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Quarterly report of Council of Europe Offices

January-March 2023

* All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

A. LIAISON OFFICES

Introduction

The Council of Europe Offices in charge of liaison with one or more international organisations or institutions:

- represent the Secretary General vis-à-vis international organisation(s) or institution(s);
- follow the activities carried out by the relevant international organisation(s) or institution(s) and report on developments relevant to the Council of Europe activities and policies;
- provide support for the organisation of and follow-up to high-level co-ordination and other meetings or events between the Council of Europe and the relevant international organisation(s) or institution(s);
- promote effective co-operation between the Council of Europe and the relevant international organisation(s) or institution(s);
- identify opportunities for joint activities and provide advice and support in planning, negotiation, implementation and reporting on these activities;
- conduct a proactive media policy in order to raise the visibility of the Organisation.

The present document covers the reporting period January-March 2023. Following decision [CM/Del/Dec\(2013\)1175/1.6E](#) of 3 July 2013, activity reports have been published every three months, starting with July-September 2013.

Brussels - Council of Europe Office in charge of liaison with the European Union

Highlights

- On 30 January, the Council of the EU adopted its conclusions on the EU's co-operation priorities with the Council of Europe 2023-2024.
- The **Secretary General** visited Brussels/the EU from 27 February to 1 March and then again on 10 March.
- The Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly visited Brussels/the EU on 6-7 February.
- The Special Representative of the Secretary General on migration and refugees visited Brussels/the EU on 2-3 February.
- The Director of Legal Advice and Public International Law visited Brussels/the EU on 24 February.
- The Secretary General of the Congress visited Brussels/the EU on 8-9 March.
- The Director of Programme Co-ordination visited Brussels/the EU on 27 February, on 10 and on 29 March.
- The Director of Democratic Participation (DG II) was in Brussels for the presentation of the report of the Platform for the protection of journalists, bilateral meetings and the intergovernmental forum on history teaching, 7-8 March.
- The CoE - EU Scoreboard on programmatic co-operation took place on 29 March.
- The Chair of the CPT presented the CPT's 2022 report to journalists in the Office on 30 March.

The **Head of Office** held/participated in various events/bilateral meetings:

- Bilateral exchange between the DGI Secretariat and the EP Rapporteur on the ratification of the 2nd Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention (11 January).
- President of the "Vocal Europe" Think Tank and former President of the EU's European Economic and social Committee (EESC) Malosse (16 January); a Seminar on the European integration path for Ukraine organised by said Think Tank (24 January).
- EEAS Deputy Director General Kokkinakis on CoE-EU co-operation (16 January).
- EEAS Deputy Director General Devigne on developments in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia (16 January).
- Commission Coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred and discrimination Lalissee; Coordinator of "Islamophobia.be" in view of the Office's attendance at the Conference "Muslim Voices for Diversity Dialogue" at the EP (20 March).
- Secretary General of European Movement International Fassoulas (6 March).
- Exchange with the participants of the Platform for the protection of journalists (7 March).
- Presentation during International Women's Day: conference organised by the Belgian MFA on "political participation of women" (8 March).
- Secretary General of the Congress (9 March).
- Secretary of the CAI (DGI) after a meeting with representatives of the Commission (Connect) on 14 March and following discussions with US interlocutors on 24 March.
- DG Just (Head of the Rule of Law Unit) on our co-operation in the field of the rule of law (17 March).
- EEAS on various aspects of CoE-EU co-operation (24 March).
- Head of the Brussels Representation of the UNFPA (27 March) to prepare the meeting of the Secretary General with UNFPA's Executive Director in Strasbourg on 18 April.

The Head of Office accompanied the Secretary General and other high-level visitors during their meetings in Brussels. In addition, he represented the CoE at the **COSCE** meeting (EU Council Working Group on the relations with the CoE and the OSCE), 17 February. He also met bilaterally the EEAS Chair of said Committee (9 February).

He also met the members of **Canadian** Parliament House Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (24 February).

The Head of Office welcomed several CoE Secretariat colleagues on mission to Brussels, such as: DG II (Sport), DG II (Culture), DGII (Observatory of history teaching in Europe), DG II (Anti-discrimination) and DPC (7-8 February).

Several exchanges were organised with Strasbourg-based colleagues as well as with EU representatives on co-operation in the **promotion of the CoE conventions** in third countries. Close contacts with Strasbourg were also kept on developments as regards the EU's **accession to the ECHR**. An exploratory meeting on further possible co-operation on the promotion of the **Medicrime** Convention was organised between DGI, DPC and the Commission (video) on 9 March. The Office also facilitated the liaison between several colleagues and the Commission on a specific joint programme dealing with detention-related issues.

The Office further assisted the Organisation in facilitating dialogue with the EU on a series of important matters of common interest, such as:

- Preparation of the EP report on the institutional relationship between the EU and the CoE.
- Bilateral contacts with representatives from the Swedish Presidency of the EU on matters of CoE interest, in particular in the fields of criminal justice, fundamental rights and digital/artificial intelligence.

Besides the EU institutions, the Office also met:

- two representatives from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (6 January).
- a group of political affairs students from the Sorbonne.

The Office facilitated the intervention of a DGII representative on non-discrimination in an EP-LIBE Committee meeting on 2 March. It also facilitated the participation of a DGI representative on the execution of the ECtHR decisions in the LIBE's Working Group on Democracy, Fundamental Rights and the Rule of Law (DRF WG) on 29 March.

The Deputy Head of Office accompanied the Director of Legal Advice and Public International Law in his meeting with **EP Jurisconsult** Drexler (14 March). In Strasbourg, he also participated in the meeting between the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law and **Director General, DG Just** Gallego on 15 March. He further participated in the Programme "Our Rule of Law Academy" organised by Groningen University with students from various European universities (17 March).

Visibility and relations with media

The Brussels-based Spokesperson/Media Officer co-ordinated communications work around the publication of the EU's latest priorities for co-operation with the Council of Europe and the launch of a new newsletter by the EU delegation in Strasbourg on co-operation between the

two organisations; the Brussels presentation of the annual report on the Platform for the protection of journalists; the press conference to launch the CPT annual report for 2022; and the March meeting of the Committee of Ministers on the implementation of judgments of the ECtHR.

He carried out media, online and social media work on issues including the January PACE session, the annual press conference at the ECtHR and the publication of the Court's annual report, the visit of the British PACE delegation to the Court, the Secretary General's visit to Brussels, various developments related to the UK and the ECHR, the online lecture given by ECtHR President O'Leary on "Ireland and the ECHR", the monitoring by the Congress of the repeat elections in Berlin, the GRECO report on Ireland, the ECRML report on the Netherlands, the statement by the ECSR President following the earthquakes in Türkiye, media freedom alerts concerning Germany and Türkiye, the Venice Commission statement on Israel, the annual conclusions from the European Committee of Social Rights, the Commissioner's statement on France, the EU's accession to the ECHR, the launch of the South Programme V, the GRETA report on Greece, the ECRI report on Hungary, a new factsheet on the execution of ECtHR judgments, International Women's Day and various judgments and decisions from the ECtHR, as well as the two major hearings related to human rights and the environment.

The Spokesperson/Media Officer also represented the CoE in the latest regular "C-10" meeting of communications staff from various international organisations and networks working on human rights; contributed to the reform of the CoE's social media presence; and continued to manage the on-going communications project highlighting the impact of the ECHR.

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

The Office continued to ensure the liaison between the Geneva-based organisations and the relevant MAEs of the CoE.

It attended the 52nd regular session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) from 27 February to 4 April (online for the most part, with some selected sessions in March in person).

The Office, together with representatives of the Congress, participated in the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on 29-30 March and delivered a statement at the closing plenary session on the CoE's contribution to Agenda 2030, focusing on SDG1 (sustainable cities and communities) and SDG17 (partnerships for the goals).

It attended a number of presentations and meetings, such as:

- Presentation on OCHA's work and role in humanitarian civil-military co-ordination (19 January).
- Meeting of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls (19 January).
- Fifth intersessional meeting of the HRC for dialogue and co-operation on human rights (19 January).
- Informal conversation with the High Commissioner for Human Rights (27 February, online).
- Intersessional Meeting - technical co-operation and capacity-building in the HRC: taking stock of the past for a better discharge of this mission in the future (20 April, online).

Furthermore, the Office facilitated the mission of Ambassador Václav Bálek, President of the United Nations Human Rights Council for 2023, to Strasbourg on 9 February. Ambassador Bálek addressed the annual exchange of views of the Ministers' Deputies with the United Nations (human rights questions) and held high-level meetings with CoE officials, including the Secretary General. The Office also facilitated the delivery of a video statement by the Secretary General to the High-Level Segment of the HRC in Geneva on 2 March.

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

Finally, in preparation for the HRC, the *Chargée d'affaires a.i.* attended a three-week training session organised by the UN, obtaining the certificate of completion.

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

Participation in OSCE Permanent Council Meetings

- 12 January: Special meeting of the Permanent Council - inauguration of the 2023 Chairpersonship-in-Office of North Macedonia; address by the OSCE CiO, MFA Bujar Osmani.
- 17 January: Special meeting of the Permanent Council - address by Armenian MFA Ararat Mirzoyan.
- 19 January: Permanent Council meeting - address by the President of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE, Icelandic MFA Thórdís Kolbrún Reykjörd Gylfadóttir.
- 26 January: Permanent Council meeting - address by the President of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.
- 2 February: OSCE Permanent Council meeting dedicated to the Russian aggression against Ukraine.
- 9 February: OSCE Permanent Council meeting dedicated to the presentations by the Chairpersons of the Security Committee, the Economic and Environmental Committee and the Human Dimension Committee.
- 16 February: OSCE Permanent Council meeting dedicated to the address by UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Gillian Triggs.
- 24 February: Reinforced meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council: participation of several Foreign Ministers of the OSCE participating States (online).
- 2 March: Permanent Council meeting; thematic report of the Secretary General on "The OSCE and climate change: progress in 2022 and prospects for the future".
- 9 March: Permanent Council meeting; International Women's Day; report by the OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan.
- 16 March: Permanent Council meeting; report by Director of ODIHR Matteo Mecacci.
- 23 March: Permanent Council meeting dedicated to the Russian aggression against Ukraine; invocation of the Moscow Mechanism to investigate human rights abuses in Belarus.
- 30 March: Permanent Council meeting dedicated to the Russian aggression against Ukraine; invocation of the Moscow Mechanism to investigate cases of illegal deportation of Ukrainian children by the Russian Federation.

Participation in other meetings, including expert committees and conferences

- 8 January: Preparatory meeting of experts from the parties to the CoE's Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.
- 9-23 January: 4th session of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes, UNODC.
- 24 January: 32nd CCPCJ Special Event - launch of the 2022 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, UNODC.
- 30 January - 2 February: meeting of the CoE Heads of Liaison and Field Offices, Strasbourg.
- 21 February: HoO meeting with IOM Regional Director Manfred Profazi.
- 23-24 February: Winter meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.
- 13-14 March: OSCE First Supplementary Human Dimension Implementation Meeting - Media Freedom as a Central Pillar of Comprehensive Security.
- 13-17 March: 66th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the UNODC.

Warsaw - Council of Europe Office in charge of liaison with international organisations or institutions in Warsaw, in particular with OSCE/ODIHR and the Community of Democracies

Activities of the Office

Enhancing the co-operation with OSCE ODIHR - The Academy on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Polish Cities, a joint OSCE/ODIHR-CoE-UNHCR-OECD inter-agency project, implemented in co-operation with the Union of Polish Metropolises, was officially launched on 16 March. Over the next 18 months, international partners will offer a series of training courses for staff from a range of local authorities in Poland to address numerous aspects of migrant and refugee integration in cities. The CoE contribution is provided by the Intercultural Cities Programme, which will offer "An Intercultural Integration Training Course". The Office was involved in the conceptualisation and development of this co-operation initiative and will provide support for the implementation of the relevant part of the project assigned to the CoE in the coming months.

Close working relations with ODIHR staff members were maintained both by the HoO and by CoE delegations visiting Warsaw. Discussions included, among others, a meeting between the co-rapporteur of the PACE Monitoring Committee on honouring of obligations and commitments by Poland and an ODIHR delegation (Fabrizio Nava, Senior Political Adviser of Director's Office; Vladimir Misev, Senior Adviser of the Election Department; Carolyn Hammer, Rule of Law Officer; Konstantine Vardzelashvili, Head of Democratisation Department) and a meeting between the Head of Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Programmes (DGII) and Marharyta Zhesko and Ruth Burns, ODIHR hate crimes officers in the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department. The HoO remained in constant contact with the ODIHR Director's Office to discuss the possibility of involving ODIHR in the implementation of certain elements of the list activities agreed at the meeting of the CoE Contact Group on co-operation with Representatives of Belarusian democratic forces and civil society on 25 January 2023.

Continuation of the co-operation with the Community of Democracies (CoD) - The Office followed and informed about CoD work and activities, in particular activities to increase youth engagement and participation in political and public life. Of particular interest were the CoD's preparations for participation in the Summit for Democracy II, co-hosted by the United States and Costa Rica, and the announcement of a new CoD project, Global Youth Democracy Network.

Establishment of closer co-operation with Frontex - The Office reported on the Agency's published data on migration trends in Europe and on the first steps and initiatives undertaken by the new Frontex Executive Director after taking office. Regular consultations between the Office of the Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer and various CoE bodies and entities continued.

