

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Quarterly report of Council of Europe Offices

April-June 2024

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 2024. 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

In the course of the reporting period, the Office facilitated the organisation of the visit and the meetings of several **CoE high officials**, including, in particular:

- the President of the Congress, Mr Cools,
- the Director of Political Affairs and External Relations, Mr Papa,
- the Director of Programme Co-ordination, Mr Neukirch,
- the SRSG on Migration and Refugees, Mr Best,
- the DG II Director for Democracy, Mr Gruden,
- the CPT President, Mr Mitchell, and its Executive Secretary, Mr Chetwynd,
- the GRECO President, Mr Mrcla, and its Executive Secretary, Ms Stoica,
- the Director of the EDQM, Ms Doerr, and
- the Director of Social Rights, Health and the Environment, Mr R Benitez.

The Office facilitated **high-level CoE-EU contacts**, such as the online meeting between the PACE rapporteurs on sanctions and the EU Special Envoy on EU sanctions, Mr O'Sullivan, in May; the online exchange between the DPAER Director and the diplomatic advisor to Commission President Michel; and the exchange between the CM and EUSR Lajcak in June.

The Head of Office and colleagues helped prepare and then participated in the **CoE-EU "Scoreboard"** meeting and in the **"CoE-EU/CATS"** meeting held in Strasbourg on 19 and 27 June respectively.

The Head of Office held various meetings and represented the Organisation at several events, for instance:

- he represented the SG in the EU Ministerial Conference on Social Rights (the "La Hulpe" Conference") on 15-16 April.
- he met the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the EU, Mr Prankevicius, in the framework of the Lithuanian Chairmanship of the CM.
- he represented the CoE in an event organised by the Flemish Government in Brussels for the 75th anniversary of the CoE, where the Head of the Youth Department gave a speech.
- he participated in a conference organised by the "Friends of Europe" think tank on the situation in Ukraine and the European policies about the conflict.
- he met the Head of the Regional Office - Europe of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and a representative of the UN Global Compact.

On several occasions, the Office met representatives of the **Belgian EU Presidency**. It held a meeting with DGII colleagues on the production of a television series and another meeting on education policies and discussed criminal law developments with the chair of the EU CATS committee.

The Head of Office and colleagues maintained a high level of **contacts with all EU institutions**. In addition to contacts with the Commission, EEAS and the Council, it notably met the secretariat of the EP on possible co-operation on research and publication and organised a DGI intervention in a hearing on AI organised by the European Economic and

Social Committee. The Office also maintained contacts with **non-member states**, such as Canada, Israel and the Republic of Korea.

The Office organised **public presentations and press briefings** around:

- the annual report of the CPT (by its President and Executive Secretary).
- GRECO's annual report (by its President and Executive Secretary).
- the EDQM's work and achievements, on the occasion of its 60th anniversary (by Director Doerr).

The Office further received several visitors and groups - organised under the EU visitors' programme or by various states, academia and think tanks.

The Office participated in the consultations in Strasbourg with DGNEAR on the next **EU Enlargement Report** by the European Commission. It also held several consultations on various **EU funding instruments** and the possibilities for further co-operation with the CoE under these.

The Office **reported** on numerous EU developments that are of direct relevance to headquarters. It focused on matters such as the situation in Georgia as regards the foreign agent law, the Russian aggression against Ukraine and related policies (accountability, sanctions, return of deported children, use of frozen Russian assets, etc), the situation in candidate countries and enlargement policies, the Migration Pact and its implementation and the AI Act. The Office also followed and reported on the European elections of 9 June and the ensuing European Summits. It reported on the priorities of the incoming Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU and on the achievements of the outgoing Belgian Presidency.

The Office informed EEAS and the Commission about reports and statements by the Secretary General, CM decisions and statements by different organs of the Organisation.

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

Highlights

The Office followed up on the 55th Session of the Human Rights Council, transmitting relevant reports and information to colleagues in the Secretariat. The Head of Office finished her round of courtesy visits to permanent representatives of CoE member and observer states and started to reach out to permanent representatives of selected non-member states. She introduced CoE priorities and activities to her counterparts and presented CoE open conventions and, where appropriate, the Register of Damage for Ukraine.

Bilateral meetings were held with UNICEF Regional Director De Dominicis, ILO Director General Hounbo, UNIDIR Director Geiss and the HRC President.

The Office prepared and facilitated the visits of the SRSG on Migration and Refugees and PACE Bureau Sub-Committee on the situation of children from Ukraine.

The Head of Office represented the CoE in a number of events, such as the AI for Good Summit, the HRC Presidential High-Level Discussion on climate change, World Refugee Day, the UN International Day for Peace and the International Day of Women in Multilateralism.

She presented the new Framework Convention on AI on several occasions, including the Conference on AI and Development organised by the International Organisation of La Francophonie and the "Women in AI" UNIDIR Fellowship.

She also exchanged views about the abolition of the death penalty with relevant OHCHR staff and facilitated contacts with the secretariat.

Contacts were made with the UN Special Rapporteur on counter terrorism and human rights, as well as with ICRC staff dedicated to this topic.

The Permanent Delegation also started to follow, as an observer, WHO briefings on the negotiations on a convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

As of 18 June, the CoE delegation attended the 56th Session of the Human Rights Council.

Vienna - Council of Europe Office in charge of liaison with the OSCE, United Nations Office and other international organisations in Vienna

On 25 April, the Secretary General addressed the OSCE Permanent Council. She emphasised the significance of multilateralism and collaborative efforts in upholding rules-based international order. She also held a dialogue with Ambassadors to the OSCE, as well as an informal meeting with Ms Helga Maria Schmid, Secretary General of the OSCE. In addition, she met Ambassador Natasha Meli Daudey, Permanent Representative of Malta to the OSCE and Chair of the OSCE Permanent Council.

Furthermore, the Secretary General held a meeting with Ms Sirpa Rautio, Director of the Fundamental Rights Agency.

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

Highlights

The second quarter of 2024 brought the change of the Head of the CoE Office in Warsaw. Following the end of the term of office of Mr Pawel Wierdak and the appointment of the new Head, the first months in office were taken with administrative tasks related to the functioning of the Office and courtesy calls with the representatives of the institutions based in Warsaw.

The highlights of this quarter included the Head of Office meetings with ODIHR Director Mecacci and Secretary General of the Community of Democracies Garrett, as well as more working-level contacts with representatives of ODIHR, the Community of Democracies and Frontex.

During the transition period, the most urgent tasks included, amongst others, authorisation procedures with the revenue office, post office, bank and local IT and telecom providers. A visit of an IT specialist from Strasbourg was also organised to perform an IT upgrade of the Office premises.

The newly appointed Head of Office paid a study visit to Strasbourg, meeting the representatives of the Directorates and Departments of the CoE Secretariat, PACE, the Congress and the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, with a view to better understanding the structure and mandate of the Organisation. An exchange of views was organised, among others, with Director of Political Affairs and External Relations Papa, Director of the Private Office Esposito (and Adviser de Roeck), SRSG on Migration and Refugees Best SRSG on antisemitic, ant-Muslim and others forms of religious intolerance and hate crime Guessel.

High-level visits/meetings

25-26 April - Visit to Warsaw of the Venice Commission, headed by Ms Granata Menghini, at the request of the Polish authorities regarding an urgent opinion on the draft law amending the Law on the National Council of the Judiciary of Poland. Meetings with civil society and judicial associations, meetings at the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Parliament, the Chancellery of the President, the National Council of the Judiciary, the Ombudsman's Office, the Supreme Court and the State Electoral Commission.

26 April - 38th Meeting of the Coordination Group between the CoE and the OSCE in Strasbourg with the participation of ODIHR's representatives: Ms Jaliashvili, First Deputy Director, Mr Mossop, Special Adviser, Director's Representative in Vienna, and Mr Wrzecionkowski, Deputy Head of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination.

10 May - Meeting with Ms Jaliashvili and Mr Marrella, ODIHR Deputy Director's political adviser, on the preparations for the Second and Third Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings in Vienna, the organisation of the official visit of Deputy Director Jaliashvili to Strasbourg and the potential ways of strengthening the tripartite co-operation between the CoE, ODIHR and the UN.

14 June - Meeting with Secretary General of the Community of Democracies Garrett to officially present her credentials.

18 June - Meeting with ODIHR Director Meccaci to officially present her credentials.

19-20 June - Institutional visit of Ms Jaliashvili to headquarters for meetings with representatives of various Directorates, the Congress, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Private Office and SRSGs.

Activities of the Office

a) Enhancing the co-operation with OSCE/ODIHR - The Head of Office started her mandate by paying visits to the representatives of the respective OSCE/ODIHR departments and divisions, meeting Mr Kishan Manocha, Head of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, Ms Julia Netesova, Head of the Democratic Governance and Gender Equality Unit, Ms Julia Gebhard, Deputy Head of Democratisation and Head of Migration, Mr Andrew Gardner, Acting Head of the Human Rights Department, Mr Cristi Mihalache, Senior Advisor on Roma and Sinti Issues, Mr Ghenadie Barba, Chief of the Rule of Law Unit, Ms Alice Szczepanikova, Migration and Freedom of Movement Advisor, and Mr Konstantine Vardzelashvili, Head of the Democratisation Department. The aim of these meetings was mainly to establish working-level contacts and to exchange views regarding potential future CoE-ODIHR joint initiatives in the framework of human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

The Head of Office also closely followed the discussions concerning the appointment of the top four OSCE positions, in particular the election of the new ODIHR Director; monitored the reports and statements published by ODIHR on the election observation missions; and attended a number of meetings and consultations convened by the Office. In particular, the Head of Office participated online in all three Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings in Vienna (on the Role of Civil Society in the Promotion and Protection of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law; on Media Literacy and Democracy; and on Tolerance and Non-discrimination and Gender Equality). She also took part in ODIHR's consultative meeting with international partners on the guide for prosecutors on hate crime and criminalised hate-speech. Finally, she held a meeting with the CoE Head of Division on Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Programmes ahead of his visit to Poland for the 5th meeting of the Committee of Experts on Intercultural Inclusion (ADI-INT) in Lublin and ahead of the training course on intercultural inclusion organised by the CoE in Wroclaw in the framework of the joint inter-agency initiative (ODIHR/CoE/UNHRC/OECD) of the Academy on the integration of migrants and refugees in Polish cities.

b) Strengthening the co-operation with the Community of Democracies/CoD - Following her appointment, apart from the courtesy call with Secretary General Garrett, the Head of Office also met Ms Milka Zagloba, Legal Counsel, and Mr Mateusz Mielczarek, Programme Officer, to discuss potential joint initiatives on democratisation, in particular in the field of disinformation, democracy and technology and youth participation. The brainstorming exchange of views led to inviting the CoE's representative to participate as a panellist in the workshop on disinformation held at the margins of the CoD's Governing Council (the CoE was represented by the Division of Co-operation and Capacity Building on Freedom of expression of the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity). Being the first joint CoE-CoD initiative, the event set a good precedent for future co-operation, contributing to enhancing the CoE's visibility and expertise in the area of freedom of expression amongst the CoD members and diplomatic corps in Warsaw.

The HoO also followed the elections of the new Secretary General of the CoD and reported on the relevant developments and activities of the CoD, including the outcomes of the sessions of the CoD Executive Committee and the 38th CoD Governing Council meeting.

c) Establishing closer co-operation with Frontex - While awaiting the official meeting with Executive Director Leijtens, the Head of Office visited the Frontex premises, meeting Mr Jonas Grimheden, Fundamental Rights Officer, in order to familiarise herself with the work of the Agency and to identify potential co-operation proposals for 2024. The Head of Office reported on Frontex's activities, including on the updates concerning the irregular border crossings, workshops on ensuring fundamental rights during border management and the publication of the Guidelines for European Common Minimum Standards for Border Surveillance.

B. CoE OFFICES AND PROGRAMME OFFICES

List of abbreviations used for the naming of projects

AP	Action-Plan- level funding
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

Programme Office in Ankara

Situation of the office

The Council of Europe Programme Office in Ankara has 38 (11 men, 27 women) staff members, out of which eight (four men, four women) are core staff and 30 (seven men, 23 women) are project staff.

As of 30 June 2024, the Programme Office has implemented 11 projects, four in the framework of Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye III”, four EU/CoE Joint Programmes, one funded through a voluntary contribution (Human Rights Trust Fund (HRTF), Norway, Belgium, Türkiye and the Netherlands) and two regional programmes, ROMACTED II and Roma Integration III.

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Strengthening the Human Rights Protection in the Context of Migration”:** 105 lawyers from İzmir, Adana, Kahramanmaraş and Mardin Bars were trained on “Detention in the Context of Migration”. The Human Rights and Equality Institution started to use the guide on monitoring of detention places, developed by the project. The translation of Council of Europe Guide on Administrative Detention of Migrants and Asylum Seekers was completed in May. An international event on human rights and migration in natural disasters and emergencies was organised in Ankara on 11-12 June, with the opening of the President of Union of Bar Associations and the Deputy Head of the Council of Europe Programme Office, hosting over 100 participants from bars, public institutions and CSOs. A needs assessment on the guardianship system in child protection was done for the Ministry of Family and Social Services in June.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Action against Money Laundering in Türkiye”:** In May, 41 representatives of MASAK (Turkish Financial Intelligence Unit) and relevant institutions in Ankara were provided with enhanced knowledge on good practices related to on-site supervision of financial institutions. Participation of a MASAK representative in a multi-country event on “AML/CFT Supervision of Designated Non-financial Businesses and Professions and Virtual Assets Service Providers – Practical Application of Sector-Specific Measures” on 11-12 June in Vilnius was ensured under the action.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Fostering women’s access to justice in Türkiye (WA2J Türkiye)”:** 87 vulnerable women were empowered to claim their rights and report violations through eight training sessions on legal literacy, held in Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Adıyaman and Malatya provinces affected by the earthquake. The action continued to promote legal aid to be more accessible and gender-sensitive through the grant scheme launched with the Union of Turkish Bar Association, from which 262 women benefitted so far. 294 (238 women and 56 men) students were certified through the HELP course on “Access to justice for women”. The action is currently in the process of selecting three civil society organisations to be awarded grants to promote women’s access to justice. With Bilkent University in Ankara, an international panel on gender-responsive legal practices was organized on 15 May, with an aim to provide an overview of international principles and practices related to gender-responsive legal systems, steps to be taken for a gender-sensitive and victim-centred family law in Türkiye, and gender-sensitive communication in cases of violence and domestic violence. Findings of the project gender analysis was discussed in an online event titled “One year after the earthquakes of 6

February: Where do we stand in the pursuit of justice?", organised by İstanbul Bilgi University on 29 May. The recommendations of this analysis were shared with the Ministry of Family and Social Services, Ombudsman Institution and Human Rights and Equality Institution to promote evidence-informed gender-sensitive policy making and monitoring.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Pilot Project on Digital Citizenship Education in Türkiye":** Child participation activities continued and 10 online focus group discussions took place in April with the participation of 118 (62 women, 56 men) students from pilot schools. The action contributed to the raising awareness on digital citizenship education and to build capacity of the various stakeholders through adaptation of the online teacher training activities and development of new materials targeting parents and students. On 28 May, Award Ceremony of the Podcast Contest was held in Ankara in presence of Director of Programme Coordination (DPC) of the Council of Europe, to announce the winners and deliver their awards within the scope of the celebrations of the 75th Anniversary of the Council of Europe and 20th Anniversary of the Ankara Programme Office.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Supporting the Effective Implementation of Turkish Constitutional Court Judgments in the field of Fundamental Rights":** A total of 257 lawyers from Adana, Sinop, Tokat, Siirt, Aydın, Bursa and Tekirdağ Bar Associations on "Individual Application Procedures" and the lawyers of İzmir Bar Association on "Execution of Judgments" were trained. On 30-31 May, the training activities for 142 judges and prosecutors on "Right to a Fair Trial" were launched with the opening addressed by the President of the Constitutional Court, the Minister of Justice, the Head of the Council of Europe Programme Office and EUD representative. An international panel on "Artificial Intelligence and Law" was organised on 31 May in Ankara Medipol University, with speeches from the President of the Human Rights and Equality Institution, the Ministry of Justice and well-known academics.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Turkey":** Two meetings with CSO representatives on family mediation were held on 24 April and 22 May. On the same subject, a field visit to the courts in Van took place on 25 April. In the field of conciliation, an awareness raising seminar for 91 judges and prosecutors was held in Fethiye on 26 April. On 9 May, an International Symposium on Conciliation was launched in Istanbul by the Minister of Justice and the Head of the Council of Europe Programme Office, with over 100 judges, prosecutors, lawyers and academicians. On 24 May, the model conciliation room equipped by the project was launched in Adana. Two roundtable discussions aiming to familiarize mediation and arbitration practices with the business representatives were held in Ankara (1 June) and in İstanbul (13 June).

- **EU/CoE JP, "Improving the Effectiveness of Family Courts: Better Protection of the Rights of Family Members":** Six in-service cascade training activities in Izmir, Antalya, Istanbul and Mardin and one pre-service training session in Ankara were organised for a total of 570 judges and prosecutors. An open court day was organised in Izmir Courthouse in April. Implementation of three informative brochures, handbooks and guidelines designed under the project started in three pilot courthouses were implemented. The Family Courts Law Clinic established in Izmir Courthouse in cooperation with Izmir Economy University became operational in June. The lawyers to provide legal assistance to the earthquake survivors in Hatay were trained on family court procedures in June. External Evaluation of the Project was initiated with a deadline of completion by August.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Improving International Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters in Turkey":** In April and May, four cascade training sessions were organised in Antalya and Mardin for a total of 100 judges and prosecutors. A workshop was held in Ankara in April, with judges and prosecutors to discuss the revised Circular no.69/2 on international letters rogatory proceedings and new Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) templates. On 27-28 May, an international

conference was organised in Ankara on international judicial cooperation and combatting cybercrime in cooperation with the Council of Europe Cybercrime Office. The high-level conference was launched by the video messages of Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Deputy Minister of Justice and completed its first day with the closing remarks of Director of Programme Cooperation of the Council of Europe and the Director General of International Relations of the Ministry of Justice. The publication of Ministerial Circular No 183, supported by the project, contributed to the establishment of "Bureaux for International Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters" in seven provinces. The implementation has started and the appointment of the judicial personnel and administrative staff to these offices has been completed by placement of one Acting Chief Public Prosecutor, one Public Prosecutor, and one Registrar in each office.

