initiatives such as the Cities4Cities platform.
- On 3-5 May, visit of the Venice Commission Delegation headed by Claire Bazy Malaurie, President of the Venice Commission in order to conduct bilateral meeting to discuss the reform of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine.

Sarajevo

Situation of the Office

Core staff – seven, project staff – 19, total staff – 26.

The Office implemented 11 projects, of which six are through the EU/CoE Horizontal Facility (Phase III), while five are funded by voluntary contributions to the Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022-2025. The Office participated in the implementation of two regional projects, the EU/CoE Joint Programme on Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED) and managing violent extremism in prisons / preventing post-release radicalisation

State of implementation of projects / the Action Plan

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Further strengthening the treatment of detained and sentenced persons in line with European standards in Bosnia and Herzegovina”**: the local human rights trainers continued with drafting of protocols for managing persons deprived of liberty. Their work was complemented by meetings with senior police managers who committed to intensifying efforts to prevent and respond to ill-treatment at a co-ordination meeting on [15-16 May 2023](#). Advocacy meetings were held with the Federal Minister of Interior ([29 May](#)) and the Federal Minister of Justice ([5 June](#)) to discuss co-operation and the process of digitalization of prisons.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Towards an equal, inclusive and tolerant Bosnia and Herzegovina”**: the official launch of the action took place on 4 April at the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH and gathered 85 stakeholders. The steering committee meeting was held on the same day. A Living Library event, organised for 31 high school students from the “Third grammar school” in Sarajevo, took place on 12 May and raised awareness about prejudices and stereotypes. On 6 June, the first co-ordination meeting brought together 36 stakeholders to work on implementation of the BiH LGBTI Action plan. The action supported the fourth Pride March held on 24 June in Sarajevo.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Quality education for all”**: three co-ordination activities were conducted with participation of relevant ministries of education and pedagogical institutes resulting in agreement on modalities for transforming pilot schools into resource centres for democratic culture. In the first round (school year 2023/24) nine out of 29 HF II pilot schools were selected to receive comprehensive one-year school leader and teacher trainings to become Resource Centres for democratic culture by June 2024. Local trainers were selected, and the training methodology developed.
- **EU/ CoE HF III, “Protecting Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina – PROFREX - BH”**: the Steering Committee was held on 22 June to renew the stakeholders’ commitment to protecting freedom of expression and media, discuss future activities and strengthen the focus on the judicial protection of freedom of expression, safety of journalists, and the collaborative model of regulation and self-regulation to combat harmful content online.
- **AP VC, “Ensuring Sustainable Penitentiary Actions in managing rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners (VEPs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (ESPA-VEP)”**: on 27 – 28 April the project held a working group meeting to develop a training programme for prison intelligence units. Working group meetings were held on 18–19 May and 15-16 June to adjust

and finalise the programme for basic and advanced trainings for prison staff. Three interagency co-operation meetings between prisons and centres for social welfare were held on 6 April, 10 May and 31 May in order to pilot pre-release programmes for violent extremism prisoners. The 2nd Steering Committee meeting took place on 14 June.

- **AP VC, “Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Phase III”:** a one-month placement at the European Court of Human Rights of two BiH judges helped them gain further experience in the Court standards. The Family Law of FBiH and the Law on Extra-judicial Procedure of FBiH were amended to meet the requirements of the *Hadžimejlić* case and sent to Parliament. 44 lawyers were trained on access to classified documents; 38 judges and prosecutors finalised the initial human rights training; 25 judges enhanced their judicial reasoning skills in two trainings on civil and criminal decisions. The Law of CoE was introduced as a master programme at the Law Faculty in Sarajevo.
- **AP VC, “Innovating democratic participation at local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina”:** on 29-30 May, the [third meeting of the Platform of Exchange](#) on Open Government brought together 22 local authorities across the country, who reaffirmed their commitment to participatory decision-making. On 30 May, the [expert opinion](#) on guaranteeing local autonomy in the Federation of BiH was discussed with mayors. On 31 May, the Congress supported the [first-ever meeting of the Presidencies](#) of the two Associations of Municipalities and Cities in BiH with participation of over 20 mayors.
- **Sweden VC, “Enhancing institutional capacities on freedom of expression and information in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EFEx)”:** the second [Steering Committee meeting](#) took place on 12 May 2023. The Working Group on Monitoring and Reporting on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information was established under the mandate of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees. The [inaugural meeting](#) of the working group was held on 14 and 15 June.
- **AP VC, “Strengthening anti-trafficking action in Bosnia and Herzegovina”:** the panel on [access to justice, rights and effective remedies for victims of human trafficking](#), organised in the framework of the XXI Counselling on Criminal Law on 2 June in Neum gathered 35 officials to discuss procedures for compensation for victims. The [round table](#) on enhancing the participation of victims and survivors of human trafficking was held on 19 June. During the event, project signed a grant agreement with NGO *Novi Početak* established by survivors of human trafficking. The event received wide [media coverage](#).
- **EU/CoE regional HF III, “Enhancing co-operation in the Western Balkans in managing violent extremism in prisons and preventing further radicalisation after release”:** the 1st Steering Committee and a co-ordination meeting with the international community partners in the region were held on 11 May in Podgorica. Beneficiaries from the penitentiary system, national employment bureaus and Civil Society Organizations exchanged the best practices in the field of preparation for release, post-penal rehabilitation, vocational training, and informal education of violent extremist prisoners in the region and EU at the regional conference held in Durres (Albania) on 22 June.

Other relevant activities

- On 6 April, the HoO made opening remarks at the conference on the occasion of the International Roma Day, organised by the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH.

- On 11-13 April an inception mission of the Economic Crime and Cooperation Division took place in view of starting the HF III Action against corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing.
- 1st Steering Committee Meeting of the HF III CEPEJ Action "Strengthening the Efficiency and Quality of Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiHSEJ)" was held on 28 April 2023.
- On 24-28 April, a delegation of the Advisory Committee visited BiH to monitor the implementation of the Framework Convention on National Minorities (fifth cycle of monitoring).
- On 15-17 May, DPC Director, Claus Neukirch visited Sarajevo for a series of meetings including with the BiH Foreign Minister, the Chairperson and members of the Central Election Commission, members of the diplomatic corps and CSO representatives.
- On 22 May, the HoO opened the "[CoE Days](#)", [visibility event](#) organised by the CoE Office in Sarajevo.
- On 22-26 May, a delegation of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) carried out a monitoring visit.
- On 15 June, the HoO opened a post-election, lessons learned conference organised by the Central Election Commission of BiH with the support of CoE and OSCE.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 30-31 May, the President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Bernd Vöhringer (Germany, EPP/CCE) visited BiH together with the Director of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Rafael Benitez within the framework of the activities of the project on Innovating democratic participation at local level.

Skopje

Situation of the Office

Core staff - one, project staff - 17, total staff - 18.