Ensuring the visibility of the CoE - The Office provided ongoing support to CoE activities in Poland, including visits to Poland by the co-rapporteur of the PACE Monitoring Committee on honouring of obligations and commitments by Poland, by the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (COMEX) and by the rapporteur of the PACE Migration Committee on Addressing the specific challenges faced by the Belarusians in exile. The Office supported the organisation of the launch event "Ensuring implementation of reforms in the antidiscrimination domain in Ukraine, in line with European standards", which was held in Warsaw.

B. FIELD AND PROGRAMME OFFICES

List of abbreviations used for the naming of projects

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

Baku

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 5, Project staff –8, Total staff - 13.

The Office is currently implementing four projects in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”, one project funded through voluntary contributions at the Action Plan-level, and one funded through the Human Rights Trust Fund and a voluntary contribution from Belgium.

State of implementation of projects

- **AP VC, “Promoting media professionalism and freedom of information in Azerbaijan (PRO-M-FEX)”:** (i) the Project conducted a study to look into the existing teaching curricula and programmes on conflict-related journalism of Azerbaijani universities with a view to developing a curriculum on conflict-sensitive journalism. (ii) A group of Azerbaijani journalists were trained in media literacy and disinformation, as well as in media coverage of gender-based violence and countering sexist hate speech in media respectively during two two-day workshops. (iii) The Project launched the assessment of the Azerbaijani legal framework on freedom of information and access to information by comparing it with respective international standards through involvement of international and local experts.
- **Human Rights Trust Fund and Belgium VC, “Support for the improvement of the execution of the European Court judgments by Azerbaijan”:** (i) Staff members from the Office of the Government Agent, Supreme Court, Office of the Prosecutor General, and the Ministry of Justice enhanced their capacity in preparation of action plans and reports on execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). (ii) Seven employees of national partner institutions increased their knowledge on best practices in re-opening of the judicial proceedings and implementing other domestic measures on execution of the ECHR judgments during a study visit to the HQ of the CoE. (iii) National legal framework and practices on re-opening of domestic proceedings and inter-agency coordination of the execution of judgments of the ECHR were assessed.
- **EU/CoE PGG II, “Strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in Azerbaijan”:** (i) 60 court presidents, judges and court staff from Baku and regions were trained on court performance reporting according to CEPEJ tools and methodology. (ii) Recommendations were provided to improve the work efficiency of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan based on CEPEJ methodologies and tools. (iii) The final conference to present the main results achieved during the past four years in the framework of the project took place on 21 February.
- **EU/CoE PGG II, “Strengthening Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery in Azerbaijan”:** (i) The project improved capacities of Azerbaijani practitioners in preventing money laundering crimes related to tax evasion. It also trained lawyers to increase their understanding of their roles and necessary measures to implement against money laundering and terrorist financing. (ii) Furthermore, the project enhanced capacities of law enforcement and judiciary in exploiting different financial investigative techniques to better combat money laundering. (iii) Lastly, standard operating procedures were developed to assist authorities in better handling incoming and outgoing mutual legal assistance requests.

- **EU/CoE PGG II, "Raising Awareness on the Istanbul Convention (IC) and other Gender Equality Standards in Azerbaijan":** the project finalised a study on "Protection orders in cases of VAW/DV: international standards and national practices in Azerbaijan" and presented the conclusions and recommendations of the study to members of parliament, state officials, legal professionals, representatives of civil society, diplomatic corps and academia during the project closing conference on 22 February. National actors showed interest and willingness to act on the recommendations in order to improve relevant legislation and practice and emphasized importance of PGG continuation.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Preventing and fighting economic crime in Azerbaijan":** the project technically started on 1 March.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Azerbaijan":** the project technically started on 1 March.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Fostering mediation in Azerbaijan":** the project technically started on 1 March.
- **EU/CoE PGG III "Promoting equality in Azerbaijan":** the project technically started on 1 March.

Other relevant activities

- On 18 January, HoO attended a seminar on preparation of action plans and reports for the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) within the Council of Europe project "Support for the improvement of the execution of the European Court judgments by Azerbaijan".
- On 6 February, HoO attended an opening of the Workshop on "Parallel Financial Investigations".
- On 10 February, HoO attended a seminar on court performance reporting according to CEPEJ tools and methodology organized for court presidents and judges in cooperation with the Academy of Justice of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
- On 7 March, HoO attended a launching event of the National Dialogue Platform on WOMEN' AGENDA.
- On 9 March, HoO delivered a seminar for the students of Law Faculty of the Baku State University.
- On 15 March, HoO attended an opening of the first working group meeting of the experts developing a curriculum on conflict sensitive journalism.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 16-17 March 2023, the Director of Programme Co-ordination of the Council of Europe Mr. Claus Neukirch visited Baku. Accompanied by the Head of Office, Mr Neukirch met with a Deputy Minister of Justice, representatives of the Presidential Administration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, as well as with the European Union Heads of Missions and some other Ambassadors present in Baku.

Belgrade

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 7, Project staff – 26, Horizontal Facility Coordination Hub (HFCH) – 1, Regional Finance Officer -1, Total – 35.

The Office is currently implementing 11 (country specific and regional) projects: 9 jointly funded with the EU (6 under the Horizontal Facility Phase III (HF), ROMACTED, Support for the implementation of judicial reform in Serbia, "HELP in the Western Balkans" and 2 projects through Voluntary Contributions (VC) of the Swedish Foreign Ministry/SIDA on Anti-Money-Laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing (AML/CTF) and of the Kingdom of Belgium Citizenship and human rights education with young people in Serbia.

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

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Quality Education for All-Serbia"**: the first, inaugural Steering Committee meeting was held in February. The meeting of the beneficiary working group aimed at policy advancement and change agenda was held in March. New mentor schools to work in all 18 school districts were selected. A meeting with Minister of Education and State Secretary with a purpose of presenting the aims of the action was held in March. HoO and SPO visited a mentor school in Kraljevo and discussed with the students and school project team on the implementation plan and the results achieved. Preparatory activities were finalised – communication plan and action infosheets, as well as production of visibility and didactic material.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Combating discrimination and promoting diversity in Serbia"**: during the inception phase meetings with main partners (Protector of Citizens, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue and Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja) were organized to discuss their priorities. The Action continues to provide support to the Ministry with the adoption of the Action Plan for Exercising the Rights of National Minorities.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia"**: within the HFIII inception phase, the project team organized 16 consultation meetings with representatives of national authorities, CSOs, EUD and international organizations working in the field of anti-trafficking to discuss needs and areas of intervention. First, the kick-off action Steering Committee meeting was implemented on 23 March, and the action workplan was adopted. Expert consultation meeting with prosecutors, judges of the Supreme Court of Cassation and staff of the Centre for Human trafficking victims' protection was organized on 30 March aiming at the improvement of Centre's findings/expert opinions which are used in judicial proceedings.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Enhancing human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons"**: within the Action's framework, a survey of medical screening in police custody and conduct of health workers when examining persons in police detention was initiated. Analyses of questionnaires' responses will form a basis for MoU between MoI and MoH on medical treatment of persons detained by the police. The very first SC meeting was organised during which overall as well as six-month WP of the Action was discussed with the beneficiaries. This meeting was preceded by individual meetings with beneficiaries and discussions on their emerging needs to be addressed within Action's framework.

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Enhancing co-operation in the Western Balkans in managing violent extremism in prisons and preventing further radicalisation after release”:**

fact-finding mission to Serbia was carried out under the inception phase. On the occasion, the project team held consultations with broad spectrum of project partners and stakeholders in Serbia to determine priority needs of Serbia that will be addressed through regional dimension of the project. The main project partner, MoJ and supporting partner MoI have opted for active engagement in activities under the regional dimension.

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Strengthening human rights protection in Serbia”:**

representatives of the highest judicial institutions participated in the round table on the execution of the European Court of Human Rights’ judgements, with focus on the case Dragan Petrovic v. Serbia in February. Thematic factsheet on the personal data protection in the context of the execution of the European Court of Human Rights’ judgements was translated into Serbian and distributed to relevant judicial institutions. The second annual cycle of the student practice programme with the Government Agent for law students was initiated in March. The first action’s Steering Committee meeting took place on 27 March.

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Protecting Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Serbia”:**

during the inception phase, the team met with all relevant stakeholders to discuss and tailor activities for result-based outcomes. A meeting with the Ministry for Information was held to present the action with emphasis on available Expertise Co-ordination Mechanism (ECM) providing expertise within the CoE system. As the outcome, the Ministry will join the action Steering Committee and is currently considering the available ECM as they are currently drafting two media related laws. Additionally, the team agreed with two main Journalist Associations in Serbia to build a synergy in the implementation of the action.

- **Human Rights Trust Fund VC, “HELP in the Western Balkans”:**

the first Steering Committee meeting has been organized gathering more than 20 representatives of Judicial Academies and Bar Associations of the six Beneficiaries including government agents at the European Court of Human Rights. For two days, the members discussed the results of the previous “HELP” action and set the activities for the new two-years project funded by the Human Rights Trust Fund (HRTF). The specific courses were identified in close cooperation with partners and the Department for the Execution of the Judgements of the European Court of Human Rights. Additionally, 10 HELP courses were launched throughout the region increasing the number of users of the HELP platform.

- **EU/CoE regional JP, “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED)-phase 2”:**

the implementation of 26 small grants-scheme projects commenced in 13 municipalities in Serbia, addressing the needs in various areas such as empowerment of Roma women/ youth, education, infrastructure, health, etc. Co-operation with the HF III Action “Quality Education for All” was initiated in the reporting period, with the specific focus on the “Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture” as the capacity-building material for teachers and stakeholders to reinforce the respect for dignity of marginalized children in schools.

- **EU/CoE JP, “Support for the implementation of judicial reform in Serbia”:**

implementation of the reform continues with WGs drafting bylaws; comparative analysis was produced as preparation for regulating the future status of court and prosecution office staff; monitoring of undue influence on the judiciary started on 1 January as foreseen by the Sector Budget Support; Judicial Academy WG for updating the multi-annual workplan held two meetings; two joint sessions of all four appellate courts aimed at harmonising case-law were held; comparative analysis on case-law harmonisation in public prosecution was finalised.

- **Sweden VC, "Preventing money laundering and terrorist financing in Serbia":** project conducted a review of asset recovery regime in Serbia and provided needed recommendations. The assessment of the processing and adjudicating money laundering stand-alone cases has been conducted. As the result of the project efforts, a Memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Central Bank and the Agency for Prevention of Corruption to enhance exchange of information on the verification of asset declarations of public officials. Finally, a set of amendments to several laws regulating registration and supervision of NPO sector was developed and discussed with beneficiaries and civil society.

Follow-up action

- New EU/CoE joint programmes under IPA 2024, namely "Human Resources Management in Local Self-Government - Phase 3" and "Improving the treatment of prisoners with mental health problems and strengthening alternative sanction" were greenlighted by the European Union and the Ministry of European Integration for their implementation in 2024. The preparation of the project proposal (through the close cooperation with the beneficiaries on the project proposals, need assessment meetings with interlocutors and identification of priorities) is underway.

Other relevant activities

- On the occasion of the adoption of five key laws on judiciary, on 21 February, the judicial reform conference has been organised on 21 of February under the EU/CoE JP Support for the implementation of judicial reform in order to discuss possible reaches of the new judicial laws and the vital non-legislative measures which should contribute to securing an independent and future-oriented judiciary. Opening remarks were delivered by the Minister of Justice, alongside EUD Ambassador, Cristophe Poirel, DGI Human Rights Director, and the Swedish Ambassador, while keynote speakers included the President of the Supreme Court of Cassation and Deputy Chief Prosecutor.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, carried out a country monitoring visit from 13 to 17 March 2023. The Commissioner met with the Serbian authorities including the Prime Minister Ana Brnabić; the regulatory human rights bodies and a wide range of civil society organisations whose work pertains to the topics covered in the visit.

Bucharest

Situation of the Office

Core Staff – 0.5 Project staff – 38, Total staff – 38,5

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

State of implementation of projects

Cross-cutting major activities:

- **An updated cursory overview of the “[Global State of Cybercrime Legislation](#)”** prepared by C-PROC was published in January. [The C-PROC activity report of the Secretary General](#), published in January 2023, shows that important impact was achieved worldwide in this period in spite of a challenging context that included in particular the Russian aggression against Ukraine. C-PROC continued to support the participation of subject matter experts from selected countries in the 4th meeting of the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Convention on ICT crimes (January). Experience of 20 years of the Budapest Convention was shared during the side event to UN AHC organized by the Council of Europe and Permanent Mission of Romania to the international organisations in Vienna. On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the First Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, C-PROC organized the [International conference on xenophobia and racism via computer systems](#). More than 200 participants from 34 countries, including representatives of academia, private sector and international organisations attended the [International Conference on cybercrime and e-evidence in Africa](#) on 6-7 March, organized by CyberSouth, GLACY+ and Octopus projects. The conference concluded with a “[Call to Action](#)” encouraging African countries and all stakeholders to make use of existing treaties, such as the Budapest Convention, and adopt legislation on cybercrime and the protection of personal data.
- **EU/CoE regional JP, CyberEast:** the project initiated the update of the [Study](#) on conditions and safeguards under Article 15 of the Convention on Cybercrime in the Eastern Partnership. The series of [first responder training](#) sessions for law enforcement, as well as advanced [judicial training](#), have been organised in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. The project reinforced capacities of criminal authorities and skills for international co-operation by holding the [Regional Training](#) on Joint Investigative Teams and improved co-operation with foreign service providers under the [Second Additional Protocol](#) to the Convention on Cybercrime. Civil society engagement and accountability of cybercrime action was addressed in Moldova in the framework of the [National Forum](#).
- **EU/CoE regional JP, CyberSouth:** the project worked with national judicial training institutions to ensure that cybercrime and electronic evidence modules are integrated into the national curricula for magistrates in [Algeria](#), Lebanon and Morocco. Links between cybercrime and data protection were explored and discussed in Algeria, [Jordan](#) and [Lebanon](#) involving law enforcement, the judiciary and national authorities on data protection. Work on legislation to ensure alignment of national regulations with the Budapest Convention and its Protocols continued in Jordan and Tunisia, while the importance and interactions of the Council of Europe

Conventions (Budapest Convention, 108+, MEDICRIME) were presented and discussed with MENA countries¹ on the occasion of [the launch of Council of Europe Programme South V](#).