- **5 donors¹ VC, "Enhancing the Disciplinary and Reward Procedures for prisoners in Türkiye"**: Two complaint forms for the use of prisoners were drafted in the 1st Working Group (WG) meeting held on 1-2 April. A part of training plans and materials for prison managers and staff were discussed and validated during the 3rd WG meeting held on 6-8 May, for the upcoming Training of Trainers (ToTs) and cascade trainings. A high-level delegation of nine representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) visited Spanish penitentiary institutions on 4-6 June to observe the best practices. On 10-12 June, the 3rd WG meeting was organised to review the draft Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) prepared for the prison management. 50 representatives from various stakeholders validated the draft SOPs during the roundtable meeting on 13 June. The submission of the legislative package, prepared under the project, to the Turkish Grand National Assembly was postponed to the next round of parliamentary session.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "ROMACTED 2 - Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level"**: Implementation of 19 grant projects is ongoing. A large-scale Advisory Group Meeting in coordination with the Roma Integration Phase II was held on 25 April in Ankara. Courtesy visits were conducted on 27 May to the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the Ministry of Interior and UNDP with the participation of Programme Manager to discuss possible collaboration opportunities. On 29 May, a grant monitoring visit with the Head of Council of Europe Programme Office was paid to the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality and Gaziantep Office of the Human Rights and Equality Institution. In June, further grant monitoring visits were conducted to the municipalities of Kdz. Ereğli, Konak, Gömeç, Akhisar, Uzunköprü, Edirne and Şişli.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "Roma Integration Phase III"**: The project work plan was finalized in March in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services. However, due to the internal staff changes in the Ministry, the work plan will be revised with the future authorities. The Regional Roma Housing Conference, held in Tirana on 12-13 June, convened policymakers, activists, experts, and community leaders to tackle the critical housing challenges and inequalities faced by Roma communities in the Western Balkans and Türkiye.

Follow up actions

- **EU/CoE JP, "Supporting the Effective Implementation of Turkish Constitutional Court Judgments in the field of Fundamental Rights"**:
 - ✓ Placements of three TCC rapporteurs in the Council of Europe/European Court of Human Rights will continue as of September.
 - ✓ Four European Court of Human Rights roundtable meetings will be organised on 13-14 September, with the participation of two lawyers of the European Court.

¹ Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, Türkiye, Human Rights Trust Fund (HRTF)

- ✓ An International Conference on the 12th Anniversary of Individual Application System will be held on 23 September in Ankara.
- ✓ A workshop to raise awareness in public and civil society organisations on selected areas of TCC case-law is planned for September and October.
- ✓ Seven training sessions for lawyers and four training sessions for judges are further planned.
- **EU/CoE JP, "Promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Turkey":**
 - ✓ Three roundtable discussions on mediation and arbitration practices with business representatives from Istanbul and Ankara will be held in July.
 - ✓ An online training module regarding ethical standards for conciliators will be completed by August.
 - ✓ The closing ceremony of the project will be organized in Ankara on 10 September.
- **EU/CoE JP, "Improving the Effectiveness of Family Courts: Better Protection of the Rights of Family Members":**
 - ✓ On-site legal assistance will be provided to 300 family members affected by the earthquake in Hatay during June-August.
 - ✓ The Evaluation Report will be produced and presented to the relevant stakeholders.
 - ✓ The Roadmap on Legislative and Policy-level Amendments will be finalized.
 - ✓ The structure of Family Justice Council developed under the project is expected to be adopted by September. The project will be finalised by a closing conference in September 2024.
- **EU/CoE JP, "Improving International Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters in Turkey":**
 - ✓ Two more cascade training sessions are planned for 1-3 July in Izmir.
 - ✓ On 4 July, the second workshop is planned to discuss the revised Circular no.69/2 and new MLA templates with judges and prosecutors.
 - ✓ In September, a study visit to Spain is planned with the Ministry of Justice.
- **5 donors VC, "Enhancing the Disciplinary and Reward Procedures for Prisoners in Türkiye":**
 - ✓ The finalised SOPs and complaint forms are expected to be endorsed by the MoJ in July.
 - ✓ The adoption of the relevant legislative amendments drafted under the project will be closely followed during the next round of parliamentary session.
 - ✓ Additional training materials for the ToT and cascade training sessions will be finalised in July. The remaining training plans and materials will be developed through a desk study by early September.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening the Human Rights Protection in the Context of Migration":**
 - ✓ Next cascade training sessions are planned with various local bars in July and September, in coordination with the Union of Turkish Bar Associations.
 - ✓ The guide on monitoring of detention places will be published and disseminated.
 - ✓ Training material on monitoring of detention places will be developed by September.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action against Money Laundering in Türkiye":**
 - ✓ A two-day workshop on "Comparative Practices on Setting up and Functions of Asset Recovery Office and Asset Sharing in the EU Member States" is planned for July.
 - ✓ Two technical papers on the subjects related to anti money laundering will be drafted in the next quarter.
 - ✓ Discussions with the EU on the revision of action logframe is ongoing.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Fostering Women's Access to Justice in Turkey":**

- ✓ The action will organise a joint event with UN Women in October with the aim of further dissemination of the findings of the gender analysis in the earthquake region. The event aims to bring together international organisations, civil society, academia, and public institutions, which previously reported on the consequences of the earthquakes.
- ✓ The action is currently facing a challenging situation concerning its budget and continues its efforts to draft complimentary projects and will follow-up on their realisation.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Pilot Project on Digital Citizenship Education in Türkiye":**
 - ✓ Contents of training and awareness raising materials targeting teachers, students and parents will be reviewed in July and finalised during the following quarter.
 - ✓ The tender for the web-based game will be finalised and contractor will be identified by the end of July. The game will be developed and tested by December.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "ROMACTED 2 - Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level":**
 - ✓ Monitoring visits will continue in 10 ROMACTED municipalities.
 - ✓ External Evaluation for ROMACTED 2 will be completed by September.
 - ✓ Discussions on future Roma Projects to be implemented in Türkiye will continue.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "Roma Integration Phase III":**
 - ✓ A media training will be carried out in Serbia in August, including representatives from Türkiye.
 - ✓ An introductory visit to Ombudsman will be organised in the next quarter.
 - ✓ Amendment on project activities and budget will be worked with the team.
 - ✓ The progress report will be submitted in July.
 - ✓ Field visits to Izmir and Hatay/Gaziantep will be organized in the next quarter.
 - ✓ Training sessions on Roma communities will be organised for the Human Rights and Equality Institution.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- The visibility week of 27-31 May, on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Council of Europe and the 20th Anniversary of the Council of Europe Programme Office, started to be celebrated on 27 May with a high-level reception in Ankara with more than 150 distinguished representatives from the public institutions, EUD, embassies, international organisations and CSOs.
- The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities carried out a local election mission during 29 March - 1 April.
- ECRI Monitoring Visit was conducted on 25-31 May.
- PACE Delegation Monitoring Visit was held on 10-14 June.

Office in Baku

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Baku has 14 (four men, 10 women) staff members, out of which six (two men, four women) are core staff and eight (two men, six women) are project staff.

As of 30 June 2024, the Office has implemented five projects, four in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Partnership for Good Governance" and one project funded through a voluntary contribution at Action Plan-level. The Action Plan for Azerbaijan 2022-2025 has received as of 30 June 2024 Action-Plan-level contributions from Germany, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, and Romania. The project funded by voluntary contributions from Belgium and HRTF was finalized in May.

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Preventing and fighting economic crime in Azerbaijan"**: The project started the process for the updating of the Anti-Corruption and Ethics Handbooks, earlier developed under the first phase of the Partnership for Good Governance Project in 2016. The handbooks will serve as a guide for all practitioners, particularly civil servants, to enhance understanding of international standards and good practices in the fight against corruption, improvement of good governance, and promotion of integrity and ethical behaviour based on the universal values.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Azerbaijan"**: The project prepared the publications of four European Court of Human Rights Factsheets in Azerbaijani which will be awareness-raising sources on violence against women (VAW), domestic violence (DW) and gender equality. Furthermore, it translated and adopted recently introduced e-learning HELP course on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in Azerbaijani. The course will be available to be used on the HELP platform after its e-designing. The project arranged the participation of six civil society representatives to the Budapest conference for raising awareness on VAW which will be held on 11-12 July.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Fostering mediation in Azerbaijan"**: The project launched the work on developing a Handbook for mediators of Azerbaijan. The handbook will contain detailed recommendations and tools for effective mediation in civil, family, labour, commercial, administrative matters and serve as a practical guide for national mediators in their daily work. Two modules relevant for mediation of the HELP course on "Quality of Justice – the Work of the CEPEJ" were translated into Azerbaijani language.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Promoting equality in Azerbaijan"**: The project conducted a training activity on the role of civil society in promoting equality and non-discrimination on 4-5 June. With this training it was aimed to enhance the capacity of 20 civil society representatives and law students in promoting equality and non-discrimination. The training included presentations and interactive sessions on European standards, equality data collection, importance of support services to people affected by discrimination, relating awareness raising initiatives and effective communication strategies. The project also initiated

the translation of updated version of the Council of Europe's online course on Hate Speech, that will be used as a very useful tool for further training of all relevant actors.

- **AP, "Promoting media professionalism and freedom of information in Azerbaijan (PRO-M-FEX) – Phase I":** The project produced a Guide on Access to Information for Azerbaijani journalists which is developed with the involvement of both international and national experts. The guide explains the legal requirements on access to information and assists Azerbaijani journalists in inquiring about and using information for their journalistic activities, in line with their right to freedom of information.

- **Belgium and HRTF VC, "Support for the improvement of the execution of the European Court judgments by Azerbaijan":** The duration of the project, which was due to end on 29 February, was extended by three months and finalised on 31 May. During the reporting period the project focused on translations and desk reviews of the documents that will be sustainably useful for all parties engaged in the execution process of the European Court of Human Rights' cases at national level. All translated documents have been placed into the relevant sections of the website of the Department for Execution of European Court's judgments for an easy reference. The outcomes of the project will be presented within the final report to be submitted in August.

Follow up actions

- Follow up on final narrative and financial report for the Project on "Support for the improvement of the execution of the European Court judgments by Azerbaijan".

Other relevant activities

- On 2 April and 21 May the Head of Office and the Deputy Head of Office met with Aysel Yagubova, Head of Department for Cooperation with International Human Rights Institutions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- On 22 May, the Deputy Head of Office attended the event on "Green World Solidarity" organised by the DOST Centre under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
- On 23 May, the Head of Office and the Deputy Head of Office met with Lena Karlsson, DG NEAR and EaP gender expert, within the PGG III project "Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Azerbaijan".
- On 24 May, the Head of Office attended the visit to Lachin organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- On 3 June, the Head of Office attended the diplomatic briefing of the COP29 Operating Company.
- On 2 May and 27 June, the Deputy Head of Office attended the regular sessions of the Central Electoral Commission of Azerbaijan.

Office in Belgrade

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Belgrade has 34 staff members (10 men, 24 women), out of which seven are core staff (four men, three women), and 27 are project staff (six men, 21 women).

As of 30 June 2024, the Office has implemented 14 (country specific and regional) projects, 10 jointly funded with the EU (seven in the framework of the Horizontal Facility Phase III and three EU/CoE Joint Programmes) and four projects funded through Voluntary Contributions: two funded by Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), one funded by the Human Rights Trust Fund (HRTF) and one funded by Germany.

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Quality Education for All - Serbia"**: The second peer learning and mentors meeting for 72 mentors and key partners took place in May. Mentor schools identified and selected 180 new schools, nationwide, to be trained for the 2024/25 School Year. The third Action Steering Committee meeting was organised in April. The editing process for the "Guidelines for Integration of Reference Framework in National Curricula II" commenced in June. Mentor schools and mentees marked Day of Education for Democratic Culture with thousands of participants across Serbia.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Combating discrimination and promoting diversity in Serbia"**: The capacity of the Commissioner for protection of equality (CPE) was strengthened through a survey on hate speech in the media with a focus on the misuse of sensitive terms, followed by training activities for media representatives on the concept and forms of discrimination and hate speech, with emphasis on the vulnerability of LGBTI people, and a conference on combating hate speech. Following the recommendations of the CPE Special report on discrimination of children, a training session on antidiscrimination for teaching and non-teaching staff in schools has been developed for 23 participants from different municipalities.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Protecting Freedom of Expression and of the Media in Serbia (PRO-FREX-S)"**: The action provided support to REM² through the provision of legal opinions on by-laws which now contain enhanced human rights protection articles, better privacy safeguards for minors and more balanced requirements for election campaign media coverage. The action further supported journalists' associations of Serbia through the provision of the newly adopted Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)2 on countering the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), in Serbian language.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening anti-trafficking action in Serbia"**: The action organised a training seminar on detecting potential child trafficking in schools with 37 participants (five men, 32 women), including representatives of 13 regional school districts and key anti-trafficking stakeholders (representatives of police, education, social affairs, health and two anti-trafficking civil society organisations). Peer Exchange of Serbian anti-trafficking policy makers (three men, four women) with counterparts from Finland took place on 21 and 22 May in Helsinki. The 3rd Action Steering Committee meeting was held on 10 June.

² Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media in Serbia

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Strengthening human rights protection in Serbia”:** The action supported capacity building of Serbian institutions: organised a training session for Constitutional Court advisors on the application of the proportionality and quality of law tests; four training activities for prosecutors on how to effectively implement decisions of the European Court of Human Rights in prosecutorial acts; a high-level regional conference on legal aspects of the use of data from encrypted messaging services as evidence in criminal proceedings. The action contributed to European inter-judicial dialogue by supporting participation of Serbian courts’ advisors in the meeting of the SCN³ and by supporting participation of the European Court of Human Rights’ judge in the Annual Symposium of Serbian judiciary.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Enhancing the human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons in Serbia”:** Drafting of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Interior was finalised and awaiting further processing by the authorities. The aim is to standardise conduct of police officers and medical workers for medical screening of detainees in police custody. Drafting of the four new offender treatment programmes is on track. In two peer-to-peer sessions, 40 treatment officers and 10 commissioners were acquainted with the reintegration programme for long-term offenders and have now a better understanding on utilising it most effectively.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Enhancing cooperation in the Western Balkans in managing violent extremism in prisons and preventing further radicalisation after release”:** Prison professionals from Serbia took part at the 2nd regional conference held on 24 - 25 April in Tirana (Albania) dedicated to rehabilitation and the prison-exit continuum of VEPs⁴ and prisoners at risk from radicalisation and have attended the 3rd Steering Committee meeting. Representatives of Serbian Department for Execution of Criminal Sanctions enhanced their knowledge and skills in application of VEPs specific instruments and rehabilitation approach at the training held on 25 – 26 June in Vrdnik (Serbia).
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, “ROMACTED 2 - Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level”:** In commemoration of the International Roma Day, an event was organised at the Roma Cultural Centre in Pirot, to honour the richness of Roma culture, tradition, and identity. The event gathered distinguished guests, including Mayor of Pirot, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade, Assistant Minister for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, representatives of the EU Delegation in Serbia and president of CSO Ternipe. On the same occasion, various cultural and educational events were organised in 13 Programme cities and municipalities and Roma flag was raised on city halls or public institutions.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, “Roma Integration Phase III”:** The project initiated the preparation of the Poznan Declaration Assessment in cooperation with the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue in Serbia and the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina (institutional partners). Informative meetings for Roma on mechanisms for reporting discrimination were held in five settlements in Serbia. A round table on data-based policies and programs was organized in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) with municipalities, civil society and institutions. The Regional Conference on Housing was organized in Tirana (Albania) for representatives of relevant institutions and civil society organizations.
- **EU/CoE JP, “Support for the implementation of judicial reform in Serbia”:** The project facilitated the finalisation of all implementation bylaws for the new judicial and prosecutorial laws. The presentation of the Bulletin of the Supreme Public Prosecutors’ Office

³ Superior Courts Network

⁴ Violent Extremist Prisoners

took place in Belgrade and support was provided for the organisation of the Annual Conference of Judges in Vrnjacka Banja. An expert of the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE) participated at the panel on evaluation of work of judges, the Grant Agreement for the Supreme Court was signed and two quarterly meetings of all four appellate courts and Supreme Court of Serbia were held to harmonise case law. The Judicial Academy trainees were supported to participate at the THEMIS Competition in European Law in Rome.

- **HRTF VC, Regional "HELP in the Western Balkans"**: The project supported the regional launch of the HELP course "Women Access to Justice" for all six Judicial Academies in the region. The following courses have been also launched: HELP course on Antidiscrimination in Serbia, Hate Speech in Kosovo*, Hate Crime and Introduction to Corruption Prevention in Albania and Ethics for judges, prosecutors and lawyers in North Macedonia. The number of users of the HELP platform in the region is 9688, which is an increase of 36% since the beginning of the project in January 2023.

- **Sweden (Sida) VC, "Preventing money laundering and terrorist financing in Serbia"**: The project conducted final activities planned within the project at the end of the project implementation. A three-month long online training programme focused on international cooperation in asset recovery has been successfully completed by 26 prosecutors. The training programme has been included by the Judicial Academy which incorporated it in the list of courses available for legal professionals on their website. Also, the project supported development of the guidelines for financial and non-financial sector supervisors on verification of data from the Registry of Beneficial Owners.

- **Sweden (Sida) VC, "Countering Economic Crime in Serbia"**: The project has been launched in the reporting period. Within this period, it already started implementation of the most urgent activities based on the needs of the project beneficiaries. The project provided support to the Serbian Financial Intelligence Unit to improve the procedures and system of prioritisation and development of operational analysis and prepare the draft of plan of prioritisation. In addition, the project conducted review and provided recommendations for enhancing the Law on lobbying to enable effective implementation of the law and fulfilment of the 5th Round GRECO recommendations.

- **Germany VC, "Prevent bullying and peer violence in schools"**: The official launch event was organised on 28 May, attended by ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps, high officials, academic community. Steering Committee members and research experts met with representatives of UNESCO and OECD on 5-7 June and discussed research methodologies related to peer violence in schools, use of technology in education through the lenses of relevance and equity, as well as child participation and empowerment. Methodology for carrying out baseline research on peer violence in schools in Serbia is being adapted, ensuring it is highly effective to address the needs and challenges faced by students in Serbia.

Other relevant activities

- On 11-12 April, the 3rd Belgrade History Education Symposium was held in the framework of the 75th anniversary of the Council of Europe. The symposium was organised by the CSO "Education for 21st century", University of Belgrade, the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade, and the Council of Europe's Observatory on History Teaching in Europe.

* 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

- On 13-19 May, the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade supported the organisation of Pride Week in Novi Sad and marking of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT).
- On 18 June, the International Day for Countering Hate Speech was marked in co-operation with the Commissioner for Protection of Equality.
- On 25 June, the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade marked the 75th anniversary of the Council of Europe with a commemorative ceremony gathering representatives of the government, the diplomatic corps and international organisations, the media, the civil sector, partners and counterparts. The event was also an opportunity to enhance the co-operation and coordination with partners.
- On 24-28 June, the monitoring visit of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities took place in Serbia.

Cybercrime Programme Office in Bucharest

Situation of the Office

The Cybercrime Programme Office of the Council of Europe in Bucharest has 46 (10 men, 36 women, Head of Office split between Bucharest and Strasbourg) staff members, out of which two (one man, one woman) is core staff and 44 (nine men, 35 women) project staff.

During the reporting period, the office was responsible for the implementation of seven capacity building projects on cybercrime, out of which five are jointly funded with the European Union (EU) and two are funded by voluntary contributions.