The Office implemented nine projects, six in the framework of the EU/CoE Joint Programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye", two other EU/CoE regional Joint Programmes (ROMACTED II and Roma Integration Phase III), and one funded by the German Government.

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

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Freedom of expression and freedom of the media in North Macedonia"**: the action held its first Steering Committee which endorsed the revised workplan. In addition, the proposed amendments to the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and their possible impact on the implementation of the action were closely monitored.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening anti-trafficking action in North Macedonia"**: 19 representatives from anti-trafficking institutions, CSOs, international organisations, and experts took part in two focus groups on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and trafficking in human beings (THB) organised by the action. In addition, 31 health professionals gained knowledge on the proactive identification and referral of THB victims. Moreover, following the recommendations emitted within the third report of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), the action began preparing a comprehensive analysis on conducted investigations and prosecutions on human trafficking, as well as the adjustment of the GRETA report on online and technology-facilitated THB to local conditions.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Towards a consolidated and more efficient Free Legal Aid (FLA) System in North Macedonia"**: 50 employees from the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (Centres for Social Work) and the Ministry of Interior [increased their capacities](#) on handling domestic and gender-based violence cases and cases involving children, with the support of the action. Furthermore, 100 lawyers bolstered their capacities by successfully completing the HELP course on justice for children, launched in co-operation with the Bar Association. [The Legal Needs Survey Report for North Macedonia](#) - prepared and published by the action- provides data on the legal needs of the population and basis for more efficient planning and provision of legal aid. Moreover, the development of technical specifications for the second phase of the Software for the appointment of ex officio lawyers has been finalised by the action and will provide transparency and non-discrimination in the appointment system of ex officio lawyers.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Enhancing the capacities of the penitentiary system in North Macedonia"**: the first draft of the Standard Operating Procedures on pre-release and post penal integration was finalised under the action. The document was designed with all involved stakeholders/civil society organisations (CSOs) and sets the foundation for future multi-agency co-ordination.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Combating hatred and intolerance in North Macedonia"**: the high-level conference "Society free from hatred: Joint effort and a common goal" organised by the

action promoted the CM Recommendation on combating hate speech, with three panels that touched upon the recommendation's achievements and impact so far, as well as possible future efforts and reforms. Moreover, the [Summer Seminar](#) on Combating Discrimination and Hate Speech, organised in co-operation with EU/ regional JP "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED II)", enabled 16 young people to learn about anti-discrimination, anti-gypsyism and hate speech, tools how to combat these issues, as well as to outline their own engagement and activism in the fight against discrimination and hate speech.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action against economic crime"**: the action supported the working group developing amendments on effective whistleblowing mechanisms. A workshop conducted in May, involving CSOs, the private sector, and state institutions, presented the proposals and recommendations developed under HFII in line with the Council of Europe standards and the EU directive. The action also enhanced the knowledge of 17 representatives of law enforcement agencies³ on the use of the i2 Analyst's Notebook software enabling officers to enhance intelligence identification and track criminal networks. Additionally, a needs assessment meeting explored opportunities to integrate and maximise the utilisation of data analytics software, enhance information management and analytical capacities.

- **EU/CoE regional JP, "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED II)"**: a joint event was organised in Skopje on 7 April with the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, the Roma Inclusion Advisor and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy's Department for Implementation of the Roma Strategy, on the occasion of the [International Roma Day](#). The event's discussions focused on the EU perspectives and quality development of the Roma community in North Macedonia.

- **Germany VC, "Quality education for all - North Macedonia"**: the first Steering Committee of the project was held on 20 April in Skopje, and the [launching conference](#) "Educating for democratic culture - from policy to practice" on 22-23 June 2023 in Ohrid. The conference gathered more than 100 participants from North Macedonia and South-East Europe, including policy makers, school principals, teachers, CSOs and experts, and the welcoming remarks were given by the Minister of Education, Jeton Shaqiri. The event promoted democracy and human rights in and through education and provided a platform for sharing experiences and discussions.

³ Including the National Co-ordination Centre, Financial Police, Ministry of Interior, Financial Intelligence Office, Customs Office, and Public Prosecutor's Office.

Tbilisi

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 10, Project staff – 40, Total staff – 50.

The Office implemented 20 projects, four in the framework of EU/CoE Partnership for Good Governance (PGG II), one funded through EU/CoE joint cooperation, and 15 funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level.

State of implementation of projects

- **AP VC, “Promoting an Integrated Approach to End Violence against Women and Enhancing Gender Equality in Georgia”**: in co-operation with UN Women, training on adjudication of VAW and DV cases was conducted for three groups of investigators of the Special Investigation Service (57 professionals); in addition, specialisation training on sexual violence for 18 victims’ and witness’ coordinators of General Prosecutor service and training on sexual violence crimes for two groups of 18 judges and 20 assistants to judges were conducted. As a result, awareness of legal professionals working on VAW and DV issues was increased. The project was presented at the Open Air Festival, aiming at raising awareness of general public regarding gender equality, IC, existing stereotypes around sexual violence and psychological abuse. 700 visitors participated in thematic offline and online quizzes.
- **AP VC, “Strengthening Freedom of media, Internet governance and Personal Data Protection in Georgia” SMIP-GE**: amendments to the Law on Broadcasting were adopted by the Parliament based on the Council of Europe Legal Opinion. Two research documents, “Tromsø Convention Standards: overview of the access to information regulatory frameworks within the State-Parties to Tromsø Convention” and “Review of the legal and policy framework of Georgia with regard to the protection and safety of journalists” were presented to respective stakeholders. The strategic plan for development of the Charter of Journalistic Ethics was developed and presented to the Council of the Charter. A conference on Strategic Litigation against Public Participation (SLAPPs) hosted the establishment of an anti-SLAPPs co-ordination and co-operation platform of 7 CSOs.
- **AP VC, “Enhanced Access to Legal Aid Services for Marginalised Population”**: the project completed the development of the electronic module for the Legal Aid Service to provide electronic consultations to citizens in the field of labour law. The project supported the meeting of the Justice Coordination Council involving judges, lawyers and prosecutors from Imereti region of Georgia and developed recommendations for improved court practice on cases involving juvenile victims and witnesses. A four-day training of trainers to 15 managing staff of Legal Aid Bureaus was delivered. An assessment report on the quality of legal aid in Georgia was drafted, containing recommendations for LAS’ guidelines on Assessment of Quality of Legal Consultation and Legal Aid. On 30 June a HELP course on Hate Crime and Hate Speech for Georgian lawyers was launched.
- **AP VC, “Supporting Transparency, Inclusiveness and Integrity of Electoral Practice and Process in Georgia”**: activities aimed at further alignment of domestic electoral practices with international standards were extended to the regions. At conferences held in Tbilisi and Batumi representatives from national and regional media outlets discussed

solutions for balanced and neutral coverage of elections, as well as new approaches to meet challenges of elections observations in digital times. To promote active engagement of youth in elections, civic education schoolteachers from Ajara region deepened their knowledge of international standards and newly introduced electoral practices. Introducing new voting procedures, information technology to be used nationwide were cross-cutting issues throughout the activities.