- **EU/CoE regional JP, iPROCEEDS-2:** capacities of criminal justice authorities were enhanced through sustainable judicial training on cybercrime, electronic evidence, [international co-operation](#) and [training of trainers](#) at domestic and regional level. Closer co-operation between incident response teams and law enforcement authorities in the investigation of ransomware attacks was achieved by organizing domestic [simulation exercises](#) on effective sharing of data between cybersecurity and cybercrime communities. The practical value of the "[Guide for criminal investigations of ransomware attacks](#)" and the new tools and mechanisms for public-private co-operation provided by of the Second Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention were the key topics of the events organised in the region.

- **EU/CoE JP, GLACY+:** cybercrime legislation of [Rwanda](#) and Nepal was assessed. Capacities of policymakers were strengthened in Peru, with emphasis on the Second Additional Protocol. A series of 3 webinars on the Budapest Convention was organized for law enforcement agencies in Brazil. The capacities on search, seizure, and confiscation of online proceeds of crime were reinforced in Senegal and Benin, while Brazilian law enforcement agencies discussed the tools and mechanisms of the Budapest Convention. The project agreed on the strategic plan for the third phase of the GLACY project during the [13th Steering Committee](#). An assessment report covering hub and selected countries was drafted with the aim of identifying progress made and the future areas to be prioritized.

- **8 donors² VC, Octopus Project:** the project was successful in further building the capacities of criminal justice authorities around the globe in [addressing cybercrime and the challenge of electronic evidence](#), including by implementing a dedicated stream of activities on online [xenophobia and racism](#), [supporting implementation of the 2nd Additional Protocol](#), enhancing international cooperation and capacities in [Africa](#), etc. Dialogue fostered within the [Cybercrime Convention community](#), coordination of positions at the 4th meeting of the UN Ad Hoc Committee and the initiation of the T-CY 4th round of assessments contributed to further strengthening of the [membership, reach, relevance and impact of this Treaty](#) with the support of the project. The [Cyberviolence resource](#) and [Octopus Platform](#) maintained by the project served as important tools enabling criminal justice authorities and legal practitioners worldwide to increase their knowledge on the topic. The [HELP course launched in Slovakia and Bulgaria](#) contributed to this as well.

Follow up actions

- Finalization of the T-CY 4th round of assessment of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.
- Increase the engagement of Ukrainian law enforcement and judiciary into project's training activities organized abroad.
- Ensuring continued coordination of positions at the next sessions of the UN Ad hoc committee to elaborate an international convention on countering the use of ICTs for criminal purposes.
- Reach out to States worldwide and presentation of the Budapest Convention as a framework that stands for a free, open and global Internet where restrictions are

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

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

limited and subject to rule of law safeguards, including at international fora such as RightsCon, IGF, EuroDIG, etc.

- Development of the Council of Europe webpage dedicated to resources on ransomware attacks.
- Development of the online training platform on cybercrime and electronic evidence.
- Holding national training sessions in practical exercise format with defence attorneys and improvement of interagency co-operation on cybercrime and cybersecurity via regional and national training and coordination exercises in CyberEast countries.
- Evaluation of the progress made in the iPROCEEDS-2 region.
- Organisation of the Steering Committees of CyberSouth, iPROCEEDS-2 and GLACY+ projects.
- Preparation of new projects, or the extension of ongoing projects, and mobilisation of the necessary resources.

Other relevant activities

- [Cameroon, Korea, Sierra Leone and Uruguay were invited to accede to the Convention on Cybercrime](#) in February.
- [France, Germany, Greece, Albania](#), Dominican Republic and [Argentina](#) signed the Second Additional Protocol.
- [Iceland joined the First Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, on countering xenophobic and racist acts committed through computer systems](#) in January.
- [Serbia became the first state to ratify the Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime](#) in February.

Chisinau

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 7, Project staff – 25, Total staff – 32.

The Office implemented fourteen projects, eight funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan level, two in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance” and four funded through voluntary contributions from Norway, the Netherlands, the United States of America and the Austrian Development Agency respectively, as detailed below³.

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

- **AP VC, “Education for Democracy in the Republic of Moldova II”:** 35 school inspectors were trained on the practical application of the methodology for monitoring the implementation of the new civic education curriculum, which was developed with the support of the Council of Europe. The Ministry of Education and Research approved the piloting of the methodology for the period February-May 2023.
- **AP VC, “Strengthening the prison and probation reforms, provision of health care and treatment of patients in closed institutions in the Republic of Moldova”:** recommendations for the revision of the minimum dietary standards for prisoners were provided. 17 prison governors and the management of the National Administration of Penitentiaries (NAP) enhanced their knowledge and skills in Leadership and Management; 46 specialists from all prisons were trained on applying the new Policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on dynamic security and on the treatment of vulnerable groups of detainees. The NAP was also provided with a new Policy and SOPs on combating the criminal subculture in Juvenile Detention Centres and 34 prison staff were prepared for piloting the individual sentence planning. The first progress session on piloting the Cognitive Behaviour Treatment Programme addressing prisoners serving long term sentences was also held in 6 prisons.
- **AP VC, “Support for Media Pluralism and Freedom of Expression in the Republic of Moldova”:** the project provided Teleradio-Moldova with a 5-year Development Strategy and Action Plan which were publicly presented during the Board Meeting and streamed live on Facebook. The draft Law on access to information, an important step after the ratification of the Tromsø Convention, was amended in accordance with Council of Europe’s recommendations and public consultations were launched.
- **AP VC, “Improving Electoral Practice in the Republic of Moldova, Phase II”:** the Central Electoral Commission was provided with two newly developed regulations on State Register of Voters and on Voters’ rolls. A training program was developed and three trainings were delivered for 31 members of three district electoral councils from ATU Gagauzia ahead of the Governor (Bashkan) and new partial elections of People’s Assembly of Gagauzia.

³ In addition to the donors mentioned above, the following countries are currently contributing to the Council of Europe-Republic of Moldova Action Plan 2021-2024 (in alphabetical order): Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland.

- **AP VC, "Preventing and protecting children from violence including in the digital environment"**: a Gap analysis of the online child exploitation framework was finalized and presented during a public event. In a 3-day training, 30 judges, prosecutors and police officers enhanced their knowledge on Preventing and Combating Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The concept of the methodology for ex-post impact evaluation of the Law no. 299 related to children in conflict with the law was developed. Throughout March 2023, two ToT sessions for educators on the training methodology of their peers and an additional practical training on prevention of child sexual abuse ("Kiko and the Hand") were delivered.
- **AP VC, "Supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova"**: the project organized interviews with 27 key national stakeholders to collect information for a study on strengthening multiagency cooperation on violence against women and domestic violence (VAW/DV). Contributions were provided to the National Programme on preventing and combating VAW/DV for 2023-2027. In addition, Guidelines for social workers based on the Istanbul Convention provisions were finalized and a baseline analysis on the digital dimension of violence was undertaken. An awareness raising campaign marking the International Women Day reached around 45,000 people.
- **AP VC, "Reinforcing the culture of dialogue and consultation of local authorities in the Republic of Moldova – Phase II"**: in January - February 2023, the draft Public Administration Reform Strategy of the Republic of Moldova for 2023–2030 was reviewed by a CoE expert. An opinion was prepared and some important recommendations for its improvement in line with the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the Congress recommendations for the Republic of Moldova were taken into consideration in the final document, approved by the Government on 15 March 2023. In addition, expert support was provided to CALM with the development of tools to improve their capacities for effective data collection and analysis of the local democracy situation in the country.
- **AP VC, "Strengthening the human rights protection of refugees and migrants in the Republic of Moldova"**: the Project held its first Steering Committee Meeting, preceded by the launch event with over 40 participants, including the Council of Europe's Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees. Also, the National Institute of Justice and the School of Fine Arts "Alexei Sciussev", in partnership with the Council of Europe and other entities, launched the art contest "My house is also your house: together in safety". In the framework of the competition, 50 students from the School of Fine Arts "Alexei Sciussev" took part in a public lecture and were briefed about the specific needs and rights of refugees and migrants in the Republic of Moldova.
- **EU/CoE PGG II, "Strengthening the capacities of the justice sector actors to deliver justice in line with European standards, in particular to fight discrimination, in the Republic of Moldova"**: a video documentary titled "Life story of a victim of discrimination in the Republic of Moldova" (available in Romanian with English subtitles) shed light on this issue in the country. Produced together with the Equality Council, the film chronicles the story of a long-time Secretary of a Local Council who was subjected to discrimination in her workplace. In addition, 41 judges, prosecutors and judicial staff enhanced their knowledge on international standards on prohibition of discrimination.
- **EU/CoE PGG II, "Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova"**: the JUSTAT Automated Information System was developed in the format of a "minimum viable format", comprising performance indicators and other statistical information useful for courts, legal professionals and analysts

in charge of court performance assessment, but also for the public at large. A server for the National Union of Enforcement Agents was purchased to upgrade the IT infrastructure of the institution. Proposals to amend the existing legislation were developed to allow the inclusion of a module on e-auctioning of the seized goods in the enforcement system, with the aim to consolidate the enforcement procedures.

- **Norway AP VC, "Strengthening the human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova"**: 40 legal professionals enhanced their knowledge and practical skills on the relevant standards and case-law of the European Court of Human Rights on the imposition of, and release from life imprisonment while 41 legal professionals - on the application of the new legislative amendments related to criminal investigation and trial *in absentia*. The Ombudsperson Strategic Development Programme for 2023-2030, developed with the support of the project, was approved in March 2023. In addition, the Ombudsperson's staff strengthened their skills on human rights monitoring and reporting based on a tailor-made Training Programme.
- **The Netherlands AP VC, "Enhancing diversity and equality in the Republic of Moldova"**: 18 Police officers strengthened their capacities to respond to hate crime directed towards LGBTI people. The training focused on enhancing their skills to investigate crimes with particular emphasis on victim support. In addition, 54 law enforcement officers from four regions were trained in peer-to-peer sessions focused on operating in a multicultural environment and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups.
- **United States of America (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) VC, "Action Against Corruption in the Republic of Moldova II"**: the project webpage was finalised. The project team held inception meetings, adjusted outcomes as needed and finalised the draft workplan and calendar of activities. The Project Start-up Conference and the 1st Steering Committee meeting were organised on 2 March 2023 and, on this occasion, operational documents were presented and agreed with the project Steering Committee members.
- **Austria VC, "Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova"**: the project started with a 5-month inception phase. The project team was set up and coordination meetings were organised with the project stakeholders and beneficiaries to discuss the project initiatives in the field of social labour rights protection, access of persons from vulnerable groups to VET system and their subsequent employment. The project's operational documents, such as the Work Plan 2023-2025 and the ToRs of the Steering Committee, were prepared.

Follow up actions

- The two national projects listed above, implemented in the framework of the EU/CoE Programme "Partnership for Good Governance II" (PGG), were closed on 28 February 2023. New PGG initiatives in the field of anti-discrimination, efficiency of justice as well as anti-money laundering and assets recovery were inaugurated on 1 March as part of the third phase of this programme. The PGG project "Enhancing anti-money laundering and asset recovery regime in the Republic of Moldova" held the first Project Technical Committee Meeting on 29 March.
- The project "Improving Electoral Practice in the Republic of Moldova, Phase II" was closed on 28 February 2023 and a new phase started on 1 March.

Other relevant activities

- Throughout March 2023, the Venice Commission adopted the “Interim Opinion on the draft Law on limiting excessive influence in the economic and public life (de-oligarchisation) of the Republic of Moldova”, previously examined by the Sub-Commissions on Democratic Institutions, Fundamental Rights and the Rule of Law and the “Joint Opinion of the Venice Commission and the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI) of the Council of Europe on the draft Law on the external assessment of judges and prosecutors (full vetting) of the Republic of Moldova”. In addition, the Venice Commission provided the relevant Moldovan authorities with the “Opinion on the draft law the Intelligence and Security Service, as well as on the draft law on counter-intelligence and external intelligence activity of the Republic of Moldova”.
- Between 30 January and 3 February, the Office assisted the delegation of the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) who carried out the first evaluation visit to the Republic of Moldova. Meetings were held with representatives from different Ministries and national human rights institutions, as well as with civil society organisations working in the area of violence against women.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 30-31 March, the Office facilitated the organisation of the official visit of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Marija Pejčinović Burić to the Republic of Moldova. The Secretary General met the President Maia Sandu and key ministers during her official visit, praised the country's determination to the ongoing reforms and reaffirmed the Council of Europe's full support, including in respect of judicial reform and the fight against corruption.