State of implementation of projects

Joint initiatives of the Cybercrime Programme Office (C-PROC) collectively strengthened international cooperation, legal frameworks, and awareness in the fight against cybercrime worldwide. [C-PROC celebrated 10 years since it was founded](#), continuing to be one of the primary players and a global centre of expertise for capacity building on cybercrime and e-evidence. The [International Network of National Trainers](#) enhanced global judicial training on cybercrime and electronic evidence with more than 70 judges and prosecutors attending the new sessions on [OCSEA](#) and [cyberviolence](#). The T-CY Plenary (18-20 June) was supported by all projects implemented by C-PROC.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, “CyberSPEX - Enhanced co-operation on e-evidence by EU Member States through the Second Protocol to the Budapest Convention”**: The launching event of the project (June) validated its objective and identified new ways of assisting EU Member States in the internal process of the implementation of the Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime. The preparation of the guide on the implementation of the Second Additional Protocol continued as well as the dialogue with relevant European Union agencies and projects.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, “CyberEast+ - Enhanced Action on Cybercrime for Cyber Resilience in the Eastern Partnership states”**: Following a delayed launch of the project in May, this action in the Eastern Partnership region focused on legislative approximation with the Budapest Convention and its Second Protocol, skills for financial investigations, and engagement with civil society on cyber resilience. The project planning event was followed by bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the T-CY 30th Plenary and marked the move of project approach towards more national ownership. Cooperation with Azerbaijan is currently limited due to political developments, while activities for Georgia remain regional in scope before the October elections.
- **AP, “CyberUA – Strengthening capacities on electronic evidence of war crimes and gross human rights violations in Ukraine”**: An inception study on electronic evidence of war crimes and related offences in the context of the war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as review of investigative manuals and guidelines of the Prosecutor General’s Office in terms of electronic evidence handling, were completed. The cooperation exercise in Kyiv, as first-ever in-person activity under the project in Ukraine, tested and developed the skills for handling cyberattacks on critical infrastructure. An in-depth study of substantive law in relation

to the crime of aggression via cyberattacks is underway. The work under the project is coordinated through relevant workstreams of the Accountability Dialogue Group.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, “CyberSouth+: Enhanced cooperation on cybercrime and electronic evidence in the Southern Neighbourhood Region”:** The project was officially launched on 17-18 April, in Lisbon, following an inception phase of three months (January to March), during which all priority countries were consulted, and an agreement on the work plan was reached with each of them. The first part of the year was dedicated to national priorities. In Algeria the project supported the delivery of a Training of Trainer course for magistrates and started a roadmap for the elaboration of a national guide on cybercrime to train magistrates. The project paid an official visit to Jordan to discuss with all main stakeholders the implementation of the new cybercrime law and activities to be jointly implemented until the end of the initiative in 2026. A workshop on Standard Operating Procedures and cryptocurrency took place with the Lebanese institutions and four national activities were organized with Morocco by supporting a specialized training course on dark web and cryptocurrency for LEA, a training course on cybercrime and e-evidence for magistrates, a workshop on the First Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention and a conference on cybercrime and AI. In Tunisia the project supported a workshop on domestic procedural powers and a Training of Trainers course for magistrates. The project started a comprehensive legislative review regarding the domestic framework of the new three partners: Egypt, Libya and Palestine** and contributed to the European Security and Defence College’s annual course “The EU’s Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade”.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, “CyberSEE – Co-operation on Cybercrime: Enhanced action on cybercrime and electronic evidence in South-East Europe and Türkiye”:** Over 200 criminal justice professionals enhanced their knowledge on judicial cooperation on cybercrime at the [International Conference in Türkiye](#), on attribution and confiscation of [cryptocurrencies](#), [investigation online child abuse](#), [handling electronic evidence](#) and [advanced forensic tools](#) at the events organized in collaboration with the US DoJ, EUROPOL, ISS World and OSCE. First steps to integrate cybercrime and electronic evidence modules into curricula of the police academies were taken during the [Regional Workshop in Montenegro](#). The project objectives and upcoming activities were agreed upon at the first [Steering Committee Meeting](#). Closer co-operation and real-time information exchange between Law Enforcement Agencies and Computer Emergency Response Teams was supported by the Regional Workshop in Albania under the EU policy cycle EMPACT.

- **EU/CoE JP, “Global Action on Cybercrime extended (GLACY+)”:** Project partner countries discussed the overall progress of the project and shared key developments at country level in the [First Steering Committee](#). The ongoing legislative reforms in Rwanda, [Cameroon](#), Panama (cybercrime and electronic evidence), [the Gambia](#) (electronic evidence) and Sierra Leone (data protection) were supported. Policy dialogue with parliamentarians was enhanced in the context of national legal reforms in Ecuador, Fiji and through a High-Level workshop for policymakers of the Pacific Islands. 50 criminal justice professionals and diplomats from 10 LATAM countries exchanged views in a [regional event dedicated to the implementation of the Second Additional Protocol](#). The development of the 24/7 POC in Ecuador, Cameroon and Kiribati was supported. The capacities of [Mauritius](#) and [Brazil](#) on judicial training were reinforced by creating pools of national trainers. The Filipino regional trainers delivered training to a group of 28 Thai judges, in the new capacity of the Philippines as hub country for the project. A new course on gendered aspects of cybercrime was developed and delivered in Ecuador. Project partner countries discussed the overall progress of the project and shared key developments at country level in the [First Steering Committee](#).

** 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

- **8⁵ donors VC, "Octopus project"**: Legislative and technical capacities were enhanced in Mauritius and Brazil, creating pools of national judicial trainers on cybercrime and e-evidence (jointly with GLACY-e project). Workshops in Seychelles and Mauritania focused on aligning national laws with the Budapest Convention. Specialized judicial training courses were held in Thailand to improve international cooperation and prosecutorial skills in handling cybercrime cases, whilst Malaysia and Kazakhstan were supported in assessing their needs in legislative reform and capacity building in view of their prospective accession to the Budapest Convention.
- **United States of America (INL) VC, "Enhanced Action on Cybercrime and Electronic Evidence (CYBERKOP)" under the Octopus project (see also Pristina Office)**: Criminal justice professionals enhanced their knowledge on [judicial cooperation](#) on cybercrime, drafting agreements on judicial cooperation in criminal matters, data preservation, [spontaneous information](#) and relevant EU instruments for international cooperation, such as European Investigation Order and Joint Investigation Teams, but also on investigation of [online child abuse](#), cryptocurrencies and practical [use of forensics tools](#).

Follow up actions

- Regional workshop on Internet investigations, in cooperation with US Department of Justice, 11-12 July, Türkiye.
- Regional training on Cryptocurrency and Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, 11-13 September, Montenegro.
- Support for participation of the project countries in the UN Ad-Hoc Committee for drafting an international treaty on cybercrime, 29 July – 9 August, New York, USA.
- Domestic trainings on Investigation and Confiscation of Cryptocurrencies, 27-29 August, Belgrade, Serbia.
- Underground Economy Conference, 2-5 September, Strasbourg, France.
- Joint conference Council of Europe-EUROJUST on spontaneous sharing of information on cybercrime, 25-26 September, The Hague, Netherlands.
- Launch of the CyberEast+ Project on Enhanced action on cybercrime for cyber resilience in Eastern Partnership States, coupled with regional discussion on requirements of the Second Additional protocol for the EU candidate countries.
- Creation of a team at the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine to support the implementation of the CyberUA project on "Strengthening capacities on electronic evidence of war crimes and gross human rights violations in Ukraine".
- Series of activities supporting Ukraine on handling of e-evidence, malware/ransomware, financial and network investigations, as well as qualifying the crime of aggression.
- Online resource on e-evidence and OSINT of war crimes.
- Consultations with key infrastructure on cooperation on e-evidence of war crimes.
- Workshops on the role and responsibilities of the 24/7 Contact Points in Fiji, Cote D'Ivoire, Benin, Grenada, Sao Tome and Vanuatu.
- Domestic workshop on public-private cooperation and mitigating cybersecurity risks, Pristina, Kosovo*.
- Domestic workshops on updating the legal and regulatory frameworks, Pristina, Kosovo*.
- Domestic joint workshop on cryptocurrencies – analysis to confiscation, Pristina, Kosovo*.
- Finalisation and publication of the Council of Europe ransomware webpage.
- Launch of CYBOX online training platform.
- Completion of the final assessment report of the CyberSouth project and GLACY+ project.

⁵ Canada, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States of America

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- Finalisation and submission to the European Commission of the inception report of CyberSEE, CyberSPEX, GLACY-e projects.
- Regional workshop for Southeast Asia countries on cybercrime and e-evidence.

Other relevant activities

- [Sierra Leone acceded to the Convention on Cybercrime](#), 19 April.
- [Grenada acceded to the Convention on Cybercrime](#), 23 April.
- [Georgia becomes the 44th State to sign the Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime](#), 17 June.
- [Benin, Fiji and Kiribati acceded to the Convention on Cybercrime](#), 20 June.
- [Benin acceded to the First Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime](#), 20 June.
- [Czechia and Sierra Leone signed the Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime](#), 20 June.

Office in Chisinau

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Chisinau has 45 (11 men, 34 women) staff members, out of which seven (four men, three women) are core staff and 38 (seven men, 31 women) project staff.

As of 30 June 2024, the Office has implemented 20 projects, 12 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 through the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the European Union respectively, as detailed below. The Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024 has received as of 30 June 2024 Action-Plan-level contributions from Belgium, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Sweden, Switzerland, as well as from the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe.

State of implementation of projects

- **AP, "Preventing and protecting children from violence including in the digital environment"**: The project supported the prizes for seven children (five girls and two boys) awarded within the National art award contest on Child friendly justice, organised in cooperation with National Institute of Justice and School of Fine Arts. On 11 June, 15 female probation counsellors participated in a follow-up session on the training manual developed in 2023 to identify challenges and lessons learned. Within 12-14 June, 13 penitentiaries staff (four men and nine women) attended a ToT session to build their capacities in working with children in conflict with law.
- **AP, "Strengthening the prison and probation reforms, provision of health care and the treatment of patients in closed institutions in the Republic of Moldova"**: Medical equipment was donated to the National Administration of Penitentiaries, in view of aligning the delivery of medical services in prisons to [CPT](#) standards. The handover ceremony was hosted by the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Moldova and the [Deputy Secretary General](#) of the Council of Europe. New minimum nutrition and hygiene standards for prisoners, new rules on releasing seriously ill sentenced detainees and those held on remand from detention, new Law on Mental Health and Well-being were approved, following the expertise provided by the project. In June the Ministry of Justice has also requested the expertise on amendments proposed to the Law No. 300/2017 on the penitentiary administration system, which will be provided under the same project.
- **AP, "Supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova"**: The project facilitated a public lecture on the digital dimension of violence against women (VAW), delivered by the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe to over 120 students. 50 social assistants from various regions enhanced their skills in handling domestic violence cases per Council of Europe guidelines. A study on the Republic of Moldova's legal framework's alignment with the Istanbul Convention for protecting migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women from violence was launched. 16 Moldovan institutions and CSOs representatives (five men and 11 women) participated in a VAW best practices exchange during a study visit hosted by the Spanish Ministry of Equality. The staff of the Agency on

Preventing and Combating VAW and Domestic Violence, along with other authorities, improved their data collection skills related to VAW.

- **Netherlands VC, “Enhancing diversity and equality in the Republic of Moldova” and AP, “Promoting non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova”:** A MoU was signed with the Cimislia District Council and one local network was established for supporting victims and vulnerable groups against hate crime and discrimination. 23 Heads of Police Inspectorates (22 men, one woman) received training on bias-motivated offences and hate speech. A Round table was organised in synergy with four Council of Europe projects, UN Women and Central Electoral Commission on combating hate speech and sexism, ahead of presidential election. Four Police Academy courses were updated to address bias-motivated offences, following analysis and recommendations. Increased awareness and interinstitutional cooperation in four pilot districts to combat discrimination and support vulnerable groups, following three one-day training sessions for the local networks from four pilot districts (45 participants). A Round table enhanced dialogue between Moldovan Police and the LGBTI community (40 participants). 14 trainers from the General Police Inspectorate and Police Academy lecturers were trained to combat hate speech. 23 Community mediators enhanced their knowledge in promoting Roma rights.

- **AP, “Support for Media Pluralism and Freedom of Expression in the Republic of Moldova”:** The project launched a [publication](#) to serve as a guide for civil servants and commentary of the new Law on Access to Information of Public Interest. Additional support has been provided to the Government of Moldova in developing the methodological framework for monitoring the proactive transparency criteria in the law on access to information and to prepare a communications campaign aiming at informing the general public about the new faster and easier means to request information.

- **AP, “Strengthening the human rights protection of refugees and migrants in the Republic of Moldova”:** A high-level visit to Malta of the Moldovan legal, asylum and migration professionals was carried out. A joint workshop with UNHCR on Protection of asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants took place in Chisinau. 30 schoolteachers from Southern districts participated in a two-day seminar. A study visit of the representatives of the People’s Advocate Office to Portugal was conducted. World Refugee Day 2024 was marked with the presentation of the Resilience Journal for Adolescents. Moldovan legal professionals participated in an International Conference on Human Rights and Migration in Ankara. Moldovan professionals in the field of asylum and migration participated in a two and a half-day study visit to Germany.

- **AP, “Support to the Office of the Ombudsperson in the protection of human rights in the Republic of Moldova phase I”:** The official launch of the project took place on 8 May. The project supported the publication of the 2023 Annual Report on Human Rights and Freedoms, which was subsequently presented to Parliament on 27 June. The Human Rights Caravan campaign was launched in the southern city of Cahul, Moldova - an initiative led by the Ombudsperson’s Office with the support of the Council of Europe and the UNHCR. The project supported the Human Rights Caravan in three towns of the Republic of Moldova as one of the major activities under the project upon launching it during early summer.

- **AP, “Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova (IEPRM), phase III”:** A guide on monitoring sexist speech in media during elections was developed and a round-table with the EU and UN Women launched an anti-sexist and no-hate speech campaign on 26 April. Two ToTs on 15-18 April and 14-17 May enhanced the capacities of over 40 electoral officials for the upcoming 2024 Presidential elections. Around 25 Central Electoral Commissions (CECs) representatives benefited from the BRIDGE workshop on Building Institutional Excellence. Approximately 50 judges and prosecutors were trained on electoral

dispute resolution on 6 June. Moldovan electoral administration learned from Portuguese authorities about postal voting during a study visit to Lisbon on 18-20 June.

- **AP, “Reinforcing the culture of dialogue and ethical open local governance in the Republic of Moldova”**: Municipalities from Causeni and Leova, with the project support, were the first Moldovan municipalities selected to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Local Programme. Peer exchange was organised for the selected municipalities from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine on OGP and human rights, and for national associations from Moldova and Ukraine on their role in promoting open government. The Guide on preventing and combatting sexism at the local level was published and disseminated during Congress of Local Authorities from the Republic of Moldova’s (CALM) Administrative Council meeting and a roundtable on combatting sexism ahead of 2024 presidential elections.

- **AP, “Education for Democracy in the Republic of Moldova II”**: 650 school directors and 970 civic education teachers all over Moldova have been trained how to apply in practice the monitoring methodology on implementation of the “Education for society” curriculum (methodological approach, opportunities, and challenges). The methodology, developed with support of the Council of Europe, was approved by Ministry of Education and Research for nation-wide implementation as of September 2024.

- **Norway VC / AP, “Strengthening the human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova”**: The project trained over 20 investigative judges on handling complaints about poor detention conditions. The Advisory Council under the Government Agent of Moldova held its 3rd meeting to discuss pending Court judgments, systemic issue solutions, and new applications recently communicated to the Government. The Council of Europe's legal expertise on Law No. 1545/1998, concerning compensation for unlawful acts by criminal investigation authorities, prosecution, and courts, recommends new legislation.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, “Support to further modernisation of court management in the Republic of Moldova”**: Within the working groups on uniformisation of annual reporting on courts’ performance and optimisation of human resources, the project has developed recommendations aiming at improving and harmonising the structure of the annual report on court performance and the methodology of monitoring and analysing statistical data on human resources in the judicial system. Guidance on the use of JUSTAT AIS and its functionalities in drafting court reports was provided. The draft Communication policy documents were developed with the view to be further discussed with the stakeholders.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, “Enhancing the anti-money laundering and asset recovery regime in the Republic of Moldova”**: A comprehensive document assessing the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) guidelines for identifying Beneficial Owners (BO) was developed. It compares the FIU’s guidelines with international standards, particularly those set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and documents best practices, highlighting areas of alignment and divergence, and opportunities for improvement. Additionally, a two-day workshop on strategic analysis was conducted for FIU staff from the strategic analysis, operational analysis, and compliance sections. It aimed to enhance AML and asset recovery activities by focusing on skills development, risk mitigation, inter-agency cooperation, and capacity building, equipping FIU staff with essential strategic analysis skills.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, “Combating discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in the Republic of Moldova”**: The project made steps forward in improving data collection on hate crimes, namely through a meeting platform of key actors on 10 April and a [training session](#) for 42 operators of the Police database. Eight representatives of the Equality Council and of the People’s Advocate Office [learned from the experience of Maltese authorities](#). The project

contributed to [advancing cooperation in combating hate speech and sexism ahead of presidential election](#). 143 legal professionals were trained on [ensuring legal redress to hatred](#), and on [better protection of minorities](#). International Day against hate speech was marked through [dedicated Police training](#). Additionally, the project contributed to creating a [platform between Police and the LGBTI community](#). Capacities of 23 Roma community mediators were built through a tailor-made training on 25-26 June.

- **EU/CoE JP, “Support to the justice reform in the Republic of Moldova”:** The project provided two legal assessments to the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) concerning the regulation on selection of judges to the Supreme Court of Justice and draft regulation on the SCM Board for selection and evaluation of judges. 14 trainers (three men, 10 women) of the National Institute of Justice were trained in Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model and adult training methodology. Members and staff of the Superior Council of Prosecutors, including representatives of the Prosecutorial Inspection (11 men, 12 women), were trained in administrative procedure.

- **United States of America (INL) VC, “Action against Corruption in the Republic of Moldova – Phase 2”:** (1) During 29-30 May 2024, confidential counselling on ethical matters was discussed with judges and prosecutors in the Republic of Moldova as a way forward to strengthen integrity in the judicial and prosecutorial systems; (2) A roundtable event was organized, aimed to advance discussions on the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Moldova on whistleblower protection which came into force in October 2023. The event took place in Chisinau, on 6 June, and facilitated discussions among stakeholders involved in implementing the law, contributing to a better understanding of the enforcement mechanism.

- **Austria (ADA) VC, “Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova”:** The project increased knowledge of the European Social Charter (ESC) system for staff members of the Ombudsperson Institution, Equality Council, Trade Union, National Confederation of Employers, and civil society organizations. 20 representatives from eight Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions, the National Agency for Employment, Trade Union, employers' confederation, and companies discussed integrating persons with special needs into the labour market. 12 students and 16 teachers from eight VET institutions improved their communication skills for promoting educational offers and enhancing website content, guided by a developed communication strategies guide. The National Network for Integrating NEET Youth (Not in employment, education, or training) into the VET System was launched with project support.

Other relevant activities

- The Venice Commission issued the [opinion](#) on the Law on the partial implementation of the postal vote, approved by the Council for Democratic Elections at its 80th meeting (Venice, 20 June) and adopted by the Venice Commission at its 139th Plenary Session (Venice, 21-22 June).

