

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Quarterly report of Council of Europe Offices

October-December 2023

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 October-December 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

The **Secretary General** came to Brussels twice during the reporting period. She first participated in a conference organized by the CCBE and met with the Commission Vice-President in charge of transparency and values, Ms V. Jourova, on 23 October. She came back on 27-28 November 2023, to participate in the international conference launching the Global Alliance against migrant **smuggling** and met bilaterally with Ms Suica, Vice-President of the Commission.

The Office was much involved in the preparation and conduct of the EU-CoE Senior Officials meeting (**SOM**), 19 October, Brussels. The Office organized many bilateral meetings for CoE high Officials in Brussels for that occasion. The Head of Office, Amb. Zayats, accompanied Mr M. Papa, Director DPAER, to the EU Council Working Group on the cooperation with the CoE and the OSCE ("COSCE") on 20 October.

The Head of Office and the Office more broadly followed closely **rule of law** related developments. The Head of Office organized the meeting between DG I Director for human rights, Mr Poirel, and the newly appointed DGJUST Director for fundamental rights, rule of law and democracy, Mr Mousnier. The Office facilitated the participation of the Commissioner for Justice, Mr Reynders, in the PACE on 12 October. It organized the exchanges between the Directors General of DGI, Mr Giakoumopoulos, and DG Just, Ms Gallego, on rule of law related issues. It facilitated to participation of Director Juncher in the EP – LIBE inter-Committee meeting (4/12) on rule of law related matters. The HoO met with the deputy Head of the Cabinet of Justice Commissioner Reynders, on 13 December.

The Head of Office accompanied the President of the Congress to the EU Committee of the Regions. He accompanied DPC Director C. Neukirch to his meeting with REFORM Director-General Mr Nava.

The Head of Office organized **bilateral meetings** with the Head of **Liechtenstein's** Mission to the EU in October – as CoE's incoming Chair of the CM –, with **Canada's** Permanent Observer, Mr Brousseau, with the **Belgian** Permanent Representative to the EU, Ambassador van de Voorde, in view of the incoming Belgian Presidency of the EU Council, and with Amb. Ronner, **EEAS** Deputy Managing Director for Values and Multilateral Relations and EEAS Ambassador for gender and diversity.

The Head of Office **met with CoE representatives** in the Office, such as:

- Mr Cools, newly elected President of the CoE Congress,
- the newly appointed PACE General Rapporteur on violence against women, Ms Gjonaj,
- the Executive Director of Eurimages and her Deputy,
- Ms S. Granata, Executive Secretary to the Venice Commission, who accompanied the VC President to the EU's Conference of the Presidents of the Constitutional Courts (10 Nov.),
- Director M. Gruden, who participated in the governing board of the CoE-EU Youth Partnership,
- Director Petra Doer of the EDQM .
- Mr M. Kliuchkovskiy, Executive Director of the Register of Damage, who participated in an international conference on accountability in Ukraine (27-28 Nov).

The Head of Office co-Chaired the bi-annual meeting of the "EU (Chair **CATS**, Commission, EEAS) – CoE meeting" on 5 December, under the Spanish Presidency of the EU.

He **represented the CoE** on many different occasions, such as :

- a meeting with the Eastern Partnership civil society forum,
- a "panel des maires" organized by the SG of the Organisation of World Heritage Cities;
- an event organized by a French MEP, Ms Guillaume, on "Repatriation of Syrian refugees : what is at stake?";
- the conference organized by DGI and the "Social Platform" in Brussels, on 14 December, on social rights;
- an exchange with the European Olympic Committee (EU and International Affairs Committee), together with the DGII colleague responsible for Sport policies

He participated in online meetings with EU representatives on the EU's participation in the **Istanbul Convention**. The Office participated in the online coordination meeting organized by Ms Kayacik, SRSG on migration and asylum.

He received representatives of the US "Progressive Policy Institute" to discuss their activities in Ukraine and he also received the Chairman of International and Public Affairs matters of the Edelman Global Advisory consultancy (USA).

As usual, the Office **reported** on the many developments of direct interest to the CoE, including, among others,

- the meeting of the "European Political Community" in Granada on 6 October,
- the European Council meetings in October and December, where EU leaders decided to proceed further as regards the EU integration process of four CoE MS: Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- the "Regional Dialogue for Europe and Central-Asia" organized by the UN OHCHR in Brussels in the context of the 75th anniversary of the UDHR as well as the Conference organized by the President of the European Parliament, Ms Metsola, for the 75th anniversary of the UDHR, 29 November.
- the publication of the CJEU Advocate General on a case of direct interest to the EU's accession process to the ECHR;
- migration related policies and the smuggling of migrants,
- the recurrent issue of accountability for crimes committed in Ukraine, including the crime of aggression.

The Office **hosted meetings** such as the board meeting of the European Platform of media regulatory authorities and presented the CoE's activities to groups of visitors coming from different Universities/academies.

The Office regularly **informed** the Commission, the EEAS and the EP Secretariat on important decisions taken by the CM, PACE and the Venice Commission. This covers for instance discussions on a future special tribunal for Ukraine, the first meeting of the Board of the Register of Damage (RD4U) as well as the first meeting of the consultation Group on children from Ukraine (CGU).

The **Brussels-based Spokesperson/Media Officer** coordinated **communications work** around the Secretary General's visit to Brussels, notably including a Euronews interview, the joint statement with the European Union to mark World and European Day against the Death Penalty, Armenia's ratification of Protocol No. 13 to the ECHR, the December CM-DH meeting on the execution of ECHR judgments, the event in Brussels on the European Social Charter

and links with EU law, as well as various reports from the CoE monitoring bodies on member States.

He also carried out **media, online and social media work** on issues including various developments at the European Court of Human Rights as well as on the October PACE and Congress sessions, the plenary session of the Venice Commission, follow-up to the September CM-DH meeting, the PACE monitoring of the elections in Poland, the UK's ratification of the Saint-Denis Convention; the Commissioner's statement on Hungary, the history teaching conference in Strasbourg; the PACE monitoring of the election in Serbia, the Commissioner's report on Italy, the publication of the Council of Europe/FRA guidance note on the rights of migrant children.

The Spokesperson/Media Officer spoke at an event organised by the Human Rights Lawyers Association in **London** and met various journalists and other stakeholders.

In addition, the Spokesperson/Media Officer **represented** the Directorate of Communications at, and chaired, the regular C-10 meeting of communications staff from various human rights organisations and continued to manage the on-going communications project highlighting the **impact of the ECHR** system.

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

Highlights

The Council of Europe **permanent presence** in the Geneva Delegation to the UN (CoE Liaison Office) **was re-established** in the course of the autumn 2023. During the reporting period, besides the setting up of the physical presence, including the upgrade of IT infrastructure, the Head of Office started the process of carrying out a series of **courtesy visits**, starting with the CoE member and observer States and UN Officials. She also met with the Delegation of the European in Geneva. This followed the **presentation of credentials** to UNOG Director Ms Valovaya.

Bilateral meetings were also held with Mr Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Leclerc, UNHCR Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe, Ms Maalla M'jid, SRSG on Violence Against Children, Ms Molcean, UNECE Executive Secretary, and representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), such as the Chief of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the Chief of Special Procedures Branch, as well as UNOG Chief of Protocol.

Secretary General Pejčinović Burić visited Geneva during the reporting period, where she delivered a pledge at the high-level event "**Human Rights 75**" in Geneva to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On the margins of the event, the SG held bilateral meetings with Mr Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Mr Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Office facilitated the preparation of the visit.

The Head of Office represented the Council of Europe and intervened on behalf of the SRSG on Migration and Refugees to the UNHCR Executive Committee. She also accompanied delegations of the Council of Europe who visited Geneva in the reporting period. Notably, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees Leyla Kayacik visited Geneva from 13-15 December to participate in the second **Global Refugee Forum** (UNHCR), where she delivered a statement on behalf of the Organisation. The Office also accompanied the SRSG to the Nansen Award and to her bilateral meeting with Deputy Director General for Management and Reform a.i. of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Ms Irina Vojáčková-Sollorano. In November, the HoO also accompanied a CoE delegation to the **UN Forum on Minority Issues**, and also met with the newly appointed Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Nicolas Levrat.

Other activities

The Head of Office attended a number of important events, such as:

- IOM, 114th Session of the Council;
- The 28th Humanitarian and Security Conference (November);
- Event on the Universality of Human Rights and the Universal Responsibility to Care organised by the Holy See (8 December);
- Global Forum of Women Human Rights Defenders: Countering the Anti-Rights Backlash and Strengthening Protection Frameworks (12 December).

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**

The Office regularly attended the OSCE Permanent Council meetings, notably:

5 October; 6 October (special meeting dedicated to the Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine); 19 October; 2 November; 9 November; 16 November; 23 November; 7 December (including the report by the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the observance of the 30th anniversary of the creation of such function).

Participation in other OSCE meetings, including expert committees, and conferences

- 4 October: OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee meeting - Strengthening security and stability in the OSCE region through cooperation and the promotion of good governance.
- 3 November: 37th meeting of the Co-ordination Group between the Council of Europe and the OSCE. The Head of Office gave an introduction to the CoE participants, covering the principal issues on the OSCE's agenda.
- 13 November: Economic and Environmental Implementation Meeting (EEDIM).

Participation in UN meetings

- 12 and 13 October: Briefing for delegations by the representatives of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) field operations;
- 23-25 October: 1st Intersessional meeting of the 66th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) of the UNODC;
- 31 October: UNODC High-Level event: 20th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

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

High-level visits/meetings

12 October, 14 December - HoO coordination meetings with the First Deputy Director of OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Ms Tea Jaliashvili.

Activities of the Office

a) Enhancing the cooperation with OSCE ODIHR – The main event of the fourth quarter of 2023 was the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference (2-13.10) organized by the North Macedonian OSCE Chairmanship and ODIHR in place of the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. Representatives of OSCE participating States, civil society, international organizations, NHRI and academia gathered in Warsaw to discuss human rights and democratic challenges. The HoO led the CoE delegation, which actively participated in the event, taking the floor in all plenary debates and in many side events. On the margins of the Conference CoE organised a side event on the right to access State-held information, which focused on the Tromsø Convention and ECtHR jurisprudence on the right to information, aiming to promote the standards set by the organisation. Many of the CoE's activities were mentioned in discussions, with special emphasis on the decision of the Reykjavik Summit to establish a Register of Damage caused by the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine as an important part of the larger effort to ensure Russia's accountability for the crimes committed in Ukraine.

Apart from WHDC and high-level meetings mentioned above, the HoO and CoE experts attended numerous meetings and consultations convened by ODIHR. These included i.a. the launch event of the OSCE ODIHR report on Engaging the Ukrainian Diaspora in Reconstruction and Development; ODIHR's Annual Trial Monitoring Meeting in Skopje, where the execution of recent ECtHR judgments concerning judicial independence was presented and midterm review meeting of the Academy on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Polish Cities - joint OSCE ODIHR-CoE-UNHCR-OECD inter-agency initiative.

b) Continuation of the cooperation with the Community of Democracies (CoD) – The Office maintained regular working relations with the Permanent Secretariat of the CoD and reported on the relevant developments and activities of the Community, in particular about the discussions and outcome of the Community Executive Committee meetings and the 37th session of CoD Governing Council. HoO moderated a panel on current challenges to human rights and democracy during 2023 Warsaw Dialog for Democracy - "75 Years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Legacy and Duty" co-organised by the CoD with the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

c) Establishment of closer co-operation with Frontex – The third study visit to Strasbourg of Frontex Fundamental Rights Monitors was organised in November to discuss the CoE standards related to migration and cross border cooperation. The programme of the visit included, among other things, meetings with SRSG on migration and refugees, the representatives of the CoE Secretariat (ECRI, Venice Commission, CPT, GRETA, Office of the Commissioner for HR, lawyers at the European Court of Human Rights and in the Department for the Execution of Judgments) and PACE Migration Committee Secretariat. In addition to discussions at expert level, Frontex Monitors also held an exchange of views with GRETA

members during the 49th plenary meeting of The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

B. CoE OFFICES AND PROGRAMME OFFICES

List of abbreviations used for the naming of projects

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

Programme Office in Ankara

Situation of the office

The Council of Europe Programme Office in Ankara has 40 (10 men, 30 women) staff members, out of which eight (four men, four women) are core staff and 32 (six men, 26 women) are project staff.