Kyiv

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 10, project staff – 51, total staff – 61.

Olena Lytvynenko took up her duties as Head of Office *ad interim* on 1st March 2023.

State of implementation of projects/programmes

- **AP VC, “Strengthening Ukrainian Law Enforcement Agencies During War and Post-War Period”:** preparations to pilot a performance evaluation methodology for the investigators of the State Bureau of Investigation were finalised and an overview of European practices on parliamentary control over law enforcement agencies for the Parliamentary committee on law enforcement was launched. In March, in cooperation with other Council of Europe projects, the project contributed to the high-level conference "United for Justice", organised by the Office of the Prosecutor General to discuss the accountability for the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine.
- **AP VC, “Combatting violence against women in Ukraine– Phase II”:** the project completed its inception phase. The project's work plan was discussed and agreed with the main project stakeholders and partners at the first Project's Steering Committee meeting. The project provided its support to the Ministry of Social Policy to select GREVIO members following the established rules.
- **AP VC, “Protecting the rights of Ukrainian children during and in post-war context”:** on 14 March 2023 an international conference for more than 240 participants was held to present resources developed by the Council of Europe in 2022 in the area of the protection of children's rights. The conference also assessed the needs of the stakeholders for further support to be provided by the project until December 2024 ([link to the news item](#)) The first meeting of the project's Steering Committee discussed and approved the Project's work plan for 2023.
- **AP VC, “Strengthening multi-level governance, democracy and human rights at local level in Ukraine”:** the strategic orientation and design of the project were discussed and confirmed with representatives of Ukrainian national and local authorities and members of the Ukrainian delegation to the Congress at the launching event held on 21 February 2023. Representatives of 62 local authorities from 20 regions, representing all sizes of cities and towns, including the Kyiv city, increased their awareness on deliberative democracy models and got acquainted with approaches to improve collaborative decision-making at local level. Fifteen local communities expressed interest to introduce deliberative democracy models in their communities.
- **AP VC, “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase III”:** in co-operation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Agency on Civil Service, the project developed a concept of a long-term training for civil servants at local, regional and national levels to equip them with standards, tools and resources on strengthening youth policy and youth work and removing barriers to youth participation. In order to share positive experience of the project capacity building efforts aimed at youth workers in member states, the project translated the [Guide on the Educational Course of Trauma Informed Youth Work](#) in English language. The project contributed to the development of an occupational standard for the new

profession "Youth specialist (youth worker)" through sharing standards and approaches of the Council of Europe in the field of youth participation and youth work. The occupational standard was approved by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in March 2023.

- **AP VC, "Supporting democratic post-war elections in Ukraine":** the project focused on strategic and operational planning in coordination with its main partners. Series of meetings were organised for representatives of Ukrainian authorities with representatives of election management bodies from member states having experience of holding first post-war/post-conflict elections. Two meetings with representatives of the CEC of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) were held, whereas respective BiH experience on issues related to appointment and conduct of post-war elections, security and election administration was presented and discussed.

- **AP VC, "Strengthening Good Democratic Governance and Resilience in Ukraine":** in March, the project issued a legal opinion on the draft roadmap for the next phase of the decentralisation reform in Ukraine, developed by the national partners as a follow up to the High-Level Dialogue on good democratic governance that took place in November 2022. Furthermore, the project delivered its expert assistance to the profile Parliamentary Committee to review draft law "On public consultations" prior to the second reading in the Parliament in line with recommendations of the Council of Europe's [Opinion of May 2021](#). In addition, the project continued its tailor-made support to develop metropolitan governance in Ukraine through promoting findings of the [opinion poll](#) on public administration and inter-municipal co-operation, in coordination with the association "Kyiv Agglomeration", as well as facilitating seven working groups' meetings of the Steering Committee under the Lviv regional military administration established to elaborate a development strategy of the Lviv Agglomeration.

- **AP VC, "Strengthening democratic resilience through civic participation during the war and in the post-war context in Ukraine":** the inception phase was completed. The project's work plan was developed, discussed and approved by the partners and stakeholders at the first Steering Committee meeting. The public presentation of the draft law "On public consultations" was supported by the project following a request of the profile Parliamentary committee and helped to promote awareness about its main features and the general necessity of the adoption of the draft law.

- **AP VC, "Support the reform of the national minority legal framework and the resilience of the national minorities and Roma in Ukraine":** following request from the State agency of ethnic policy and freedom of conscience (DESS), the project provided expert overview of the state programme "Diversity in Unity" and assisted DESS to hold 17 consultations with more than 180 representatives of national minorities to discuss content of this programme. The project supported a field visit of the Ombudsperson's office representatives to the Transcarpathia to meet with the Hungarian and Roma communities, regional and local authorities. With the project's support, the Ombudsperson's office developed a set of recommendations on improving access for internally displaced Roma people to ID documents. On 29-30 March more than 50 representatives of partner institutions from Ukraine gathered together in Warsaw with representatives of the Council of Europe and European Union, taking stock of the previous years of cooperation in the anti-discrimination domain. The [event](#) also enabled discussions about the prospect of reforms in the field of protection the rights of national minorities, and the future support needed by partners in these areas. On 30 March the first project's steering committee meeting discussed and agreed upon the activities outlined in the project's work plan. On 31 March representatives of DESS and the Ministry of Education and Science took part in consultations with experts of the Venice Commission on provisions of the law on national minorities.

- **AP VC, "Fostering Human Rights in the Criminal Justice System in Ukraine":** an expert analysis of the disciplinary practice of the Body in Charge of the Disciplinary Proceedings of the Ukrainian public prosecution service for nine months of its work (2021-2022) was carried out and [published](#). A survey on the work of the Ukrainian public prosecution service in the context of the ongoing war was finalised and presented to the Prosecutor General and other officials of the Office of the Prosecutor General (OPG). The project completed an analysis of the decision of the previous and current composition of the Council of Prosecutors of Ukraine. At the request of the Parliamentary committee on law enforcement, a comparative study on the parliamentary supervision of the public prosecution service and law enforcement agencies was launched. In March, the project, in cooperation with the project "Strengthening Ukrainian law enforcement agencies during war and post-war period", supported the high-level conference "[United for Justice](#)" organised by OPG, that brought together key international and national stakeholders and facilitated discussions on the accountability for the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, including various accountability mechanisms for international crimes. On 13 March, the project, in cooperation with experts of the NGO JustGroup, supported a kick-off session of the strategic development workshop for 13 staff members (5 female, 8 male) of the International Legal Cooperation Department of the OPG. On 23 March 2023, the project enhanced knowledge and skills of 38 judges (14 female, 24 male) of the High Anti-Corruption Court of Ukraine on the application of pre-trial detention in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine and applicable standards under Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

- **AP VC, "Support to functioning of justice in the war and post-war context of Ukraine":** an international conference was organised jointly with the Supreme Court on the implementation of the rule of law principle and new role of Supreme Court in modern conditions. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mrs. Marija Pejčinović Burić, addressed the participants of this conference and expressed her solidarity with the Ukrainian people and her hope for a speedy restoration of peace in Ukraine. The conference was attended by more than 300 judges and 100 legal professionals.

- **AP VC, "Strengthening judicial and non-judicial remedies for the human rights protection of the war-affected people in Ukraine":** the project was launched in January and conducted a number of meetings with key national partners to discuss their needs and priorities. Preparatory work has been launched by the project to prepare overviews of national legislation on administrative and civil law remedies for the human rights protection of war-affected people and national case-law on compensation for damage caused by the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

- **AP VC, "Facilitating Housing Solutions for War-Affected People in Ukraine":** the project has started in January. Within the reporting period the project held consultations with the key partners and stakeholders. Also, the project contributed to the Ombudsperson's visit to Strasbourg in January 2023 to present key challenges faced by war-affected people in Ukraine including access to housing rights and to ensure sustainability of the outcomes achieved by the Council of Europe in the field of digital solutions for war-affected people in 2022, Budapest Convention.

- **AP VC, "HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals) for Ukraine including during wartime":** the development of a new HELP course on International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights has been [launched](#). The working group including four renowned international experts had its first meeting in the end of February 2023 in Strasbourg. The novelty of the course is in covering the interplay between international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The release of the new course is

anticipated in 2023. Introductory meetings have been held with project partners including Justice Training Institutions, National Bar Association and the Ministry of Education and Science.

- **AP VC, “Enhanced social protection in Ukraine”:** the project provided expert support to the working group on development of a Social Code of Ukraine created under the Parliament to serve as a social platform for provision of effective and timely social support to those in need, including the war-affected population. Support was provided to respective national authorities in implementation of the National Strategy for Barrier-Free Environment and conducting its monitoring, as well as development of regional action plans by the regional administrations. The project participated in thematic activities of expert council at the Ombudsperson and supported a monitoring visit undertaken by the Ombudsperson’s office to access healthcare in social institutions.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, “Enhancing anti-money laundering, counter terrorist financing and asset recovery regime in Ukraine” (PGG III Ukraine):** the project provided expert advice and support to the national stakeholders in developing draft legislation on establishing a Central Bank Account Register of the holders and beneficial owners of bank accounts, payment accounts and safe-deposit boxes

- **Human Rights Trust Fund VC, “Ensuring the effective implementation of the right to a fair trial (Article 6 of the ECHR) in Ukraine”:** in February, the project presented an overview of practices existing in four member states of the Council of Europe as to the functioning of judiciary councils with the focus on disciplinary proceedings along with the set of recommendations to the High Council of Justice, which relaunched its work in January 2023. In March the project mapped the most topical issues related to the application by legal professionals of the derogation from certain articles of the European Convention on Human Rights according to Article 15 of the Convention made by Ukraine as a consequence of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine by holding two round table discussions with 21 legal professionals. In March the project held thematic consultations with leadership and members of the Council of Judges of Ukraine to define key issues, related to functioning of judicial self-governance bodies, system of judicial education and evaluation and system of disciplinary proceedings against judges. The president of the Supreme Court, during its visit to Strasbourg, that was supported by the project, took part in the opening of the judicial year of the European Court of Human Rights and discussed with relevant Council of Europe representatives functioning of the Supreme Court in times of war, as well as pending issues related to judiciary and current stage of judicial reform process.

- **AP VC, “Supporting Implementation of the European Human Rights Standards in Ukraine”:** the project continued its support to the Ombudsperson’s office in revision of legislation on protection of personal data in light of EU’s accession agenda of Ukraine. In January-February, a number of thematic discussions on issues of personal data protection, development of National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) and strengthening of the Ombudsperson's Office capacity to prevent human rights violations and respond to the challenges related to reporting of gross human rights violations in the military context were organised by the project with participation of 85 representatives of partner institutions. In February, 65 participants enhanced knowledge in judicial practice in the field of personal data protection and got acquainted with the generalized catalogue of the data protection principles. Special attention was paid to such issues as the legality and fairness of the personal data use, as well as the responsibility of the officials. The project, in cooperation with other Council of Europe projects, supported the first introductory visit of the newly elected Ombudsperson to Strasbourg to discuss the needs for strengthening cooperation in the field of human rights

protection in times of war, the role of the Ombudsperson office in the reporting of gross violations of human rights, in further enhancement of NPM, including creation of a mechanism for the rehabilitation of victims of ill-treatment and torture.

Sarajevo

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 7, project staff – 19, total staff – 26.

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

State of implementation of projects / the Action Plan

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Further strengthening the treatment of detained and sentenced persons in line with European standards in Bosnia and Herzegovina”:** the local human rights trainers met from 24 to 25 January to map out contributions to the operational procedures for conducting police interviews and policing public gatherings. The first drafting session held on 14 and 15 March drew from the [CoE](#) and [APT](#) guides (Mendez principles). The international consultants developed Technical Specifications for the procurement of hardware equipment in nine prison establishments, to enable operationalisation of the prison software developed earlier. The Steering Committee met on 7 March and affirmed its full support to the activities envisaged for developing training material and to the series of assessment visits aimed at establishing the baseline for future outcomes.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Quality education for all”:** the Action identified the first nine schools to be supported during the 2023/2024 academic year to enable them to join the Democratic School Network as resource centres. The selection took account of geographical location to ensure that all three curricula (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and Brčko District) are equally represented. The training methodologies for school management, teachers and pedagogical institutions were developed by local experts. The Action launched calls for local and international expertise and the selection of pools of experts is underway.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Towards an equal, inclusive and tolerant Bosnia and Herzegovina”:** numerous bilateral meetings were held with stakeholders to discuss co-operation and fine-tune the Action’s activities, notably with the main partner institutions/ministries at the state level, other institutions/ministries on state and entity level, international organisations, EUD, and CSOs.
- **EU/ CoE HF III, “Protecting Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina – PROFREX - BH”:** PROFREX is in an inception phase until 30 April. During the reporting period the Senior Project Officer had a series of inception meetings with a range of partners, including new ones. The Workplan has been confirmed and approved, and the Steering Committee of the Action will take place in May.
- **AP VC, “Ensuring Sustainable Penitentiary Actions in managing rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners (VEPs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (ESPA-VEP)”:** during the reporting period the project Working group held three meetings. At the end of January the draft methodology for prison staff training was adopted, determining topics for basic and advanced levels of training. Following work in late February to develop content and specific objectives of six modules, there is now a complete training syllabus. From 20 to 22 March the project organised its first session on piloting pre-release programmes for violent extremist

prisoners (VEPs), its key achievement being improved interagency cooperation between prisons and centres for social welfare for working with such cases.