- **AP VC, "Strengthening Protection of Social and Economic Rights in Georgia":** the project conducted workshops for Public Defender Office and CSO representatives on preparation of joint shadow reports under the European Social Charter (ESC) for relevant CSOs working on social rights in Georgia and on case law analysis of ECSR and the European Court of Human Rights. For the first time, the Project held a workshop for journalists and different media representatives on media coverage of social issues and the ethical standards of reporting sensitive information in light of the ESC. A second group of beneficiaries (labour inspectors and PDO representatives) successfully completed the HELP course "Labour Rights as Human Rights."

- **Austria VC, "Strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level in Georgia":** two webinars on the rights of the child and of people with disabilities gathered together around 70 participants each. They were carried out to support local authorities in the implementation of commitments and responsibilities entrusted to them within the new legal framework. The second in-person workshop of the learning path on anti-discrimination, focusing on inclusive communication, was held in April with more than 60 representatives from national and local authorities; the workshop was co-organised with the MFA of Georgia and contributed to the Council of Europe visibility week.

- **Austria VC, "Strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level in Georgia":** three municipalities of Georgia (Tbilisi, Marneuli, Gori) started implementation (groups of representatives were trained in the methodology) of the Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit to improve civil engagement in development of municipal strategic documents; 15 representatives of local authorities and CSOs have learned from Austria's experience and good practices in civil participation by participating in the study visit to Austria. Information campaign "Change the Scenario" reached out to the citizens of six municipalities (around 600 citizens). Two Citizens' Assemblies were organised in two municipalities (Rustavi and Ozurgeti) with the project's support. An expert camp dedicated School Participatory Budgeting was conducted.

- **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 second cycle of the quality check of the data collected within the Justice Dashboard EaP, the 2021 data report has been submitted to DG-NEAR. The report contains: Part 1: Comparative tables and charts for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, with summary overviews per indicator (submission date: 1 June 2023); Part 2: Beneficiary Profiles for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (submission date: 30 June 2023); and Part 3: the Condensed version of the Analysis for all beneficiaries on a selected number of indicators (submission date: 30 June 2023).

- **AP VC, "Human Rights Compliant Policing in Georgia":** a conference dedicated to the role of the SIS in the effective investigation of alleged ill-treatment cases committed by law-enforcement officers and in the protection of the victims and witnesses of ill-treatment was held. During the working meeting, the prevention council, composed by high officials of SIS, MIA, MOJ, Prosecutor's office and the SSS discussed the acute issues hindering effective

and timely investigation. The CSOs enhanced their skills on monitoring peaceful assemblies and demonstrations. Through advanced trainings, 60 police officers and MIA investigators enhanced their skills in interviewing juvenile victims and offenders. The medical personnel of the temporary detention isolators enhanced their knowledge on treatment of the detainees with substance-use problems.

- **AP VC, "Promoting the Effective Protection of Equality and Non-Discrimination in Georgia"**: the first Steering Committee Meeting gathered government partners and CSOs. A workshop allowed the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to learn from the experience of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia (POG) on specialisation of prosecutors on hate crime. Another workshop provided forum for discussion for MIA, POG, Supreme Court and Special Investigation Service on the gaps of data collection on hate crimes. Agencies agreed to publish the analytical part for the report for 2022. Equality and non-discrimination corner at Tbilisi Open Air festival reached out to over 300 participants. Representatives of insurance companies underwent the training on equality and non-discrimination.

- **AP VC, "Enhancing Healthcare Provision in Georgia's Penitentiary System"**: a WG meeting to develop a two-year implementation plan (2023-2024) of Penitentiary Mental Healthcare Standards; a WG Meeting with participation of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) dedicated to discussing NPM recommendations on mental healthcare in Georgia's penitentiary system; a two-day workshop for the NPM to discuss the newly developed "Concise Tools for NPM Monitoring of Mental Healthcare in penitentiary institutions and the Kutiri Psychiatric Hospital"; a study visit to Copenhagen, Denmark for NPM and MoJ staff on mental healthcare issues and monitoring mechanisms. Kilns were purchased to support rehabilitation and out-of-cell activities for offenders.

- **Switzerland VC, "Democracy Starts in Schools-Engaging School Children in Decision Making Processes in Schools and Communities in Georgia"**: a module of the professional development programme "Developing a Democratic School" has been piloted in 27 schools. As a result, 54 school directors and deputy directors and 54 teachers received intensive trainings on democratic school governance, participation levels and competences of democratic culture. Within the piloting process, a group of facilitators provided continuous coaching sessions for 20 schools to support the implementation of the action plans followed by one-and-a-half-day workshops visits in each school. An application-based network for knowledge and experience sharing "Education for Democracy" was established to unite the partner pilot schools of the project.

- **AP VC, "Developing a Drug Prevention Support Network for Parents and Professionals in Georgia"**: a conference on the Role of parents in drug prevention held in Tbilisi gathered relevant national stakeholders, to discuss how to improve the role of parents in drug prevention, and the ways to increase their involvement in the school prevention. Three regional workshops on Drug Prevention were held, aimed at providing knowledge and awareness about the drug prevention and its related issues for school directors and representatives of the local self-government/municipalities. The project was present at the 2023 Open Air Festival, aiming at raising awareness of general public regarding healthy lifestyle as a measure to prevent use of psychoactive substances or delay their use.

- **AP VC, "Ensuring child-friendly justice in Georgia: preventing and protecting children from violence, including in the digital environment"**: via a Training of Trainers on Effective Investigation and Prosecution of Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation,

18 representatives of MIA, Supreme Court and Prosecutor's office raised their capacity on effective online investigative tools and practises. Investigators and prosecutors enhanced their knowledge on interviewing child victims and witnesses - 14 trainers deepened their knowledge on legal as well as psychological aspects of child sexual abuse and interviewing. A guideline on "Specifics of Interviewing Child Victims/Witnesses of Sexual Abuse" was developed and put in practice.

- **AP VC, "Strengthening Implementation of Human Rights Practices and Education in Georgia"**: on June 26, 2023, the third working group meeting took place regarding the National Strategy for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the draft execution strategy. On 18-21 April 2023, the second Training of Trainers (ToT) for a total of 45 legal professionals selected through a competitive process during the first ToT was held in December 2022. The project ensured the adaptation of two HELP courses that were previously translated into Georgian, namely "Ethics of Judges, Prosecutors, and Lawyers" and "Business and Human Rights." The courses are being integrated into the HELP platform.

- **AP VC, "Promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in Georgia"**: two needs assessment activities were conducted to identify the needs in respect of court-annexed and private, as well as victim-offender mediation. Interviews were organised with various stakeholders; mediation centres were visited and research on best practices was carried out. During the reporting period, a training was conducted for 35 mediators through which the participants enhanced their ability to negotiate effectively.