The Office implemented 12 projects, four in the framework of Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye III, five EU/CoE Joint Programmes, one funded through a voluntary contribution (from HRTF of the Council of Europe, Norway, Belgium, Türkiye and the Netherlands) and two regional programmes, ROMACTED II and Roma Integration.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Strengthening the Criminal Justice System and the Capacity of Justice Professionals on Prevention of the European Convention on Human Rights Violations in Turkey":** HELP Course on Cybercrime was launched with 280 judges and prosecutors in November. Cascade trainings and guidelines on the Right to Liberty and Security, Reasoning of Judgements and Combatting with Financing of Terrorism (overall 4233 trainees) were delivered to the judiciary across the country. Awareness raising activities (Open Court Day and public videos) and two large scale international symposiums on 'Fight Against Cybercrime and Financing of Terrorism' were organised in Ankara and İstanbul. Training modules on eight topics and electronic data bases for e-library were provided for the Justice Academy. Project Closing Conference was held with the attendance of Minister of Justice on 30 November.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Supporting the Effective Implementation of Turkish Constitutional Court Judgements in the Field of Fundamental Rights":** 27 lawyers on "Individual Application" were trained in Ankara as trainers. An International Conference on the 11th Anniversary of Individual Application was organised on 13 October, with the participation of the Head of EU Delegation, President of Turkish Constitutional Court (TCC) and Council of Europe Head of Operations. A visit to Strasbourg by 25 TCC representatives and a regional meeting on "Violation Decisions on Individual Applications" were conducted in October. On 18-19 December, a workshop on "Prohibition of Discrimination in Working Life" was organised with the participation of Human Rights and Equality Institution, Parliament, Council of State, Ministries of Interior and Justice and Ombudsperson Institution. The roadmap for the application of TCC judgments and 3-month-placements of 7 TCC rapporteurs in European Court of Human Rights were completed in December.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Project on Promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution in Turkey":** 75 conciliators from different regions were trained and assessed on the use of new models of conciliation, including child-friendly and restorative justice. Training videos on restorative justice and negotiation techniques and a training seminar on "Elimination of Joint Ownership" with 300 mediators and experts were completed in October. On 14 November, a Symposium on the 10th Anniversary of Mediation took place in Ankara in the scope of Mediators' Day, with 750 participants including mediators, academia and experts. Workshops were organised with the stakeholders to discuss the effectiveness of new conciliation model, mediation and training modules in December. A 9-month-extension to the project duration (until September 2024) was approved.

- **EU/CoE JP, “Joint Project on Improving the Effectiveness of Family Courts: Better Protection of the Rights of Family Members”:** Study visits to UK and Ireland took place on 9-11 October, with 13 participants from the Justice Academy and project stakeholders, to observe different practices on family justice and mediation. An International Symposium on Family Law was organised on 1-3 November, to draw attention to the vulnerable groups in family disputes. In November, a roadmap on the legislation and policy-level changes was drafted to highlight the desired improvements in the family justice system. To increase the awareness of court users, new brochures and handbooks were drafted on the functioning of family justice. A tender to create an online training platform was launched in December. A 9-month extension to the Project duration (until September 2024) was approved.
- **EU/CoE JP, “Improving International Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters in Turkey”:** Six trainings on the practices of international judicial cooperation for 150 judges and prosecutors from the regions were organised in Antalya on 11-13 October, in İstanbul on 15-17 November and in Izmir on 6-8 December. A report related to the mutual legal assistance requests was prepared and discussed with the stakeholders in November. Two study visits were organised to Germany and France with 13 participants each, to observe the relevant practices and to contribute to improving the judicial cooperation with both countries. 67 books in foreign languages were purchased for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) library (also accessible electronically) in December. The tender for the purchase of hardware to support the electronic system of MoJ was completed. A 12-month-extension to the Project duration (until December 2024) was approved.
- **VC, “Enhancing the Disciplinary and Reward Procedures for Prisoners in Türkiye and update on achievements during the reporting period”:** The last Working Group meeting on the revision of legislative framework on disciplinary and reward procedures for prisoners was organised on 15 November. As a result, the draft amendments on the regulatory framework were agreed to be concluded in the next meeting planned for January 2024. The draft policy paper on maintaining good order in prisons through rewards and disciplinary sanctions was developed in the meeting held on 16-17 November. An outline for the training of trainers and cascade training curriculum to increase knowledge and skills of prison managers and staff was drafted during the WG meeting in November. The baseline study to identify the effectiveness of the discipline and reward practices was finalised and reported with the findings in December.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Strengthening the Human Rights Protections in the Context of Migration”:** 73 gendarmerie officers working as first responders to the migration cases at the borders enhanced their knowledge on “Human Rights, Migration and Child Friendly Information”, in Antalya on 9-11 October. The materials for trainers on detention procedures were developed and two training sessions were held in Ankara in November. 48 lawyers attended these trainings specifically on “non-refoulement, right to liberty and security, alternatives to immigration detention, and protection of persons in vulnerable situation”. The drafted guideline on child protection legislation was approved by the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) and 40 central and local PMM staff were trained on the protection of children. The translation of Council of Europe Guide on “Family-based Care for Unaccompanied and Separated Children” was completed.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Action against Money Laundering in Türkiye”:** Action’s implementation has stalled during the reporting period, as the revisions proposed on the Logframe following the inception phase consultations with the beneficiary institutions are pending EU approval. Generally, the preparations are underway for swift roll-out of certain

activities in the upcoming reporting period once an approval of the revised Logframe is obtained.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Fostering Women's Access to Justice in Türkiye":** 755 lawyers were certified on the gender-sensitive and victim-oriented legal aid through HELP course on "Access to Justice for Women". An international conference was organised on 27 November in Ankara, with the participation of Head of Council of Europe Programme Office, the Head of EU Delegation and President of Union of Turkish Bar Association. The event, attended by 114 representatives from bars, academia and civil society, significantly contributed to the awareness raising through substantive media coverage. In December, an event on legal literacy was organised in Hatay with the participation of 47 women victims of earthquake, with an aim to empower the vulnerable groups in claiming their rights and reporting potential right violations.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Pilot Project on Digital Citizenship Education in Türkiye":** Launching event of the action was carried out on 17 October with high level participation from Council of Europe, EU Delegation and the Ministry of National Education. The event was followed by two-day face-to-face capacity building activity targeting teachers and school administrators from 14 pilot schools. The needs assessment study was finalised and its report was shared with the beneficiary institution in November. The preparations for the adaptation of online courses on digital citizenship education (DCE) and development of a child friendly DCE handbook have been launched.

- **EU/CoE JP, "ROMACTED Phase II-Promoting Good Governance and Roma Empowerment at Local Level":** Monitoring visits were conducted in eight pilot municipalities, namely Edirne, Uzunköprü, Muratlı, Konak, Gömeç, Akhisar, Gaziantep and Canik Municipalities in November. An online training for the municipalities on the preparation of grant proposal was organised on 20-21 November. All agreements for the small grant projects of the municipalities were signed in December.

- **EU/CoE JP, "ROMA Integration Phase III":** The implementation phase of the project started in December. The communication with the National Roma Contact Point - Ministry of Family and Social Services was initiated, and the assessment of the tender for thematic consultants was completed in December.

Follow up actions

- **EU/CoE JP, « Strengthening the Criminal Justice System and the Capacity of Justice Professionals on Prevention of the European Convention on Human Rights Violations in Turkey»:** The project ended on 14 December after a 54-month-implementation period. The project final report is to be submitted within six months as of the end of the project.
- **EU/CoE JP, "Supporting the Effective Implementation of Turkish Constitutional Court Judgements in the Field of Fundamental Rights":**
 - ✓ The second progress report of the project has been submitted to EU Delegation on 29 November. Revisions on the Report are ongoing.
 - ✓ The evaluation on the tender to support the IT platform of TCC judgments is ongoing. As for the purchase of this IT tool, an addendum to the project contract will be requested.
 - ✓ Trainings of trainers and cascade trainings for lawyers, prosecutors and judges will intensively continue in 2024.

- ✓ A workshop on "Combating Violence Against Women" is planned with Human Rights and Equality Institution for 6-7 February 2024.
- **EU/CoE JP, "Project on Promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution in Turkey":**
 - ✓ A high-level international conference on the new practices and approaches of alternative dispute resolution is planned in Istanbul in Feb 2024.
 - ✓ Online training modules will be reviewed by the stakeholders and the training videos will be finalised.
 - ✓ A desk-research initiated to examine various country examples on practices for the mediation will be completed.
- **EU/CoE JP, "Joint Project on Improving the Effectiveness of Family Courts: Better Protection of the Rights of Family Members":**
 - ✓ Draft roadmap will be discussed and concluded with the stakeholders.
 - ✓ Production of online training programme to reach out all justice professionals working in the family justice system will start once the tender assessment is completed.
 - ✓ Awareness raising materials will be printed and disseminated to the family courts.
 - ✓ One law clinic will be established and operationalised in İzmir.
- **EU/CoE JP, "Improving International Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters in Turkey":**
 - ✓ Cascade trainings for judges, prosecutors and lawyers will intensively continue in 2024.
 - ✓ Delivery of the procured hardware for the centralised electronic system will be ensured.
- **VC, "Enhancing the Disciplinary and Reward Procedures for Prisoners in Türkiye and update on achievements during the reporting period":**
 - ✓ The assessment report, which identifies the systemic shortcomings and practical gaps and highlights the need for improvement in disciplinary and reward procedures, will be taken as a basis in the next activities.
 - ✓ The final draft of legislative amendments will be presented to stakeholders in a meeting planned in Ankara for January 2024.
 - ✓ The draft policy paper will be discussed with the Ministry of Justice in January 2024.
 - ✓ Draft curriculum of the trainings will be reviewed in a meeting planned in February 2024.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening the Human Rights Protections in the Context of Migration":**
 - ✓ The guides produced by the project will be published for the use of PMM and the Ministry of Family and Social Services.
 - ✓ Additional trainings are planned for local bars in coordination with the Union of Turkish Bar Associations.
 - ✓ Needs Assessment Report on guardianship system in child protection in the context of migration will be prepared.
 - ✓ Trainings on monitoring of detention places will be organised for the Human Rights and Equality Institution.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action against Money Laundering in Türkiye":**
 - ✓ The exact number of activities to be implemented during the next quarter will be subject to further consultations with the beneficiaries to make sure their feasibility vis-à-vis other priorities of the beneficiary institutions and their capacity to attend /provide inputs for the planned actions.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Fostering Women's Access to Justice in Türkiye":**

- ✓ The awareness raising documents and the results of gender analysis (to be completed in January 2024) will be shared and discussed with the stakeholders.
- ✓ The recommendations specified in the gender analysis will be closely followed up.
- ✓ The methodology of the capacity building sessions on legal literacy is planned to be revised to increase their efficiency and effectiveness.
- ✓ The action will continue establishing synergies with CSOs working on women's rights. The project team has already attended several activities organised by CSOs and international organisations such as the UNFPA. High-level visits were paid to the Federation of Women Associations of Türkiye, Flying Broom Foundation and UN Women in November, where concrete proposals for cooperation were discussed and information on current activities were exchanged.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Pilot Project on Digital Citizenship Education in Türkiye":**
 - ✓ Content for the online teacher trainings and child friendly DCE handbook will be developed in line with the results of the needs assessment study.
 - ✓ A call for tender will be launched for the provision of services to develop a web-based game targeting lower-secondary students.
- **EU/CoE JP, "ROMACTED Phase II-Promoting Good Governance and Roma Empowerment at Local Level":**
 - ✓ Monitoring visits will be conducted in Şişli and Karadeniz Ereğli Municipalities.
 - ✓ Advisory Group Meeting will be organised in February 2024 in Ankara.
 - ✓ Implementation grant projects of 10 municipalities will be closely followed-up.
- **EU/CoE JP, "ROMA Integration Phase III" :**
 - ✓ Project Work Plan will be finalized in January 2024 in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services.
 - ✓ The inception report is pending for approval in January 2024.
 - ✓ Introductory visits to stakeholders in Istanbul will be paid on 25-26 January 2024.
 - ✓ The communication with the Human Rights and Equality Institution will be launched in January 2024.
 - ✓ A media training will be carried out in Serbia in March 2024 including representatives from Türkiye.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 21-22 October, the Deputy Secretary General visited the provinces of Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş.
- On 3 November, the Secretary General's Special Representative on Migration and Refugees visited Ankara.
- On 13 November, the Secretary General visited Ankara and the Council of Europe Programme Office.
- On 20 November, a Congress post-monitoring visit took place in Ankara.

Office in Baku

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Baku has 17 (four men, 13 women) staff members, out of which six (two men, four women) are core staff and 11 (two men, nine women) project staff. The new Deputy Head of Office took up her duties on 1 December.