- **AP VC, “Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Phase III”:** 47 in-service judges enhanced their skills through two trainings on legal reasoning of civil and criminal decisions in line with ECHR standards. A moot court competition involving 37 law students took place after the human rights clinics held at the law faculties of Banja Luka and Zenica. Twelve legal advisers of case law departments enhanced their understanding of European standards on data protection, which contributes to the harmonisation of judicial practice. An assessment of draft amendments to certain laws of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that are necessary to execute the ECHR judgment *Hadžimejlić and others v. BiH* was submitted for consideration to the FBiH Ministry of Justice.
- **AP VC, “Innovating democratic participation at local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina”:** [Banja Luka](#) and [Mostar](#) received support in the form of grants to commission citizens’ assemblies in 2023, thereby consolidating Bosnia and Herzegovina’s place at the vanguard of deliberative democracy in South-East Europe. A learning path on deliberative democracy was launched on 28 March, with a series of thematic webinars for the cities of Banja Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo and the municipality of Modriča, aimed at increasing knowledge and skills to run deliberative processes. Apart from the grants themselves, the peer exchanges and the know-how gained as a result of those participatory processes will contribute to strengthening collaborative governance and inclusive and informed decision-making at local level.
- **Sweden VC, “Enhancing institutional capacities on freedom of expression and information in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EFEx)”:** an international call for tenders for intellectual services was carried out, and a pool of international and local experts will soon be officially established. The document *Mapping of BiH treaty reporting obligations on freedom of expression / freedom of information* was completed, while *Mapping of local stakeholders regarding monitoring / reporting* is in the final stages of finalisation. Two missions of the selected long-term international consultant took place with the aim of drafting the Terms of reference for the Working Group on monitoring/reporting on freedom of expression and of access to information, in cooperation with the main project partner, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees.
- **AP VC, “Strengthening anti-trafficking action in Bosnia and Herzegovina”:** the two-year project, funded through voluntary contributions secured for the implementation of the Council of Europe [Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (2022–2025), was launched in January. Its primary goal is to support the implementation of the [Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings](#) focusing on [GRETA's urgent recommendations](#) related to the access to justice and effective remedies for victims. During the inception period numerous consultations and 25 bilateral meetings were held to verify and finalise the project design. At the [first Steering Committee meeting](#) on 21 March, attended by representatives from 16 institutions - including all levels of government - the Action’s work plan was approved.
- **EU/CoE regional JP, “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level” (ROMACTED II):** 12 programme municipalities in BiH signed grants through the small grants scheme and for post-COVID recovery with the CoE, making up a total of 180 000 EUR of support towards education, health, infrastructure and Roma women empowerment. A monitoring tool for tracking implementation of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion of Roma was developed in close co-operation with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees.

Printing of the foregoing Action Plan - an official document adopted by the BiH Council of Ministers - was finalised, a boon also for CoE visibility. In Travnik (one of the programme municipalities), an NGO gathering young Roma women was established, which was welcomed by local authorities.

- **EU/CoE regional HF III, “Enhancing co-operation in the Western Balkans in managing violent extremism in prisons and preventing further radicalisation after release”:** January saw the launch of a 48-month follow-up regional project on prevention of radicalisation in prisons and rehabilitation and resocialisation of violent extremist prisoners. During February and March, fact-finding missions to all six capitals were organised with the aim of identifying beneficiary-specific needs, ensuring continuation of activities and support already provided, and building synergies with local CSOs and international community partners. In light of the missions’ findings, the project will revise the overall workplan and define country-specific components, which will be presented at the Steering Committee meeting scheduled for 11 May in Podgorica (Montenegro).

Other relevant activities

- On 9 February, the HoO signed a grant agreement with the Mayor of Banja Luka, Draško Stanivuković. While in Banja Luka, she met on 10 February officials from the Republika Srpska entity, including the Minister of Administration and Local Self-Government, Senka Jujić, the Minister of Education and Culture, Željka Stojičić, and the Minister of Justice, Miloš Bukejlović.
- On 28 February, the DHoO signed a grant agreement with the Mayor of Mostar, Mario Kordić, in the presence of City Assembly Chairman Salem Marić.
- On 14 March, the HoO briefed the Steering Board of Ambassadors (SBA) of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) about the Council of Europe’s work in education and history teaching.

Skopje

Situation of the Office

Core staff 2, Project staff 15, Total staff 17.

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

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in North Macedonia"**: the action "Protecting freedom of expression and of the media in North Macedonia – PRO-FREX-NMK" is in inception phase from January until end of April 2023, there are no results to be reported yet.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening anti-trafficking action in North Macedonia"**: the action was in its inception period and revised its log frame upon the publication of the 3rd Country Report of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) and ed consultations with the beneficiaries and EUD. The revised log frame was approved by the action's SC on the kickoff event on 16 March in Skopje. On 16 March in Skopje, the action facilitated the signature of the Memorandum for Cooperation in anti-trafficking field by the Interior Minister and the Labour Inspectorate Director. The action organized peer-to-peer meeting for sharing best practices between the Bureau for Development of Education in Skopje and the Ministry of Education and Science in Pristina with the NGOs' participation.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Towards a Consolidated and More Efficient Free Legal Aid (FLA) System in North Macedonia"**: in the frame of FLA, the 11th National Coordination Body meeting was held on 22 March 2023, local coordination body was established in Kumanovo, on 24 March and fifty attorneys from North Macedonia successfully completed the two online HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals) courses on child-friendly justice.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Enhancing the capacities of the penitentiary system and the external oversight mechanism in North Macedonia"**: four activities were completed under HF10 "Strengthening the capacities of the penitentiary system in North Macedonia", in the reporting period. The first activity under HFIII was the Steering Committee meeting on 10 February, adopting the general and five-month workplan. On 13 February, a roundtable on the execution of ECtHR's judgements, as well as the functioning of the External Oversight Mechanism was held in Skopje, together with senior officials from CoE's Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. One of the conclusions of this roundtable is that North Macedonia's authorities are committed to working closely with CoE and the EU, in the process of executing the judgements, as well as to further consolidate the External Oversight Mechanism over persons with police authority and prison police. Separate working groups started working on developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on pre-release preparation and post-penal support, as well as on designing a training strategy and curricula that will be used by the Training Centre of the Directorate for the Execution of Sanctions.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action on Promotion of Diversity and Equality"**: during the reporting period, the Action on Combating Hatred and Intolerance in North Macedonia published the Macedonian translation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers on combating hate speech. The Recommendation will be publicly presented at a high-level conference on 31 May. During this period, the project team had

meetings with partners and beneficiaries, including the newly appointed Minister of Justice and the Chairman of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, to discuss activities and the co-operation under the new phase of the Horizontal Facility. This will be rounded up with the First Steering Committee scheduled for 26 April.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action against economic crime"**: during the reporting period the Action against economic crime started its inception phase under the Horizontal Facility III. During the reporting period, the Action prepared the final report for Phase II. Also, the senior project officer met with different beneficiaries to define the timeline and some specific activities from the workplan of the Action phase iii. During the reporting period, the Action prepared the draft Inception report and prepared for the 1st Steering Committee meeting.

- **EU/CoE regional JP, "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED II)"**: implemented in North Macedonia in 15 Municipalities. On the occasion of the International Roma Day, the EU perspectives and quality development of the Roma community in the Republic of North Macedonia were discussed with high representatives of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia and all the relevant stakeholders in the country. Once again, the pledge for improving the quality development of the Roma community was confirmed as high priority. The event was organised with the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia within the EU/CoE ROMACTED Programme, phase II.

Tbilisi

Situation of the Office

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

The Office implemented 20 projects, 4 in the framework of EU/CoE Partnership for Good Governance (PGG II), 1 funded through EU/CoE joint cooperation, and 15 funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level.

State of implementation of projects

- **EU/CoE PGG II, “Supporting the Criminal Justice Reforms. Tackling Criminal Aspects of the Judicial Reforms in Georgia”:** in the format of justice coordination council legal professionals agreed to continue work for establishment unified court practice and further aligning criminal justice legislation with the best European standards following discussions around findings of the CoE’s Review on “Compatibility With the European Standards of Georgia’s Criminal Procedure Code” Assessment of regulatory framework of analytical work of General Prosecutor’s Office suggested specific recommendations for further advancement of implementation evidence based criminal law policy. European examples of arrangement of investigations and prosecution have been discussed with members of parliament.
- **AP VC, “Promoting an Integrated Approach to End Violence against Women and Enhancing Gender Equality in Georgia”:** within the framework of the project, CoE office in Georgia and the Governmental Administration hosted on 13 February a conference to present the recommendations provided to Georgia by GREVIO. The hybrid event was attended by 86 person (81 women and 5 men), out of which 24 person represented civil society organisations. Moreover, representatives of 7 non-governmental organisations participated as speakers in three thematic panels of the Conference. On 10 March, the essay competition “Women in Justice, Women for Justice” winners were announced. Encouraging the students and celebrating International Day of Women Judges was a joint initiative of the Council of Europe Georgia Office, the Tbilisi Court of Appeals, the Association of Women Judges and the High School of Justice. 30 undergraduate students took part in the competition.
- **AP VC, “Strengthening Freedom of media, Internet governance and Personal Data Protection in Georgia” SMIP-GE:** the legal opinion on the Law of Georgia on Broadcasting was provided to the Parliament of Georgia at its request. It was further disseminated, published and is now available to the general public. The comparative study “Tromsø Convention Standards: overview of the access to information regulatory frameworks within the State-Parties to Tromsø Convention” was provided to the key stakeholders. The study aims at facilitating ratification of above Convention by Georgia. Presentation of the study and its wide distribution is planned in April 2023. The work continued to finalise two research documents: Review over the law and practice of Georgia in the context of safety of journalists and the institutional strategy of the Charter of Journalistic Ethics of Georgia.
- **AP VC, “Enhanced Access to Legal Aid Services for Marginalised Population”:** on 1-3 March the project enhanced skills of 25 free legal aid lawyers and consultants in effective communication with clients and parties in the court through a three-day training involving national and international trainers. In collaboration with the project “Supporting the criminal justice reforms - tackling criminal aspects of the judicial reforms in Georgia” the project supported discussion of required changes to the Criminal Procedure Code and developed recommendations related to jury trials within the framework of the Justice Coordination

Council, involving judges, lawyers and prosecutors. The project started assessment of the quality of provided free legal aid in Georgia and assessment of the new draft „Rules and Criteria for the Assessment of Quality of Legal Consultation and Legal Aid” developed by the LEPL Legal Aid Service. The project completed the needs assessment concerning the training module for managers of free legal aid bureaus and started development of training materials.

- **AP VC, “Supporting Transparency, Inclusiveness and Integrity of Electoral Practice and Process in Georgia”:** on 1 February, a Project Steering Committee meeting was held. Board members discussed accomplishments of 2022 and approved annual workplan for 2023. The Project continued meeting objectives related to enhancing domestic citizen organisations and enforcing findings of the baseline study conducted under the Project. In cooperation with the Georgian Young Lawyer’s Association, the Project composed a team of consultants to develop/modify election observation methodology, crucial for improving standards of election observation and meeting new challenges of a digital era. The methodology will be finalized by May.

- **AP VC, “Strengthening Protection of Social and Economic Rights in Georgia”:** a workshop was conducted for the Public Defender’s Office on developing quality alternative reports on the implementation of the European Social Charter (ESC). A second group for the HELP course “Labour Rights as Human Rights” was launched with the participation of labour inspectors and Public Defender’s Office staff. Three in-depth awareness raising seminars on the ESC were held for different groups of legal professionals such as lawyers, staff members of various parliamentary committees and judges. A workshop was conducted for labour inspectors on child labour standards in the light of the ESC. The aim of the workshop was to support the Labour Inspection Office in its activities connected with promoting and monitoring social rights.

- **Austria VC, “Strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level in Georgia”:** a new learning path on antidiscrimination for local authorities was launched in February 2023. At the first workshop, 75 representatives from national and local authorities increased their knowledge and discussed relevant tools. A series of four webinars on effective and inclusive project management was piloted with the five local authorities to support the implementation of initiatives on equality, diversity, and inclusion. The NALAG’s Committee was established to steer efforts of Association in advocating for local authorities’ contribution to the country human rights commitments.

- **Austria VC, “Strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level in Georgia”:** three municipalities of Georgia (Tbilisi, Marneuli, Gori) started implementation (groups of representatives were trained in the methodology) of civil participation methodology of the Council of Europe – “Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit” to improve civil engagement in development of municipal strategic documents; Telavi municipality conducted public consultations with “CivicLab” methodology to develop economic development action plan. Information campaign “Change the Scenario” was launched in Tbilisi bringing together around 80 participants, mainly youth. Tbilisi city hall representatives (around 30) were trained in Council of Europe civil participation methodologies; needs assessment in civil participation were conducted in 15 pilot municipalities.

- **EU/CoE regional JP, “Support for a better evaluation of the result of judicial reform efforts in the Eastern Partnership” (Justice Dashboard EaP):** the quality check for 2021 data was conducted in January – March 2023 by the CEPEJ Secretariat in line with CEPEJ methodology and in close cooperation with the EaP Dashboard national correspondents from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, in view of preparing

the first part of the report (or first deliverable) for the delivery to EC/DG NEAR. Support to data collection missions have been carried out in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in January 2023, along with continuous support provided to all countries of the Project.