- **EU/CoE PGG II, "Support to modernisation of court management in Georgia"**: the CEPEJ court coaching programme in Georgia began with expert visits to the Supreme Court of Georgia and Rustavi City Court from 23 to 25 May 2023. CEPEJ experts conducted interviews to assess specific needs, provide recommendations, and share methodologies for improving court management.

- **EU/CoE PGG II, "Consolidating and enhancing the institutional and operational frameworks for the prevention and combatting of corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing in Georgia"**: local anti-corruption trainers from the State Security Service of Georgia conducted awareness-raising sessions on the importance of corruption prevention for the representatives of local municipalities in Kvemo Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti regions, with support from the project.

Follow up actions

- Austria VC, "Strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level in Georgia": regional information campaign "Change the scenario" events planned in Kvemo Kartli, Guria and Imereti. Development of the proposals of regulatory acts for the implementation of School Participatory Budgeting in Georgia. Conducting community assessments and stakeholders' identification and assessment in Tbilisi, Marneuli and Gori municipalities as part of the pilot of "Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit." "CivicLab" public consultations are planned in Akhmeta municipality. Development of civil participation guidelines for municipalities. Conducting youth camp on civil participation for the youth from 15 pilot municipalities of Georgia. Conducting CivicLab and Uchange ToT for municipality representatives

- EU/CoE JP, "Support for a better evaluation of the result of judicial reform efforts in the Eastern Partnership" (Justice Dashboard EaP): proceed with the preparation for and launch of the next data collection cycle in September 2023.
- AP VC, "Ensuring child-friendly justice in Georgia: preventing and protecting children from violence, including in the digital environment": developed Guidelines on "Specifics of Interviewing Child Victims/Witnesses of Sexual Abuse" will be further disseminated and used in future training with law enforcement officials; Public Defender requested development of lesson plans and visibility materials on child sexual abuse and exploitation; the materials will be finalised in September and used during school meetings with children aged 13-16 and teachers.

Other Relevant Activities

- On 15-19 May: delegation of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC-FCNM) paid an official visit to Georgia to prepare an opinion in 2022/23 within its fifth monitoring cycle.
- On 16-20 May: A delegation of the ECRI visited Georgia to assess the situation with regards to equality body, inclusive education, the situation of irregularly present migrants; LGBTI equality; racist and homo-/transphobic hate speech and violence in the framework of its fifth round of monitoring of Georgia.
- On 18-19 May: Venice Commission delegation visited in preparation of the final opinion on the draft law on de-oligarchisation.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 30 June – 2 July: The Secretary General visited Georgia to hold bilateral meetings and attend Tbilisi International Women Conference that took place on the initiative of the President of Georgia.
- On 30 June – 3 July: Commissioner for Human Rights visited Georgia, holding meetings with the PM, the President, the Parliament Speaker, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and CSOs, as well as carrying out a visit to ABL.

Tirana

Situation of the Office

Core staff – six, project staff – 17, total staff – 23.

The Office implemented nine projects, out of which seven are co-funded by the EU, one by the Swedish Sida and one by the German Government. Except for one regional project, the projects implemented by the Office are administratively fully decentralised. The Office continued to alternate teleworking with office presence.

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

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action on Strengthening the Efficiency of Justice (SEJ IV) in Albania"**: the annual joint meeting of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils was supported, focusing on the inter-institutional co-operation and exchange to address common important challenges in context of the new judicial map. 70 non-judicial staff of the general jurisdiction courts of Tirana, Fier and Vlora enhanced their capacities on CEPEJ tools on judicial time management and court performance indicators. 38 members of the High Inspector of Justice in Albania enhanced their capacities on thematic inspection in view of the European best practices. Court coaching activities were organized with the Appeal Court of General Jurisdiction and the Court of First Instance in Durres, to measure the court performance in line with CEPEJ guidelines.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners in Albania"**: a Training of Trainers programme capacitated 31 penitentiary staff of different profiles on management and treatment of sex offenders and convicts with a history of family violence. A plan of action was established for identifying, treating and managing of the abovementioned category of prisoners.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action on Economic Crime in Albania"**: the law on "International restrictive measures" was improved in compliance with FATF Recommendation 7 and related Interpretative Note. The Central Election Commission (CEC) oversight capacities were enhanced through the Electronic Platform on Financial Monitoring and Reporting launched and utilised in the runup to local elections of 14 May 2023. The capacities of financial officers of political parties, CEC monitors, mayor and city council candidates and 10 licenced accounting experts were enhanced on operationalising the platform. The Action supported the General Directorate of Prevention of Money Laundering (GDPML) to develop its new information systems and their hosting infrastructure in order to address the challenges that the Albanian FIU's staff face in their daily work on analysing increasing information streams and needs for data.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action on Supporting effective domestic remedies and facilitating the execution of judgments (D-REX III)"**: a high-level conference was organised in Tirana to mark the 110 anniversary of the Albanian Supreme Court. It served as a platform for fruitful exchanges between participants from Albania and other countries, addressing challenges in the context of the national implementation of human rights and securing independency and impartiality of the judiciary. An Albanian judge was seconded to the European Court of Human Rights.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action on Advancing the protection from discrimination in Albania"**: 60 lawyers enrolled in the HELP course on anti-discrimination in Albania. 50 judges and prosecutors from various jurisdictions increased their capacities on Hate Crimes and non-Discrimination, in co-operation with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and the School of Magistrates. The Action led the initiatives at the national level during the IDAHOT week, including the pride organised in Tirana on 21 May, where over 400 people marched for equality and non-discrimination of LGBTI people. The Central Election Commission was supporting in preparing and running the information campaign through posters, videos and social media posts in eight minority languages.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action on Protecting Freedom of Expression and of the Media in Albania (Pro-Frex-A)"**: the Audio-visual Media Authority was supported in reviewing its broadcasting code. The 1st Steering Committee of the Action was organised.
- **EU/CoE regional JP, "ROMACTED Programme"**: International Roma Day was marked in the Municipality of Korçë through promotion of the Roma history, language and traditions.
- **Sweden VC, "Strengthening Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania"**: over 1000 students of 10 pilot schools enhanced their capacities on environmental protection. An assessment of the Teacher Preparedness Curricula of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Tirana University is completed. Winners of the video competition "Fake # Fact" visited CoE HQs and had thematic meetings with senior CoE representatives.

Other relevant activities

- A 16-member delegation from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe carried out an election observation mission from 12 to 15 May to observe the elections for mayors and local councillors in the 61 municipalities of Albania.
- On 15-16 June 2023, the Director of Council of Europe Programme Co-ordination, Claus Neukirch, paid an official visit to Tirana to meet with representatives of Albanian authorities as well as international partners and representatives of civil society. Discussions focused on current and potential future technical co-operation activities advancing the country's reform agenda.