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

State of implementation of projects

- **AP VC, "Promoting media professionalism and freedom of information in Azerbaijan (PRO-M-FEX)":** (i) The Project completed the compilation and analysis of court cases and appeals at various instances related to the violation of media freedom in the context of implementing the new Law on Media. (ii) The Project supported the participation of four Azerbaijani journalists and two representatives of the authorities in the Council of Europe regional forum on freedom of expression in times of war, held in December in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. Additionally, three Azerbaijani participants actively contributed to panel discussions on the safety of journalists and combating disinformation in the media during the forum.
- **AP VC, "Support for the improvement of the execution of the European Court of Human Rights judgments by Azerbaijan":** Two working group meetings on the National Execution Strategy and Action Plan for the Execution of Judgments and Decisions of the European Court of Human Rights by the Republic of Azerbaijan were held on 20 November and 15 of December respectively. As a follow up of the working group meetings, three separate sub-working group meetings were organized on 18 December that deal with backlog of cases pending execution, interagency coordination in execution of European Court of Human Rights judgments, and the functions/structure of analytical departments with the focus on enhancement of the analytical capacities of justice stakeholders in application of human rights concepts. As a result of the meetings, National Execution Strategy was adopted on a project level.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Preventing and fighting economic crime in Azerbaijan":** National authorities improved their knowledge and experience in implementing targeted financial sanctions against terrorism and proliferation financing with a view to prevent and combat criminals' abuse of the international financial system for illicit purposes. Furthermore, 28 investigators, prosecutors, judges, financial intelligence, and central bank practitioners improved their understanding of new payment methods and investigative techniques aimed at deterring future crypto-enabled crimes and virtual assets-based money laundering.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (VAW/DV) in Azerbaijan":** Three recommendations proposed in the PGG II studies and promoted under the current project were reflected in the draft Law on amendments to the Law on preventing domestic violence, which was adopted on 30 December. Law students and professors (11 participants) learned about Council of Europe's

work on combating VAW/DV violence during the study visit to Strasbourg on 9-13 October. The project involved 25 legal professionals in the café discussion "Zero tolerance to domestic violence in society", organised under the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence on 9 December. The project also raised awareness of 20 police officers, 13 judges and nine representatives of local executive authorities on international standards and best practices on protection orders during the awareness raising sessions on 13-14 December.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Fostering Mediation in Azerbaijan":** The project organized a mission to Baku focused on improving the training framework on mediation in Azerbaijan. It started with consultations on the opportunity of setting up standards for training programmes for mediators, as well as of an accreditation system for mediation trainers and training entities. A two-day training of trainers increased the competences of 22 national mediation trainers and heads of mediation organisations from Baku and regions. The project's progress and priorities for the support to developing the institute of mediation in the country were discussed with representatives from the key partner institutions during the second Technical Project Committee meeting held on 25 October.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Promoting equality in Azerbaijan":** 29 civil society representatives, young legal professionals, and volunteers from Baku and three regions of Azerbaijan enhanced awareness of the standards and tools of the Council of Europe for promoting equality and non-discrimination through an intensive training session held on 19-20 December. The training workshop supported the capacity building of civil society to work on ensuring equality and a more diverse society through providing a collaborative learning platform. The learning platform will encompass interactive discussions, case analyses, group work on real-world scenarios and exchange of experiences and best practices for building a more inclusive and equitable society.

Other relevant activities

- On 2 October, the Head of Office attended online Partnership for Good Governance Steering Committee Meeting.
- On 6 October, the Head of Office attended the opening of the training for University Faculty Members Teaching Journalism and Conflict Sensitive Journalism in the framework of the project "Promoting media professionalism and freedom of information in Azerbaijan".
- On 19 October, the Head of Office attended the VI Congress of Azerbaijan Women, held on the 100th anniversary of the national leader Heydar Aliyev, as well as the 25th anniversary of the first Women's Congress organized by State Committee on Family, Women and Affairs.
- On 26 October, the Head of Office attended the opening of advanced training of trainers on mediation within the project "Fostering mediation in Azerbaijan".
- On 3 November, the Head of Office met with a group of Ambassadors organized by Swedish Ambassador Tobias Lorentzson to discuss gender related updates in Azerbaijan.
- On 13 November and 29 November, the Head of Office attended the opening of trainings on "Implementation of Targeted Financial Sanctions" and "Investigation and Prosecution of Money Laundering using New Payment Methods" respectively in the framework of the project "Preventing and fighting economic crime in Azerbaijan".
- On 30 November, the Head of Office attended the conference to commemorate 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, organized by UNRC.
- On 6 December, the Head of Office attended the international conference on "Domestic violence prevention: opportunities and perspectives" organized by State Committee on Family Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

- On 7 December, the Head of Office attended the opening of the Second Project Steering Committee Meeting in the framework of the project "Preventing and fighting economic crime in Azerbaijan".
- On 13 December, the Head of Office attended the opening of the raising awareness session on combating VAW among law-enforcement officials and judges in Azerbaijan in the framework of the project "Preventing and combating VAW/DV in Azerbaijan".
- On 15 December, the Head of Office attended the opening of the Working Group and Sub-Working Groups meetings on the National Execution Strategy and Action Plan for the Execution of European Court of Human Rights Judgments by the Republic of Azerbaijan in the framework of the project "Support for the improvement of the execution of the European Court of Human Rights judgments by Azerbaijan".
- On 19 December, the Head of Office attended the opening of the training on promoting equality and non-discrimination for civil society representatives in Azerbaijan in the framework of the project "Promoting equality in Azerbaijan".
- On 21 December, the Head of Office attended the conference on "Modern development trends of legal science and teaching" on the 100th anniversary of Great Leader Heydar Aliyev and the 95th anniversary of the Faculty of Law of Baku State University.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- From 16 to 23 October, Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, visited Armenia and Azerbaijan, including the Karabakh region. The focus of the visit was on the human rights situation of people affected by the conflict.
- On 8 December, Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, paid a working visit to Azerbaijan and met with the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Speaker of the Parliament. The Head of Office took part in all three meetings. The Secretary General also visited the Council of Europe Office in Baku and exchanged with the staff.

Office in Belgrade

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Belgrade has 31 (eight men, 23 women) staff members, out of which six (three men, three women) are core staff, 23 (five men, 18 women) project staff, one (woman) Horizontal Facility Coordination Hub (HFCH) and one (woman) Regional Finance Officer.

The Office is currently implementing 12 (country specific and regional) projects, out of which 10 are jointly funded with the EU (seven under the Horizontal Facility Phase III, Support for the implementation of judicial reform in Serbia, ROMACTED and Roma Integration Programme, two projects through Voluntary Contributions: one on Anti-Money-Laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing funded by the Swedish Foreign Ministry/SIDA and one on HELP in the Western Balkans funded by the Human Rights Trust Fund).

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

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Quality Education for All-Serbia":** Peer Exchange of the Serbian policy makers with peers from Ireland and UK took place in October as a result of which a professor from Belfast will work on development of RFCDC¹ University programme in Serbia. The first meeting of the state Curricula working group to connect RFCDC descriptors with national curricula took place in October. Policy makers from the Republic of Moldova visited Serbian counterparts and schools. Education fair focused on RFCDC took place in October. Mentor schools conducted dissemination visits to more than 150 schools and trained 600 teachers. Days of Education for Democratic Culture in 25 municipalities gathered more than 10000 participants.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Combating discrimination and promoting diversity in Serbia":** Six workshops on the position and responsibilities of the Protector of Citizens for representatives of Roma non-governmental organizations and institutions at the local level were organized in Belgrade and across Serbia. The International Day for Tolerance was marked on 17 November with a conference in Novi Sad. A Special report on violence in schools, prepared by the Protector of citizens of Serbia in co-operation with a Panel of youth advisors, was presented to the public on 8 December in Belgrade. The Action provide inputs in line with Council of Europe standards and recommendations for the draft law on electronic media.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Protecting freedom of expression and of the media in Serbia (PROFREX)":** The action supported REM² in providing cascade trainings to 90 pre-school educators, equipping them with knowledge and materials for teaching media literacy. In cooperation with the Secretariat of the European Court of Human Rights, the Case Law Guide on Data Protection was delivered in Serbian language to the Commissioner³ staff, ensuring access to the latest insights on data protection standards. A methodology for the research disinformation, misinformation and mal information was developed in cooperation with two largest journalists' associations and other media actors, charting a road to research-based policy paper, planned for next year.

¹ Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

² Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media in Serbia

³ Commissioner for Access to Information and Personal Data Protection

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Strengthening anti-trafficking action in Serbia”:** A donation of IT equipment (laptops, computers, printers) to the National Anti-trafficking Co-ordination Office (Ministry of the Interior), National Rapporteur (Ombudsperson office), Centre for Human Trafficking Victims’ Protection and NGO ASTRA delivered to help them operate more efficiently to combat human trafficking. A multidisciplinary training on labour trafficking was held for 24 labour inspectors. A guide for improvement of Centre’s finding/opinion was presented to anti-trafficking stakeholders. The Dutch National Rapporteur on human trafficking presented good practise example to Serbian peers. The 2nd Steering Committee meeting was held on 7 December.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Strengthening human rights protection in Serbia”:** The Action co-organised with the Constitutional Court an international conference for representatives of constitutional courts throughout Europe, European Court of Human Rights, Venice Commission, national institutions and academia, to discuss the role of constitutional courts in implementing the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention), and published an English version of the analysis of the implementation of the Convention in the Constitutional Court’s decisions. The Action contributed to final execution of the judgment in case Dragan Petrović v. Serbia, with a roundtable gathering relevant national stakeholders and Council of Europe Department for the execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Enhancing human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons”:** Qualitative analysis of health workers’ conduct when examining persons in police detention and a draft MoU between Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior were discussed with the line ministries. The aim is to standardise the conduct of both police officers and medical workers in medical screening in police custody. The task force for putting into practice Interviewing Manual for police officers was supported. The drafting of new offender treatment programmes is on track. The reintegration programme for long term prisoners was finalised according to piloting results and experience. An assessment of the implementation of individual treatment plans in psychiatric clinics was conducted.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Enhancing co-operation in the Western Balkans in managing violent extremism in prisons and preventing further radicalisation after release”:** The 2nd Steering Committee meeting was held on 17 October in Skopje (North Macedonia), where representatives from Serbia adopted a six-month Work Plan. During the 1st thematic onsite visit on to BiH in November, prison practitioners from Serbia learned about management, rehabilitation and preparation for release of violent extremist prisoners (VEP) and the multiagency support to reintegration and resocialisation of VEPs who returned to the local communities. Two research projects have been finalised in the region (including Serbia).
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, “ROMACTED Phase II - Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level”:** The second Advisory Group Meeting was held in Belgrade on 23 November. Over 50 participants from 13 partner cities and municipalities, ministries, international and civil society organisations participated in the meeting. During the meeting, the draft Guidelines for Roma responsible budgeting at the local level and Analysis on presentation of Roma history and culture in curricula and textbooks in Serbia were presented. The implementation of 26 small grants-scheme projects continued in municipalities, addressing the needs in various areas such as education, infrastructure, health, post-COVID recovery, etc.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, “Roma Integration III”:** The project ensured cooperation with the Commissioner for Protection of Equality in Serbia and the Ombudsman of Bosnia and

Herzegovina (BiH) in antidiscrimination and anti-gypsism activities. The co-operation on Roma inclusion with European Network on Statelessness (ENS), European Institute for Roma Arts and Culture (ERAC) and the Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative (REDI) was established. The project was presented to the Network for Roma inclusion on local level in Serbia and to the Board for Roma of the Council of Ministers in BiH. Project institutional partners participated in Roma Platform meeting on Roma housing organized with DG NEAR.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Support for the implementation of judicial reform in Serbia":** The project continued supporting Serbian authorities in developing bylaws for the new judicial and prosecutorial laws; the High Judicial Council adopted the Rules of Procedure, Rulebook on the protection from undue influence and the Rulebook on the Budgetary Commission; a comparative analysis of the relations between prosecutorial councils and professional associations was presented. Two panel sessions were organised at the Kopaonik School of Natural Law focusing on modernization of Legal Education and effects of artificial intelligence in the judiciary and the publication 'Roadmap of the justice sector reform-achievements and future steps' was developed.

- **Human Rights Trust Fund VC, regional "HELP in the Western Balkans":** The project launched nine HELP courses - Family Law and Human Rights and Data Protection and Privacy Rights in Bosnia and Hercegovina; Ethics for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers in Albania; Prohibition of Ill treatment in Montenegro; Business and Human Rights in Serbia; and Data Protection and Human Rights, Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, Child friendly Justice and Hate Crime & Hate Speech in North Macedonia. More than 450 legal professionals from the region enrolled in these courses. The number of users of the HELP platform is 8587, which is an increase by 25% since the beginning of 2023.

- **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) VC, "Preventing money laundering and terrorist financing in Serbia":** The project enhanced capacities of Serbian authorities in processing and adjudicating money laundering as a standalone offence through an extensive three module training. Advice was provided to authorities to strengthen risk-based oversight and supervision of NPOs⁴ while the capacities were raised among NPOs to recognise and mitigate risks from abuse for terrorist financing purposes. The project delivered IT equipment to the Serbian Criminal Police to improve their efficiency in conduction of financial investigations, and case management software is being developed in line with their needs and requirements.