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 8-9 April, the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, paid an official visit to the Republic of Moldova. He had meetings with high-level Moldovan officials, and hosted, along with the Minister of Justice, a handover ceremony of medical equipment to the National Administration of Penitentiaries. He also participated in a public lecture held at Moldova State University, where he delivered introductory

remarks and engaged in a dialogue with students on gender equality and the [Istanbul Convention](#).

- On 22-23 May 2024, the President of the European Court of Human Rights, and the President of the Venice Commission, visited the Republic of Moldova to participate in the XIXth Congress of the Conference of European Constitutional Courts held in Chisinau hosted by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova with the support of the Council of Europe. During their visit, they also held bilateral meetings with the President of the Republic of Moldova, and other high-level officials of the country.

Office in Georgia

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Georgia has 49 (seven men, 42 women) staff members, out of which 10 (three men, seven women) are core staff and 39 (four men, 35 women) are project staff.

As of 30 June 2024, the Office has implemented 17 projects, four in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Partnership for Good Governance", one regional EU/CoE Joint Programme, two projects funded through a voluntary contribution from Austria through the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and from Switzerland through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) respectively, and 11 funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level. The Action Plan for the Georgia 2024-2027 has received as of 30 June 2024 Action-Plan-level contributions from Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, as well as from the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe.

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Support to modernisation of court management in Georgia":** Significant progress has been made in the Court Coaching programme across pilot courts. In Zugdidi Regional Court and the Supreme Court of Georgia, user satisfaction survey questionnaires were developed with CEPEJ's expertise, tailored for court users and legal professionals. Batumi City Court initiated the implementation of the CEPEJ backlog reduction tool, supported by a two-day workshop that included detailed statistical analyses of court backlogs. The project has developed a new mediation module for the High School of Justice, focusing on judge referrals to mediation. Additionally, court managers gained valuable insights into advanced management practices and ADR mechanisms during a study visit to Lisbon, Portugal.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Consolidating and enhancing the institutional and operational frameworks for the prevention and combatting of corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing in Georgia":** 25 representatives of commercial banks, together with the National Bank of Georgia, discussed the mechanisms and practices of effective implementation of EU targeted sanctions.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Strengthening independence and professionalism of justice in Georgia":** A three-day workshop for the Analytical Unit of the Prosecutor's Office was organised to support its staff in various data collection and research methods for the purposes of developing evidence-based decision-making. Also, a training was conducted for the assistants of the Supreme Court judges on the right to respect for private and family life and the freedom of expression under the European Convention on Human Rights. The purpose of the training is to ensure that the Convention is effectively utilized by the Supreme Court in its decisions and judgments are balanced and well-reasoned.
- **EU/CoE Regional 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 third cycle of the quality check of the data collected within the Justice Dashboard EaP, Part 1: Comparative tables and charts for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine, with summary overviews per indicator of the 2023 data report have been submitted to DG- NEAR on 1 June. Work continues Part 2: Beneficiary Profiles

for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine (submission date: 30 June); Beneficiary profiles also include an analysis by a GRECO expert on accountability related indicators and Part 3: the Condensed version of the Analysis for all beneficiaries on a selected number of indicators (submission date: 30 June). In parallel to that, joint activities with the EU/CoE PGG III project have been carried out for the Republic of Moldova (within national Working groups on Reporting on court performance and on Human Resources in courts).

- **Austria (ADA) VC / AP, "Strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level in Georgia"**: A Roadmap with step-by-step guidance on the introduction of the Austrian practice of youth participation to the Georgian participatory framework has been developed as a result of the working meeting among Georgian and Austrian parliamentary counterparts. Besides, focal persons from 15 target municipalities were trained as specialists and trainers in public consultation methodology – CivicLab. A curriculum on human rights and anti-discrimination was launched to equip local authorities with the knowledge, skills, and perspectives that are essential for advancing a human-rights based local democracy. During the fifth Forum of Exchange, local elected representatives, municipal staff and project partners shared insights on their perspectives and main interests for the next four years, as well as on future direction of their endeavours in regard with the protection and promotion of human rights in their constituencies.

- **Switzerland (SDC) VC, "Democracy Starts in Schools - Engaging School Children in Decision Making Processes in Schools and Communities (II)"**: An in-depth gap analysis focusing on examining democratic school governance policies and practice in Georgian schools led by a group of education, behavioural science and monitoring and evaluation experts was initiated and is ongoing. Within the gap analysis, four online focus groups with parents and students were conducted and 3 217 parents and 2 746 students were surveyed to understand enablers and disablers of school community participation in school decision-making processes. In co-operation with Education Quality Enhancement Centre of Georgia, 71 school authorisation quality assurance experts were equipped with in-depth understanding of Council of Europe "Guidelines on Student Participation in Democratic School Governance" and how to support schools use student participation practical instruments to meet the school authorisation standards.

- **AP, "Promoting human rights and participation at local level through open government: a case study in Georgia"**: During the Open Gov Week, an online event was held to share experiences, strategies, and challenges in promoting inclusivity and a human rights perspective within Open Government initiatives in local authorities of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. The event included the presentation of findings from a study in six Georgian members of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Local Programme (Akhaltsikhe, Khoni, Kutaisi, Ozurgeti, Rustavi, and Tbilisi) on the integration of human rights considerations, citizen participation, and inclusivity in governance processes.

- **AP, "Support to Penitentiary System Reforms in Georgia"**: The Project organised a three-day meeting with senior managers of the Special Penitentiary Service to finalise the Penitentiary Mental Healthcare Standards and 2025-2026 implementation plan. A long-term rehabilitation programme was developed for Georgian prison and probation systems, targeting offenders with alcohol dependencies and related mental health issues; a mid-term evaluation workshop for the Positive Parenting Programme pilot assessed preliminary outcomes. Nine specialists from the Juvenile Referral Centre, National Agency for Crime Prevention and Probation, and Special Penitentiary Service visited Italy to learn about juvenile rehabilitation services. The Project held six external supervision workshops for 124 psychologists and social workers from aforementioned institutions.

- **AP, “Reinforcing gender equality and implementing GREVIO recommendations to combat violence against women and domestic violence in Georgia”:** The integrated security workshop was held from April to May for two groups of women football players, with a total of 24 participants. The workshop was conducted based on the manual developed by the “Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation” and the Urgent Action Fund for Women’s Human Rights. By addressing personal security, safety, and physical well-being in a comprehensive manner, the workshop equipped women football players with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to navigate security challenges effectively. This workshop was result of collaborative efforts of USAID, UNDP and the Council of Europe project.
- **AP, “Further Enhancement of Social and Economic Rights in Georgia”:** The project developed an assessment report to evaluate Georgia’s readiness to ratify selected provisions of the European Social Charter. The project hosted a roundtable discussion to discuss with the stakeholders the preliminary findings of the report and the possibility to extend the scope of ratification of the European Social Charter. Participants agreed to further discuss the possible acceptance of pre-selected provisions at the next meeting of the Tripartite social dialogue. The project co-hosted over thousand visitors at the Human Rights Corner of the Open-Air Festival where guests had the opportunity to learn about important issues of social rights through engaging educational activities.
- **AP, “Enhancing Human Rights Compliant Approach in Law Enforcement Institutions in Georgia”:** The Risk Assessment instrument was prepared for the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), to assess the probability of re-offending by the perpetrators of the violent crimes. Additionally, two groups of 40 MIA staff and regional investigators, enhanced their skills on interviewing the victim and offender juveniles. The Special Operation Procedures on Investigation of Use of Lethal and Non-lethal Forces are prepared for the Special Investigation Service (SIS). Furthermore, the SIS investigators benefitted from training of trainers’ sessions on application of Article 2 and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights on right to life and prohibition of torture and investigation of use of force respectively. Additionally, the group of SIS investigators enhanced their knowledge through the bilateral meetings with their counterparts in UK, organised within the study visit.
- **AP, “Enhancing Equality and Non-Discrimination in Georgia”:** Media representatives participated in the training to familiarise themselves with sensitivities of discrimination topics, such as femicide and gender-based violence. At Tbilisi Open Air festival, the project hosted awareness raising activities in co-operation with the project “Further Enhancement of Social and Economic Rights in Georgia”. Peer-to-peer study visit to Skopje (North Macedonia) aimed to exchange knowledge and experiences between law enforcement agencies. Different stakeholders gathered in a co-ordination meeting to discuss current challenges and tendencies of combating discrimination and hate crimes.
- **AP, “Supporting Freedom of Expression and Media in Georgia (SFEM-GE)”:** As part of capacity building of major stakeholders in the field of media regulation, two representatives of national media regulatory authority (ComCom) as well as three representatives of Media Advocacy Coalition took part at the three-day Annual Conference on European Media Law held in June in Trier, Germany. In the view of events following initiation of the Law on Foreign Influence, activities linked to law enforcement agencies have been postponed, activities involving Media Advocacy Coalition have been cancelled/postponed due to unavailability of partner CSOs. The project currently reprioritises its actions considering emerged needs for media organisations.
- **AP, “Supporting transparency, inclusiveness and integrity of electoral practice and processes in Georgia (Phase II)”:** The project supported further modernisation of electoral processes. A study visit for the Central Election Commission to the Council of Europe

Headquarters provided an effective platform to analyse practical experiences and share possible options for future solutions. To promote active engagement of citizens in decision-making for October Parliamentary Elections, micro-grants were awarded to the three CSOs targeting disabled persons, ethnic minorities, and youth. Judges and the staff of the Anti-Corruption Bureau explored ways to improve monitoring of legality and transparency of political finance at the Bench Bar workshop. They agreed on common practices necessary for ensuring effective legal remedies for all concerned.

Follow up actions

- **AP, “Promoting human rights and participation at local level through open government: a case study in Georgia”:** Inception phase for the follow up project will be carried out with different actions, including the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks as well as mapping of the relevant stakeholders and target groups.
- **AP, “Enhancing Equality and Non-Discrimination in Georgia”:**
 - ✓ Conduct trainings with business representatives in partnership with the PDO and Labour Inspection Office to raise awareness on discrimination in the workplace and the importance of creating and implementing socially responsible equality policies;
 - ✓ Conduct training with regional CSOs in partnership with the Coalition for Equality;
 - ✓ Organise activities for upcoming Short Film Festival and Equality Week;
 - ✓ Conduct training with resource officers;
 - ✓ Conduct training on human rights education.
- **EU/CoE Regional 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 Autumn.
 - ✓ Proceed with the preparation of the second deliverable (beneficiary profiles for each country) and third deliverable (condensed version of the data analysis) to be submitted to DG NEAR by 30 June.

Other relevant activities

- On 24 April, a PGG Local Steering Committee meeting took place in Georgia. In preparation and execution of the meeting, a delegation from Strasbourg visited Tbilisi.

Office in Morocco

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Morocco has 12 (four men, eight women) staff members, out of which four (one man, three women) are core staff and eight (three men, five women) are project staff.

The Office has implemented an EU/CoE programme and a project funded by voluntary and other contributions. A new programme "Towards a more protective, accessible and effective justice in Morocco (MA-JUST)", funded by the European Union, which was signed in July, began its implementation retroactively on 1st June.

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE JP, "Support to the National Preventive Mechanism against torture and Support to the development of the role of the Parliament in Morocco" (ENI/2020/418-263)**

Support to the development of the role of Parliament in Morocco (extension underway)

- 30 April: Meeting of the Political Steering Committee to close the project.
- 30 April: Seminar on "Migration and climate change: how do they fit together?" to mark the end of the project.
- Finalisation of :
 - ✓ Website for the House of Councillors: currently being finalised
 - ✓ Electronic platform for petitions and motions for the House of Representatives: finalisation in progress

Support to the National Preventive Mechanism against torture (NPM)

- 18 April: Technical support for MNP members and managers in improving the efficiency of preventive visits to child protection centres.
- From 5 to 6 June: Participation of Fath El Habti EL Bari of the National Council for Human Rights (CNDH) in the Forum of European NPMs.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Towards a more protective, accessible and effective justice in Morocco" (MA-JUST)**

- 7 June: Seminar on "The Council of Europe's key human rights standards" and signing of the annual work plan between the DIDH and the Council of Europe for the period 2024-2025.

- **Third-party funding (other than voluntary contributions) :**

Children's rights

- 10 June: Regional conference on hotlines for child protection online, with the participation of representatives from international hotlines including E-enfance (France), Bee secure (Luxembourg) and Child Focus (Belgium).

Other activities:

- From 16 to 18 April: Fatima Berkan, adviser at the Ministry of Justice, attended the 25th plenary meeting of the Commission for Gender Equality (GEC) at the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg.
- From 17 to 18 April: Participation of a Moroccan delegation in the launch of the CyberSouth+ programme in Lisbon.
- 22 April: Regional conference on "Euro-Mediterranean approaches to access to information" organised by the Council of Europe's Freedom of Expression Cooperation Division and Morocco's Commission of Right to access to Information (CDAI) - South V Programme - Rabat.
- 13 May: The Head of Office took part in a conference on "Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights" organised by the DIDH in the presence of the Moroccan Minister of Justice.
- 13 May: The Head of Office took part in a symposium on cybercrime and artificial intelligence organised by the *Centre Marocain de Recherches Polytechniques et d'Innovation* (CMRPI).
- 13 to 17 May: Anas El Gharib, a young representative of civil society, took part in the conference "Having confidence in the future", organised to mark the 75th anniversary of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.
- From 14 to 17 May: Thematic training course on "Improving access to and the quality of treatment services" organised by the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe in Rabat.
- 21 May: Presentation of the North-South 2023 Prize to the President of Morocco's CNDH, Amina Bouyach, who participated in the work held alongside the event at the CNS in Lisbon.
- From 21 to 23 May: Training on the Dark Web and crypto-currencies in cooperation with the Royal Moroccan Gendarmerie and the Council of Europe's Cybercrime programme - CyberSud + - Casablanca.
- 23 May: Workshop on the Criminal Code and the First Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention organised by the Council of Europe's Programme Office on Cybercrime with the participation of the Moroccan Ministry of Justice in Rabat.
- 27 May: The Head of Office took part in the conference organised by the Ministry of Justice in partnership with the Danish Anti-Torture Institute "Dignity": "Parole: the requirements of implementation and the challenges of widening opportunities for release and reintegration".
- 30 May: Participation of Fatima Berkan, adviser to the Ministry of Justice, in the GEC's annual conference "United for gender equality: making room for women and girls" at the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg.
- 6 and 7 June: Further training on cybercrime and electronic evidence for magistrates (CyberSud+) in Tangiers.
- 11 and 12 June: Visit by a delegation from the Council of Europe as part of the mandate of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), which supports the implementation of the ESC in its member states, and meetings with the various governmental and non-governmental authorities responsible for or involved in sport in Morocco.
- As part of the human rights training programme for legal professionals (HELP) in the southern Mediterranean, Morocco has begun the process of adapting the HELP course on human rights and sport for use in its own country, as the first country in the region to do so.

- 12 and 13 June: International seminar on the exception of unconstitutionality of laws - comparative experiences organised by the Moroccan Ministry of Justice and the Venice Commission in the presence of the Moroccan Minister of Justice and the Vice-President of the Venice Commission. South V Programme. Rabat.
- From 17 to 19 June: Ayoub Aboujaafar, Head of the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Department at the Directorate of Criminal Affairs, Pardons and Crime Monitoring, attended the 85th plenary meeting of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) in Strasbourg.
- 27 June: Participation of the Head of Office and a delegation from the Council of Europe in the 13rd University in Prisons organised by the DGAPR.

High-level visits from the Council of Europe and other official delegations

- 15-16 April: Visit by a delegation from Morocco's Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights (DIDH) and the Ministry of Justice to the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg. The delegation met with :
 - ✓ Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe ;
 - ✓ The President of PACE ;
 - ✓ The Director at the DG for Democracy and Human Dignity ;
 - ✓ The Head of the Inclusion and Anti-discrimination Programmes Division ;
 - ✓ The Vice-President of the Conference of INGOs ;
 - ✓ The Vice-President and Deputy Registrar of the European Court of Human Rights ;
 - ✓ Director of Security, Integrity and the Rule of Law ;
 - ✓ The Director of the Programme Coordination Department ;
 - ✓ The Deputy Director of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights.
- 29 April: Working visit by the President of the Council of Europe's PACE, Theodoros Rousopoulos, who met with :
 - ✓ The Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Resident Abroad of the Kingdom of Morocco, Nasser Bourita ;
 - ✓ The Presidents of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors of Morocco ;
 - ✓ The President of Morocco's CNDH, Amina Bouyach.

Programme Office in Podgorica

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Programme Office in Podgorica has 16 (three men, 13 women) staff members, out of which two (women) are core staff and 14 (three men, 11 women) project staff.

As of 30 June 2024, the Programme Office has implemented six projects within the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye", one project within the framework of the EU/CoE Joint Programme ROMACTED Phase II and one funded through a regional voluntary contribution from Germany.

Additionally, the following regional projects, not directly managed by the Podgorica Office are conducting activities in Montenegro:

1. HF III Regional project "Women's Access to Justice in the Western Balkans"
2. HRTF Regional VC HELP in the Western Balkans
3. EU/CoE Regional Joint Project Roma Integration – Phase III
4. End Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse@Europe, funded by the End Violence Against Children Fund

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening accountability of the judicial system and enhancing protection of victims' rights in Montenegro"**: The Judicial Reform Strategy 2024-2027 with the 2024 – 2025 Action Plan were adopted on 16 May. By developing the Strategy's Fiscal analysis and organising public debate on this strategic document, the project directly supports the authorities in addressing this interim EU accession benchmark. Recommendations for improving court interpreting in proceedings before the court, police, the prosecution, notaries, bailiffs as well as in the attorney-client relations were developed, to reinforce coordination among legal professionals for the benefit of citizens. The process of revision of the Law on Judicial Council and Judges and the Law on State Prosecution Office was successfully completed. Following the Venice Commission's urgent opinions issued on 6 May and 16 May, respectively, the Law on State Prosecution Office was adopted on 6 June and the Law on Judicial Council and judges on 19 June. The Communication Strategy of the Judicial Council and Courts (2024 – 2026) with 2024 Action Plan was presented on 15 April. The Communication Protocol between State prosecution and Police was drafted, pending adoption and follow-up training in July. A series of round table discussions was commenced, to inform key policy interventions and enhance institutional practices of the new prosecutorial ethical and disciplinary bodies. 35 judges, state prosecutors and candidates for judges and prosecutors gained knowledge on ethics and discipline, drawing upon relevant Council of Europe standards and domestic regulations.