Yerevan

Situation of the Office

Core staff – five, Project staff – 20, Total staff – 25

The Office implemented 10 projects: three national projects funded by the EU under the Partnership for Good Governance III (PGGIII); and seven projects funded by donors' Action Plan-level voluntary contributions, including one project funded by the Government of Austria. In addition to that, the Office provides support to MAEs in the implementation of other regional projects and activities.

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

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Support to the justice reform in Armenia"**: the PGG III Project Support to the justice reform in Armenia started on 1 March 2023. The First Technical Committee meeting was held on 6 April 2023. In May, a high-level delegation from the [Interagency Committee of Armenia](#) visited Strasbourg to participate in a round table on implementing European Court of Human Rights judgments and to launch the [Armenian user interface of HUDOC-ECHR](#). A round table discussion on June 2-3 focused on strategic directions for judicial and legal reforms in Armenia. It highlighted the [crucial role of civil society organisations](#) (CSOs) in driving the reform process and emphasised their contribution in monitoring strategy's implementation.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Enhancing national capacities for effective prevention and fight against economic crime in Armenia"**: on April 4-7, a four-day training course and related Training of Trainers Programme on applying the Model Code of Conduct for public servants was organised for 30 integrity officers of Armenia, in charge of supporting the implementation of the Code and providing related guidance to their colleagues within public institutions. The Project further contributed, through a two-day workshop held on April 20-21, at enhancing the understanding of the National Bank and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of Armenia on conducting Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing National Risk Assessment (ML/TF NRA). The event aimed at providing guidance for improving the upcoming ML/TF NRA in Armenia with a focus on data collection and analysis tools, risk identification and mitigating measures.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Promoting equality and non-discrimination in Armenia"**: in April the project initiated a conduct of the baseline study that was submitted to the project team at the end of June with the assessment of the situation in Armenia in relation to the existing redress mechanisms and anti-discrimination legislation current state of play. On May 23, the project was officially introduced to the partners in the scope of the PGG III launching event in Yerevan. On June 9, the project's [first technical committee meeting](#) was held during which state and non-state stakeholders were presented the project objectives and consequently, proposed suggestions to be reflected in the project foreseen activities. In June, two representatives from the Human Rights Defender's Office of the RA attended the [regional event](#) on Equality bodies in the scope of the PGG/HF regional conference.

- **AP VC, “Fostering Human Rights in the Armed Forces in Armenia”**: the Project launching event and the 1st steering committee meeting were held on 21 April 2023. The work plan was discussed and adopted during the SC meeting. A high-level event, round table discussion on fostering the execution of the European Court of Human Rights judgments was co-organised by the Project in co-operation with other two projects on 11 and 12 May in Strasbourg. The Project arranged the visit of five representatives of the Armenian government to Strasbourg. On 28 June, a workshop on human rights of member of the armed forces was organised by the Project in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) and the Project supported the participation of four Armenian delegates from partner agencies in the workshop. National and international consultants’ tender-related documentation is in due progress of development.
- **AP VC, “Strengthening the Probation Service in Armenia”**: on 23 May 2023, the Project organised a working group meeting to discuss the further steps necessary for validation of the risk and needs assessment tool. As a result of the outcomes of those discussions the Project’s consultants developed the roadmap for further actions and revised the scoring of the tool. On 8 June 2023, the Project organised a working meeting to discuss further IT needs of the Probation Service. On 9-10 June 2023, the Project organised a workshop with different stakeholders (probation staff, judges, NGOs, etc) on the current issues related to resocialisation of probation beneficiaries and application of electronic monitoring (home arrest, administrative supervision).
- **AP VC, “Strengthening the Protection of the Rights of Persons in Detention”**: on 15-17 April 2023, a mission was conducted to assess the needs of the Penitentiary Medicine Centre with a view to assisting with its efficient transfer from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). Following that, a comprehensive assessment report was prepared and shared with the stakeholders to be used as a roadmap for improving the prison healthcare system and ensuring smooth operation of the Penitentiary Medicine Centre. The MoJ has developed a Concept aiming to introduce a new security model to improve the procedures for the admission, training and appointment of penitentiary officers. In that context, the CoE provided technical expertise, reviewing the proposed draft strategy and providing recommendations considering the best practices of member states and international standards regulating the field. To ensure effective application of the mental health assessment and screening toolkit and further enhance the capacities of psychiatrists and psychologists, new in-house training curricula and modules for specialized training sessions for medical and non-medical staff who work with the inmates with mental disorders was developed and shared with the stakeholders.
- **AP VC, “Ending violence against women and promoting gender equality in Armenia”**: the project supports the government to draft the State Gender Equality Strategy for 2024-2026, and as a lead of the team of consultants representing UN Women, UNFPA, and EUD, developed a methodology for collecting and analysing data in seven priority areas. A study research on electronic monitoring of perpetrators of domestic violence or other forms of interpersonal violence has been conducted to support the Police of Armenia. Three CSOs are supported with small grants to run national communication and advocacy campaigns to support awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives to promote the values, aims and provisions of the Istanbul Convention. Several key visibility materials (on sexism, Istanbul Convention, digital forms of VAW, etc.) have been translated into Armenian and edited.
- **AP VC, “Protection of Human Rights in Biomedicine II”**: the priority areas of the co-operation have been agreed during the high-level launching [event](#) of the Project on 13 April. On 26 April, a HELP Course on Key Ethical Principles on Bioethics was [launched](#) for two more groups of legal and healthcare professionals. Prior to the development of the new HELP Course

on “Human Rights in Mental Health Services”, an [expert-discussion](#) was organized on 12 May serving as a unique platform to identify the human rights issues in mental health services. The representatives of the Ministry of Health and National Institute of Health have participated in the [31st Meeting](#) of National Ethics Councils on 25-26 May in Stockholm to establish effective collaboration with the Swedish National Council on Medical Ethics. The legal reference and recommendations have been provided to the National Assembly on acting Law on “Reproductive Health Rights” with regard to the legal provisions on sex-selection.

- **HRTF VC, “Support to the effective execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in Armenia”:** [the launching event](#) that brought together over 50 beneficiaries and project partners, marked the official start of the Project on 28 April. [A visit](#) of the high-level delegation of Armenia to Strasbourg in May aimed at facilitating discussions between the representatives of the national Interagency Committee and the relevant CoE services. Moreover, the launch of the Armenian user interface of HUDOC-ECHR will further increase the understanding of the Court’s case-law among legal professionals and the general public in Armenia. Two [round-table discussions](#) on the draft Law on “Enforcement Proceedings” aimed at bringing the country’s legislation and practice closer to the European standards to promote human rights and strengthen the rule of law were organised on 6 and 8 June.