Follow-up actions

- The new VC agreement with Swedish Development Agency (SIDA) that has been signed in mid-December, will pave the way for continuing cooperation in the field of economic crime, after a successfully implemented first phase of the overall programme in this respect.
- The preparation for launching the new VC project Prevent bullying and peer violence in schools (funded by a voluntary contribution by Germany) is completed and the project is ready to be launched on 1 January 2024.

Other relevant activities

- On 17 November, the International Day for Tolerance was marked with a Conference on Multiculturalism and Interculturalism in Novi Sad, in partnership with the Ministry

⁴ Non-profit organisations

for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue and the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme. The event gathered representatives of national minorities, media, CSOs, authorities, etc.

- 25 November-10 December: 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, ending on the Human Rights Day, was promoted through social media, to raise awareness and engage wider population in fight against violence.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 2-4 October, the Rapporteur of the Monitoring Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Axel Shafer, paid an official visit to Serbia in a fact-finding mission.
- On 23-24 November a delegation of PACE, led by Stefan Schennach (Austria, SOC), made a pre-electoral visit to Serbia.
- On 15-18 December, a delegation of 23 members of PACE observed the early parliamentary elections in Serbia.

Cybercrime Programme Office in Bucharest

Situation of the Office

The Cybercrime Programme Office of the Council of Europe in Bucharest has 35 (eight men, 27 women, Head of Office split between Bucharest and Strasbourg) staff members, out of which one (woman) is core staff and 34 (eight men, 26 women) project staff.

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

Joint initiatives of the Cybercrime Programme Office (C-PROC) of the Council of Europe collectively strengthened international cooperation, legal frameworks, and awareness in the fight against cybercrime worldwide. The [discussion paper on freedom of expression and cybercrime](#) was developed to support policy makers, legislators and criminal justice practitioners in their development and implementation of policies and legislation on cybercrime, consistent with the right to the freedom of expression. The [International Network of Judicial Trainers' Plenary](#) enhanced global judicial training in cybercrime and electronic evidence, [expanding its reach by integrating the CyberSouth Judicial Training Network](#) during the latest meeting of this global community. The [24/7 Points of Contact Network](#) (with for over 130 participants from more than 60 countries attending) and [EUROPOL Cybercrime Annual Conference](#) facilitated crucial international collaboration and strategy exchange among projects' priority countries and beyond. The [29th T-CY Plenary](#) and [Octopus Conference](#) in Bucharest, attended by over 500 professionals from approx. 100 countries, marked a key milestone in global discourse on e-evidence and cybercrime, recognising [C-PROC's 10 years of impact](#), as also evidenced in the latest report on the [global state of cybercrime legislation](#). Moreover, project proposals for five new projects were finalised (CyberEast+, CyberUA, CyberSouth+, CyberSEE, CyberSPEX) were finalised in view of signature and commencement in early 2024.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "CyberEast":** The project completed a study on electronic evidence of war crimes and related offences in Ukraine. Regional activities addressed the matters of [cybercrime and parallel financial investigations](#), [technical exercise](#) on state-sponsored attacks, and [cooperation between cybercrime and cybersecurity](#) experts. Georgian investigators were trained on the use of open-source intelligence tools, while the [Europol Annual Cybercrime Conference](#) provided venue for the [24/7 points of contact meeting](#) as well as insight into [iOCTA reporting](#) methodology. The project [concluded](#) with [Octopus Conference 2023](#) and adoption of a renewed [Declaration](#) of Strategic Priorities on Cybercrime for the Eastern Partnership region which represents an important achievement given the policy context in this region.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "CyberSouth":** Domestic cybercrime legislation was discussed with the representatives of the [Tunisian Parliament](#), in view of the accession process to the Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention) by February 2024, including concerns regarding fundamental rights. Visits and online meetings with all national institutions dealing

with cybercrime from Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia were organized to prepare the final assessment of the project (2017-2023). Relevant material such as the guide for conducting criminal investigations of ransomware attacks and the electronic evidence guide were updated and translated into Arabic. The project contributed to the first SIRIUS event for MENA countries and to the [29th Lisbon Forum of the North-South Centre on Human Rights, Environment and Economic Crimes: Youth at the forefront](#). The [final conference of the CyberSouth](#) project discussed the project's impact and results as well as the new plan for co-operation under the CyberSouth+ initiative (2024-2026).

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "iPROCEEDS-2"**: Closer co-operation of incident response teams of South-East Europe with the international cybersecurity community on topics such as standardization, regulations and latest developments in the field was achieved by supporting participation of delegates to the [ETSI Security Conference](#). A series of workshops in [Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye](#) assessed developments and progress achieved in recent years in cybercrime and electronic evidence in terms of legislation, strategies, investigation and capacities for cooperation. The closing meeting of the project provided a retrospective of results and impact, best practices shared and success achieved during the last 48 months and laid down the foundation of a future project for capacity building for the region in 2024 and beyond.

- **EU/CoE JP, "GLACY+"**: GLACY+ continued to support ongoing legislative reforms in Rwanda, Nigeria, Malawi, Dominican Republic, Mexico and Cameroon (some in cooperation with the Octopus Project). Inter-agency cooperation to effectively trace and freeze criminal proceeds was strengthened in Colombia. 19; investigators, technical analysts, public prosecutors from seven selected countries from the Asia-Pacific region were certified as Interpol instructors. Some 85 Peruvian police officers and prosecutors enhanced their knowledge on collecting and preserving evidence as first responders, in a course designed and delivered by the national and regional trainers, trained previously by the project. The capacities and knowledge on cryptocurrencies of the members of the International Network of Judicial Trainers was bolstered in [the last session of the peer-to-peer webinar of the year](#). 32 delegates from 20 African countries discussed and agreed next steps at national level to ensure the sustainability of the training strategies on cybercrime. In cooperation with [TAIEX](#), the project supported the unfolding of the training curricula on cybercrime at national level in Ghana. Law enforcement and prosecutors from 14 Latin American (LATAM) countries engaged with the private sector in a [regional workshop on strengthening cooperation between criminal justice authorities in the Latin American region and international providers of communication services active in the region](#). The project supported the Americas INTERPOL Working Group on cybercrime, gathering some 75 Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and prosecutors.

- **EU/CoE JP, "GLACY-e"**: Being in the inception period, the project consolidated the relationship with hub and selected countries and developed the agenda and workplan for 2024. A smooth transition between the GLACY+ and GLACY-e project was ensured by gradually taking on some of the GLACY+ activities by GLACY-e. The GLACY+ closing conference and GLACY-e opening conference provided an opportunity to gather all current as well as new selected countries and to assess the expected project's impact and results as well as the priorities under the GLACY-e project.

- **8⁵ donors VC, "Octopus Project"**: Legislative assessments and advisory missions (some in cooperation with the GLACY+ project) in countries like Cameroun, Malawi, Mexico, Kazakhstan, Seychelles, and Mauritania provided avenues for strengthening their legal

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

frameworks and response to cybercrime. The [CYBERKOP action in Kosovo*](#) was launched, and a dedicated action for ASEAN countries for 2024/2025 was prepared. Support to major international and regional events, including the [Global Conference on Cyber Capacity Building in Ghana](#), [regional workshop on public/private cooperation](#) in Chile, dedicated workshop sessions on war crimes and e-evidence at [Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\) 2023 in Kyoto](#) and the [World Forum for Democracy](#) in Strasbourg in addition to other cross-cutting activities offered an important platform for knowledge sharing and exchange. Number of resources were made available, such as [Study on implementation of the 1st Additional Protocol on xenophobia and racism](#), discussion paper on [cybercrime & freedom of expression](#), new Budapest Convention booklets in [EN / FR / ES / PT](#), updated [Cyberviolence resource](#) and [CYBOX online training platform](#) on cybercrime and electronic evidence. International dialogue, cooperation and commitment were further bolstered as a result of the [29th T-CY Plenary](#) and [Octopus Conference](#) in Bucharest, underscoring C-PROC's impact in the global fight against cybercrime.

Follow up actions

- Launch of the:
 - ✓ CyberEast+ follow-up regional project in the Eastern Partnership;
 - ✓ CyberUA project on strengthening capacities on electronic evidence of war crimes and gross human rights violations in Ukraine;
 - ✓ CyberSEE Project on enhanced action on cybercrime and electronic evidence in South-East Europe and Türkiye;
 - ✓ CyberSouth+ project on enhanced cooperation on cybercrime and electronic evidence in the Southern Neighbourhood Region;
 - ✓ CyberSPEX project on enhanced co-operation on e-evidence by EU Member States through the Second Protocol to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.
- Supporting the participation of experts in the concluding session of the UN Ad Hoc Committee on "countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes" in order to ensure consistency with the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and human rights and rule of law requirements.
- Online Regional workshop for the EaP region's EU candidate countries concerning implementation arrangements for the Second Additional Protocol in February 2024.
- Development of the Council of Europe webpage with resources on ransomware attacks.
- Launch of CYBOX – the online training platform on cybercrime and electronic evidence and migration of all activities of the International Network of Judicial Trainers on this platform.
- Organisation of the Digital Security Challenge 2023 under the GLACY+ project, a capture the flag competition for selected countries
- Finalisation of the Guidebook on Cybercrime Training Strategies, Research on cybercrime victims: understanding of the landscape in the Global South and Survey on the cybercrime strategies in GLACY+ countries.
- Preparation of the survey on use of ISACs as an enhancer of the private - public partnership (in GLACY-e countries).
- Preparation of the mapping study on cyberviolence legislation and case law.
- Onboarding selected countries in the GLACY-e project.
- Update of country wikis and legal profiles on Octopus Platform.
- Mobilisation of resources for the ASEAN action on cybercrime and electronic evidence, and the Caribbean region.

*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

- Follow-up activities on OCSEA in cooperation with Children's rights division.
- Preparation of proposals for future projects, or the extension of ongoing projects, and mobilisation of the necessary resources.

Other relevant activities

- [Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe invited to join the Convention on Cybercrime](#), 4 October.
- [Cameroon becomes 69th Party to Convention on Cybercrime](#)
- [Octopus Conference 2023: Japan makes a voluntary contribution](#), 25 October.
- [United Kingdom makes a further voluntary contribution to the Octopus Project](#), 28 November.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 13-15 December, participation of the Deputy secretary General, Bjørn Berge, in the Octopus Conference and in the ceremony on the last day of the Octopus Conference 2023 for the depositing of the accession instrument to the Convention on Cybercrime by Cameroon. A special session focused on 10 years of capacity building by C-PROC was addressed by Bjørn Berge, Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General, and Traian Hristea, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania.

Office in Chisinau

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Chisinau has 40 (12 men, 28 women) staff members, out of which eight (four men, four women) are core staff and 32 (eight men, 24 women) project staff.

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

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

- **The Netherlands VC, "Enhancing diversity and equality in the Republic of Moldova"**: 113 law enforcement personnel from Chisinau and the south of Moldova increased their knowledge to address bias-motivated offences (BMO) according to the latest legislative amendments. 35 representatives from four partner districts (Soroca, Calarasi, Dubasari, Cimislia) improved their skills and abilities to establish local networks, to offer specialised assistance to victims of discrimination and BMOs in their respective districts through specialised training. 12 teachers from Military and Police Academies, completed a ToT on the BMOs particularities.
- **Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) VC, "Action against corruption in the Republic of Moldova – Phase 2"**: Proposals for Regulations on the performance evaluation and disciplinary liability of inspector-judges were developed and submitted to the Judicial Inspection and Disciplinary Board. The project continued to provide guidance to the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) in the development of the institutional strategy, and to support the State Chancellery in developing a guide for persons exercising top executive functions and high officials covering all relevant integrity rules and principles. Capacity building activities for the law enforcement sector in the field of corruption risk assessment and management are being conducted.
- **AP VC, "Preventing and protecting children from violence including in the digital environment"**: 16 trainers (teachers and managers from pre-school education institutions) enhanced their capacities during a 2.5-day supervision session organised within the "Kiko and the Hand" programme for preventing sexual abuse of children. The report on Mapping of services available for children in conflict with law in the Republic of Moldova and the good practices from Council of Europe member states were presented on 12 December during a working group meeting in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.
- **AP VC, "Support for Media Pluralism and Freedom of Expression in the Republic of Moldova"**: The Programme organized a Regional Forum "[Freedom of Expression in Times of War](#)" on 6-7 December, bringing together 100 stakeholders from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to address the state of freedom of expression and the evolution of the phenomenon in the context of the Russian aggression in Ukraine. Five senior representatives of the Audiovisual Council (AC) learned about experiences of the key audiovisual regulatory authority in the UK - Ofcom helping on the operation of the AC that will reinforce the pathway towards European integration, during a peer-visit.