- **AP VC, “Human Rights Compliant Policing in Georgia”:** methodology on training needs assessment and training evaluation for MIA Academy was put in place. The SIS was equipped with the Strategy and the Action Plan of the Service. The SOPs were developed for the Quality Monitoring Department of the SIS. Manual on the treatment of detainees with drug-related problems in temporary detention isolators was reviewed in line with the European standards. The investigators of the SIS improved their capacity through number of trainings sessions on documenting the injuries, and application of Article 3 of European Convention on Human Rights. The investigators of MIA enhanced their knowledge on interviewing juvenile victims and offenders. Law-enforcement agencies and CSOs from three regions of Georgia (Shida Kartli, Kvemo Kartli and Samtckhe-Javakheti) raised their awareness on the novelties introduced under the SIS mandate and contributed to improving SIS transparency and accountability.

- **AP VC, “Promoting the Effective Protection of Equality and Non-Discrimination in Georgia”:** data analysis report on hate motivated crimes for 2021-2022 was elaborated with the support of CoE consultant. The process revealed the need for further improvement of data collection and the member institutions of memorandum of understanding on hate crime data collection agreed on amendment of MoU. The training on ECHR standards and data collection on hate motivated crimes enabled the assistant judges to deepen their understanding and knowledge on CoE standards on discrimination and hate motivated crimes and obligation for data collection thereof.

- **AP VC, “Enhancing Healthcare Provision in Georgia’s Penitentiary System”:** in the reporting period, the Project supported three studies on project-related issues: the best international practice on how to efficiently ensure uninterrupted continuation of the Suicide Prevention Programme throughout the probation period; successful services and programmes provided for people with drug and/or alcohol-use related problems or disorders; and best international practice on how to ensure the efficient arrangement of the safety cells/rooms. The activities also contributed to the capacity building of over 100 operational penitentiary and probation staff, which strengthened personnel’s knowledge on various topics and further improved their skills.

- **Switzerland VC, “Democracy Starts in Schools-Engaging School Children in Decision Making Processes in Schools and Communities in Georgia”:** assessment report from the initial visits to 20 pilot schools has been developed and results shared with relevant stakeholders. Eight facilitators have gone through intensive ToTs on Methodological guidelines and coaching to provide quality support to pilot schools. Workshops on the methodological guidelines on student participation have been designed and delivered at pilot schools. Around 350 students, 300 teachers, 240 parents and 40 representatives of school administration participated in the workshops. As a result of the workshops 20 action plans on increasing student participation in decision making processes at schools and communities have been jointly designed by school communities. In March, coaching process to support school in implementation of the action plans has started. Module of the professional development program for school principals has been developed.

- **AP VC, “Developing a Drug Prevention Support Network for Parents and Professionals in Georgia”:** project team visited the Pompidou Secretariat in January. The Pompidou Group expert, Corina Giacomello, paid a visit to Georgia to support Juvenile Referral

Centre and its specialists (social workers and psychologists) working with children and adolescents, age group of 7-18 years old. As a result of the visit, the Report on Programme and International Experiences for the further development and consolidation of the Juvenile Referral Centre was produced; Peer review of the Positive Parenthood Programme has been completed by two international experts; 2nd Project Board Meeting and the 2nd Prevention Workshop have been delivered.

- **AP VC, “Ensuring child-friendly justice in Georgia: preventing and protecting children from violence, including in the digital environment”:** the first comprehensive Training manual on Online Child Sexual Abuse -developed by the EndOCSEA@Europe project- has been adapted to Georgian context and shared with stakeholders with appropriate commitments undertaken from their side to participate in following TOT and general trainings. Assessment visit was finalized with over 40 participants interviewed (25% of men and 75% of women) from state agencies as well as CSOs and public defender. As a result, Gap report was developed analysing existing national legal and policy framework in Georgia related to protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation including in an on-line environment, the findings and recommendations were shared with stakeholders. In March, the training manual for investigators and prosecutor’s on “Specifics of Interviewing Child Victims and Witnesses of sexual abuse” was developed and approved by project partners for the following TOT and general training purposes.

- **AP VC “Enhancing Implementation of Human Rights Practices and Education in Georgia”:** a study visit of the delegation from Georgia to the Council of Europe was held on 8-10 March 2023 to the CM and Execution Department of the Council of Europe. The Project continued consultations with various partner universities (University of Europe; National University of Georgia) for inclusion of HELP in their curriculums. The Project translated and adapted to the Georgian legal context the HELP course on Business and Human Rights and Ethics for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers. The Project contributed to the organization of the Winter School held on 23-26 January for students and court staff.

- **AP VC, “Promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in Georgia”:** 23 mediators enhanced their knowledge on unconscious processes in mediation. The participants were introduced to psychological theories about the working of unconscious mind, concepts of biases (gender bias, in-group bias etc.) and how unconscious moral judgments can affect the perception and judgments of mediators. The aim of the training was to improve mediators’ ability to handle complex disputes and ultimately to contribute to the quality of mediation in civil cases.

Follow up actions

- **AP VC, “Developing a Drug Prevention Support Network for Parents and Professionals in Georgia”:** the Project will host international capacity building seminar on the Role of Parents in Drug Prevention, complete upgrading of the [DUDIT](#) adding Georgian language into the system, deliver two regional workshops in prevention, participate in international seminar in Venice and contribute at Tbilisi Open Air Festival through hosting public discussion on prevention.
- **EU/CoE regional JP, “Support for a better evaluation of the result of judicial reform efforts in the Eastern Partnership” (Justice Dashboard EaP):** finalise the first deliverable for DG NEAR by 1 June 2023. This first deliverable is composed of Comparative tables and graphs for all Eastern Partnership beneficiaries with summary overviews per indicator. 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 2023.
- Organisation of Citizen's Assemblies in Ozurgeti and Rustavi in April, May 2023; Regional information campaign "Change the scenario" events planned in Gori, Borjomi, Oni and Ambrolauri municipalities. Initiating the implementation of School Participatory Budgeting in cooperation with Polish Solidarity Fund and Civil Society Development Forum (CSDF) through consultation meetings with education sector, capacity development activities, and adaptation of material into Georgian context. Conducting community assessments and stakeholders identification and assessment in Tbilisi, Marneuli and Gori municipalities as part of the pilot of "Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit. "CivicLab" public consultations are planned in Akhmeta municipality.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 27-29 March: PACE Co-rapporteurs visited Georgia within a factfinding mission on honouring obligations and commitments by Georgia.

Tirana

Situation of the Office

The CoE Office in Tirana has 23 staff members (4 male/19 female) out of which 6 (4/2) are core staff and 17 (female) project staff. The Office implements nine projects, out of which seven are co-funded by the EU, one by the Swedish Sida and one by the German Government. Except for one regional project, the projects implemented by the Office are administratively fully decentralised.

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

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening the Efficiency of Justice (SEJ IV) in Albania"**: the 1st Steering Committee meeting of the project took place.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners in Albania"**: the 1st Steering Committee meeting of the project took place.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Economic Crime in Albania"**: relevant representatives of 360 public institutions were capacitated on effective use of the electronic system on assets and conflict of interests' declaration. 120 appointed CEC's monitors and 20 financial officers of political parties in Albania enhanced their technical knowledge on the use and functioning of the online platform for reporting and monitoring of political party and electoral campaign finances.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Supporting effective domestic remedies and facilitating the execution of judgments (D-REX III)"**: 35 legal practitioners and judges from High Court and four first instance courts (Fieri, Vlora, Saranda and Gjirokaster) attended the 3rd regional forum for the harmonisation of judicial practice. In cooperation with the Action on "Advancing the protection from discrimination in Albania", an action-plan is supported to facilitate the execution of X and others v. Albania – measures against segregation of Roma / Egyptian pupils in education system. Supported two legal acts of the amended law 133/2015 (treatment of property) will facilitate its implementation.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Advancing the protection from discrimination in Albania"**: the Committee of National Minorities was supported in preparing the strategic plan of the institution 2023-2026. The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) was supported in organizing the "Week against Discrimination" through awareness raising activities in various regions. Ahead of 14 May local elections, the Central Election Commission was supported with the translation of election information and education materials in eight minority languages, including the boosting of the information campaign through social media channels. A high-level event was organised with the CEC and the OSCE PiA on promoting ethical standards and countering hate speech during electoral campaign.
- **EU/CoE regional JP, ROMACTED**: 20 Roma Focal Points responsible for Roma inclusion policies at local level were trained on Roma Responsive Budgeting and Human Resource Management. Representatives of partner municipalities enhanced their skills on Small Grant Implementation and Reporting. Roma Responsive Budgeting was included in the official Guideline on the preparation of the Local Medium-Term Budgetary Programme 2024-2026.
- **Sweden VC, "Strengthening Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania"**: 125 teachers increased their professional competences on understanding and using social media

as education tools for democracy and human rights. Four CoE Online LEMON courses were adopted into Albanian and made available through the platform. The national campaign "Fake ≠ Fact" was promoted in social media through awarded video products of a national context under the same theme organised through pilot schools.

Yerevan

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 6, Project staff – 19, Total staff – 25

Currently, the CoE Office implements 13 projects: two national projects (Nos 1-3) and two regional projects (Nos 4-5) funded by the EU under the Partnership for Good Governance II (PGGII); and seven projects (Nos 6-11) funded by donors' Action Plan-level voluntary contributions, including one project funded by the Government of Austria (No 12). In addition to that, the Office provides support to MAEs in the implementation of other regional projects and activities.

The EU/CoE Partnership for Good Governance II (PGGII) came to an end on 28 February 2023. The below reporting for PGGII projects reflects the results of January-February 2023 period. With the new Action Plan for Armenia 2023-2026, the six projects (Nos 6-11) funded by donors' Action Plan-level voluntary contributions started their inception phase. The implementation of the follow-up project on decentralisation (No 12) started on 1 December 2022.

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

1. EU/CoE PGG II, "Support to the judicial reform – enhancing the independence and professionalism of the judiciary in Armenia": the [final conference](#) marking the official completion of the Component 1 of the Project "Implementation of the Judicial reforms in Armenia" took place on 21 February. The conference allowed the national authorities and experts to evaluate the progress of the current justice reform and to mark the joint achievements of the Project, as well as to exchange on the way forward. The importance of the Council of Europe contribution to the elaboration of the Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy for 2022-2026 was highlighted. In the same vein, the revised Judicial Code and the performance evaluation system of judges were noted as crucial steps towards more accountable judiciary. The new PGG III Project "Support to the justice reform in Armenia" started on 1 March 2023. The First Technical Committee of the Project was held on 6 April 2023.

2. EU/CoE PGG II, "Support to the judicial reform - supporting the criminal justice reform and harmonising the application of European standards in Armenia": the [final conference](#) marking the official completion of the Component 2 of the Project "Implementation of the Judicial reforms in Armenia" took place on 21 February. At the conference, the Project partners acknowledged the tangible results achieved by the Project, expressed their full commitment and gratitude for the excellent cooperation and recognised crucial importance of continuing the CoE support for the implementation of the criminal justice reform in Armenia. The new PGG III Project "Support to the justice reform in Armenia" started on 1 March 2023. The First Technical Committee of the Project was held on 6 April 2023.

3. EU/CoE PGG II, "Strengthening institutional capacities to fight and prevent corruption in Armenia": in order to support the efforts of the Armenian authorities in aligning the national system to international standards and global and national challenges, the project delivered a [workshop on risk-based Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism](#) (AML/CFT) supervision and management of virtual assets for 21 (6 male and 15 female) representatives of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) and its Financial Monitoring

Centre (FIU). The training programme covered the latest relevant FATF guidance on the application of a risk-based approach towards virtual assets, the 5th EU Anti Money Laundering Directive and other standards providing a platform for discussion on current practices and challenges faced at the country level. The project was finalised and presented to national stakeholders with an expert review of the legal amendments related to virtual assets and virtual asset service providers in Armenia aimed at further enhancement and improvement of the draft in line with international standards and good practices. During the discussion, practical considerations of the supervisory authorities on the further improvement of relevant instruments and industry standards were raised to ensure that the draft amendments met the current practical context.

4. EU/CoE PGG II, “Strengthening the profession of lawyer in line with European standards” (regional, decentralised project): 62 members of the Bar Associations, judges, and other national authorities’ representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine took part in the online presentation of the findings of the cross-country review of the impact of gender-related issues on the profession of lawyer and access to justice. The review provides an analysis of gender-related legal frameworks of five countries benchmarking on relevant European standards and providing recommendations for improvement. Further to the event, the review was finalised to reflect the comments of national authorities.

The final technical committee meeting of the Project was held both remotely and in person in Strasbourg, France. The event which gathered representatives of the participating countries – Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, served as a forum to take stock of the achievements with focus on the work done in enhancing co-operation between the bar associations and law societies of the participating countries and improving the internal functioning and independence of the bar. During the event, participants discussed the prospects of the new Council of Europe legal instrument on the profession of lawyers, shared best practices, discussed challenges and opportunities, and highlighted the impact of the project.