- **Austria VC, “Democratic Development, Decentralisation, and Good Governance in Armenia, Phase II”:** on 3-5 April 2023, the 3rd stage of the Leadership Academy Programme for cross-border co-operation was organised, following the conduct of two successful stages in 2022. Around 30 mayors and senior officials from Armenian and Georgian borderline municipalities met in Gyumri (Shirak province, Armenia) to look into opportunities for practical interaction between neighbouring local authorities in Armenia and Georgia in a wide range of areas of common interest. On 24 May 2023, at least 43 economic development officers from more than 35 communities in Armenia participated in an online workshop on *how to conduct feasibility studies to support evidence-based policy-making at local level in Armenia*. In the reporting period, a competitive call for local consultancy services was launched through the Tenders Board, and the results will be concluded in the beginning of July 2023.

Pristina

Situation of the Office

Core staff – six, Project staff –19, Total staff - 25.

During the reporting period, the Office implemented 11 projects, three in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Horizontal Facility III for the Western Balkans and Türkiye", one EU/CoE Regional Joint Programme (ROMACTED), two EU/CoE Joint Projects, one funded by UNMIK, and four funded through non-earmarked voluntary contributions by member States. The Project "Promoting human rights and non-discrimination principles at the local level", which was funded by UNMIK and implemented by the Council of Europe, ended on 30 June 2023.

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

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Protecting Freedom of Expression and of the Media (PRO-FREX-K)":** following intensive consultations with beneficiaries, the action revised the logical frame, maintaining its scope with a focus on the most needed areas of intervention, where adjustment of certain activities was required. Such responsiveness to emerging needs on the ground served to further strengthen the spirit of co-operation with key stakeholders, in particular the organisations of media professionals. The action also completed the preparation of Communication and Visibility Plan and its website content, based on the Visibility and Communication Guidelines of HFIII.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Ensuring Efficiency and Quality of Justice (KOSEJIII)":** the action supported the efforts of the Commission dealing with the monitoring of the Strategic Plan on the Backlog, by organising three workshops for civil judges from all basic courts on 7-9 June 2023. The expertise provided for the KPC has increased its awareness about CEPEJ standards and best practices on the performance evaluation of prosecutors. The action also helped the MoJ draft the "Concept Document for realization of civil rights including the right of the parties to a trial within the reasonable time", in line with the CoE standards.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Combating Discrimination and Hatred":** the action supported NGOs in organising several activities during the pride week, which contributed to the enhanced acknowledgement of respect for diversity. 30 anti-discrimination officers increased their capacities during a workshop held by the project on the drafting of annual report concerning the implementation of Law 05/L-021 on protection from discrimination, which was prepared by the Office of Good Governance. The expertise also provided to the Ombudsperson Institution to design a minoring tool in relation to the aforementioned law.
- **EU/CoE JP, "Building Capacity for Inclusive Education – INCLUDE":** 250 educators (school principals, psychologists, parents' council representatives) from 25 pilot schools gained new skills on creating a democratic and inclusive learning community through the completion of a training programme. Another training programme helped 37 education professionals (26 women/11 men) from four pilot schools in Ferizaj/Uroševac enhance their competencies on inclusive education, assessment of students with SEN and individual education plans. 25 teachers (15 women/10 men) from Mother Theresa Resource centre in Prizren benefited from Module 1 of training on teaching methodologies for deaf students.

- **EU/CoE JP, “Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo* (PECK III)”**: the advice provided by the project followed with a study visit to Ireland increased the compatibility of the new regulatory framework on protection of whistleblowers with the international standards and strengthened the whistleblower protection framework. The training of 40 officials advanced the capacities of relevant institutions to implement international standards and domestic legislation on targeted financial sanctions related to financing of terrorism and proliferation financing. The expertise provided upgraded the AML/CFT supervision regime and enhanced effective prosecution of money laundering offences. The advice offered to the Agency for Prevention of Corruption facilitated preparation of the sub legal act on corruption risk assessment in line with international standards.
- **EU/CoE regional JP, “Promoting Good Governance and Roma Empowerment at Local Level (ROMACTED2)”**: on 24 May, the Conference on Fostering and Promoting employment among Roma Ashkali Egyptian communities was organized jointly with the Office of the Good Governance. The conference reinforced the commitments of the Poznan Declaration. In the frame of ROMACTED II grants scheme, 10 small community projects and 10 projects related to Covid 19 recovery measures were launched at the local level, stipulating grassroots level initiatives for the inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Monitoring of 20 community projects in 10 beneficiary municipalities has taken place.
- **AP VC, “Enhancing anti-trafficking actions”**: the expertise provided by the project supported alignment of the Regulation for State Shelter for victims of trafficking with GRETA recommendations. The training delivered on 7 June 2023 helped the prosecutors, police and victim advocates enhance their competencies to implement the Amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure in the field of human trafficking in line with the relevant international standards. The study visit organized by the project to Lisbon on 12-15 June 2023 supported share of best practices on investigation/prosecution of human trafficking, data management, and provision of assistance to victims. Journalists increased their skills on victim-centred reporting, protection of survivors, and raising public awareness through a training session on reporting about incidents of human trafficking, which was held on 27 June 2023.
- **AP VC, “Support to the Constitutional Court in applying and disseminating the European Human Rights Standards”**: 40 lawyers increased their understanding in applying caselaw of the European Court of Human Rights on Article 5 and Article 6 through the workshop on the Right to Liberty and Security and Right to Fair Trial. The workshop on harmonization of judicial practice which was held on 9 June 2023 contributed to strengthening judicial dialogue between courts at different levels. The capacity of the Constitutional Court for execution of judgements was reinforced following development of the Roadmap for Execution of Judgements. Two legal advisors of the Constitutional Court improved their knowledge of the European Convention on Human Rights standards after completing the placement with the European Court of Human Rights. The Report on Users’ Satisfaction Survey and the Manual on Judicial Reasoning helped to enhance the institutional capacities of the Court.
- **AP VC, “Aligning laws and policies with the Istanbul Convention”**: the project supported the Working Group established by the MoJ to design the Programme for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence, with a view to ensuring its compliance with the standards of the Istanbul Convention. It also facilitated the visit of the Minister of Justice to the HQ in Strasbourg, which took place on 22-23 June. Meetings focused mainly on domestic violence and violence against women, the current joint interventions and plans for the future.

- **AP VC, "Improvement of the treatment of persons deprived of liberty"**: on 25 April 2023 a high-level roundtable presenting the findings and recommendations of the Council of Europe assessment missions on the legal statuses and regulatory framework of the Institute of Forensic Psychiatry (IFPK), Special Institute Shtime/Shtimlje (SIS), and the Prison Health Department (PHD) of the Ministry of Health was organized. Two WG meetings on revising the existing, and developing new, rehabilitation and reintegration tools and programmes, including guidelines and manuals on psycho-social treatment in IFPK and SIS organized on 18-20 April and 16-18 May. On 14-16 June a needs assessment mission on the guidelines and tools for occupational therapy for the PHD took place. On 5-6 June a workshop on finalizing the PHD protocols and Standard Operating Procedures was organized.