- **AP VC, “Strengthening the human rights protection of refugees and migrants in the Republic of Moldova”:** 12 psychologists from the National Centre of Psycho-pedagogical Assistance completed a three-day ToT on trauma treatment techniques and prevention of burnout. 46 representatives of the General Inspectorate for Migration, Border Police, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection increased their knowledge on the European and national legal framework on migration and asylum during two training sessions. The Human Rights and Equality Forum 2023 was held in Chisinau, bringing together about 120 national authorities, development partners and civil society representatives. Postage stamps promoting refugee rights were launched during a public event in Chisinau.
- **EU/CoE JP, “Support to the Justice Reform in the Republic of Moldova”:** The judges and key staff of the Constitutional Court enhanced their knowledge of EU law during a two-day training held in November. The staff and the inter-agency working group of the Ministry of Justice responsible for the EU screening process for Chapter 23 and the Political Criteria learned about the experiences of the EU screening process in North Macedonia during a two-day training held in December. In December, 11 representatives of the National Institute of Justice learned about the experiences of the Centre for Judicial Studies of Portugal regarding recruitment, selection and training of judges and prosecutors in Portugal.
- **AP VC, “Improving electoral practice in the Republic of Moldova, Phase III”:** Over 40 electoral officials improved their knowledge on the updated State Automated Information System “Elections” through an explanatory workshop; 110 students learned about electoral processes through information sessions in four education institutions from Chisinau, Balti, Leova and Dubasari; eight online media were monitored on sexist speech during electoral campaign; 30 staff (Central Electoral Commission, Training Centre, CE Council of Gagauzia) improved their strategic planning through a workshop on developing strategic programmes for 2024-27; 50 electoral officials evaluated November 2023 elections; the Project Steering Committee (PSC) approved the 2024 Project Work Plan.
- **AP VC, “Strengthening the prison and probation reforms, provision of health care and treatment of patients in closed institutions in the Republic of Moldova”:** Three pilot initiatives, on testing the Individual Sentence Planning in prisons and two new rehabilitation programmes targeting prisoners serving long-term sentences and those with alcohol addiction, were successfully finalised and validated for implementation at prison system level. The first draft of the Strategy to prevent and reduce overcrowding in prisons and a new Offender Behavior Programme addressing aggressive and violent behaviour of adult offenders under probation were also finalised.
- **Norway VC, “Strengthening the human rights compliant criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova”:** Council of Europe support led to the set-up of the Advisory Council for the execution of the European Court of Human Rights’ (the European Court) judgments under the Government Agent of the Republic of Moldova, aiming at fostering the execution process of the European Court’s judgments at national level. Moldovan National Preventive Mechanism Annual Report for 2022 was presented at Ombudsperson Office/Council of Europe round table, raising awareness on the detention conditions and safeguards against torture and other ill-treatment.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, “Enhancing the anti-money laundering and asset recovery regime in the Republic of Moldova”:** The project team contracted two international experts to provide a Technical Paper (TP) comprising an analysis of the execution of extended

confiscation mechanisms and non-conviction-based confiscation in Moldova at the Ministry of Justice's request, and a TP comprising an analysis of available practices in the Republic of Moldova to compensate crime victims and providing recommendations for setting up a system of social reuse of confiscated assets. In close coordination with the Financial Intelligence Unit of the RM, the project initiated support in view of providing suggestions for the establishment of a Training Centre for monitoring and reporting entities in the field of Money Laundering/Terrorism Financing.

- **AP VC, "Supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova":** The PSC approved the 2024 priorities cost increase and the annual workplan. A report in the field of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (p&c VAW/DV) in accordance with the Council of Europe standards provided for in the Istanbul Convention (IC) was published. The project contributed with an input on GREVIO Recommendation No. 1 on combating digital violence at the 3rd International Conference on p&c VAW/DV in Chisinau. 25 penitentiary and probation officers increased their knowledge on the improvement of the protection of women and girls against violence. 38 judges, prosecutors and investigation officers enhanced their abilities to prosecute and investigate cases of violence in accordance with pillar III of the IC and the European Court of Human Rights' case-law. GREVIO baseline evaluation report of the RM was disseminated and presented to the public, findings were discussed with national authorities.

- **AP VC, "Reinforcing the culture of dialogue and consultation of local authorities in the Republic of Moldova – Phase II":** In the area of multi-level governmental dialogue, draft amendments for enhancing the consultation mechanism in line with the European Charter of Local Self-Government were finalised and agreed upon by the State Chancellery, the Parliament, the national association CALM and mayors, with Congress support. Regarding open government, the Fifth National Action Plan was launched on 24 November; it includes, for the first time, a local component co-created with local authorities. Over 100 representatives of local authorities and civil society benefitted from online information sessions on the Open Government Partnership (OGP)-Local Programme. Six municipalities were selected to be supported by the Congress in the application process.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Combating discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in the Republic of Moldova":** The project supported the [Coming Out Day Festival](#), an awareness raising event on discrimination of LGBTI persons. A series of trainings for legal professionals were carried out on [European standards on hate speech and hate crimes](#) and [combating discrimination on religious, ethnic and linguistic grounds](#). A workshop with the Equality Council and General Police Inspectorate was held, [for a better protection of victims of discrimination](#). Activities on combating hate speech in audiovisual media were continued: [the guide for assessing hate speech in media](#) was issued in [EN, RO, RU](#); four sessions were conducted with [monitors of the Audiovisual Council](#), as well as an [event on the lessons learnt on monitoring hate speech in the media during the electoral campaign](#).

- **AP VC, "Education for Democracy in the Republic of Moldova":** 10 education professionals from the Republic of Moldova exchanged experiences and best practices in integration of the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) transversally into other subjects (curricular areas) at primary and secondary education levels with their counterparts from the Republic of Serbia, during a study visit to the Republic of Serbia organised by the Project. The experts will consider the lessons learnt from Serbian experience in the process of drafting the guidelines for integration of RFCDC in selected subjects of Moldovan national curricula.

- **Austrian Development Agency VC, "Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova":** 58 labour inspectors enhanced their knowledge on the application of contravention fines for undeclared and under-declared work. In this respect a guide was also developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. 50 representatives of the Ombudsperson Institution and Equality Council raised their awareness on the European Social Charter system and their role in engaging with the European Committee of Social Rights under the monitoring procedures. On 30 October, 44 stakeholders discussed the findings and the draft recommendations of the needs assessment in the field of social labour rights during a round table.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Support to further modernisation of court management in the Republic of Moldova":** The CEPEJ Project launched two working groups to develop 1) recommendations for a balanced distribution of the workload among courts and judges, with a view to creating and maintaining better working conditions and, 2) ways of improving the court performance through the harmonisation of annual court reports and a management of courts based on their workload and results. The JUSTAT Automated Information System (AIS) was supplemented with the 4th Dashboard to reflect the structure and the volume of the workload in the courts (an online tool to provide statistical data on court performance; it helps the courts to take well-grounded decisions for improvement of their management).

Office in Georgia

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Georgia has 47 (six men, 41 women) staff members, out of which eight (two men, six women) are core staff and 39 (four men, 35 women) project staff.

The Office implemented 20 projects, four in the framework of EU/CoE Partnership for Good Governance (PGG II), one funded through EU/CoE joint co-operation and 15 funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level. The Action Plan 2020-2023 came to an end on 31 December 2023, with the launch of the new Action Plan 2024-2027 scheduled for 18 January 2024.

State of implementation of projects

- **AP VC, “Promoting an integrated approach to end violence against women and enhancing gender equality in Georgia”:** The international conference on Services for survivors of gender-based violence was organised in collaboration with UN Women and the LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance for Victims of Human Trafficking. With 121 attendees, it aimed to foster national-level dialogue between different stakeholders. Additionally, the conference on the Implementation of sexual harassment prevention mechanisms, conducted in partnership with UN Women and the USAID Rule of Law Program under the “16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence”, engaged diverse stakeholders (85 women and nine men). Furthermore, capacity-building activities included a training session for court staff on administrative data collection for violence against women and domestic violence (27 participants), specialisation training on sexual violence crimes for an additional group of prosecutors (22 participants) and a workshop supporting the co-ordination of GREVIO baseline evaluation report recommendations in Georgia (25 participants).
- **AP VC, “Strengthening freedom of media, internet governance and personal data protection in Georgia” (SMIP-GE):** A platform of seven civil society organisations fighting Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPPs) adopted its 2024-2026 Strategy and 2024 Action Plan, which details the inputs of each platform member as well as the ways they will co-operate with each other. General Assembly of the Charter of Journalistic Ethics approved two out of four Council of Europe recommended institutional changes, namely, enabling suspension of membership and introduction of the yearly membership fee by the Charter members. The Personal Data Protection Service was informed about standards and good practice in Europe in the field of privacy by design and by default. This will help the institution to draft the guidelines in this specific field as required by the new Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection.
- **AP VC, “Supporting transparency, inclusiveness and integrity of electoral practice and process in Georgia”:** At the international conference on “ICT and ICT-related disinformation in elections” more than 100 high-level election officials from 25 countries explored effective instruments to respond to global challenges of a digital era. During the study visit, high officials of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) exchanged with the Bulgarian colleagues on practical solutions related to the use of Information and Communication Technologies in elections. Findings of the visit were shared by the CEC as a part of preparation for upcoming parliamentary elections. Women politicians from Ajara region discussed legal and policy instruments during the workshop, as well as steps forward aimed at enhancing women’s impact on political and public decision making.

- **AP VC, “Strengthening protection of social and economic rights in Georgia”:** A series of events were organised to better align the Georgian legislation with the standards of the European Social Charter through discussing different provisions. The events included a workshop on the accepted provisions, a roundtable on the unratified ones and a session on collective complaints. The dialogue contributed to the development of the roadmap that will support to facilitate ratification process of the Charter’s additional provisions. The workshop to support state institutions in crafting its “Ad hoc” report under the revised reporting procedure of the European Social Charter was organised that led to timely submission of the comprehensive report.
- **Austria VC, “Strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level in Georgia (local authorities)”:** 25 trainers were trained on human rights and local democracy for youth. Expert support was provided to six local authorities to develop, review and/or update policy documents based on human rights principles. A curriculum on human rights for local authorities was drafted to strengthen their capacities to mainstream human rights, anti-discrimination and gender equality in their policies and practices. The project final event was held with the participation of the Congress Secretary General and up to 150 stakeholders to mark achievements of the local authorities and CSOs on participatory democracy and human rights.
- **Austria VC, “Strengthening Participatory Democracy and Human Rights at local level in Georgia (civil participation)”:** Civil participation campaign “Change the scenario” was organised in three municipalities of Kvemo Kartli region (Tetritskaro, Bolnisi and Marneuli). Gori municipality applied the Council of Europe methodology under “Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit” to elaborate its four-year mid-term development plan. School Participatory Budgeting is piloted in two municipalities (Zestaponi and Tbilisi) – upon preparing the regulatory base, pupils and teachers were introduced to the methodology. Local authorities and civil society from seven target municipalities benefited from the study visit to Portugal to learn good practices in civil participation. Training in civil participation methods was provided to Saburtalo district advisory council members; Exhibition of achievements of municipalities and CSOs in local democracy was organised during the project final event.
- **EU/CoE JP, “Support for a Better Evaluation of the Result of Judicial Reform Efforts in the Eastern Partnership” (Justice Dashboard EaP):** The Dashboard data was included by the European Commission in its Enlargement Reports published in November. A Regional meeting of the EaP Dashboard correspondents was organised on the margins of the regular CEPEJ National Correspondents Network’s meeting in Strasbourg, on 18 October. The 3rd Steering Committee meeting took stock of progress to date and endorsed the next cycle of the data collection. Thus, the 3rd cycle of data collection on 2023 data was subsequently launched in November. The quality check on 2022 data under the regulation’s Evaluation cycle is underway.
- **AP VC, “Human Rights Compliant Policing in Georgia”:** The staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) benefited from the training of trainers on interviewing juvenile victims and offenders. The managers of MIA Academy raised awareness on the learning process in the Portugal police system. The Special Investigation Service of Georgia (SIS) is equipped with the re-investigation guidelines following adverse judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. The managerial staff of the SIS summarised the actions followed during 2023 during the working meeting. The managers of investigation department enhanced their skills on communication with the victim and offender juveniles while interviewing.

- **AP VC, “Promoting the Effective Protection of Equality and Non-Discrimination in Georgia”:** Multistakeholder working meeting gathered the representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Prosecutor’s Office and judges to ensure alignment of standards for identifying hate motivation in crimes, discuss challenges in processing, investigating, prosecuting, and adjudicating hate-motivated crimes, along with data collection. The hate crime data collection Memorandum was updated, to cover the collection of the statistics for hate crime cases assigned to the Victim Witness Co-ordinators and conducting periodic data analysis. First-ever analysis report on hate crime data collected during 2021-2022 was published. The Equality Week 2023 was conducted, with active participation from government institutions, civil society, media, and the private sector, marking the fifth-year anniversary and reaching directly over 3,000 people across Georgia. The exhibition “Threads of Resilience” was showcased on the opening of the Equality week and the extended project closing Steering Committee meeting. The exhibition featuring photo, video, and installation works designed to illuminate often unseen examples of resistance of minority groups.