Draft amendments to the Law on Free Legal Aid are adopted by the Government on 18 April (pending adoption before the Parliament). Revision of the Criminal Procedural Code is at the final stage with the WG addressing the comments received from the EU. The work on the National Victims 'Rights Strategy is underway, where on 24 April the first coordination meeting of all relevant counterparts took place. With that aim the work on ex-ante analysis is initiated, to map the state of play concerning the victims' rights in Montenegro. 30 lawyers enhanced their capacities on provision of free legal aid to the victims of trafficking in human beings. Concept of the initiative on availability of free legal aid for the victims of trafficking in human

beings is finalised. A grant agreement with the Law Faculty of the University of Montenegro was signed concerning the implementation of the human rights legal clinics programme. The analysis of the effects of the Constitutional Courts' decisions is finalised.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Enhancing Human Rights protection for detained and sentenced persons in Montenegro":** The Supreme State Prosecutor adopted the "Instructions for State Prosecutors' Proceedings in Cases of Suspected Violations of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights". Instruction is fully based on the recommendations provided by the Council of Europe consultants in the Assessment report "Coordination of the Montenegrin Prosecution and Police for the Investigation of Ill-treatment, other Serious Human Rights Violations and Related Abuses". This document represents a significant step forward in enhancing investigation efficiency and addressing impunity.

The national Working Group has developed a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to regulate key priority areas for police conduct. These SOPs are currently under review by Council of Europe consultants to ensure they align with the highest human rights standards, particularly those of the Council of Europe and the CPT.

Monitoring officers from the NPM (10) and the Ministry of Justice (two) attended a training session on communication skills necessary when interacting with individuals with intellectual disabilities and dementia. This training activity is crucial for their frequent visits to facilities housing these vulnerable groups, promoting better understanding and more appropriate recommendations, thereby improving human rights protection.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action against Economic Crime in Montenegro":** The action successfully met the urgent needs of the Government of Montenegro to accelerate EU accession negotiations. Key results include finalising the anti-corruption strategic framework (2024-2028) and an Action Plan (2024-2025), reviewing amendments to the Law on Prevention of Corruption, and improving the legal framework for extended confiscation. These strategic documents were adopted by the Government on 4 June and the legislation was passed by Parliament on 7 June. These efforts contributed to receiving a positive report on the implementation of interim benchmarks in the Chapters 23 and 24 (IBAR), as confirmed at the 16th meeting of the Accession Conference with Montenegro at Ministerial level, held on 26 June in Brussels.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Combating hatred and intolerance in Montenegro":** The action advanced significantly in the legislation component: the final document for the new 2024-2028 LGBTI National Strategy was completed and sent to relevant authorities for feedback and comments. Local NGOs gained credibility as advocates for LGBTI rights. A questionnaire on anti-racism policies was conducted in Montenegro and other regional countries, assessing frameworks and practices to combat racism. The project supported the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights in finalizing the new Law on Anti-Discrimination, incorporating feedback from various bodies (EU/ECRI/TaieX/Ombudsman). A draft Law on Legal Gender Identity was prepared and sent for evaluation to relevant ministries. Hate speech mapping continued with tailored research questions and a road map for the next round of interviews for data collection in September.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Quality Education for All – Montenegro":** During educational workshops, parents and students had an opportunity to learn more about digital citizenship education. Teachers and social workers gained knowledge on inclusive education, covering equal rights and support for vulnerable students during a series of workshops. A second workshop on digital citizenship occurred in Berane in May, and a workshop on AI's impact on academic integrity was held on 29-30 May in Podgorica. A working group met several times during reporting period to develop the University of Montenegro's code of ethics, needing further legal review. Additionally, a survey on school resilience for potential emergencies was tested and prepared and launched in June. A social media initiative to combat digital

discrimination and promote inclusive education was approved, and in June, a second inclusive education training session took place in Zabljak.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Protecting Freedom of Expression and of the Media in Montenegro (PRO-FREX-M)":** On 15 April the project supported the presentation of the Communication Strategy for Supreme Court and Judicial Council. The Communication Strategy will help increase the level of public trust in the judicial system, and will also be beneficial for the media, due to improved and proactive approach of judicial institutions. During the training session organised in co-operation with the Centre for Training in Judiciary and State prosecution, 14 judges and prosecutors gained knowledge on freedom of expression in digital space and relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "ROMACTED 2 – Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level":** International Roma Day, 8 April, was marked in several ROMACTED partner municipalities with numerous activities: a knowledge quiz, lectures, sports tournaments, etc. The aim was to promote Roma culture and tradition. As part of the ROMACTED small grants scheme, premises were officially opened in Bijelo Polje in April in the Roma settlement, which will be used to organise various activities for community members. In June, the workshop "Lessons learned through the implementation process of ROMACTED small grants" was held. The representatives of the municipal teams interactively analysed this process and the experiences gained. This improved their knowledge and skills and prepared them for similar initiatives in the coming period.

- **Germany Regional VC, "Promoting deliberative democracy and innovative approaches to citizen participation in South-East Europe":** A regional project on "Promoting deliberative democracy and innovative approaches to citizen participation in South-East Europe" was launched on 18 April in Bar, Montenegro. In the same occasion, a workshop on deliberative democracy was held. The event brought together local elected representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and members of the Network of Associations of Local Authorities in South-East Europe (NALAS). The launching event served as an opportunity to exchange and discuss the features of deliberative democracy, a key element of the Reykjavik principles of democracy. The project aims to strengthen democratic processes in the South-East of Europe and to enhance the skills and capacities of local authorities and their association. It promotes deliberative democracy and innovative forms of citizen participation as complements to representative democracy in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

Other activities

- Upon the request of the Ministry of Justice, the Venice Commission prepared five urgent opinions on the draft amendments to the Law on Seizure and Confiscation of Material Benefit Derived from Criminal Activity, the draft law on the prevention of corruption, the draft amendments to the laws on the State Prosecution Service and on the Special State Prosecutor's Office, draft amendments to the Law on the Judicial Council and Judges. The opinions were endorsed during at the plenary session of the Venice Commission on 21 – 22 June.
- Following the adoption of the laws necessary for the country to receive a positive IBAR (Interim Benchmark Assessment Report on the rule of law) in the area of judiciary, anti-money laundering, anti-corruption and media, on 26 June, the EU-Montenegro Intergovernmental Conference confirmed that the country has met the "interim benchmarks" on the rule of law. The Council of Europe Programme Office in Podgorica will continue to support the authorities in drafting internal legal documents/implementation of the laws.

DPC/DPAER/Inf(2024)3

- Meeting of the Head of the Council of Europe Programme Office with Snezana Armenko, President of the Constitutional Court of Montenegro.
- Meeting of the Head of the Council of Europe Programme Office with Mirjana Popovic, President of the Court of Appeal of Court of Montenegro.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- The President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress, and the Director of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, visited Montenegro during the Launching event of the regional project "Promoting deliberative democracy and innovative approaches to citizen participation in South-East Europe".

Office in Pristina

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Pristina has 23 (seven men, 16 women) staff members, out of which six (three men, three women) are core staff and 17 (four men, 13 women) are project staff.

The Office implemented 12 projects, four in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye", one EU/CoE Kosovo* specific Joint Programme and two regional EU/CoE Joint Programmes, two projects funded through a voluntary contribution from the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the US Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), respectively, as well as three funded through voluntary contributions at Overview Document level. The Overview Document⁶ for Kosovo* has received non-earmarked contributions from Belgium, Germany, Ireland and Norway.

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Protecting Freedom of Expression and of the Media (PRO-FREX-K)":** The project contributed to advancing the independence of the media regulator, the Independent Media Commission (IMC), by providing detailed feedback on the draft law on IMC. The expert recommendations would better align the draft law with EU standards and have been referenced as such by international community partners, notably EUSR and OMiK. A video animation on SLAPPs is in development, and the Committee of Ministers' recommendation on SLAPPs has been translated into Albanian and Serbian. The Basic Prosecution Office in Pristina requested the project's support to organise training on media freedom and the legal aspects of investigating journalists.
- **EU/CoE HF III: "Enhancing co-operation in the Western Balkans in managing violent extremism in prisons and preventing further radicalisation after release":** More than 50 practitioners from the region and EU shared experiences in the realm of rehabilitation, reintegration and the prison-exit continuum of violent extremist prisoners and prisoners at risk from radicalisation at the 2nd regional conference held on 24 - 25 April in Tirana (Albania). The action's Steering Committee members from Kosovo* held their 3rd session on 25 April in Tirana. A three-day training activity, on 17-19 June in Istog (Kosovo), for 21 beneficiaries from Kosovo Correction Service, Kosovo Probation Service and Division for Prevention and Reintegration of Radicalised Persons focused on application of VEPs specific tools (Screening and Risk and Needs Assessment tool), and rehabilitation and reintegration programme.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Combating discrimination and hatred":** Two workshops for amending the Law on Protecting from Discrimination were held on 26 April and 28-29 May. A grant agreement was signed with the NGO Center for Equality and Liberty for PRIDE Week to organise joint activities from 3-8 June aimed at raising public awareness and celebrating diversity. The New Action Plan for LGBTI rights (2024-2026) was unveiled on 4 June during

⁶ This document is an update of the document [GR-DEM\(2021\)11](#), of which the Ministers' Deputies took note at their 1420th meeting (8 December 2021).

It provides an overview of the projects which are proposed as well as of the ones which are currently being implemented by the Council of Europe in Kosovo*. For more information, please see [Result details \(coe.int\)](#)

PRIDE Week. Two NGOs and three police officers benefited from a peer exchange between Ukraine, Albania, and Kosovo* on 23-25 May in Tirana. Two young individuals from national minorities participated in the "International Youth Seminar and Policy Symposium on the Active Political Participation of National Minority Youth" in Budapest from 17-19 June.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening the Quality and Efficiency of Justice in Kosovo*(KoSEJ III)"**: Based on CEPEJ expert recommendations from January 2024, a workshop in April, and a Peer-to-Peer event with BiH and Albania in May, Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC) started piloting the collection of statistics automatically from the case management system and created a working group to decrease the pending cases against unknown perpetrators. A CEPEJ expert paid a field visit in April to support the Kosovo Judicial Council in using alerts and performance indicators to better monitor "old" pending cases.
- **EU/CoE JP, "Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo*(PECK III)"**: Through peer-to-peer exchange and hands on guidance provided to the Agency for Prevention of Corruption the project has strengthened the asset declaration framework in Kosovo in line with international standards and comparative practices. The project continued to support the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers in enhancing the AML/CFT legislative framework and its alignment with EU directives and evolving international standards. The project strengthened operational capacities of 26 officials representing Police, Prosecution, Judiciary, Financial Intelligence Unit and Agency for Administration of Sequestered and Confiscated Assets on asset recovery including virtual assets. It strengthened capacities of the Interagency Working Group on National Risk Assessment and Management on the use the Council of Europe National Risk Assessment Methodology.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "Roma Integration Phase III"**: The programme facilitated meetings fostering collaboration between line ministries and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian organizations. Key highlights include: 1/ Regional-level Conference on Roma Housing ensuring cooperation and engagement of Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure, Office for Good Governance in addressing Roma housing needs; 2/ Consensus on key activities across thematic areas, effectively integrated into the project's work plan. Simultaneously, a comprehensive five-year assessment of progress on Poznan Declaration commitments in Kosovo* for 2019-2024 was conducted, emphasizing multifaceted consultations with government agencies, NGOs and desk research highlighting the need for enhanced coordination. The programme provided support in preparing the assessment on employment measures, reinforcing collaborative efforts towards Roma employability in Kosovo*. Additionally, the programme funded Roma Versitas Kosovo in offering assistance with civil registration to the Roma and Ashkali communities.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "ROMACTED 2 - Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level"**: A cycle of interactive training on knowledge creation about Roma Ashkali Egyptian identity was organized with Gracanica/Gracanice, Kamenice/Kamenica, Gjakove/Djakovica and Istog/Istok municipalities. On 24 June, Egyptian Memorial Day was marked with Egyptian community and local authorities in Istog/Istog municipality. Follow up on priority issues derived from the Task Force meeting were done in Ferizaj/Urosevac and Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje. The Programme facilitated the call for Roma language interpreters with Kosovo Judicial Council. A consultant was contracted for the workshop on municipal action plan for post covid socio-economic recovery.
- **UNMIK VC, "Promoting human rights and non-discrimination principles at the local level – Phase II"**: The tutored HELP course on Hate Speech was launched on 8 May, attended by 70 officials from municipalities, ministries, law enforcement agencies, the Ombudsperson Institution, the Justice Academy, and civil society organizations. Out of 76 enrolled participants, 60 successfully completed the course and were certified on 20 June.

Over two training events, 20-21 May in Pristina and 11-12 June in Istog/Istok, 45 municipal and ministerial anti-discrimination officers, along with officials from the Ombudsperson Institution, enhanced their skills in data collection, reporting, and understanding non-discrimination principles. Four local NGOs—Kosovo 2.0, Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture, Instituti QIKA, and Bethany Christian Services—completed their activities at the local level and submitted their final reports. The project's Closing Conference, attended by the main beneficiaries and partners, took place on 20 June in Pristina.

- **United States of America (INL) VC, “Enhanced Action on Cybercrime and Electronic Evidence (CYBERKOP)” under the Octopus project ([see also Bucharest Office](#)):** Three meetings on Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) agreements for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) were held in April and May to create a legal basis for the fight against cybercrime. A training session was held for magistrates on international cooperation on cybercrime with the focus on spontaneous exchange of information. Three delegations representing the Academy of Justice, MoJ, Kosovo Police, Special Prosecution of Kosovo, Basic Prosecution of Kosovo, National Cyber Security Unit, and Financial Intelligence Unit attended conferences/trainings in the Hague, Prague and Ankara in June on the topics of cybercrime, international cooperation, and sexual exploitation and abuse of children.

- **Overview Document VC, “Aligning laws and policies with the Istanbul Convention”:** The project is supporting the Ministry of Justice with expert comments and recommendations on the alignment with the Istanbul Convention of the Administrative Instruction based on the new Law on Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender Based Violence. 17 judges and prosecutors (six women and eight men) trained on “Offences involving Violence against Women: Trauma-informed Prosecutions and Adjudications”, which was organised in cooperation with the Academy of Justice and US Embassy in Pristina and took place on 18-19 June. 11 psychology students (all women) trained on the “Curriculum for professionals working on programmes for treatment of perpetrators”, organised by the project in cooperation with Department of Psychology at the University of Pristina, which took place on 5-6 June.

- **Overview Document VC, “Improvement of the treatment of persons deprived of liberty”:** A one-day workshop with the Heads of the Prison Health Department, Kosovo Correctional Services, Institute for Forensic Psychiatry, Special Institute for Persons with Physician and Mental Disabilities, and the head of the National Preventive Mechanism of the Ombudsperson Institution, assessed the needs of the project partners and beneficiaries for the development of protocols on ill-treatment in line with the Istanbul Protocol. The workshop was followed by a three-day working group during which the representatives of all the above-mentioned institutions developed a draft protocol including an incident report and a checklist on recording of injuries in prisons and other closed institutions.

- **Overview Document VC, “Support to the Constitutional Court in Applying and Disseminating European Human Rights Standards – Phase II”:** 25 judges and prosecutors (12 women, 13 men) reinforced knowledge of the European Court of Human Rights’ practice on the Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). In two regional workshops, 73 lawyers of Bar Association (39 women, 42 men) deepened understanding of standards set under Articles 5 and 6 of the Convention. 30 professionals of the Constitutional Court (CC) (14 women, 16 men) were trained on methodologies applied by the European Court’s Jurisconsult. In the launching conference, 89 judges and lawyers (35 women, 54 men) deepened knowledge of standards of the European Court in judicial protection of human rights. 27 legal professionals (16 women, 11 men) of CC and Information and Privacy Agency increased knowledge of European Court’s caselaw on Article 8 of the Convention. The project produced a report on harmonisation of judicial practice.

Follow up actions

- **Overview Document VC, "Improvement of the treatment of persons deprived of liberty":**
 - ✓ Draft protocols and relevant tools on ill treatment finalised and shared with the project partners.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Protecting Freedom of Expression and of the Media (PRO-FREX-K)":**
 - ✓ The draft law on the Independent Media Commission (IMC) will be followed up, based depending on the developments and the steps to be undertaken by the Assembly. The Action will further provide expertise in this direction, as needed.
- **EU/CoE HF III: "Enhancing co-operation in the Western Balkans in managing violent extremism in prisons and preventing further radicalisation after release":**
 - ✓ The 3rd coordination meeting, with international organisations in the field of Prevention /Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) will take place on 1 July, in the Council of Europe Office in Pristina.
 - ✓ Piloting of the VEP-specific tools and programs in Dubrava and High Security Prison will commence in July/August.
- **Overview Document VC: "Aligning laws and policies with the Istanbul Convention":**
 - ✓ Support the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation on the manual for teachers and education staff on all forms of VAW.
 - ✓ Research on women victims of violence against women at the risk of intersectional discrimination.
- **EU/CoE JP, "Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo*(PECK III)":**
 - ✓ Presentation of the findings from the Corruption Risk Mapping process. 7th Steering Committee meeting.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "Roma Integration Phase III" :**
 - ✓ Support the revision of the Action Plan for Roma and Ashkali Communities.
 - ✓ Support the Documentation and Reporting of Discrimination Cases against Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians.
 - ✓ Support to the inter-institutional team for encouraging and promoting employment for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.
 - ✓ Creation of general guidelines on Roma Responsive Budgeting in Kosovo*, including for the central and local levels.
 - ✓ Development of housing legalization guidelines.
- **Overview Document VC, "Support to the Constitutional Court in Applying and Disseminating European Human Rights Standards – Phase II":**
 - ✓ Internal restructuring workshop with Constitutional Court (July); Workshop with Constitutional Court and regular courts on execution of judgements (September); workshops with lawyers of Bar Association and Agency for Free Legal Aid on the Convention/the European Court standards (July-September).

Office in Sarajevo

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo has 32 (nine men, 23 women) staff members, out of which seven (four men, three women) are core staff and 25 (five men, 20 women) are project staff.

As of 30 June 2024, the Office has implemented 13 projects, six in the framework of the EU/CoE Horizontal Facility (Phase III), and seven funded by voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level. The Office is also involved in three regional projects, the EU/CoE Joint Programme on Roma empowerment at local level, enhancing co-operation in managing violent extremism in prisons, and evaluation of the results of judicial reform in the Western Balkans. The Action Plan for Bosnia-Herzegovina 2022-2025 has received as of 30 June 2024 Action-Plan-Level contributions from Belgium, Germany, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Norway and Slovenia as well as from the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe.

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Strengthening the Efficiency and Quality of Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiHSEJ)”**: Activities supported justice efficiency and quality by promoting best practices of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ). They focused on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC) BiH regional Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Hub initiative, offering insights into CEPEJ Cyberjustice tools and promoting knowledge exchange. The project co-organised a regional workshop to improve prosecutorial efficiency in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo*, and also supported pilot courts in developing communication strategies aligned with HJPC’s strategy and CEPEJ standards. Additionally, the project promoted mediation practices within the BiH judiciary, supporting the HJPC’s Strategy on ADR for enhanced judicial efficiency and quality.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Further strengthening the treatment of detained and sentenced persons in line with European standards in Bosnia and Herzegovina”** : The country-wide Train the Trainer scheme in police agencies resulted in [certification of skills for additional 11 police officers](#). They immediately [started](#) peer training on [Human rights of persons deprived of liberty in police custody](#) in the Una-Sana, Zenica-Doboj and Herzegovina-Neretva Cantonal Ministries of Interior. The [3rd coordination meeting with senior police managers](#), which took place in May, remains the only forum where heads of 17 agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina meet annually to discuss challenges. The FBiH authorities adopted amendments to the Law on execution of criminal sanctions on 16 May, enabling putting of the HF-developed prison software into function for the beneficiaries in its competence.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Action against corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing in Bosnia and Herzegovina”**: The Action commenced a review of risk-based supervision methodologies for lawyers and notaries, to be completed in July, with the goal of providing comprehensive recommendations and supporting capacity-building workshops in September. In response to the need for expert support in developing guidelines for high-risk non-profit organisations (NPOs), there was a consultative meeting with relevant authorities to discuss the new AML/CFT Law, particularly Article 84, which mandates targeted measures for high-risk NPOs. This meeting set the stage for developing a Technical Paper with recommendations for finalising secondary legislation (Instruction) by the Ministry of Justice in the coming period.