5. EU/COE PGG II, “Strengthening access to justice for victims of discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in the Eastern Partnership countries”: in January 2023 the [Manual](#) for educators on hate speech online in Armenian was printed and its public [presentation](#) was organized on 6 February 2023. During the event, the participants, mostly teachers, representatives from the educational institutions and the HRD Office expressed willingness to cooperate to combat online hate speech among pupils. On 15 February, 25 judges and prosecutors successfully [completed](#) the ECRI GPR 15 e-learning course hosted on the HELP platform. On 28 February, the regional anti-discrimination project has finalized its results and prepared a ground for the local project “Promoting equality and non-discrimination in Armenia” to commence since 1st March 2023.

6. AP VC, “Fostering Human Rights in the Armed Forces in Armenia”: project started in January 2023, the Project team was shaped on 1 March 2023 by involvement of the new Project Manager. During the inception phase several consultation meetings were held with the representatives of the main national partner, the Ministry of Defence as well as other Project stakeholders. The Project launching event and the 1st steering committee meeting are planned on 21 April 2023. The work plans will be discussed and adopted during the SC meeting. National and international consultants’ tender-related documentation is in due progress of development.

7. AP VC, "Strengthening the Probation Service in Armenia": the Project has started on January 2023. During the induction phase the Project has organised a joint launching event with the Project "Strengthening the Protection of the Rights of Persons in Detention". The launching event was combined with the first steering committee meeting, at the course of which Project's 2023 and 2023-2024 work plans were adopted. The Project team has held several meetings with the partners that were devoted to consultations over the current developments in the probation field.

8. AP VC, "Strengthening the Protection of the Rights of Persons in Detention": the Project has started on January 2023. During the induction phase the Project has organised a joint launching event with the Project "Strengthening the Probation Service in Armenia". The launching event was combined with the first steering committee meeting, at the course of which Project's 2023 and 2023-2024 work plans were adopted. The Project team has held several meetings with the partners that were devoted to consultations over the current developments in the penitentiary and prison healthcare fields.

9. AP VC, "Ending violence against women and promoting gender equality in Armenia": in January 2023, the project completed and submitted the Final Project Report for the previous PMM 2227 project and started the inception phase of the newly started project (PMM3422) with first Steering Committee meeting and kick-off the project on 21 March. On 22 March, at the awareness-raising seminar, over 30 representatives from 18 CSOs learned about the methodology and toolkit developed by CoE, WAVE and Un Women for CSOs to run communication/advocacy campaigns to promote the values, aims and main provisions of the CoE Istanbul Convention.

Following the seminar, the project launched a call for proposals, aiming to support awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives of Armenian CSOs to promote the values, aims and provisions of the Istanbul Convention. The tender for national consultant service was launched and pools of consultants for 8 lots were created. Several key reports and courses that will be used in the future activities (HELP course for law enforcement on DV/VAW, GREVIO Recommendation N1 on digital VAW, the methodology for CSOs, etc.) have been translated into Armenian.

10. AP VC, "Protection of Human Rights in Biomedicine II": the Project has started in January 2023. During the induction phase the Project jointly with the Ministry of Health has organised a ["Annual meeting of Advosors of the Ministry of Health"](#) together with the Ministry defining the priorities of the cooperation within new Project. Two calls for tenders for local and international consultancy services have been announced through the Tender Board and the results will be concluded during the first week of April. The 6-months working plan was adopted for smooth implementation of the Project.

11. Human Rights Trust Fund VC, "Ensuring the Implementation of the ECHR through effective execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in Armenia": the Project started in January 2023, during the inception phase several consultation meetings were held with the Office of the Representative of Armenia on International Legal Matters, the main national partner of the Project. Following, a needs assessment aimed at identifying the evolving needs of the national partners regarding the effective implementation of the European Court of Human Rights judgements at national level was carried out in March. The results will be finalised in April, before the launching event of the Project planned on 28 April.

12. Austria VC, "Democratic Development, Decentralisation, and Good Governance in Armenia, Phase II": during the inception period of the Phase II of the project on Democratic Development, Decentralisation, and Good Governance in Armenia

(DDDGGGA), on 17 February 2023, project stakeholders visited a youth facility in Aparan municipality, renovated through a small grant scheme implemented under DDDGGGA Phase I. The official launch of the project and the First Steering Committee meeting took place on 20 February 2023. More than 35 representatives of consolidated communities participated in the follow-up workshop on “Leveraging the benefits of inter-municipal and cross-border cooperation for better service delivery at local level” (21 February 2023).

Other relevant activities

- 15-17 February - visit of the Director of Programme Co-ordination Mr Claus Neukirch, bilateral meetings, field visits to [Aparan Youth Community Centre](#), and [Vocational training centre for probation beneficiaries in Ararat](#).

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- 16-17 February: Visit of the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe Mr Bjørn Berge on the occasion of the launching of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenia 2023-2026 – the [launching event](#) took place on 16 February, with official welcome from the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe Mr Bjørn Berge and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Mr Ararat Mirzoyan. Mr Bjørn Berge held also bilateral meetings with national authorities.

Pristina

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 6, Project staff –19, Total staff - 25.

During the reporting period, the Office implemented 11 projects, three in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Horizontal Facility III for the Western Balkans and Türkiye”, one EU/CoE Regional Joint Programme (ROMACTED), two EU/CoE Joint Projects, one funded by UNMIK, and four funded through non-earmarked voluntary contributions. The implementation of beneficiary specific actions under the third phase of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye” started in the beginning of January. The VC non-earmarked Reinforcing the Fight against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Kosovo* - phase III, which ended 28 February 2023, was followed by the VC Aligning laws and policies with the Istanbul Convention, which started on 1 March 2023.

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

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Protecting Freedom of Expression and of the Media (PRO-FREX-K)”**: the Action carried out extensive consultations with its major partners and beneficiaries during the inception period, which also coincided with the reporting period. The purpose of these consultations was twofold: to align the action plan with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries and to solicit feedback for successful implementation. The insights gained from these consultations played a crucial role in shaping the activities of the Action.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Ensuring Efficiency and Quality of Justice (KOSEJIII)”**: during the inception phase (January-February), regular exchanges and a visit took place. The first Steering Committee meeting was held on 15 March. A Joint Commitment on justice reforms was signed between KJC, KPC, MoJ listing Judge Performance Evaluation as a priority issue, taking into account the recommendations made by the Action. On 28 March the KJC, the Basic Court of Pristina and the Municipality of Pristina signed a MoU on e-summonses to avoid delays in court proceedings, as a follow-up to the previous activities carried out under the earlier phase of the HF.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Promotion of Diversity and Equality in Kosovo*”**: intensive consultations carried out with the main beneficiaries during the initial period of the Action in order confirm that the planned activities match the up-to-date needs of institutions. On 21 March the first Steering Committee (SC) meeting of the Action was held in Pristina, with the participation of representatives from the EU, OGG, Deputy Ombudsperson, and also local NGOs.
- **EU/CoE JP, “Building Capacity for Inclusive Education– INCLUDE”**: a high-level conference on Inclusive Education was organised on 2 March in Pristina. 70 education professionals from the pilot schools of Pristina and Podujeva (51 women and 19 men) completed the ten-day training on Inclusive Education, assessment of students with special educational needs and individual education plans. 89 resource centre education professionals (73 women and 16 men) completed the Module I “Disability and Inclusive education”. Grant was awarded to one NGO to implement tutoring programme for 110 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students of upper secondary level of education in five municipalities.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo*" (PECK III):** the Assembly adopted on 9 February a new law on Verification of Unjustified Wealth, taking into account the Project's recommendations. Advice on the legislative framework concerning virtual assets and the service providers was provided to Parliament. The authorities were supported in risk assessment of terrorist abuse of NPOs, as per developed the CoE Methodology. Peer-to-peer mentoring activities were delivered for the Special Prosecution, Financial Intelligence Unit and Central Bank of Kosovo to enhance their operational capacities to carry out AML/CFT risk-based supervision and carry out Money Laundering investigation and prosecution.
- **EU/CoE regional JP, "Promoting Good Governance and Roma Empowerment at Local Level (ROMACTED2)":** within the framework of the grants scheme, 20 grant agreements were signed with local authorities and local NGOs. In the light of this, coordination meetings with 20 grantees in 10 beneficiary municipalities were held. Municipal Guideline and Matrix on Covid 19 socio-economic recovery measures were introduced on a Roundtable with 10 beneficiary municipalities. Local authorities were consulted on the way forward where feedback was gathered. ROMACTED become part of the technical group for protection against discrimination which is led by the Office of Good Governance.
- **AP VC, "Enhancing anti-trafficking actions":** the Administrative Instruction on the Database has been drafted and undergone public consultations, awaiting adoption of the Minister of MoIA; Technical Specifications for the database reviewed. The project facilitated procedures on establishment of the database for victims of trafficking. The project, in cooperation with anti-trafficking action in North Macedonia, organized a peer-to-peer exchange between the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation and the Bureau for Development of Education in North Macedonia.
- **AP VC, "Support to the Constitutional Court in applying and disseminating the European Human Rights Standards":** the project organized a workshop with the Constitutional Court to review its Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and provide induction training for newly appointed judges. It organized a study visit to Portugal for seven judges and six legal advisors of the Court to exchange best practices with. The Constitutional Court users' satisfaction survey has been completed. A workshop on Property Rights and European Court of Human Rights was organised in Ohrid, North Macedonia, with 17 judges and lawyers of the constitutional courts of Kosovo* and North Macedonia. The project facilitated the placement of the President and lawyer of the Constitutional Court to European Court of Human Rights.
- **AP VC, "Reinforcing the Fight against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Kosovo* - phase III"** (ended on 28 February 2023): 38 legal professionals (31 women and eight men) graduated from the HELP course "Violence against Women and Domestic Violence", delivered in cooperation with Academy of Justice. 23 law students (21 women and two men) graduated in the HELP course "Women's Access to Justice", delivered in cooperation with Academy of Justice and University of Pristina. The conference "Breaking the cycle of violence - programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence" took place on 16 February, which was attended by more than 80 participants. The policy brief "Implementing perpetrator programmes in Kosovo*" was published.
- **AP VC, "Aligning laws and policies with the Istanbul Convention"** (started on 1 March 2023): the launching conference took place on 29 March 2023. The event involved high level speakers, namely Prime Minister Albin Kurti; Minister of Justice Albulena Haxhiu and Claudia Luciani, Director of the Directorate for Human Dignity, Equality and Governance of the Council of Europe. The launching conference was attended by more than 80 participants,

including representatives of the local authorities, law enforcement agencies, embassies, local civil society and international organisations.

- **AP VC, "Improvement of the treatment of persons deprived of liberty"**: on 17-20 January an assessment mission took place on the legal frameworks and the statuses of the institute of forensic psychiatry of Kosovo* (IFPK) and the special institute for mental and physical disabilities Shtime/Shtimlje (SIS), and their existing rehabilitation and reintegration tools and programmes. On 21-23 January and 28-30 March respectively, two working group meetings were held on drafting the healthcare protocols and guidelines on treatment of persons with mental disabilities and revising the Prison Health Department protocols and standard operating procedures (SOP). Both events were attended by over 40 participants from all relevant project partners and beneficiaries.

- **United Nations VC, "Promoting Human Rights and Non-Discrimination Principles at the Local Level"**: on 1-2 February a training seminar on strengthening monitoring and reporting skills for municipal anti-discrimination officers was held in Ferizaj, with the participation of nine women and eight men. A similar training was delivered in Mitrovica South with the participation of five women and 15 men. Grant agreements were concluded with three local NGOs. On 22-23 March, HELP course on Antidiscrimination was launched, a workshop on preparation of anti-discrimination annual report was organised for anti-discrimination officers.

Follow up actions

- *PRO-FREX-K*: First Steering Committee Meeting has been planned for early May.
- *INCLUDE*: Capacity building activities with the second round of pilot schools will be continued.
- *PECK III*: Presentation of lessons learned and results from the mentoring of the Central Bank and Financial Intelligence Unit on 19 and 20 April 2023. It is expected that this event will inform the relevant authorities on the follow up steps to further upgrade the AML/CFT supervision regime.
- *Enhancing Anti-trafficking Actions*: Selection of the provider for development of the database/commencing development will be completed. Manual for school professionals on prevention and referral of trafficking of human beings will be published.
- *Support to the Constitutional Court in applying and disseminating the European Human Rights Standards*: Workshop with Bar Association on Article 5/Article 6 ECHR is planned for 3-4 April
- *VC Aligning laws and policies with the Istanbul Convention*: Support for the Ministry of Justice will be provided to develop the perpetrator programme
- *Improvement of the treatment of persons deprived of liberty*: Revision of Prison Health Department protocols and SOPs will be finalized.

Other relevant activities

The Office arranged bilateral meetings with officials for Claudia Luciani, Director of the Directorate for Human Dignity, Equality and Governance, during her mission on the launching of Project "Aligning Laws and Policies with the Istanbul Convention". Her bilateral meetings involved Minister of Justice, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs (National Coordinator against Human Trafficking), and the Director of PIPS. The representatives of the following international

* 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.

partners attended the dinner: EUSR, OMIK, Belgium Diplomatic Office, British Embassy, Embassy of France, Embassy of Germany, Embassy of Italy, Embassy of Ireland, Embassy of the Netherlands and Embassy of Norway.

Rabat

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 3, Project staff – 6, Total staff – 9.

The Office implemented or provided logistical support for six projects funded by the European Union.