- **AP VC, “Enhancing healthcare provision in Georgia’s Penitentiary System”:** Several activities and events were organised by the Project, including the Conference on the role of psychologists and social workers in the process of rehabilitation and re-socialisation; a workshop on monitoring methodologies with participation of the Public Defender’s Office and civil society organisations working on mental healthcare issues. An inter-agency workshop was organised to discuss suicide prevention issues and a training on “identification and primary management of personality disorders in penitentiary system” was held for penitentiary psychologists and social workers.

- **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) VC, “Democracy Starts in Schools-Engaging School Children in Decision Making Processes in Schools and Communities in Georgia”:** 20 education professionals participated in the study visit to the Republic of Moldova to share best practices in democratic school governance. As a results of the study visit, 10 best practices were implemented in nine Georgian schools. Piloting of the methodological guidelines on Student participation in democratic school governance was completed. The project facilitators conducted final assessment visits in 20 schools in Georgia and administered surveys of 1,580 school community members to assess the results of the piloting. Moreover, 20 pilot schools implemented around 115 activities supporting student participation and decision-making processes in schools and communities during the implementation of the individual action plans. The guidelines on Student Participation in Democratic School Governance were finalised and published in Georgian language. To showcase the results of the Project’s activities, 36 school principals, teachers, students and parents shared their experience, as well as personal and professional impact of the Project activities at the closing conference of the project.

- **AP VC, “Developing a Drug Prevention Support Network for Parents and Professionals in Georgia”:** The project completed a cascade of 10 regional trainings on drug prevention for 30 school principals and representatives of municipalities in Gori and Zestaponi regions. Two study visits were organised for the Georgian authorities: to the Republic of Moldova to share experiences on the therapeutic communities in prisons and to Estonia to learn about their drug policy/drug prevention policies and practices. The project published Practical Guidebook on the Pressing Issues of Mental Health for the specialists working in the criminal justice system and delivered training of trainers for 10 specialists (psychologists and social workers). It further completed the elaboration of the Positive Parenting Programme by designing focus-group questionnaires to launch the piloting process in 2024. In addition, the project provided expertise and technical facility to develop the 2nd

National Prevention Action Plan for 2024-2026. With the participation of the Pompidou Group Executive Secretary - Denis Huber, the Project Closing Conference took place on 18 December.

- **AP VC, "Ensuring Child-Friendly Justice in Georgia: Preventing and Protecting Children from Violence, including in the Digital Environment":** A general training relating to psychological aspects of interviewing children victims/witnesses of sexual abuse was organised in Tbilisi from 29 November to 2 December. On 20 November, a landmark achievement was the organisation of the first international conference on "Child friendly justice system and child rights - best European and American practices" co-hosted in Georgia with key stakeholders such as UNICEF, the US Embassy and the Caucasus University. This event convened 100 key stakeholders, including Parliament members, ministers, supreme court judges, and academics, to discuss child-friendly justice and child rights. On 21 November, the last Steering Committee meeting was held with all the stakeholders of the project to review the achievements/results and discuss about future plans. On this latter point, it was mentioned that the Council of Europe is currently implementing the EndOCSEA@EUROPE+ aiming to strengthen actions to prevent and combat Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Georgia, Montenegro and the Republic of Moldova from September 2023 to August 2025.

- **AP VC, "Promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in Georgia":** A two-day international conference on the role of restorative justice in criminal matters was organised. The goal of the event was to facilitate a dialogue on restorative justice centred around community needs and the promotion of the role and benefits of restorative justice in criminal matters. The project organised a workshop to discuss a draft law and to establish legal framework for restorative justice currently absent in the country's system. To promote and enhance ethical standards and practices within the field of mediation in civil cases, a workshop was conducted for the Ethics Commission of the Mediators Association of Georgia.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Support to Modernisation of Court Management in Georgia":** The CEPEJ sustained and conducted its first Managers' Forum where selected court managers showcased successful implementation of CEPEJ tools and managers from four pilot courts highlighted CEPEJ court coaching program activities. Additionally, a training session for court statisticians focusing on harmonising, systematising, and ensuring data quality at both court and Supreme Court levels, using CEPEJ's methodology, was conducted. This endeavour shall serve as a crucial step toward modernising the Georgian judicial system and enhancing data utilization for informed decision-making.

- **AP VC, "Enhancing Implementation of Human Rights Practices and Education in Georgia":** On 22 November, the final draft of the National Execution Strategy and Action Plan was agreed upon and adopted by the working group. On 24 November, a HELP ToT for university professors was conducted. As a result, 13 professors have become certified HELP tutors. From 28 November to 1 December, a training program for lawyers was conducted and it was facilitated by trainers from the established pool of trainers within the project. HELP courses on Business and Human Rights, as well as Ethics for Judges, Prosecutors, and Lawyers, have been adapted into Georgian language. Recommendations on the inclusion of European Court of Human Rights case law into the law program of Tbilisi State University have been elaborated.

- **AP VC, "Enhanced Access to Legal Aid Services for Marginalised Population":** The project developed and delivered a ToT in Child-friendly Justice for free legal aid (FLA) Lawyers and trained 14 trainers. The project discussed recommendations concerning the required amendments to the FLA legislation and statutory framework with the Legal Aid Service (LAS) management and decisionmakers from the Parliament of Georgia, Ministry of Justice and

Government Administration. Recommendations of the Project were implemented in the new quality control regulations of the LAS and its new internal staff regulations, adopted in December. The project developed communication materials, two animations on available free legal aid in collaboration with the LAS.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, “Consolidating and Enhancing the Institutional and Operational Frameworks for the Prevention and Combating of Corruption, Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing in Georgia”:** A group of 25 selected investigators and prosecutors from Georgia improved their skills in undertaking financial investigations to detect economic crimes.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, “Strengthening Independence and Professionalism of Justice in Georgia”:** 19 prosecutors acquired knowledge about the principles, methods and procedures of policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, 15 prosecutors advanced their capacity on adult training delivery. 24 assistants of supreme court judges learnt about latest case-law of the European Court of Human Rights on property rights, illegal construction and seizure of property.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, “Combating hate speech in Georgia”:** The Project has advanced in some activities linked with both objectives. In regards to the support activities to implement the recommendations from the systemic mapping report on combating hate speech, in December a [kick off workshop](#) was held to explore the ways to define hate speech and “interested party” based on ECRI’s monitoring. In addition, a reflection group was held online to discuss about the guidelines for self-regulation on hate speech. In line with the second objective, three online meetings were held to support the participants of the training on [Human Rights narratives to counter hate speech](#) in developing their follow-up.

Follow up actions

- **Austria VC, “Strengthening Participatory Democracy and Human Rights at Local Level in Georgia”:** Considering the no-cost extension of the project until the end of April 2024, training in civil participation methodology “CivicLab” is planned for representatives of all target municipalities. In collaboration with the Parliament, the support is planned in view of “Democracy Workshops” for young individuals. Guidelines for civil participation will be adapted and translated into Georgian language to be then shared with municipalities.
- The Pompidou Group component is included in the new Project “Support to the penitentiary systems reform in Georgia” for the next two quarters of 2024 and the full-fledged project will be tentatively launched by mid-2024 for the duration of two years.
- **EU/CoE JP, “Support for a Better Evaluation of the Result of Judicial Reform Efforts in the Eastern Partnership” (Justice Dashboard EaP):** The 2023 EaP data collection should be completed by 29 February 2024 through the COLLECT platform and followed by the quality check. Due to a change of year of reference requested by EC, the report to be submitted to EC in June 2024 will contain some data from the regular Evaluation cycle (2022 data for questions common to CEPEJ Evaluation and EaP Dashboard) and 2023 data for EaP Dashboard. Data collected since 2020 will be part of the report.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, “Combating hate speech in Georgia”:** The draft document on definition of hate speech and interested party, as well as the self-regulation guidelines should be ready in the next trimester. Following this, they will be promoted on a workshop and further efforts will be needed to put these documents in practice.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 15-17 November, a delegation of the Venice Commission headed by the Vice-President of the Commission, as well as three different groups of rapporteurs, visited Tbilisi on parallel missions for bilateral meetings and preparation of three opinions requested by the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia.
- On 28 November, the Secretary General of the Congress paid visit to Georgia to attend a concluding event of the project "Strengthening Participatory Democracy and Human Rights at Local Level in Georgia".

Office in Morocco

The Council of Europe office in Morocco employs 11 people (two men, nine women), of whom four (one man, three women) are core staff and seven (one man, six women) are part of the project team.

The Office implemented or provided logistical support for five projects financed by the European Union and one financed by a voluntary contribution.

State of implementation of projects

• EU/CoE JP, "Support for 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 Parliament in Morocco

- 3 October: study day at the House of Representatives on the conditions and circumstances of implementation of the law to fight violence against women;
- 25-27 October: study visit by a delegation of Moroccan parliamentarians to the Spanish Parliament, focusing on violence against women;
- 7 December: "Violence against women and girls: implementation and evaluation of law 103-13" round table with the participation of Moroccan parliamentarians and representatives of embassies and international organizations who are members of the "gender" thematic group;
- 11 and 12 December: study visit to the UK on participatory democracy for a delegation of parliamentarians and officials from the House of Representatives.

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

- 10-11 October: training on "Bibliographical research methodology and analysis of information gathered during thematic visits".
- 25 October: presentation of the recommendations report on the methodology of preventive visits to psychiatric institutions and discussion of a real case of a preventive visit by the NPM team to a psychiatric hospital;

• EU/CoE JP, "Regional Support to Reinforce Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democracy in the Southern Mediterranean (hereinafter South V Programme)":

HELP programme

- 1st December: training workshop on combating violence against women and domestic violence in partnership with future judges in training at the *Institut Supérieur de la Magistrature* in Tangier.
- 11 December: conference to launch the course on "Combating hate speech" in collaboration with our Moroccan partners, in Rabat.

Combating human trafficking

- October: National Anti-Trafficking Commission website goes online.
- December: layout and printing of the glossary of anti-trafficking terms in Arabic and French.

17th UniDem Med Seminar

- 21-22 November: some 50 senior civil servants from the southern Mediterranean (Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine**) took part in a discussion in Rabat on "Digital transformation and artificial intelligence: rules and applications" with experts from European countries (Germany, Spain and the UK), in cooperation with the Kingdom of Morocco's Ministry of Digital Transformation and Administrative Reform.

Media digitization

- 21 November: conference on the challenges posed by the digitization of the media, with the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication, in Rabat.

• **Belgium and Spain VC, "Enlarging common legal space with Morocco":**

Combating the sexual exploitation of children

- 24 October: a workshop on violence against children, focusing on the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, was organized in Rabat in partnership with the National Council for Human Rights.
- 25 October: an awareness-raising workshop on mechanisms for dealing with child victims of sexual abuse, focusing on national judicial action and the principles of the Lanzarote Convention, was organized in Rabat in partnership with the Presidency of the Public Prosecutor's Office.
- 2 November: the launch conference for the third edition of the national prevention campaign against cyber-violence and cyber-harassment took place in Rabat.
- 3 November: a training and capacity-building workshop for non-governmental organizations with the *Centre Marocain de Recherches Polytechniques et d'Innovation* took place in Rabat.
- 21 November: a capacity-building and awareness-raising workshop on cyber-violence and cyber-harassment against children and young people in Morocco for journalists and the media with the *Centre Marocain de Recherches Polytechniques et d'Innovation* took place in Rabat.

Combating violence against women

- 6 December: a round table on "La Moudawana and law 103-13: eliminating violence against women" took place in Rabat with the Joussour Association, in support of the round table of 7 December mentioned above.

** 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.

- **Monaco VC, "Combating violence against women":**

- Two awareness-raising vignettes have been produced to highlight the issues of early marriage in Moroccan society and maternal guardianship of children in the event of divorce.

- **8⁶ donors VC, "Addressing Competitions' Manipulation Together" (ACT)**

- 7 November: International conference in Rabat on "Preserving the integrity of sport by combating illegal betting" with the Moroccan Gaming and Sports Authority, participants from the region (Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Uganda), representing governments, gaming regulatory authorities, law enforcement agencies, betting operators, Olympic committees and sports federations.

Follow up actions

- **EU/CoE JP, "Regional Support to Reinforce Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democracy in the Southern Mediterranean (hereinafter South V Programme)":**

- ✓ HELP programme: the Council of Europe wishes to support the creation of a network of future magistrates specialized in combating violence against women, by strengthening the skills of future judges in training, and also wishes to integrate HELP courses as a pedagogical resource in the main training programmes of law faculties.
- ✓ Fight against human trafficking: layout and printing of interview guide and sample questions.