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Towards an equal, inclusive and tolerant Bosnia and Herzegovina”:** The action supported the fifth Pride March, held on 22 June in Sarajevo. One grant was awarded for the [opening of the first LGBTI shelter in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). The Civil Service Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the support of the action, developed and launched [the first online course for civil servants on recognising and responding to cases of hate speech](#). One Living Library, organised in a Banja Luka secondary school, helped 22 pupils in breaking prejudices and stereotypes. A second [discussion about the role of religion and religious communities in combating hate speech](#) took place (17-18 May), gathering 28 representatives from religious communities, media, civil society organisations and academia.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Quality Education for All – Bosnia and Herzegovina”:** The first Policy Network workshop gathering 58 representatives from 16 Ministries of education took place in May with the aim of developing Action Plans (APs), reference documents for a strategic and long-term development of vision in the education sector for the next 10-year period. The workshop was organised by the UN in BiH together with EU, Council of Europe and OSCE support. During the reporting period 106 teachers from nine pilot schools were equipped with tools for promoting democratic culture in their schools. In addition, 250 students from 29 pilot schools took part in activities for critical thinking and values organised by school clubs.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Protecting Freedom of Expression and of the Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina (PRO-FREX-BH)”:** Three capacity building sessions gathering 62 judges, prosecutors, police officers, lawyers, and journalists enhanced participants’ skills for the practical application of Council of Europe standards in the areas of protection of journalists, SLAPPs, and hate speech. The pool of local trainers was expanded and their knowledge enhanced through the advanced training of trainers on freedom of expression. At the second Steering Committee of the Action, beneficiaries, the Project team, and donor representatives discussed the results achieved and agreed on future activities.
- **EU/CoE Regional HF III, “Towards a better evaluation of the results of judicial reform efforts in the Western Balkans – Phase II ‘Dashboard Western Balkans II’”:** The Dashboard Western Balkans (DWB) Action conducted a mission to North Macedonia to present CEPEJ data collection processes and 2022 results. It involved key institutions - Ministry of Justice, High Judicial Council, and various courts and prosecutor offices - thereby enhancing visibility. Meetings provided insights into data collection, Case Management Systems, free legal aid and mediation. The first deliverable - the CEPEJ DWB report with 2023 data - was submitted to the EC, containing comparative tables for all beneficiaries and summary overviews for each of the 12 indicators with tables, beneficiary comments and methodological notes. The second part of the report, Beneficiary Profiles, was shared with the EC in June.
- **EU/CoE Regional HF III, “Enhancing cooperation in the Western Balkans in managing violent extremism in prisons and preventing further radicalisation after release”:** At the 2nd regional conference (24-25 April in Tirana), prison professionals from BiH exchanged with colleagues from the region and EU on topics of rehabilitation, reintegration and the prison-exit continuum of VEPs and prisoners at risk of radicalization. Members of the action’s Steering Committee from BiH attended its 3rd session on 25 April in Tirana. A Baseline assessment on community sanctions and measures for VEPs in BiH with a special focus on women is being finalised. During the assessment process by a local consultant, 34 representatives of different BiH institutions, including ministries, judiciary, local communities and CSOs were interviewed to complement quantitative data and desk work.
- **AP, “Ensuring Sustainable Penitentiary Actions in managing rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners in Bosnia and Herzegovina (ESPA-VEP)”:** The project implemented eight activities with a total of 145 participants (47 of them women). Highlights

include advanced training sessions for all prison staff directly working with VEPs and at-risk inmates, and a ToT for delivery of basic trainings. Each prison is now equipped with its own trainers for improved management of violent extremist prisoners (VEPs). The project Working Group drafted Guidelines for improvement of well-being and mental health of prison staff, a critical part in safeguarding personnel working with radical prisoners and those in similar categories. Interagency cooperation between prisons and local communities was improved by organising three forums and testing draft standard operating procedures.

- **AP, "Support to a coherent national implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights and facilitating execution of ECtHR judgments in Bosnia and Herzegovina":** 25 law students from the Sarajevo Law Faculty completed a clinic on "International and European Human Rights Law," co-organised by the Council of Europe and the European Law Students' Association (ELSA). 59 new judges and prosecutors took part in two training activities based on the Human Rights Curriculum. Nine trainers deepened expertise on anti-discrimination. A University of Liverpool professor gave a lecture for 15 students of the "Law of the Council of Europe" master programme. Three focal points from the highest courts attended the annual Superior Courts Network conference in Strasbourg. The acting BiH Government Agent benefited from the Romanian Government Agent's experience relevant for executing the *Šćepanović* judgment. Five HJPC members gained insights on reforms in Lithuania.

- **AP, "Innovating democratic participation at local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina":** Modriča and Travnik became the two first-ever members from BiH of the [Open Government Partnership \(OGP\) Local Programme](#), with the project's expert support. 24 recommendations for aligning legislation with the European Charter of Local Self-Government were made by representatives of 45 local authorities to higher-level governments in two advocacy events organised by the two associations of local authorities on 25 April (Sarajevo) and 29 May (Banja Luka). At the fourth [meeting of the Platform of Exchange](#) (13 June), 14 local authorities discussed needs and capacities for advancing human rights implementation at local level. A toolkit for local authorities on how to organise deliberative processes at the local level was developed.

- **AP, "Strengthening anti-trafficking action in Bosnia and Herzegovina":** The Project provided support to [two regional events](#) in Budva, Montenegro (13-17 May), gathering 36 professionals and focusing on human trafficking through modern internet technologies and victim-centred interviews. During April and May, [three training sessions](#) were held and 14 representatives of police agencies and inspectorates certified to conduct training on human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation within their institutions and agencies. The HELP [online course](#) on human trafficking for labour exploitation was finalised on 31 May, adapting it to the BiH legal framework. Out of 35 enrolled professionals, 22 successfully completed all modules and received certificates.

- **Belgium VC / AP, "Combatting digital and sexual violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina":** Representatives from judicial, executive and legislative sectors increased their understanding of best practices in investigating and prosecuting digital violence against women based on the project's "Guidelines on emerging and good practices in the investigation and prosecution of digital violence against women in line with Council of Europe and other international standards". Project partners enhanced their awareness of evidentiary gaps on the degree of harmonisation with the Istanbul Convention when it comes to digital violence against women and the consent-based definition of sexual violence through the presentation of the Gap analysis on digital and sexual violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- **AP, "Action against corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing in Bosnia and Herzegovina":** A capacity-building session was held for representatives of supervisory authorities on measures for enforcing targeted financial sanctions. Council of Europe experts shared knowledge on compliance mechanisms and enforcement strategies. The workshop featured hands-on exercises and on-site inspection checklists and was delivered in conjunction with a complementary activity of the HF-project. All logistical and administrative steps have been undertaken to deliver an awareness raising workshop for non-profit organizations (NPOs) on 2 July, including consultations with experts. The workshop will educate participants on good practices for risk-based measures to prevent misuse for terrorist financing.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "ROMACTED 2 – Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level":** Representatives of 12 municipalities and Roma NGOs convened at an Advisory Group meeting providing an opportunity for the stakeholders to reflect on their work and plan future steps together. Achievements presented included improvements in access to education and health services, housing and infrastructure, cultural preservation and heritage promotion, empowerment, employment. Monitoring tool developed in synergy with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, was presented in order to track the progress and evaluate impact effectively. International Roma Day was marked in all 12 programme municipalities in cooperation with governmental officials and community members promoting cultural awareness and respect and fostering community cohesion.
- **Sweden (Sida) VC, "Enhancing institutional capacities on freedom of expression and information in Bosnia and Herzegovina":** 22 representatives of domestic institutions, independent bodies and civil society organisations gathered at the 5th meeting of the [Working Group on Monitoring and Reporting on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information](#) in April. In May, 17 civil servants and civil society representatives enhanced their knowledge on "[Transparency and Access to Government Information](#)". 14 members reaffirmed commitment at the [Fourth Steering Committee meeting](#) and continued work on the Pilot Report at [the Sixth Working Group meeting](#). In addition to its regular activities, the Working Group started to contribute significantly to the implementation of the Council of Europe [Journalists Matter](#) Campaign.

Other relevant activities

- On 10 May, the Head of Office moderated the panel of the Conference marking the Council of Europe's 75th anniversary and the 22nd anniversary of BiH's membership organised under the patronage of the BiH Presidency Chairman and held in the BiH Parliament.
- On 25 April, the Head of Office opened the panel discussion on the topic "Guarantee of local autonomy in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina through compliance with the standards of the European Charter on Local Self-Government".
- On 28 May, the Head of Office attended and gave an introductory speech at the SOGRS Conference in Banja Luka organised in the framework of "Innovating democratic participation at local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina" project in cooperation with the Union of Municipalities and Cities of Republika Srpska.
- On 29 May, the Head of Office opened the three-day Council of Europe Days festival at the Meeting Point cinema, screening Eurimages films and the Council of Europe 75th anniversary video.
- On 19-20 June, the Deputy Head of Office attended the meeting of the Political Directors of the Peace Implementation Council.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 30 May, the Venice Commission held on-line meetings with the authorities of BiH, regarding the method of electing judges of the BiH Constitutional Court ([opinion](#)). From 10-11 June, a delegation of the Venice Commission prepared an interim opinion on the draft Law on the HJPC ([published](#) 25 June). On 27 June the President of the Venice Commission addressed the Ministerial Conference in Sarajevo on chapter 23 of EU accession negotiations.

Programme Office in Skopje

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Programme Office in Skopje has 19 (four men, 15 women) staff members, out of which two (one man, one woman) are core staff and 17 (three men, 14 women) are project staff.

As of 30 June 2024, the Office has implemented nine projects, six in the framework of the EU/CoE Joint Programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye", two EU/CoE Joint Programmes and one funded through a voluntary contribution from Germany.

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Protecting Freedom of Expression and of the Media in North Macedonia (PRO-FREX-NM)":** On 12 June, after the public presentation and 90-day feedback period, the Rulebook on Media Services Accessibility was adopted by the national authorities. On 17 April, a thematic event for upholding journalistic integrity and safeguarding journalists was held. The media community, institutions and legal professionals agreed on the need for legislative changes to incorporate the CM Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)2 on countering the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening anti-trafficking action in North Macedonia":** On 27 May, the Research on preventing child trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, forced marriages and begging was validated in a conference setting. From 20 to 21 May, a multi-disciplinary training session on the best interest of the child was delivered to 37 police officers, social workers and NGOs. On 29 May, a training session on trafficking in human beings (THB) and media was delivered to the police communication officers and journalists. The Guide on THB and ICT was published in Macedonian and English and widely distributed.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Towards a Consolidated and More Efficient Free Legal Aid (FLA) System in North Macedonia":** [The software for appointment of ex-officio lawyers has been completed and handed over to the Bar Association.](#) Additionally, [18 representatives from the CSOs and Legal Clinics](#) were trained to be trainers for provision of free legal aid in North Macedonia.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening the capacities of the penitentiary system in North Macedonia":** The Programme and Standard Operating Procedures on pre-release and post-penal support were finalised and shared with all the relevant institutions for adoption, following a wide process of consultations with the stakeholders. Extensive consultations were held with the Directorate for the Execution of Sanctions on establishing the prison police intervention teams. Two missions on improving the methodology and regulation of prison oversight (including an on-site mission to Stip Prison) were conducted.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Combating hatred and intolerance in North Macedonia":** The Action selected two applicants from among the entities that responded to the Call for grants on combating hate speech, to receive the grants. Furthermore, it supported the organisation of Skopje PRIDE and co-organised the presentation of the Annual Report on the work of the Commission for Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action against Economic Crime in North Macedonia":** The Action provided proposals to beneficiaries for improving the sanctioning regime based on GRECO recommendations. It also developed recommendations to beneficiaries for establishing clear

procedures for appropriate public officials on reporting accounts held in foreign jurisdictions in line with the UN Convention Against Corruption. A Training of Trainers was organised for the representatives of the Secretariat of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, as well as a training on combating financing of terrorism for the supervisory authorities.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "ROMACTED 2 – Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level"**: Five grants were closed with the municipalities across the country, implementing infrastructural and educational activities at the local level. The updated textbook on Antidiscrimination Law with a chapter on antigypsyism was published and will become a part of the University curricula of two Law faculties.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "Roma Integration Phase III"**: In April, the Action held a workshop to help the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy develop plans for 2024-2025, targeting the areas of antigypsyism and housing. On 7 April, the "No to Antigypsyism, Yes to the Roma" event took place. On 12-13 June, the International Conference in Tirana addressed Roma housing challenges in the Western Balkans and Türkiye. The online Geoportal of Roma settlements was launched, offering data to aid housing and infrastructure planning.
- **Germany VC, "Quality Education for All – North Macedonia"**: In June, a delegation of beneficiaries visited Croatia to learn about inclusive education strategies, informing efforts to address the issues of Roma segregation at local and school levels, tackled by the European Court of Human Rights judgment in *Elmazova and Others v. North Macedonia* case. In April-June, mentoring sessions were conducted across 25 pilot schools in seven regions, improving educators' practices and understanding of interculturality and democratic competencies.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 6-9 May, the electoral mission of the *Ad Hoc* Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe for the Observation of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in North Macedonia took place.

Office in Tirana

Situation of the Office

The CoE Office in Tirana has 25 staff members (four men, 21 women) out of which seven (four men, three women) are core staff and 18 (women) project staff.

As of 30 June 2024, the Office has implemented 10 projects, out of which eight are carried out within the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye", one is funded by Germany and one by Sweden (Sida).

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening the Quality and Efficiency of Justice in Albania (SEJ IV)":** A peer-to-peer workshop for prosecution offices of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* on good practices and shared challenges concerning the efficiency and quality of the work of prosecutorial system was organized in Vlora, in cooperation with the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors and other HF III Actions. 28 inspectors and assistant inspectors from the High Inspector of Justice enhanced their capacities on the methodology to conduct thematic inspections based on EU best practices and standards, following the creation of specific Guidelines supported by the Action. 25 court managers in Albania reinforced their capacities to measure court performance and use judicial statistics for effective decision making, in line with CEPEJ standards.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners in Albania":** 22 prison and probation first-line practitioners, members of multidisciplinary teams from three prison establishments in Burrel, Peqin and Ali Demi, and the Tirana Probation Service Regional Office, enhanced their capacities related to management of violent and extremist prisoners (VEPs), and those vulnerable to radicalization. Staff of the women prison "Ali Demi" participated in activities on Trauma-Informed Therapy.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action against Economic Crime in Albania":** The Albanian language version of the Council of Europe's HELP course on "Introduction to corruption prevention" was launched at a high-level event in Tirana, in cooperation with the Minister of State for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption, and the Albanian School of Public Administration. The Action supported the Financial Intelligence Agency to finetune the draft National Strategy on Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (2024-2030).
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Improving the protection of the right to property and facilitating execution of ECtHR judgments in Albania (D-REX III)":** Outreach monitoring activities were held at the municipalities of Librazhd, Berat, and Malësi e Madhe, to collect data on the involvement of local authorities in property registration. Albanian High Court staff exchanged experiences with their counterparts of the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation on harmonization of judicial practices in line with European Court of Human Rights standards. Four informative sessions on property compensation and registration were organised in cooperation with the Tirana Legal Aid Society (TLAS), targeting the ownership title holders as well as citizens receiving information on registration of land property and the completion of transitory ownership processes. The Action supported the publication of the third resource material on judgments of the Albanian High Court for the period 2021-2023, including on property rights. The Action also strengthened coordination among the Agency on the Treatment of Property, State Cadastre Agency and other administrative institutions, with the aim to align Albania's property rights legislation with the European Court of Human Rights.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Advancing the protection from discrimination in Albania"**: The Albanian Committee on National Minorities exchanged experiences with their Estonian counterparts in a study visit organised in Tallin, in co-operation with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Numerous thematic activities featured the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) week in Albania, together with relevant public authorities, international partners and CSOs. The Council of Europe HELP course on Hate Crimes, specifically tailored for judges, prosecutors and police officers, was launched in Albania.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Protecting Freedom of Expression and of the Media in Albania (PRO-FREX-A)"**: 44 legal professionals (15 judges, 19 prosecutors, and 10 lawyers) increased their knowledge on standards pertaining to Article 10 of European Convention on Human Rights, the case-law of European Court of Human Rights, and other relevant Council of Europe standards and recommendations. A comprehensive document outlining the terms and business requirements for IT solutions on monitoring the implementation of the Audio-visual Media Authority's Broadcasting code was prepared with the Action's support.
- **EU/CoE Regional HF III, "Enhancing cooperation in the Western Balkans in managing violent extremism in prisons and preventing further radicalisation after release"**: Five probation practitioners enriched their practical skills on the application of the Risk and Needs Assessment (RNA) tool and rehabilitation programme for Violent Extremist Offenders during a three-day online training activity. Prison and probation professionals exchanged experiences with colleagues from the region and Europe, in the realm of rehabilitation, reintegration and the prison-exit continuum of VEPs and prisoners at risk from radicalisation at the 2nd regional conference, while the members of the Action's Steering Committee from Albania attended its 3rd session. During a three-day training activity in Durres, 22 prison and probation practitioners strengthened practical skills to apply VEP specific tools (screening and RNA tool) as well as rehabilitation and pre-release programme.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "Roma Integration Phase III"**: A high-level Public Dialogue on the Inclusion of Roma in Albania was organised on the occasion of the Roma International Day. A Regional Conference on Roma Housing took place in Tirana. The Action supported a comprehensive progress assessment (2019-2024) on the Poznan Declaration commitments by Albania, highlighting the need for better coordination. The programme provided support in preparing the assessment on employment measures, reinforcing collaborative efforts towards Roma employability in Albania. Additionally, the program offered assistance with civil registration to the Roma communities through Tirana Legal Aid Society (TLAS) and Roma Active Albania.
- **Sweden (Sida) VC, "Strengthening Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania"**: An informative and educational visit was organized for 40 students and teachers from Shtjefën Gjeçovi and Kurbin high schools, Hamza Muça and Shkallnur primary schools at the former prison camp of Spaç. Through the visit young people learnt and reflected about the past, especially the importance of freedom and human dignity. 30 school principals, led by experts from the Council of Europe's education department, enhanced their skills and knowledge on democratic education.
- **Germany VC, "Sustaining Public Administration Reform at Local Level in Albania"**: The Public Administration Week initiative of the Minister of State for Public Administration and Anticorruption aimed at bringing public institutions closer to citizens. One of the main events was the Human Resources Forum which focused on the digitalisation of Human Resources Management processes and capacity building of public servants.