- **AP VC, "Promoting Human Rights and Non-Discrimination Principles at the Local Level"**: 35 municipal anti-discrimination officers, Ombudsperson regional offices and NGOs increased their knowledge of international human rights standards, including anti-discrimination principles and respect for tolerance, diversity, and inclusion through the trainings organized during May in Prizren and Peja/Pec. On 26th of June, in co-operation with the Office for Good Governance, the Project organized the closing conference with the participation of 40 representatives of central government institutions; non-discrimination focal points in the municipalities where the project was implemented, and civil society representatives.

Follow up actions:

- *INCLUDE*: capacity building activities with the Learning Centres will continue.
- *PECK III*: advise and support relevant authorities in developing sub legal acts needed to implement the Law on Targeted Financial Sanctions will continue.
- *Enhancing Anti-trafficking Actions*: handbook for school professionals on prevention and referral of THB to be launched on 14 July 2023.
- *Support to the Constitutional Court in applying and disseminating the European Human Rights Standards*: development of the Admissibility Guide to the Constitutional Court for Lawyers to be completed in the upcoming reporting period.
- *VC Aligning laws and policies with the Istanbul Convention*: revision of the Academy of Justice Curriculum.
- *Improvement of the treatment of persons deprived of liberty*:
 - The legal statuses and regulatory framework of the IFPK, SIS and PHD analyzed and relevant subject matter experts engaged leading towards the finalization of the tasks in question.
 - IFPK and SIS Standard Operating Procedures revised by the IFPK and SIS and sent to the CoE Experts for revision and analysis.
 - PHD Standard Operating Procedures finalized, printed, and disseminated.

Other relevant activities

- On 12-14 June 2023, the Director of Programme Co-ordination of the Council of Europe Claus Neukirch visited Pristina to attend the Joint working group on the overview of co-operation activities in Kosovo*. The meeting aimed to take stock of ongoing technical co-operation projects implemented by the Council of Europe in the areas of rule of law, human rights and democracy and discuss future activities with beneficiary institutions. His mission also included bilateral meetings with Besnik Bislimi, Deputy Prime Minister, Albulena Haxhiu, Minister of Justice, Kreshnik Ahmeti Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, as well as Gresa Caka Nimani, President of the Constitutional Court and Albert Zogaj, Chairperson of the Kosovo Judicial Council.

Additionally, he also met with representatives of Civil Society Organisations as well as diplomatic representatives of the Council of Europe member states and international partners, including the EUO.

* 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 – 6, Total staff – 9.

The Office implemented or provided logistical support for six 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

- From 15 to 17 May, an information seminar and study visit was held on the “Evaluation of laws by the parliamentary institution – case of Law 103.13 on Combating violence against women” for a delegation of parliamentarians and staff members from the Moroccan House of Representatives.
- From 15 to 16 June, a delegation of parliamentarians and staff members from the Moroccan House of Representatives carried out a study visit to the Portuguese Parliament on the theme of participatory democracy.
- Development of the website of the House of Councillors was carried out.
- An electronic platform for petitions and motions was developed for the House of Representatives.
- Informative material on petitions and motions was produced.
- A study on good practices in public policy evaluation by the parliamentary institution was drawn up.

Support for the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture (NPM)

- On 2 June, the Office presented its activities and achievements at the 3rd Steering Committee meeting. The action plan for the coming months and the possibility of extending the project were discussed.

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

HELP programme and combating violence against women

- On 10 May, the National Commission for the Protection of Women Victims of Violence launched its second report.
- On 20 May, a number of social workers received their certificates for completing the HELP course on combating violence against women and domestic violence.

- On 23 June, the HELP training course on cybercrime and electronic evidence was launched with the participation of representatives of the Supreme Judicial Council, the Presidency of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Higher Judicial Institute.

Combating violence against children

- On 8 June, a working visit was made to the Child and Youth Online Protection Helpline (EMC Helpline) in Kenitra to learn about the functioning of the hotline and the system developed to deal with reports of cyberbullying and cyberviolence.

Action against trafficking in human beings

- In May, the Moroccan guide on detecting and identifying victims of trafficking was designed and printed.
- On 27 May, members of the Anti-Trafficking Commission attended a technical workshop in Rabat on Law 27.14 in the light of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, with a view to possible accession.
- In June, the compendium of national case law on trafficking in human beings was designed and printed.
- On 6 and 7 June, the President of the Anti-Trafficking Commission attended the joint Council of Europe-OSCE meeting of anti-trafficking co-ordinators in Strasbourg.
- On 20 June, the Belgian information system was presented to the National Anti-Trafficking Commission in an online meeting.

Combating corruption, money laundering and terrorism

- A regional online seminar was held with a view to establishing an effective whistleblowing system in the southern Mediterranean.

From 2 to 4 May, a technical assistance mission for sport was organised as part of the ACT project - Addressing Competitions' Manipulation Together (Sport Division / Macolin Convention, ACT Project).

Pompidou Group – prevention of drug abuse

- From 30 May to 1 June, MedSPAD held its regional committee meeting in Rabat.

Tunis

Situation of the Office

Core staff – six, Project staff –14 (1 LT Mission to Lisbon), Total staff - 20.

The Office implemented two programmes and six projects: the EU/CoE bilateral Joint Programme “Improving the functioning, performance and access to justice in Tunisia” (AP-JUST), the EU/CoE Regional JP “Protecting human rights, the rule of law and democracy through shared standards in the Southern Mediterranean” (South Programme V, 11 components), and six projects funded through voluntary contributions at the Neighbourhood Partnership-level.

State of implementation of projects/programmes/Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2022-2025

Bilateral joint programme:

- **EU/CoE JP, “Improving the functioning, performance and access to justice in Tunisia” (AP-JUST):**

- **Improving the quality of justice**

- 50 representatives of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) increased their knowledge and skills on justice indicators as tools to measure courts’ activities and performance as well as to monitor time management and management by objectives to support administrative and financial policies. A seminar on justice indicators was organised in co-operation with the MoJ on 18-19 May 2023 in Tunis.
- The skills of 58 court clerks from the Sfax jurisdiction to effectively communicate and to duly perform their reception duties was enhanced with the aim to ensure public access to justice. A dedicated training was organised in co-operation with the MoJ on 25-26 May 2023 in Sfax.
- The knowledge and skills of a selected group of judges and prosecutors on how to preserve, collect, handle and present electronic evidence were enhanced during a training course on electronic evidence. The activity was co-organised in co-operation with the *Institut Supérieur de la Magistrature* as a joint initiative between the CyberSouth and AP-JUST projects on 29-31 May 2023.

- **Widening the scope of access to justice/co-operation with other justice sector actors, notably the National Bar Association of Tunisia (ONAT)**

- The awareness of 120 lawyers from the Tunis region on the rule of professional ethics and the conduct of lawyers was raised during a seminar on ethics organised on 14 April 2023.
- Capacities of over 200 lawyers from Tunis and Tabarka regions were strengthened to address new requirements of the digitalised era and consequent needs for internal organisation of law firms and legal practices in two trainings organised on 13 May and 27 May 2023. Seminars are organised in collaboration with ONAT as part of a series of events to support ONAT in this field.