Other relevant activities

- 4-5 December: The Head of Office took part in the official launch of the Arab Plan for Human Rights Education, involving bodies concerned with human rights education in the member states of the League of Arab States. The launch is co-organized by the League of Arab States and the DIDH (*Délégation Interministérielle aux Droits de l'Homme*) in Morocco, and took place in Tangier.
- 13 December: The Head of Office took part in the annual national meeting of regional and local sports managers on the theme: "What new development model for mass sport in Morocco?", including local and regional sports managers and executives from the National Committee for the Promotion of Women's Sport. The meeting took place in Casablanca.

⁶ Cyprus Sports Organisation, French Ministry of Sports, Ministry of Culture and Equality (Norway), Swiss Federal Institute of Sports, European Lotteries, World Lottery Association, French National Olympic and Sports Committee, *Française des Jeux*

Programme Office in Podgorica

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Podgorica has 14 (three men, 11 women) staff members, out of which two (women) are core staff and 12 (three men, nine women) project staff.

The Office is currently implementing six projects within the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye" as well as the EU/CoE Joint Programme ROMACTED Programme Phase II.

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

1. HF regional project "Women's access to justice in the Western Balkans"
2. EU/CoE JP i-PROCEEDS 2
3. EU/CoE JP HELP funded by Human Rights Trust Fund
4. EU/CoE JP Roma Integration – Phase III
5. End Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse@Europe, funded by the End Violence Against Children Fund

State of implementation of projects within the Horizontal Facility Programme:

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Strengthening Accountability of the Judicial System and Enhancing Protection of Victims' Rights in Montenegro":** Preparatory activities regarding the revision of the Law on State Prosecution Office have advanced, following Government's recent initiative to establish a dedicated Working Group. Consultative meetings with Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) stakeholders have been commenced to raise the awareness of local actors – judges/court staff, municipalities, lawyers, mediators and local organisations on the benefits and modalities of alternative dispute resolution. The draft Assessment concerning the Administrative Court has been completed and discussed with court representatives, aiming to improve the Court's functioning and to address the identified legal challenges. Support has been provided to the Prosecutorial Council in developing the Communication Action Plan for 2024, and to the Judicial Council and the Supreme Court in developing Judicial Communication Strategy 2024 – 2026, with an Action Plan, and on updating the Communication Protocol for Courts.

Amendments to the Criminal Code were adopted by the Parliament, introducing, inter alia, changes for the acts of torture, forced sterilisation, female genital mutilation, and revenge pornography; domestic violence is incriminated dominantly as a criminal offence. Amendments to the Law on Free Legal Aid are re-shared with the EU for review and comments, as well as the draft Law on Domestic Violence. The peer-to-peer platform for exchange of the experiences on the use of encrypted communications in criminal proceedings is established. Steps are taken towards capacity building of the legal professionals on procedural safeguards and free legal aid provision.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Enhancing the Human Rights Protection for Detained and Sentenced Persons in Montenegro":** The working group, mandated to align police regulations with European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) standards, is finalising a methodology for future procedure

standardisation and the first operating procedure “summoning persons”. Simultaneously, an ongoing assessment identifies areas for intervention in improving cooperation among investigative bodies addressing ill-treatment cases. Recommendations from this assessment will form a foundation for enhancing regulatory and operational structures for better compliance with standards.

The working group addressing prison system regulatory framework upgrades, identified a lack of operational managers' skills, which will serve as basis for providing training covering various aspects, including supervision, communication, legal compliance, ethical conduct and maintaining professional boundaries. National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) monitoring officers, together with healthcare practitioners, gained knowledge on recognising indicators of ill-treatment and adhering to the Istanbul Protocol during interviews and medical examinations during a specialised training.

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Action Against Economic Crime in Montenegro”:** The effectiveness of the Agency for prevention of corruption was increased thanks to the Project’s contributing to the finalisation of the Methodology for verifying income and assets of public officials. Capacities of the AML/CFT (anti-money laundering / countering financing terrorism) supervisors in the Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs) was increased through the organisation of a workshop for the supervisors in the games of chance sector aimed at applying a comprehensive risk-based supervisions in the subjected sector, and, simultaneously, by initiating the process of upgrading the IT system of the Financial Intelligence Unit toward automating the risk profiling processes in the DNFBPs.

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Combating Hatred and Intolerance in Montenegro”:** The presentation of a special report on Roma and Egyptians in cooperation with the Ombudsman's office and ROMACTED project contributed to fostering a dialogue and developing a local strategy to combat discrimination in Niksic municipality. The project guided the formulation of the new Anti-Discrimination Law, sent to the EU Commission for final evaluation, enhancing legislative transparency. The project’s impact is further strengthened thanks to a regular coordination with UN Focal Point for Human Rights and meetings with the EU Delegation representatives.

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Quality Education for All”:** The Faculty of Philosophy of Niksic students’ awareness on trends in inclusive education was raised thanks to the traditional celebration of “Inclusive Day” on 11 October. The necessity for critical thinking as a defence against manipulation and propaganda was identified during two courses on social media literacy for teachers, parents and pupils.

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Protecting freedom of expression and of the media in Montenegro”:** Thanks to the project’s involvement, a Media Strategy was adopted which will contribute to the improvement of the situation in media and freedom of expression field.

- **EU/CoE JP, “ROMACTED PHASE II”:** Guidelines for the development of local action plans for the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians and Guidelines for Roma and Egyptians responsive budgeting at the local level were finalised. Thanks to these guidelines, the municipalities would be able to prepare local plans and budget based on real needs.

Follow up action

- Request from the Ministry of Culture and Media, regarding the draft laws on media, on the public media service RTCG and on audio-visual media services prepared by the Ministry.

Other relevant activities:

The Head of the Programme Office attended the below mentioned meetings:

- Meeting with Andjela Jaksic Stojanovic, the newly appointed Minister of Education, Science, and Innovation.
- Meeting with Andrej Milovic, the newly appointed Minister of Justice.
- Meeting with Maida Gorcevic, the newly appointed Minister of European Affairs.
- Meeting with Fatmir Gjeka, Minister for Human and Minority Rights regarding the launching of the ROMA Integration III activities in Montenegro.
- Meeting with Jean-Yves Bouchardy, the UNHCR Representative to Montenegro.
- Meeting with Ekatarina Paniklova, the UNDP Representative to Montenegro.
- Participation at the Ceremony organised on 20 years from the establishment of the Institution of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedom of Montenegro. The Head of the Programme Office of the Council of Europe in Podgorica received a charter on behalf of the Office. This recognition establishes the Programme Office as one of the primary partners collaborating with the Ombudsman Office in the crucial mission of promoting and protecting human rights.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 10 October, the Secretary General of the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities Mathieu Mori participated at the Western Balkans CORE2023 conference on "Growing Smart and Green: Local, Regional, European". During his visit to Montenegro he met with the President of Montenegro, Jakov Milatovic, the leadership of the Montenegro delegation to the Congress, the Union of Municipalities of Montenegro (UMM).
- On 18-20 December, Claus Neukirch, Director of Council of Europe Programme Co-ordination, paid his first official visit to Montenegro and participated in the Beneficiary Steering Committee meeting of the EU/Council of Europe joint programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye".
- A delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities carried out a monitoring visit to Montenegro from 3 to 5 October to assess the application of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in this country since the last monitoring report adopted by the Congress in 2015.
- A delegation of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities visited Montenegro from 6-10 November to evaluate progress made in the protection of national minorities. This is the fourth visit of the Advisory Committee to Montenegro. The opinion on the implementation of the Framework Convention in Montenegro containing specific findings and recommendations for follow-up is expected to be adopted 2024.

Office in Pristina

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Pristina has 23 (seven men, 16 women) staff members, out of which five (three men, two women) are core staff and 18 (four men, 14 women) project staff.

During the reporting period, the Office implemented 12 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, four funded through non-earmarked voluntary contributions by member States, as well as two earmarked voluntary contributions by United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the USA, respectively.

In the same period, the Head of Office moved to the Directorate of Political Affairs and External Relations.

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

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Protecting Freedom of Expression and of the Media":** Capabilities of 60 legal and law enforcement professionals were strengthened on the European freedom of expression standards, focusing on journalist safety and online legal aspects through two capacity-building activities. The Action contributed to a conference, organised by National Democratic Institute (NDI), highlighting gender mainstreaming and addressing gendered disinformation's impact on democracy. The Action provided expertise in relation to the regulatory and legal framework of the Independent Media Commission (IMC), ensuring its alignment with European standards and best practices through legal advice for this institution concerning the draft-law on the Independent Media Commission.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Ensuring Efficiency and Quality of Justice":** 40 court presidents, chief prosecutors, and staff from Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) and Kosovo Prosecution Council (KPC) secretariats enhanced their skills to use CEPEJ performance indicators with statistical reports in the Case Management Information System (CMIS), time management, case weighting, cyberjustice and mediation. As result, a few days later, KPC started generating statistics from the CMIS. The awareness of lawyers was increased on their role in ensuring efficiency and avoiding delays in proceedings, through a workshop which focused on pretrial hearing and preparations for court proceedings.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Combating Discrimination and Hatred":** The new Action Plan for the rights of LGBTI persons 2024-2026 was finalized with the expertise provided by the Action. Monitoring and reporting tool for anti-discrimination department of Ombudsperson Institution was completed. Three police officers and two NGO representatives increased their knowledge on "police operating in diverse societies" through a workshop which took place on 24-26 October in Strasbourg. Awareness of the challenge of anti-gender movements was raised through a high-level regional event jointly organised with SOGI Unit and NGOs on 23-25 November in Pristina. Similarly, awareness of hate speech was further enhanced, supporting Youth Initiative for Human Rights in organising the 10th edition of Human Rights week from 7-11 December 2023.
- **EU/CoE JP, "Building Capacity for Inclusive Education (INCLUDE)":** Education professionals from Ministry of Education, resource centres and pilot schools learnt from

German and Luxembourgish model of inclusive education in a study visit between 9-13 October in Germany and Luxembourg. The framework curriculum for learning centres, aiming at standardising their services was finalised. 600 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian upper secondary students completed mentoring programme and 110 benefited from tutoring. 210 parents participated in awareness raising workshops on inclusive education held in seven municipalities. The importance of their role in supporting their children in education and in schools' parents' councils were discussed and recommendations for schools and the Ministry were formulated. The Project ends on 31 December.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo*":** The guidance and new supervisory tools provided by the project empowered the compliance staff of the Central Bank to ensure a more robust approach to Anti-Money Laundering/Counter Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) supervision. A tailored-made training strengthened capacities of 35 officials to combat money laundering using virtual assets. Hands-on guidance provided to the staff of the Agency for Prevention of Corruption (APC) aims to strengthen the verification of asset declarations. The advice provided to the Ministry of Finance facilitated preparation of two sub legal acts related to legislation on financing of terrorism and proliferation of financing in line with international standards. Through training on the use of CoE methodology, capacities of the APC staff to conduct corruption risk mapping were enhanced.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "Promoting Good Governance and Roma Empowerment at Local Level (ROMACTED II)":** Public awareness on Roma language was raised by organising an outdoor event on 5 November, marking International Roma Language Day. An information campaign on waste management in the South Mitrovica Roma mahalla took place with community and local authorities after 300 families received trash bins and hygienic kits as part of the grant project on covid 19 recovery measures. Synergies with Flutura Academy IT company was created with Ferizaj/Urosevac municipality and ROMACTED II. For this purpose, Roma youth was outreached providing information on the possibilities of future jobs locally available in IT sector.

- **AP VC, "Enhancing Anti-Trafficking Actions in Kosovo*":** Around 30 law enforcement professionals enhanced their knowledge on special investigative measures against child trafficking, through a workshop jointly organized with the OSCE. 100 education professionals increased their awareness about anti-trafficking actions and reintegration of victims, through a month-long anti-trafficking campaign, following the EU Anti-Trafficking Day (October 18). Database for victims of trafficking, which was developed with the support of project, was successfully launched on 24 October. The users of the database learnt how to enter data and conduct research using this new tool. The Project concludes on 31 December.

- **AP VC, "Support to the Constitutional Court in Applying and Disseminating the European Human Rights Standards":** 35 legal professionals of the Constitutional Court and Bar Association improved their knowledge of the European Court of Human Rights' standards on the Freedom of Expression on the Internet. 16 judges, prosecutors, and lawyers were certified as tutors of HELP courses following the HELP Training of Trainers (ToT) organized by the project. The Implementation Plan for 2024-2025 of the Constitutional Court's Strategy was completed. The Court significantly improved case processing and case management after comprehensive upgrade of its IT infrastructure supported by the project. 40 judges of the Constitutional Court and four Basic Courts increased understanding of European human rights standards through judicial dialogue. The Guide on Admissibility to the Constitutional Court for legal professionals has been completed. The Project ends on 31 December.