Follow up actions

- Pursuant to the request of the Albanian Parliament, a legal review of the draft law on conflict of interest is under preparation, to be delivered within July 2024.
- Two projects pertaining to electoral assistance are to be finalised by the Parliamentary and Electoral Cooperation Division by the end of August 2024.

Other relevant activities

- The Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination and the Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence met in Tirana, on 5-6 June.

Office in Tunis

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Tunis has 18 (four men, 14 women) staff members, out of which six (three men, three women) are core staff and 12 (one man, 11 women) are project staff.

The Office implemented one programme and seven projects: 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

- **NP, "Enlarging common legal space with Tunisia":**

- ✓ Combating corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing
 - The closing ceremony of the 8th promotion of the International Academy for Good Governance was organised in Tunis on 22 May to mark the completion of an eight-month training programme on good governance and prevention of corruption. Participants developed a short- and medium-term project for change that was presented to *École Nationale d'Administration* Scientific Council and relevant ministries. Overall, the programme aimed 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.
- ✓ Combating cybercrime
 - Following the ratification of the Budapest Convention, two bilateral activities were organised in Tunis in the framework of the joint EU/CoE CyberSouth+ project. A Workshop on procedural powers under the Convention on Cybercrime and domestic legislation in Tunisia was held on 28-29 May, providing the opportunity to clarify which national provisions allow criminal justice authorities to apply the tools offered by the Convention, to comply with the domestic and international cooperation provisions and to identify any legislative gaps. On 11-13 June, a Trainer-of-Trainers session on cybercrime and electronic evidence for judges was organised with the aim to reinforce the capacity of Tunisian judges to train their peers on cybercrime.
- ✓ Data protection
 - Two Trainer-of-Trainers' sessions were carried out in Tunis on 24-27 June with the objective of raising awareness and building youth capacities regarding the protection of personal data. These training sessions, targeting youth centres' trainers, focused on practical tools to raise awareness about data privacy among adolescents and youngsters. 50 youth centre's facilitators from different regions of Tunisia contributed their experience to fine-tuning of the Council of Europe "Data Protection Tool", combining several modules of theoretical and practical exercises and covering the basics of data protection, online risks, and best practices. This experience and tools will be further disseminated during summer camps organised by Tunisian youth centres all over the country. This training programme also use Compass, the Council of Europe manual for human rights education with young people, first published in 2002 within the framework of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe.

- **NP, "Support to the School of Political Studies of Tunisia":** On 29 March, the Tunis School of Politics (TSP) launched its 11th annual training cycle to build democratic capacities of young participants aged between 25-35 years with the support of a grant provided by the Council of Europe. The grant foresees activities contributing towards the annual training cycle of the TSP civil society class 2024 and itinerant training sessions targeting local young civil society activists in interior regions in Tunisia, as well as participation in the Council of Europe 2024 World Forum for Democracy scheduled on 6-8 November on "Democracy and Diversity - Can we transcend the divides?". The first two training sessions on "Civil society, the state and politics" and "Rights, freedoms and the rule of law" were held in March and June 2024 in Tunis, as well as the first itinerant training session on "The state and politics" in Kasserine governate.

- **Monaco VC /NP, "Combatting violence against women and domestic violence in Tunisia":**

- ✓ On 22 April, a meeting with the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and Seniors (MFFES) was held to discuss about the accession of Tunisia to the Istanbul Convention. While confirming the MFFES willingness to further support the process, concerns about potential obstacles to the accession were raised. It was therefore agreed to further support the MFFES in this regard as well as with the introduction of a National Orientation System for victims of domestic violence.
- ✓ On 30 and 31 May, the Tunisian representative participated in the meeting of the Committee of Parties (CoP) of the Istanbul Convention, marking the 10th anniversary of the Istanbul Convention. During this visit, the representative of Tunisia met with the team of the Division of Violence against Women and discussed potential ways of Tunisia's accession to the Istanbul Convention, such as the possibility of making declarations at the time of ratification. The exchange also focused on the organisation of joint activities. The representative of the Tunisian authorities also took part in the launch ceremony of the new Gender Equality Council of Europe strategy 2024-2029.

- **NP, "Promoting children's rights and combatting violence against children in Tunisia 2022-2025":**

- ✓ On 25 April, a workshop on the coordinated approach in interviewing victims, using the NICHD⁷ protocol, was organised in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice to promote child-friendly justice.
- ✓ On 11-13 June, a delegate to the protection of children from the governorate of Beja participated in the Lanzarote Committee Meeting in Strasbourg. The participation was a good opportunity to share experiences with other parties to the Convention.
- ✓ A series of trainings of trainers on the use of the Pedagogical Kit for Education for the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children took place in partnership with the MFFES and SAWN association on 29-31 May, 6-8 June and 19-21 June. The objective was to provide early childhood professionals with an educational kit to promote the prevention and protection of children from sexual abuse. Practical activities and simulations were carried out to ensure that the adequate messages to be conveyed by the professionals to parents and children were respected.

- **Switzerland VC/NP, "Fight against trafficking in human beings in Tunisia":**

- ✓ On 27 June, a coordination meeting with the Ministry of Justice and the President of the National Authority to Combat Trafficking in Persons was held. The commitment of the relevant institutions to develop further the cooperation in the implementation of the National Referral Mechanisms (NRM) as well as the development of an information system for the detection and identification of victims was confirmed.

- **NP, "HELP in Tunisia":**

⁷ National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

- ✓ On 25 June, the certificate ceremony of the HELP online course on Data protection and privacy rights was organised at the premises of the Tunisian Bar Association (*Ordre National des Avocats de Tunisie* – ONAT) with the participation of 13 lawyers who have successfully completed the course.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Protecting human rights, the rule of law and democracy through shared standards in the Southern Mediterranean" (South Programme V):**

- ✓ Enlarging the common legal space between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean
 - Despite the fragile security situation in the region, two joint South Programme V and CyberSouth+ missions were carried out in the Southern Mediterranean region during the reporting period.
The objective of the mission to Amman, Jordan, (22-25 April) was to further strengthen contacts and coordination with the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, explore cooperation with the Anti-trafficking Unit of the Public Security Directorate (Ministry of Interior) in line with their priorities, and advance on the expertise provided under the programme's Quick Response Mechanism (QRM) for the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship (MODEE) in support of reviewing the national regulatory framework on the protection of personal data in line with international and Council of Europe standards.
On 12-13 June, a mission to Algiers, Algeria, was organised and conducted in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to identify concrete ways and thematic areas to reinforce the involvement of the country in CyberSouth+ and in the South Programme V, both in its regional and bilateral dimensions. Priority areas discussed in this context with focal points identified by Algeria included combating corruption, money laundering and financing of terrorism, combating trafficking in human beings, cybercrime, fighting violence against women and sexual abuse against children, data protection as well as the efficiency of justice.
 - The Venice Commission opinion on the draft law on the Administrative Judiciary in Lebanon, adopted in March, was presented by one of the drafters of the opinion at the "3RF" (Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework) Justice Working Group meeting in Lebanon on 19 June. The Opinion was provided at the request of the Lebanese Minister of Justice as part of the Quick Response Mechanism (QRM) of the South Programme V.
 - Expert support by the Venice Commission was provided for Moroccan partners during an international seminar on the exception of unconstitutionality of laws – comparative experiences. The seminar was organised by the Moroccan Ministry of Justice and the Venice Commission in the presence of the Moroccan Minister of Justice and the Vice-President of the Venice Commission on 12-13 June in Rabat, Morocco.
 - The South Programme V supported the participation of Southern Mediterranean partners in various technical meetings and high-level events organised by the Council of Europe to encourage peer-to-peer exchanges and awareness of partners on Council of Europe work and standards. This included support for the participation of Tunisian and Moroccan representatives in the 25th meeting of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission (GEC) on 16-18 April and the GEC Conference "United around gender equality: making space for women and girls" on 30 May, as well as in the 85th European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) plenary meeting on 17-19 June in Strasbourg.

- ✓ Strengthening capacities to address global challenges through common tools and responses
 - In parallel to the joint South Programme V and CyberSouth+ mission to Jordan, a regional workshop on the role of anti-corruption agencies to enhance business integrity and compliance in the private sector was organised in Amman, in cooperation with the Jordanian Integrity and Anti-corruption Commission (JIACC). Over 30 representatives of the public and private sectors as well as civil society from Jordan, Morocco, Palestine** and Tunisia discussed the event aimed to raise awareness among anti-corruption agencies and other relevant institutions on international standards and good practices on business integrity and anti-corruption compliance. It was the JIACC's initiative to strengthen cooperation with the private sector.
 - Two activities promoting freedom of expression, access to information and media pluralism were implemented during the reporting period with Southern Mediterranean partners.

Libyan partners benefited from an online training workshop on Ethical and Professional Media Reporting on Elections on 13-14 May. Gathering over 20 participants representing Libyan state institutions, and civil society representatives, the training workshop was held in the framework of a series of capacity building measures targeting coordinators from the High National Elections Commission's (HNEC) electoral offices, the staff of the General Authority for Media Content Monitoring (GAMMC) and civil society representatives during the period of June 2023-May 2024.

A regional conference "Euro-Mediterranean Approaches on Access to Information", organised in partnership with the Moroccan Commission for the Right of Access to Information (CDAI) on 22 April in Rabat, Morocco, brought together participants from the two shores of the Mediterranean (Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia from the Southern Mediterranean) to discuss measures to strengthen transparent governance and safeguard the right of access to information in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (Tromsø Convention). As a result of the recommendations, two studies on self-assessment performance indicators/benchmarks were launched.
 - In the context of the Human Rights Education for legal Professionals (HELP) programme in the Southern Mediterranean, Morocco started the national adaptation process of the HELP course on Human rights and Sports as the first country in the region.
- ✓ Enhancing co-operation and dialogue
 - The Pompidou Group's Mediterranean School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (MedSPAD) held its annual committee meeting on 17 April in Paris. The meeting brought together 16 experts from the Mediterranean region with the objective of sharing experiences among the countries that have conducted MedSPAD and the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) surveys. Representatives from Jordan and Libya declared their plans to launch MedSPAD surveys. These surveys have already been carried out in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. The South Programme continues to support peer exchanges between national authorities and experts in the region and Europe.
 - A training workshop focusing on the best interests of the child was organised jointly by the Venice Commission, the Association of Ombudsmen and Mediators of the Francophonie (AOMF), and the Ombudsman of Morocco on 23-24 April in Rabat to discuss and share good practices on legal procedures, institutional care and the

inclusion of disabled children. The workshop was a step towards closer cooperation between the AOMF and the Venice Commission with a long-term objective of reinforcing coordination and collaboration between the Southern Mediterranean ombudsmen and mediators and strengthening their capacities.

- The 6th online meeting of the Arab Network of Justice Inspection Services (ARNJIS) of the CEPEJ was organised on 6 June with the participation of representatives from South Programme V partners in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. The network was originally established for the Southern Mediterranean region in 2022, but has since enlarged its scope as a response to a high interest of Arab countries towards this cooperation (Qatar, Oman, Yemen and Mauritania have joined the network without financial support of the South Programme).
- A second training for the members of the Rule of Law Youth Network (RoLYN) was organised during the African University on Youth and Development on 25-29 June in Cabo Verde. Launched in Tunis in March as a joint North-South Centre and South Programme V (SPV) initiative, the 2024-2025 training cycle of the RoLYN aims at building capacities and fostering youth-led anti-corruption initiatives to prevent and combat corruption and economic crimes and protect the environment based on Council of Europe and other international standards. SPV beneficiaries represented in the network are Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

Office in Ukraine

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Ukraine has 82 (24 men, 58 women) staff members, out of which 13 (nine men, four women) are core staff and 69 (15 men, 54 women) project staff.

As of 30 June 2024, the Office has implemented 26 projects: four in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Partnership for Good Governance", one EU/CoE Joint Programme, and 21 funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level. The Action Plan for Ukraine 2023-2026 has received as of 30 June 2024 Action-Plan-Level contributions by Andorra, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom as well as from the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe.

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Enhancing anti-money laundering, counter terrorist financing and asset recovery regime in Ukraine"**: (1) A training session was organised on interdisciplinary research and investigation methods as well as intragovernmental cooperation for effective financial crime prevention and investigation; (2) A training activity was organised for representatives of all law enforcement agencies on the detection and investigation of trade-based money laundering; (3) A technical paper was produced on "Update to the Technical Paper on the Assessment of the Response of the Government of Ukraine to the Requirements of FATF Recommendation 8 and Immediate Outcome 10"; (4) A thematic workshop on available technologies and IT solutions for enhancing the FIU capacities, in particular strategic and operational analysis, processing and visualising the data, further distribution of analytical products was organised.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Support to development of the constitutional justice in Ukraine"**: Five offline events were organised. 60 participants, including judges, staff and patronage services of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, improved their capacities on personal data protection and issues of the filtration of constitutional complaints. Exchange was organised between the judges of Latvian and Ukrainian Constitutional Courts on the right to a constitutional complaint – all six judges participating (46% of the current composition) confirmed their readiness to use the techniques provided. 180 participants participated in the international conference on the anniversary of the Constitution of Ukraine organised by the project in co-operation with OSCE.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Combating hate speech in Ukraine"**: A comprehensive report elaborated providing an overview of the current state of anti-racism policies and measures in Ukraine serving as basis for further endeavours for development of targeted action plan. Partnership between the Council of Europe and Ukrainian beneficiaries to advance on combating hate speech was reaffirmed within the second technical committee meeting. Four Young European Ambassadors, currently participating in the tailored mentoring program under regional project on promoting equality and non-discrimination met online with the Deputy Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine to explore opportunities for further co-operation in combating discrimination and hate speech in Ukraine.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Promoting equality and non-discrimination: towards more resilient and inclusive societies"**: Two representatives of the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights improved their work on handling hate speech

cases, following participation in the regional platform of Equality bodies working to address hate speech in Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans regions. Capacity of four multipliers, representing Young European Ambassadors initiative, to use human rights education and counter narratives to hate speech is being improved through participation in the tailored mentoring program alongside with peers from Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans regions following regional training and seminars in 2023 and 2024.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Support for implementing European standards relating to anti-discrimination and rights of national minorities in Ukraine":** The project provided expert and technical assistance to the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience (DESS), Ministry of Education and the VP Office for European Integration on issues related to national minorities legislation and the EU negotiation process. The project prepared an expert opinion on the draft Law 9103 on Civil Partnerships. In close cooperation with the Vice-prime Minister on European Integration the project organised a Forum on National Minorities in Ukraine. The project organised bilateral meetings for the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine and the Head of the Government Office for European Integration to discuss cooperation on the EU accession process. A peer exchange in Albania involved law enforcement and CSOs from Ukraine (seven representatives) to strengthen cooperation on protecting vulnerable groups. These events focused on enhancing collaboration and protection of LGBTIQ+ rights.

- **AP, "Strengthening Ukrainian Law Enforcement Agencies During War and Post-War Period":** Two training sessions were organized for trainers from Security Service of Ukraine's training institutions on effective management and quality content fill-up of Council of Europe-supported online in-service staff training platform. Innovative Criminalistics at the Time of War – workshop for investigators of the National Police, State Bureau of Investigation and Security Service of Ukraine was held in June and welcomed some 60 investigators, criminologists and experts from forensic institutions of key law enforcement agencies that investigate war crimes. The program was focused on cutting-edge approaches and tools for crime scene inspection, aero-forensics, evidence extraction and processing, interdisciplinary interaction in context of evidence collection and forensic examinations, as well as standards for chronological documentation of the sequence of receipt, control, transfer, analysis, placement of physical and electronic evidence.

- **Sweden VC/AP, "Combating Violence against Women in Ukraine II (COVAW II):"** 65 Ukrainian judges, prosecutors and lawyers have successfully completed HELP online course on violence against women. A webinar on the publication "After ratification: promising practices on implementation of the Istanbul Convention" on 23 May gathered 340 civil servants from regional offices of the National Social Service of Ukraine who were exposed to best promising practices. A round table on 24 May presented the "Guidelines on Reporting for GREVIO Evaluations" and "Guide to the implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation on Protecting the rights of Migrant, Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Women and Girls". A new tool, "Checklist for Preventing Violence against Women through Formal and Informal Education", has been created for professionals in educational sector to support implementation of Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention.

- **AP, "Protecting the Rights of Ukrainian Children during and in post-war context":** An online presentation of the Comprehensive Assessment of Child-Friendly Justice System in Ukraine in cooperation with Interagency Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice was organized. The sixth four-day training session "Models of effective interagency cooperation in criminal proceedings involving children" was organized. The study "In the Best Interests of the Father: How Children's Rights Are Abused During Mobilisation" was presented within the framework of a grant provided by the Project to CSO "DeJure".

- **AP, "Strengthening multi-level governance, democracy and human rights at local level in Ukraine":** At the meeting of Platform for National – Local Dialogue representatives of local authorities, the Parliament and the government took stock of achievements of the national Open Governance Partnership Action Plan 2023 – 2025, and celebrated eleven communities that have excelled in implementing practices of youth participation, development of civic hubs, and citizens engagement in the recovery of Ukraine. Intermunicipal cooperation and multilevel dialogue was enhanced within the Committee for the development of de-occupied and temporarily occupied communities of the Association of Ukrainian Cities. The Register of Damage for Ukraine was promoted among national associations of local self-government with a focus on key role of local and regional authorities in the claims submission process. Mayors and local officials from 10 municipalities improved their capacities in implementation of initiatives on open government and human rights-based approaches.
- **AP, "Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase III":** A round table was organised in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to mainstream youth perspectives in the context of Ukraine's recovery efforts. 230 civil servants and local self-government officials in five regions were trained on participatory youth policy. 20 young activists (five men, 15 women) from 10 regions developed competencies and contributed to the new State Programme "Youth of Ukraine". 57 youth workers (10 men, 47 women) were trained on social cohesion, barrier-free environment and trauma-informed youth work. 10 new NGOs from nine regions and Kyiv are implementing projects with young people. The long-term training for trainers has begun with 28 youth experts.
- **AP, "Supporting democratic post-war elections in Ukraine":** Draft Risk Assessment and Feasibility Study on i-voting in Ukraine was finalized and translated into Ukrainian for the consideration by the profile Parliamentary Committee. Expert discussion on women engagement in political processes in Ukraine was held. A draft list of criteria to assess democratic pre-conditions for the post-war elections in Ukraine was presented to national partners (profile Parliamentary Committee and Central Election Commission). Three more episodes of series of radio programmes on war-related challenges for organisation and conduct of first post-war elections in Ukraine were aired on "Ukrainian Radio". Specialized three-days IT-training activities (ITIL 4 Foundation) for the CEC Secretariat staff was conducted.
- **AP, "Strengthening Good Democratic Governance and Resilience in Ukraine":** The proposals for amendments to the law on inter-municipal co-operation were prepared. Following the support to development of the Lviv agglomeration, the project provided a grant for the local association "Lviv Agglomeration". In cooperation with the National Agency on Corruption Prevention, the action plan for improving public ethics legislative and institutional framework related to public officials at local level is implemented. In partnership with the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service the manual "Novelties of the Law on Local Public Service in Ukraine" was presented and discussed (on 23 May).
- **AP, "Strengthening democratic resilience through civic participation during the war and in the post-war context in Ukraine":** As a result of two-days capacity-building training, 19 participants acquired practical skills in coordination of Citizens' Assemblies. In the framework of the international conference on volunteerism, 50 representatives of public authorities and volunteer organisations increased awareness of the challenges and trends of volunteering in Ukraine and abroad. 120 representatives of local authorities and CSOs from Lviv region enhanced capacity to establish cooperation and dialogue. As a result of three-months mentoring programme for school teachers, full School Participatory Budgeting cycle was implemented in eight territorial communities. The city councils of Poltava, Lutsk, Brusyliv, Berdychiv and Slavutych adopted and enacted the statutes of territorial communities that include a set of instruments of civic participation.