Regional Joint Programme

- **EU/CoE JP, "Protecting human rights, the rule of law and democracy through shared standards in the Southern Mediterranean" (South Programme V)**
- The **first regional steering committee meeting** of the programme was held online on 19 April with the participation of national coordinators from Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine* and Tunisia, representatives of the DGNEAR and the EU Delegations in the region. It provided an opportunity to present the objectives and the workplan 2023 for all thematic programme components in more detail as well as joint action and synergies with other Council of Europe initiatives implemented in the Southern Mediterranean region, notably the joint EU/CoE regional programme "CyberSouth" and the North-South Centre based in Lisbon.
- On 24-25 April, Algerian and Palestinian liaison officers participated in the **20th meeting of the Joint Council on Constitutional Justice (JCCJ) of the Venice Commission**. Liaison officers from 35 courts and members of the JCCJ and seven representatives of four regional partner organisations, notably Union of the Arab Constitutional Councils and Courts and the Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions of Africa (CCJA), participated in the meeting and a mini-conference held on "Measures taken by States in response to the COVID-19 crisis and their impact on constitutional justice – constitutional case-law on emergency situations".
- On 3-4 May, a **regional workshop** organised in co-operation with the Moroccan INPPLC gathered 40 representatives of anti-corruption authorities as well as relevant entities from the public and private sectors of Jordan, Morocco, Palestine* and Tunisia **to support the establishment of an effective whistleblower protection system** that fosters public confidence and the safety of protected disclosures. A technical document on "Establishing an effective whistleblower protection system in the Southern Mediterranean" will be disseminated as a basis for further regional and/or sub-regional initiatives.
- Within the context of establishing a **National Referral Mechanism of Victims of Trafficking in Human beings (THB)** in Lebanon, the process of drafting the Kit of Indicators on the Detection and Identification of Victims of THB was initiated in May 2023. A workshop on the development of a list of indicators was organised on 4-5 May in Beirut with the participation of multiagency anti-THB professionals, civil society and international organisations. This list of indicators will be launched in October 2023 and tested in the first tutored anti-THB HELP course in Lebanon that will also be launched during the same activity.
- The President of the national anti-trafficking body in Morocco participated in the joint **CoE-OSCE Meeting of National Anti-Trafficking Coordinators and Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms** which took place in Strasbourg on 6-7 June 2023. 50 national coordinators and rapporteurs from around the world, including Morocco and Tunisia, exchanged on anti-trafficking priorities such as strengthening anti-trafficking structures, combatting forced crime, identifying and assisting foreign victims of transnational trafficking.
- On 9 May, the **National commission for the protection of women victims of violence in Morocco launched its second report** with the participation of ministries, national and international organisations and civil society actors. The South Programme V has supported the Commission since its creation in 2019, resulting notably in the development and dissemination of two awareness videos regarding the

law 103.13 on combating violence against women, as well as the commission's first report and a Guide on care for Women Victims of Violence.

- On 18-19 May, a delegation of the **Algerian** National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data (ANPDP) carried out a **working visit to the Tunisian National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data (INPDP)** to learn about the Tunisian experience in this area, the challenges faced, and the good practices established. The visit provided an opportunity to present and promote the Convention 108+ on data protection to the Algerian delegation.
- The Moroccan representative took part in the **38th meeting of the Lanzarote Committee[§]** held on 30 May–2 June, with the aim of Morocco ratifying the Lanzarote Convention. The 38th committee meeting addressed questions related to monitoring of the convention in the digital environment and in the context of the "circle of trust", as well as the increased vulnerability of children to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation as a consequence of the war in Ukraine.
- A **technical workshop** was organised on 31 May in Tunis **to provide policy advice on treaty law regarding adherence to the Tromsø Convention on access to official documents**. The participants, including representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Access to Information Authority of Tunisia (INAI) increased their knowledge on the convention, the compatibility of the Tunisian legal framework on access to information with the provisions of the convention as well as the advantages and challenges in joining the convention.
- On 31 May-1 June, the MedSPAD held its annual meeting, celebrating the 20th anniversary of this regional project. 28 participants took part in the meeting including for the first time, representatives from **Libya**, as well as representatives of the European Parliament in the EMCDDA Management Board UNODC and WHO Regional Office in Cairo. The meeting took stock of progress, notably in terms of MedSpad national surveys completed in **Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia**, the 4th MedSpad regional report on adolescent substance use and risk behaviours in the Mediterranean Region (2022) and future perspectives, including MedSpad national surveys to be conducted in **Lebanon and Palestine***.
- On 2 June 2023, the Council of Europe organised a **training workshop for 12 members of the General Authority for Monitoring Media Content (GAMMC)** of Libya on monitoring media broadcasters. This training workshop aimed at supporting the role of the audiovisual regulator in Libya, in line with Council of Europe and international standards and national legislation.
- On 13-15 June, three representatives of Morocco participated in the **83rd plenary meeting of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC)**.
- On 15-16 June, representatives of the Southern Mediterranean region took part in the **40th plenary meeting of the European commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)**.

[§] Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

- The **HELP course on cybercrime and electronic evidence was launched** in Rabat on 23 June in collaboration between the HELP Programme, the CyberSud project, and Moroccan partners (*Conseil Supérieur du Pouvoir Judiciaire, Présidence du Ministère Public, and Institut Supérieur de la Magistrature*). This course has been developed to help judicial training institutions provide a training course on cybercrime and electronic evidence for judges and prosecutors, and to integrate them into initial and ongoing training.

- **NP VC, “Enlarging common legal space with Tunisia”**: several training sessions were held as part of the 8th promotion of the International Academy for Good Governance (IAGG), which is organised through a tripartite co-operation between ENA, the General Directorate for Governance and Corruption Prevention at the Presidency of the Government and the Council of Europe. This eight-month training programme aims to build the capacity of senior civil servants, as well as representatives of civil society and the private sector, in the field of good governance. It will culminate in the development of a short- and medium-term project for change, which will be presented to ENA's scientific council.

- **NP VC, “Support to the School of Political Studies of Tunisia”**: an annual grant was provided to the Tunisian School of Political Studies to allow for the organisation of an annual training course consisting of 6 thematic sessions for Tunisian young people from civil society organisations, known as the "civil society class".

- **NP VC, “Fight against trafficking in human beings in Tunisia”**: the project supported the participation of the President of the Tunisian anti-trafficking body in the joint CoE - OSCE Meeting of National Anti-Trafficking Coordinators and Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms which took place in Strasbourg on 6-7 June 2023. 50 national coordinators and rapporteurs from around the world, including Morocco and Tunisia, exchanged on anti-trafficking priorities such as strengthening anti-trafficking structures, combatting forced crime, identifying and assisting foreign victims of transnational trafficking.

* This designation shall not be construed as a recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe member States on this issue.