State of implementation of projects

• EU/CoE JP “Support to the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture and to the Development of the key role of Parliament in Morocco” (ENI/2020/418-263)

Support for the development of the role of the Parliament in Morocco

- On 2 February, a participatory democracy awareness day was held at the House of Representatives.
- On 22 February, a parliamentary meeting was held at the House of Councillors on “Strengthening women’s economic empowerment: employment, entrepreneurship, training”.
- From 15 to 17 March: Marrakech and Ben Guérir hosted a meeting of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development and the PACE Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a healthy environment.

Ongoing:

- the website of the Parliament’s House of Councillors is being redesigned and relaunched.
- an electronic platform for petitions and motions is being developed for the House of Representatives.
- a comparative study on good practices in public policy evaluation is being drafted for the Moroccan Parliament.
- the study on best practices in public consultation by the parliamentary institution is in its final stages.

Support to the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture (NPM)

- From 9 to 10 February, a study visit to the Italian NPM was carried out to exchange experiences and good practices on monitoring techniques and relations with the authorities and civil society and explore possibilities for co-operation, in particular on the monitoring of forced returns.
- From 9 to 10 March, a technical support workshop on improving and increasing the efficiency of preventive visits was held, focusing on the specific features of psychiatric institutions, working methods during visits and report writing, and the NPM’s role in promoting a culture of prevention.
- From 20 to 21 March, training was provided on carrying out surveys, information gathering and analysis in preparation for the NPM’s thematic visit on conditions for women in prison, planned for 2023.
- On 23 March, training was provided on the psychology of interviewing and profiling people in places of detention in order to improve the interviewing skills of NPM members and staff, particularly with regard to vulnerable groups.

• **EU/CoE regional JP “Regional Support to Reinforce Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democracy in the Southern Mediterranean” (South Programme V)**

- From 13 to 14 March, a delegation from Morocco participated in the launch event of the regional South Programme V in Lisbon, in the presence of the Minister of Justice of the Kingdom of Morocco.

HELP programme and combating violence against women

- From 6 to 7 February, a Moroccan delegation attended the launch of the HELP course on International Co-operation in Criminal Matters (ICCM) in Strasbourg.

- On 8 March, a training workshop on combating violence against women was held for justice officials having already completed the HELP course, with the aim of enhancing their skills and, in the long term, building a network of future judges with expertise in this issue.

- On 10 March, a mock trial was held for justice officials studying to become judges at the ISM (Higher Judicial Institute). This immersion exercise afforded them an insight into their future working practices.

- On 17 March, the HELP course on combating violence against women was launched for some 30 participants from the Moroccan General Directorate of National Security (DGSN) and the Royal Gendarmerie.

Combating violence against children

- To mark Safer Internet Day on 7 February, a conference was held on the theme of “Acting together to put the internet to good use and surf responsibly”. With the support of the Council of Europe, the Child and Youth Online Protection Helpline (EMC-Helpline) was launched to combat cyberbullying and cyberviolence against children and young people in Morocco.

- On 9 February, the inaugural conference of the training programme on dealing with cyberbullying situations involving young people was held for institutional resource teams from the Moroccan Youth Department.

Action against trafficking in human beings

- In January, some 40 Moroccan justice officials received training in combating trafficking in human beings and 23 justice officials took part in a mock trial.

- From 18 to 20 January, a delegation from Morocco participated in the regional Training of Trainers course on combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims, held in Tunis.

- From 6 to 10 February, a delegation from Morocco participated in the regional Training of Trainers course on the prosecution of trafficking in human beings and partnership, held in Strasbourg.

• **EU/CoE regional JP, CyberSouth (with GLACY+ and Octopus)**

Cybercrime

- From 6 to 7 February, an international conference was held on “Strengthening co-operation on cybercrime and e-evidence in Africa”, with the participation of the Minister of Digital Transition and Administrative Reform of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Tunis

Situation of the Office

Core staff – 6, Project staff – 14, Total staff – 20

Bilateral joint programmes:

- **EU/CoE JP, “Support to Tunisian independent bodies” (PAII-T)**

The PAII-T came to an end on 31 March 2023 after 4 years and 3 months of implementation. The project’s final steering committee meeting was organised on 30 March 2023 in collaboration with the EU Delegation in Tunis, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the project’s main operational partners including the media regulatory authority (HAICA), and the national independent bodies on access to information (INAI), personal data protection (INPDP), combating trafficking in human beings (INLTP) and combating torture and other ill-treatment (INPT). Noting the difficult implementing context of the PAII-T, including the covid restrictions and post-25 July 2021 measures in Tunisia, the steering committee members acknowledged the results of the project and recommended a continued support in the areas of expertise of the PAII-T partners. A closing ceremony was organised for partners and stakeholders of the PAII-T on the same night in the form of an iftar.

The following activities were implemented in the last quarter of the PAII-T:

- **Freedom of expression, support to media regulatory authority (HAICA):** in order to raise public awareness of the impact of disinformation on the media and society, particularly during election periods, and to improve the quality of the press through supporting community media, a meeting with the audience of Radio Nefzawa in Kebili was organised on 28 January 2023. The meeting was part of a training cycle which have benefited 17 community radio stations throughout Tunisia during the period of September 2022-January 2023.
- **Access to information and support to the national body on access to information (INAI):** as a culmination of years of development, a data centre was established as an internal information system of the INAI in March 2023. The data centre is a technical tool aimed at improving the internal management of the INAI through a digitalised system for managing and analysing access to information requests the body receives from Tunisian citizens and institutions.
- **Fight against trafficking in human beings, human rights education for legal professionals (HELP), and support to the national body on combating trafficking in human beings (INLTP):** two sessions of a regional Training of Trainers (ToT) training were organised in collaboration with the South Programme V in Tunis on 16-21 January 2023 and in Strasbourg on 6-10 February 2023. 60 potential master trainers were trained on the HELP methodology and the CoE standards on combating trafficking in human beings. See more information below under the South Programme V activities.
- **Data protection as a crosscutting theme, support to the national body on personal data protection (INPDP):** three consecutive training sessions on privacy

in the media were organised for journalists and editors in collaboration with the INPDP and the national journalists union (SNJT) on 2-4 February 2023. The training was based on Council of Europe standards (Convention 108 and 108+) and the case of the European Court of Human Rights.

On 6 March 2023, a follow-up meeting was organised on the HELP course on data protection and privacy rights, launched in July 2022 in Tunisia, which is the first country in the Southern Mediterranean region to adapt the course to its national context.

As a joint action and a continuation of previous cooperation between the INLTP and the INPDP, a training seminar was organised to train and sensitise key actors of the referral process of victims of trafficking in human beings on protection of personal data on 8 March 2023.

- **Support to the national body on combating torture (INPT):** in January-February consultations and a mission of international experts was carried out in order to draft a roadmap towards the establishment of a referral unit (Pôle Saisine) within the INPT. The objective is to improve the internal structures and processes of the INPT to treat and follow-up, in a timely and transparent manner, claims and referral requests it receives from persons deprived of liberty and relevant institutions and bodies. The recommendations of the roadmap were presented online to the INPT on 27 February 2023.

On 15-17 March, a three-day training workshop was organised for members of the INPT with focus on the Istanbul Protocol (revised version 2022), a key reference document for the effective investigation of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The aim was to improve the skills and knowhow of the INPT members relating to the investigation of cases of torture and ill-treatment so that they can carry out their mandate in an efficient manner.

- **Fight against corruption and money laundering:** a seminar on "Preventing and fighting corruption" was organised on 14-15 February 2023 in Tunis in close cooperation with the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (ENA) and with the participation of the Directorate General of Governance and Corruption Prevention of the Presidency of the Government. Over 100 participants, including ENA students and executives, as well as representatives of governance units, had the opportunity to improve their knowledge and acquire the necessary tools to recognise the different forms that corruption can take, as well as its causes and consequences.

Two sectoral assessment methodologies for money laundering risks associated with online gaming and drug trafficking were presented in workshops organised on 16-17 March in Tunis and online on 28 March in collaboration with the Tunisian Financial Analysis Commission/Tunisian FIU (CTAF). The sectoral risks assessment methodologies were drafted in line with Council of Europe standards and tools with an aim to improve the self-assessment capacities of the CTAF and its partners in these fields.

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

- **Strengthening the independence and impartiality of the judiciary:** a working meeting on the national adaptation of the HELP course on mediation was organised on 12 January 2023 with the presence of members of the working group composed of representatives of the National Bar Association of Tunisia (ONAT), the Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies (CEJJ) and the Higher Institute of Magistracy (ISM).

Two training sessions on logistics were organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice on 13 and 18 February. These training sessions provided a general overview on logistics and legal drafting and will be complemented by further two thematic training sessions on the subject to be organised later in 2023.

- **Improving the quality of justice:** on 17 March, a working meeting was organised with representatives of the Administrative Tribunal and international experts to present the CEPEJ scoreboards.
- **Widening the scope of access to justice/cooperation with other justice sector actors, notably the National Bar Association of Tunisia (ONAT):** capacities of over 100 lawyers from Gafsa, Gabes, Mednine, Sidi Bouzid and the Sfax area were strengthened to address new requirements of the digitalised era and consequent needs for internal organisation of law firms and legal practices in a training seminar organised in collaboration with ONAT on 18 February 2023 in Sfax. The seminar was part of a series of training events and measures provided to the ONAT in this field.
A delegation of ONAT was accompanied to a study visit to the Paris Bar Association and the EFB Bar School and training centre on 20-23 March 2023 to further strengthen cooperation between the Bar Associations in France and Tunisia. The focus of the visit was to learn from training strategies, processes and structures of the Paris Bar Association and identify best practices that could be implemented by the ONAT in Tunisia.
- **EU/CoE regional JP, "Protecting human rights, the rule of law and democracy through shared standards in the Southern Mediterranean" (South Programme V):**
 - An **awareness-raising workshop on the fight against human trafficking** was organised on 12 January 2023 in Rabat in partnership with the Higher Institute of Magistracy, with the long-term objective of supporting the creation of a network of "human rights magistrates", specialised in the fight against trafficking in human beings.
 - A two-fold **regional training of trainers on HELP methodology and fighting trafficking in human beings** was held in Tunis on 16-21 January 2023 and in Strasbourg on 6-10 February 2023. This training was a further step towards the creation of a regional pool of Southern Mediterranean experts in this field, which will be instrumental to support the regional dynamics of combatting trafficking. The HELP course on International Cooperation in Criminal Matters was launched during this activity which comprised an introduction to the European Court of Human Rights and case laws related to trafficking in human beings and an exchange with the Executive Secretary of the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.
 - On 7 February 2023, the Programme contributed to the **"Safer Internet Day"** held in Morocco under the theme "Together for positive and responsible use of the internet". The helpline for the protection of children and young people against cyberviolence and cyberbullying was launched on this occasion by the Moroccan Centre for Polytechnical Research and Innovation (CMRPI). This line will complement the mechanisms for protecting children and young people online, through trusted partnerships with social media platforms and international NGOs.
 - The **1st pilot phase of a training programme for the setting of resource teams** who will be dedicated **to dealing with situations of cyberviolence and cyberbullying** and located in youth centres was launched on 20 February 2023 with

the participation of 90 directors of the centres in the Casablanca-Settat region. Participants were acquainted with technical, organisational and legal aspects related to cyberviolence, and introduced to the issue of the fight against cybercrime, the protection of personal data against children and young people, as well as methods for dealing with cyberbullying and prevention situations, following a care protocol involving the child or young person's circle of trust.

- On 28 February 2023, Mr Gianni Buquicchio, President Emeritus and Special representative of the Venice Commission, attended the **international conference on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Mediator Institution Kingdom of Morocco** entitled « Ensuring the development dimension of human rights effectiveness in public policies: What role for ombudsmen and mediators? ».
- Organised in close cooperation with the Anti Money Laundering and Counter Terrorist Financing Unit of Jordan on 6-7 March 2023, a **regional workshop "AML/CFT risk-based approach to supervision for DNFBPs supervisors"** gathered 40 representatives of selected Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs) supervisory authorities including real estate, accountants and auditors, legal professionals, traders of previous stones and precious metals, Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) as well as anti-corruption authorities of Jordan, Morocco, Palestine* and Tunisia. This regional event aimed at enhancing the capacities of the DNFBPs supervisory authorities in the region in conducting AML/CFT risk-based supervision and enabled them to exchange experiences.
- Organised with the support of Portugal and the North-South Centre, the **launching event of the South Programme V** gathered 130 participants from Europe and from the Southern Mediterranean region in Lisbon on 13-14 March 2023. Focused on the creation of a common legal space between the two shores of the Mediterranean, this event provided a platform to exchange on the relevance and added value of Council of Europe's standards and tools for the region. Thematic workshops provided an overview of the Programme's main working areas and introduction to Council of Europe conventions.
- The **8th annual meeting of national coordinators of the UniDem Med** initiative was held in Lisbon on 15 March 2023. This meeting brought together the national coordinators representing Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine* and Tunisia to take stock of the UniDem Med seminars organised in 2022, discuss their respective priorities in the field of public administration modernisation and determine the themes, dates and venues of the UniDem Med seminars to be held in 2023.
- On 15 March 2023, a group of 14 civil society experts from the Southern Mediterranean took part in the **first of a series of Euro-Med civil society "Labs"**, conceived as a partnership-driven and networking-oriented meeting, to foster the participation of young people in decision making and democratic reforms, while addressing the issues that are shaping the international agenda today.

* 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.