- **AP, "Supporting the reform of the national minority legal framework and the resilience of national minorities and Roma in Ukraine":** The project facilitated bilateral meetings in Kyiv for the Head of the Anti-discrimination Department. The Local Initiative Groups of National Minorities (LIGs) conducted six events: on IDP issues of National Minorities (NM), minority languages, art therapy for IDP children and women and training on crises communication. The events were attended by 300 NM representatives. Six grants were awarded under the assessment process.
- **AP, "Fostering Human Rights in the Criminal Justice System in Ukraine":** On 12 April, the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine opened the Round Table "Crimes Against National Security" organized with the Supreme Court and OSCE. On 15-16 May, the Office of the Prosecutor General's International Legal Cooperation Department visited the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. From 28-31 May, discussion with regional prosecutors on international cooperation was held. On June 3, a brainstorming session for the "Community Prosecutor" project was held at the Prosecutors Training Center of Ukraine. On June 7-8, the Council of Europe aided a workshop on media investigation of crimes related to Russian aggression, organized by the Prosecutor General's Office.
- **AP, "Support to the functioning of justice in the war and post-war context in Ukraine":** On 18 and 19 April, Vinnytsia, Ukraine, the project organised a Round table on the current practice of the European Court of Human Rights in cases against Ukraine and other member states of the Council of Europe. On 14 and 15 May in, Lviv, Ukraine, a Roundtable on execution of the Zhovner/Yuriy Nikolayevich Ivanov/Burmych group of cases was organised. On 20 – 23, in Lviv, Ukraine, a Summer School of International Law (war context), was organised jointly with the Ukrainian Catholic University and OSCE.
- **AP, "Strengthening judicial and non-judicial remedies for the human rights protection of the war-affected people in Ukraine":** Based on the results of the co-organized round table, recommendations for improving administrative and judicial procedures for the restoration of property rights to housing were widely disseminated among key national partners. The Project finalized the Concept of improving the national system of legal remedies and support for persons affected by armed aggression against Ukraine. Three organizations were awarded grants for strengthening the capacities of public entities. Training courses for judges on remedies in conflict related cases were reviewed to ensure their compliance with the standards of the Council of Europe.
- **AP, "Facilitating Housing Solutions for the War-Affected People in Ukraine":** A round table was organized on "Accessing Compensation for Housing Destruction: Challenges in Validating Property Rights and Ways to Resolution" (dedicated to improving administrative and judicial procedures for restoring property rights of war-affected people in the context of access to housing damage compensation). The project involved national consultant in creating Data Statistic System of the Unified Database on Internally Displaced Persons and provided expert support to advance national regulatory framework on housing solutions for the war-affected people.
- **AP, "Facilitating access to human rights and essential services for internally displaced persons and returnees at the community level":** A Steering committee meeting was held. The project work plan was formulated in close consultations with national partners, and the Ministry for Temporarily Occupied territories of Ukraine, in particular. In line with the work plan until 31 December the project will focus on a) trainings of trainers on trauma-informed approach to services for IDPs, b) support of displaced institutions with IT equipment, and c) conducting a research on practice of pre-return counselling at the local level in Ukraine.

- **AP, "HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals) for Ukraine including during wartime":** Ukraine reached the second place among the 46 member states according to the number of users of the HELP e-learning Platform. The new HELP course "International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights" has been developed and published at the Platform, an international conference was organised in cooperation with the Supreme Court in Kyiv. The new HELP course "Temporary protection in the European Union" has been developed and published at the Platform. The course was presented in Brussels at a joint EU-Council of Europe seminar on Temporary Protection in the European Union for the Ukrainian and European lawyers. Three HELP tutored courses have been adapted and launched in Kyiv. Two-day Training for Trainers for HELP tutors has been organised for 40 participants. The Strategy for introduction of HELP courses in legal education in Ukraine has been developed and presented in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and CSO "Commission on Legal Education and awareness".
- **AP, "Enhanced social protection in Ukraine":** An awareness raising campaign on the European Social Charter system was launched and a high-level discussion on the execution of the European Court of human Rights judgements was organised in Lviv on 14-15 May. A workshop on barrier-free services was held on 27 June in Kyiv, and a seminar on justice, integrity and leadership enhanced the skills of the managers of the National Mediation and Reconciliation Service on 9-10 May. In addition, extensive legal support was provided to the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine to develop the concept of transition from social allowances to social services. The interactive labour market analytics module was developed at the request of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. In addition, the report with recommendations on aligning the national legislation on maternity and paternal leaves was developed and presented to the national authorities.
- **AP, "Towards More Humane Detention Conditions and Reduced Reoffending in Ukraine (DECOPRIS)":** The draft National Action Plan for implementation of the Penitentiary Reform Strategy until 2026 was developed. A training activity for 22 penitentiary psychologists on piloting the Substance use rehabilitation programme was conducted. A training session to prepare 23 psychologists to pilot rehabilitation programme on psychological and psychosocial support for prisoners was conducted. Ongoing pilot of the Substance Use rehabilitation programme was launched in seven penitentiary institutions. A meeting between the Council of Europe Development Bank and the Ministry of Justice was conducted on preparing loan projects for construction/renovation of prisons in Ukraine. A meeting with the Deputy Minister of Justice was conducted to discuss the need for adoption of the Draft Law 5652 creating remedies for inadequate conditions of detention.
- **AP, "Supporting implementation of the European human rights standards in Ukraine":** The project contributed to the assessment of the Draft law on the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights with its official presentation at the expert discussion held in April. Enhancing efficiency of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) via creation of 27 monitoring methodologies for various places of deprivation of liberty were revised/newly developed under the project's assistance. Special three-month training course on Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights tailored to the NPM needs was provided jointly with the HELP programme. Data protection staff of the Ombudsperson's Office are trained on strategic planning. Integrating the best standards of data protection into the work of law enforcement authorities a series of special trainings was organised for the National police of Ukraine. The project assisted the Ombudsperson's Office with creation of a practical guide for building efficient external communication.
- **AP, "Safeguarding Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Media in Ukraine":** The project assisted the launch of the National Chapter of the Council of Europe

"Journalists Matter: Campaign for the Safety of Journalists". It co-organised the International Conference on Media Literacy and Media Self-Regulation and supported the 2024 Lviv Media Forum. It organised a roundtable on the possible changes to the Laws of Ukraine "On Media" and "On Advertising". The project trained another 56 judges from administrative courts on access to information and supported the Ombuds Office's participation in the 15th International Conference for Information Commissioners gathering. It co-organised bilateral meetings and PACE side events in Strasbourg on the issues of Ukrainian journalists held captive by Russia and supported a Suspilne film screening on Russian disinformation.

- **AP, "Promoting Gender Equality in Ukraine (Pro-GE)":** The Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls was translated into Ukrainian and published. The project has also developed a gender/media guidance for experts when they are selecting photographs for publications or events (non-sexist images), based on Council of Europe guidance and recommendations from the Committee of Ministers, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), Gender Equality Commission and cooperation; this is available to all Council of Europe projects upon request. A Call for proposals for three NGO grants was developed and published, and applications are currently being evaluated. A brochure on the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy and translation and national adaptation of the new HELP course on Gender Equality and Gender mainstreaming are currently in development.

- **AP, "Rights of veterans and personnel of armed forces in Ukraine":** The project has been officially launched by holding the first Steering Committee meeting on 29 April delivering a presentation of the Project as well as discussing the project workplan until the end of year with the key stakeholders. In June, the Project hosted a visit of by the Head of Department of Implementation of Human Rights, Justice and Legal Co-operation Standards, organizing a visit to the Ministry of Defence to discuss the possible ways the project can support the development of the new policy of the Ministry on human capital striving to enhance the protection of human rights in the armed forces in Ukraine.

Follow-up actions:

- **AP, "Strengthening multi-level governance, democracy and human rights at local level in Ukraine":**
 - ✓ Organisation of ToT programme on open government for local authorities;
 - ✓ Study on human rights on local and regional level in Ukraine;
 - ✓ Organisation of a series of thematic webinars on youth engagement in the context of reconstruction and recovery process;
 - ✓ Promotion of results achieved by 10 municipalities through local initiatives on open government and human rights;
 - ✓ Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ukrainian Association of Rayon and Oblast Councils.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Enhancing anti-money laundering, counter terrorist financing and asset recovery regime in Ukraine":**
 - ✓ Capacity-building activity for the State Financial Monitoring Service of Ukraine on strategic analysis.
 - ✓ Recommendations on the AML/CTF supervisory technologies and IT solutions.
 - ✓ Assessment and recommendations on the draft legislative amendments on targeted financial sanctions.
 - ✓ Recommendations on the Government's Action Plan on asset recovery.

Office in Yerevan

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Yerevan has 35 (seven men, 28 women) staff members, out of which six (three men, three women) are core staff and 29 (four men, 25 women) are project staff.

As of 30 June 2024, the Office has implemented 14 projects, three in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Partnership for Good Governance", one funded through a voluntary contribution from Austria through the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), and 10 funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level (one of them funded also through a voluntary contribution from Sweden) and Human Rights Trust Fund (HRTF). The Action Plan for Armenia 2023-2026 has received as of 30 June 2024 Action-Plan-Level contributions from Cyprus, France, Germany, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden as well as from the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Promoting equality and non-discrimination in Armenia"**: In May, the project provided essential support for developing an expert opinion on national minorities in collaboration with the Venice Commission. Additionally, the Manual on "[Policing Hate Crimes Against LGBT Persons](#)" was translated into Armenian. From 19-21 June, five Armenian police officers participated in a [peer-to-peer exchange](#) in Skopje to improve their skills in safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups. On 25 June, the project, in collaboration with the HRD of Armenia and university staff, organised an event to combat hate speech in educational institutions. From 27-28 June, 25 Armenian police officers enhanced their understanding of equality and non-discrimination.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Support to the justice reform in Armenia"**: On 26-27 April, the project organised a [high-level conference](#) on "Strengthening the Effectiveness of International Cooperation in Fighting Transnational Organised Crime" to enhance international prosecutorial cooperation. From April to June, by training and certifying prospective mediators, the project contributed to the reduction of court caseloads and promoted alternative dispute resolution. Several study visits were organised to enhance judicial capacities. Expert support was provided to draft a new law chapter on transferring proceedings. Additionally, the Training Commission of the General Assembly of Judges can now streamline its processes using a new Training Methodology developed by the project.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Enhancing national capacities for effective prevention and fight against economic crime in Armenia"**: Following the development of the Interpretative Manual for the Model Code of Conduct for Public Servants in Armenia (2023), the project published it for broader accessibility. It also contributed to organising a [high-level prosecutorial conference](#). With the project's support, 25 Anti-Corruption Committee [investigators enhanced their skills](#) in combating money laundering and corruption. The project reviewed Armenian whistleblowing law and the Law on Investment Funds to guide the Financial Monitoring Centre on anti-money laundering. A Training of Trainers workshop for NGOs was held to improve whistleblowing systems. Reviews of Armenia's integrity rules for top executives and the national anti-corruption framework were also initiated.
- **Austria (ADA) VC, "Democratic Development, Decentralisation and Good Governance in Armenia – Phase II"**: Two Community Consultation Initiative meetings (CCIM) were organised: at the [9th CCIM](#) (8 April), findings of the Study of the RoA legislation

on local duties and fees were discussed, while at the 10th CCIM (28 June), Draft Chapters 1-3 of the revised RoA Law "On Local Self-Government" were presented. Two [Workshops on Inter-municipal Co-operation \(IMC\)](#) (9-10 April) helped develop the capacities of 42 local officials to prepare grant proposals on IMC, while a Workshop on Resilience Building Strategies (24-25 June) strengthened the capacities of 25 local officials to enhance community resilience. During the [4th Stage of the Leadership Academy for Cross-border Co-operation](#) (26-27 June, Dilijan) 30 senior officials from Armenian and Georgian municipalities looked into joint opportunities for practical interaction.

- **HRTF VC, "Ensuring implementation of the ECHR through effective execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in Armenia"**: In April, 42 investigators [were trained](#) on effective investigation of ill-treatment cases in the light of the issues deriving from *Virabyan v. Armenia* group of cases. The alternative to detention restraint measures [were promoted](#) by preparing [the Guide](#) that addresses various issues, which hinder the effective application of these measures in Armenia. The new draft law on "Police Guard" that [was prepared](#) with the Council of Europe support, passed the first reading in June. Its adoption will contribute to the execution of the general measures of *Saghatelyan v. Armenia* group of cases, where the European Court of Human Rights found disproportionate and unnecessary dispersal of the peaceful protests, as well as lack of effective domestic remedy for grievances under Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- **AP, "Strengthening the Protection of the Rights of Persons in Detention"**: On 2-3 May, 24 representatives from the Probation and Penitentiary services attended a two-day workshop on resocialisation and conditional release. A [public consultation](#) on reforming the conditional release system took place on 15 May. Additionally, an assessment report titled "The Needs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to Improve its Ability to Address Issues Related to Ill-Treatment of Individuals Deprived of Their Liberty" was developed and shared with the MIA. This included a medical examination form and guidelines on alleged ill-treatment, which were discussed during a [workshop](#) on 5 May. Furthermore, skill-based training for Penitentiary Service staff on the Risk and Need Assessment (RNA) tool was conducted on 28-29 June.
- **AP, "Fostering human rights in the armed forces in Armenia"**: In the framework of 15-18 April trainings, [43 Armenian military professionals](#) enhanced their knowledge and skills to tackle the manifestations of criminal sub-culture in the army. On 25 April a multi-stakeholder discussion was organised with an ultimate target to enhance [the draft](#) of the "Behavioural Regulations of Members of the Armed Forces of Armenia" put forward by the Ministry of Defence of Armenia. On 21 June the Armenian adaptation of the [HELP course](#) "Human Rights in the Armed Forces" was launched. On 25-28 June training sessions, military commanders and military police officers strengthened their knowledge to protect lives and physical and psychological integrity of members of the armed forces more effectively.
- **Sweden VC / AP, "Ending violence against women and promoting gender equality in Armenia"**: Continuing capacity building of frontline professionals on combating domestic violence (DV) and gender equality, the project trained [24 investigators](#) and [13 media specialists](#). The National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia [adopted](#) amendments to the existing bill on preventing DV and increasing the effectiveness of the protection of domestic violence victims, based on the Council of Europe gap analysis and recommendations. The project facilitated [discussion](#) on implementation of these amendments among relevant state agencies and CSOs. Eight CSOs received small grants to promote empowerment of refugee women and gender equality. Two research/reports with recommendations (mapping DV victim support services in Armenia and digital dimensions of violence against women) are underway.
- **AP, "Protection of Human Rights in Biomedicine II"**: In May Armenia has [signed](#) the Council of Europe Oviedo Convention. The Republic of Armenia Law on "Reproductive health

rights” was amended based on the recommendations of the Council of Europe. Human Rights Defender’s Office applies new [knowledge and skills](#) on different aspects enshrined in the Oviedo Convention. Medical centres are promoting the functioning of the Ethics Committee through the knowledge gained during the [capacity-building](#). Medical CSOs [discussed](#) the benefits of the ratification of the Oviedo Convention. The simulation of the ratification of the Oviedo Convention [promoted](#) the public dialogue. [The expert report on legal incapacity issues](#) serves as the guiding document for the execution of the European Court of Human Rights *Nikolyan vs. Armenia* judgement.

- **AP, “Strengthening the Probation Service in Armenia”:** A [training of trainers](#) on 23-25 May enhanced probation officers' skills on specific topics. Draft amendments to the Government Decree to improve the performance evaluation of probation officers were prepared and adopted by the Government, partially incorporating feedback from experts. The Risk and Need Assessment (RNA) validation study concluded with the results outlined in the report. A [workshop](#) on 2-3 May fostered inter-agency cooperation between Probation and Penitentiary Services. [Training of trainers](#) on 7-8 June focused on applying new alternative restraint measures and sanctions. Rehabilitation programmes for drug addictions and violent offenders are underway. An international [conference](#) on 11-12 June shared best practices on rehabilitation of offenders.

- **AP, “Support to Communities Hosting Refugees in Armenia”:** In response to the [call for grant proposals](#) to support communities hosting refugees in Armenia, applications from 15 host communities were received, with four of them being selected for funding. A workshop on Resilience Building Strategies (ReBuS) was organised on 11 April to develop the capacities of more than 20 local officials from host communities and promote institutionalisation of practices to enhance resilience. The Workshop was followed by visits to 11 host communities to support them with the implementation of the ReBuS toolkit.

- **AP, “Strengthening human rights safeguards for the displaced population in Armenia”:** In April, the project organised an initiative that empowered civil society organisations from the Karabakh region to enhance their capacities in proposal writing and fundraising, leading to stronger future project proposals. With the project’s support, Armenian representative participated in the [European National Preventive Mechanisms \(NPM\) Forum](#) organised in Strasbourg in June. This engagement facilitated the exchange of best practices for monitoring pre-trial detention facilities, including the administrative detention of migrants. In June, [World Refugee Day](#) was marked by a workshop on refugee protection laws and policies, discussing strategies to improve services, foster integration, and enhance stakeholder cooperation for the refugee community.

- **AP, “Enhancing social human rights in Armenia”:** Expert Support was provided to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia for the development of the Social Housing/Housing Program through preparing a Report (Frame Document) on Social Housing, based on international requirements in the area, and specifically of the European Social Charter and the case-law of the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR).

- **AP, “Protecting the rights of Armenian children in post-conflict context”:** In May, the [Armenian translation of the Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)11](#) on effective guardianship in the context of migration was introduced and disseminated. Needs assessment analysis and thematic interviews with key stakeholders were conducted to develop report with recommendations on protection of the rights of unaccompanied and separated children. Additionally, an event to celebrate [International Children’s Day](#) was organised, engaging middle and high school students to raise awareness of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- A delegation from the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity (DGII) visited Armenia on 6-7 May at the request of Justice Minister Grigor Minasyan for an opinion on the Draft Law on National Minorities. The delegation met with international organisations representatives to gain insight into the country's context and the situation of national minorities in Armenia. A [Joint Opinion](#) was adopted at 139th Plenary Session.