- **AP VC, "Aligning Laws and Policies with the Istanbul Convention":** 15 professionals and service providers were certified as trainers on the implementation of Programmes for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence, through a training programme which took place between 4-18 November. Awareness of the Programme for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women was increased, organising a high-level conference where the Prime Minister, Albin Kurti, and the Minister of Justice, Albulena Haxhiu attended. 110 children aged 13-15 years old benefited from the guidance on online security, while they were motivated to abandon the harmful stereotypes and adopt respectful and healthy behaviour in the digital sphere, within the scope of an information initiative organised together with the Ministry of Education.
- **AP VC, "Improvement of the Treatment of Persons Deprived of Liberty":** A delegation of six officials from the Prisons Health Department (PHD) increased their knowledge of best practices on occupational therapy (OT) in prisons, thanks to a study visit to Finland which took place on 3-5 October. This was followed by the finalization of the guidelines on occupational therapy. 30 officials from PHD, Institute for Forensic Psychiatry of Kosovo (IFPK), Special Institute in Shtime/Stimlje (SIS) and the Kosovo Correction Service (KCS) were trained as trainers to deliver sessions on the updated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). KCS strategy finalized, and 125 printed copies were handed over. Screening tools on identification of self-harm and prevention of suicide in prisons were designed at workshop, jointly held with EULEX on 4-6 December.
- **United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) VC, "Promoting Human Rights and Non-Discrimination Principles at the Local Level-Phase II":** 22 anti-discrimination municipal officials increased their knowledge on monitoring and reporting skills workshops took place on 13-14 and 16-17 November. On 14 December, grants were awarded to the following local NGOs: Kosovo 2.0, Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture, Instituti QIKA and Bethany Christian Services.
- **United States of America VC, "Enhanced Action on Cybercrime and Electronic Evidence (CYBERKOP) under the Octopus Project":** The Project signed in September. Stakeholders were informed about the launch of the Project at a roundtable meeting organised on 14 November, in Pristina.

Follow up actions

- **EU/CoE JP, "INCLUDE":** The second phase of the Programme is planned for a period of four years to be co-funded by the EU and the CoE with a budget of 3.3 million euro.
- **EU/CoE JP, "PECK III":** Second mentoring mission regarding asset declarations. Advise and support the Agency for Prevention of Corruption in conducting mapping of corruption risks.
- **AP VC, "Support to the Constitutional Court in applying and disseminating the European Human Rights Standards":** The next phase of the project starts as of January 2024.
- **AP VC, "Aligning laws and policies with the Istanbul Convention":**
 - ✓ Piloting of the Programme for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in the Correctional Service in Dubrava.
 - ✓ Supporting the Academy of Justice with the development of the Training Curriculum 2024, respectively four modules on violence against women and domestic violence.
- **AP VC, "Improvement of the treatment of persons deprived of liberty":**
 - ✓ Occupational therapy guidelines assessed and analysed for compliance with the standards of the Council of Europe and European practices.

- ✓ Training materials / manual for ToT on Occupational therapy developed.
- ✓ ToT on Occupational therapy organized, in line with the above-mentioned manual, followed by cascade trainings delivered by trainees who undergone the ToT.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 1-3 November, the Office facilitated the fact-finding mission of Dora Bakoyannis (Greece, EPP/CD), the rapporteur for the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on the application by Kosovo* for membership of the Council of Europe. This was followed by another mission conducted by the rapporteurs of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination (PACE), which took place on 3-6 December.

Office in Sarajevo

Situation of the Office

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

The Office implemented 13 projects, six in the framework of the EU/CoE Horizontal Facility (Phase III), and seven funded by voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level (2018-2021 and 2022-2025). The Office is also involved in three regional projects, the EU/CoE Joint Programme on Roma empowerment at local level, enhancing co-operation in managing violent extremism in prisons, and evaluation of the results of judicial reform in the Western Balkans.

State of implementation of projects / the Action Plan

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Strengthening the Efficiency and Quality of Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIHSEJ)”**: The project completed expert needs assessment visits to all five targeted courts. It identified the main areas of improvement in terms of quality and efficiency of justice, including through the use of CEPEJ efficiency key indicators and tools, and is preparing reports with recommendations for each of those courts. The same will be presented to and discussed with court management and the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC). Initial consultations with the judicial training centres of the two entities took place to identify areas of future support. A training addressing CEPEJ methodology and tools is now included in the Annual Training programme for 2024 of each of the judicial training centres (in FBiH and in RS).
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Further strengthening the treatment of detained and sentenced persons in line with European standards in Bosnia and Herzegovina”** : The [Federal Minister of Interior issued a decision](#) on 22 November introducing human rights modules in the new Training Programme at the Police Academy in Sarajevo. The police cadets' human rights training will be largely based on the [Horizontal Facility-produced manuals](#). [Drafting of the treatment protocols](#) for vulnerable categories of forensic patients continued in November, introducing new practices in pre-release support. The project completed a draft Rulebook on the functioning of a Preventive Mechanism in BiH on 1 December and submitted it to the Ombudsman Office for further consideration and adoption.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Action against Corruption, Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing in Bosnia and Herzegovina”**: The Action provided support to the Interagency Working Group to finalise the risk assessment of money laundering and terrorist financing associated with virtual assets (VAs) and virtual assets service providers (VASPs), along with the corresponding Action Plan. This support encompassed the provision of expert advice, specifically addressing issues related to enhancing the detection, prevention, and disruption of money laundering and terrorist financing risks associated with VAs/VASPs. In addition, to support the process of establishing Beneficial Ownership Registers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Action organised an awareness-raising workshop engaging relevant authorities at both state and entity levels.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Towards an equal, inclusive and tolerant Bosnia and Herzegovina”**: The Council of Ministers of BiH adopted on 27 November the text [Mapping](#)

[responses to hate speech in BiH](#). During [two coordination-consultative working meetings](#), 18 representatives from relevant institutions of each entity discussed the implementation of the first LGBTI Action plan. A series of Living Library events promoted understanding and empathy towards vulnerable groups among 151 students from six secondary schools. A first discussion with religious communities took place on 16 December in Zenica, gathering 27 religious community representatives, media, CSOs, academia, and [focusing on the position of women in religious communities in BiH](#).

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Quality education for all":** The Council of Ministers of BiH confirmed its commitment to the effective implementation of the Policy Recommendations with the Road Map for Improvement of Inclusive Education at its 33rd session on 20 December and urged educational authorities to provide the necessary conditions and resources for the implementation of HF III project "Quality Education for All". The Advisory Board of the Action participated at the World Forum for Democracy in November in Strasbourg and exchanged views and experiences on democracy for peace. 66 teachers from nine selected pilot schools received in-depth training to become resource centers for democratic culture.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Protecting Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina (PROFEX – BH)":** 38 representatives of the judiciary and police (19 prosecutors and 19 police officers) acquired new skills and understanding about the topic of hate speech, including antigypsyism. Over 100 representatives of the media community and civil society organisations (CSOs), including representatives of academia, students and lawyers, gained greater awareness on the protection of journalists, notably as to emerging instruments of international legal protection against Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPPs).

- **AP VC, "Ensuring Sustainable Penitentiary Actions in managing rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners (VEPs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (ESPA-VEP)":** In collaboration with penitentiary institutions and centres for social welfare (CSWs), the project completed piloting of pre-release programmes for violent extremist prisoners. Project partners concluded that the piloting process had been successful and agreed on tools to be used in future cases. Coordination among prisons, CSWs and law enforcement agencies improved through joint development of two information sharing protocols to be used for better management of VEPs (events held in October and December). In November project partners finalised the Prison operational work manual. Specialised trainings in November and December improved knowledge and skills of prison staff for working with VEPs.

- **AP VC, "Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Phase III":** A new master programme "Law of the Council of Europe" started at the Law Faculty in Sarajevo, following analyses from Phase II. Members of the Law Faculty in Sarajevo qualified as HELP trainers. Both Houses of the FBiH Parliament agreed with proposed amendments to the Family Law and the Law on Extra-judicial Proceedings, in line with the *Hadžimejlić* judgment. The Law Faculty in Banja Luka obtained recommendations on improvement of the human rights master programme syllabus. The HJPC received an assessment on establishment of case law departments at appellate courts. The MoJ FBiH acquired advice on the draft law remedying the excessive length of judicial proceedings (*Hadžajlić v. BiH*).

- **AP VC, "Innovating democratic participation at local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina":** The Guide for Women and Men in Local Politics on Preventing and Combating Sexism was adapted, responding to needs expressed by local authorities at the 3rd meeting of the [Platform for Exchange on open government](#). 15 local authorities and the members of the

BiH delegation to the Congress exchanged [online](#) on the strategic priorities of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). Eight local authorities from across BiH benefited from expert support for their applications to the OGP Local Programme. Banja Luka and Mostar launched the call for interest in view of the sortition of inhabitants for citizens' assemblies foreseen for January and February 2024, gathering respectively 347 and 288 applications.

- **Sweden VC, "Enhancing institutional capacities on freedom of expression and information in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EFEx)":** 25 representatives of domestic institutions, independent bodies and CSOs gathered at [two events](#): 3rd Steering Committee meeting and 3rd meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Reporting on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information, to establish co-operative human rights monitoring and reporting processes. Group members learned about international standards in the fields concerned at the [introductory training](#). In addition, the project published two technical papers, [Mapping of international standards and monitoring and reporting obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina on freedom of expression and information](#) and [Freedom of expression and information: stakeholder mapping and analysis](#).

- **AP VC, "Strengthening anti-trafficking action in Bosnia and Herzegovina":** To mark European Anti-trafficking Day, a [panel](#) on "Trafficking in human beings as a form of gender-based violence" for 25 legal experts took place from 17 to 19 October. On the process of developing the new anti-trafficking strategy 2024-2027, [two meetings](#) were held in Sarajevo: an exchange on 23 November with 16 non-governmental organisations, including survivors' and Roma NGOs; and consultations on 28 November with 12 specialists on the role of the business and financial sector in combating human trafficking. On 5 December the 2nd Steering Committee meeting took place in Banja Luka, attended by representatives from 14 institutions, and approved the Action's work plan for 2024.

- **AP VC, "Combatting digital and sexual violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina":** An awareness-raising event on 12 December allowed participants from state and entity-level governments, as well as civil society representatives and international organisations to discuss legislative, policy and practical considerations for implementing GREVIO Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women. Before the event, a first Steering Committee meeting enabled key project partners to agree on upcoming activities and how to maximise the project's impact. Representatives of the GREVIO Secretariat took part in the first Internet Governance Forum in Bosnia and Herzegovina, thereby enhancing awareness on the GREVIO Recommendations No.1.

- **AP VC, "Action against Corruption, Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing in Bosnia and Herzegovina":** The Action provided support to the Central Election Commission to align the existing legal provisions governing the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns with outstanding GRECO recommendations (Third Evaluation Round, 2010-2011). This support entailed engagement of a Council of Europe expert, two online consultative meetings, and production of a technical paper with detailed recommendations. In addition, the Action supported a comprehensive assessment of the business requirements for the development of an IT system for the management of seized assets in the Agency for the Management of Seized Assets of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level" (ROMACTED II):** In tandem with HF III "Protecting Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (see above), training on the topics of antigypsyism and hate speech equipped 38 prosecutors and police officers with the requisite knowledge and tools to provide better protection to Roma. The Tuzla City Council officially

accepted the Local Action Plan developed through the programme, with budget allocations for 2024 in the amount of 40,000 BAM. The Tuzla Canton broke new ground by introducing the Romani language into its school curriculum. Four small grants (out of 24) were distributed in two programme municipalities, addressing the issues identified by the communities themselves.

• **EU/CoE HF III, "Towards a better evaluation of the results of judicial reform efforts in the Western Balkans – phase II "Dashboard Western Balkan II" (DWB):**

The primary deliverables of the Dashboard Western Balkans (DWB), comprising a report and beneficiary profiles, are now accessible to the public via the [Action web page](#). At a workshop in Strasbourg in October, the project presented the results of the regional data collection as part of the 17th meeting of the CEPEJ Network of National Correspondents. A regional workshop, focusing on the "Results of data collection on the management of judicial case flows and the use of these data to improve efficiency," took place in Budapest in November. The fifth cycle (2023) of data collection from the judiciary has started.

• **EU/CoE HF III, "Enhancing Co-operation in the Western Balkans in Managing Violent Extremism in Prisons and Preventing further Radicalisation after Release":**

The Steering Committee endorsed the six-month Work Plan at its 2nd meeting held in Skopje on 17 October. Initial working group meetings on development of pre-release programmes for Violent Extremist Prisoners (VEPs) were held in Kosovo* and Albania in October and November. From 14 to 15 November prison professionals from the region visited the State Prison and the Jajce Municipality Centre for Social Welfare (BiH) to exchange good pre-release and post-penal practices. On 29 November a conference co-organised by the CoE and HOPE (Holistic Radicalisation Prevention Initiative) took place in Lisbon, bringing together prison professionals from South-East Europe and enhancing synergies with other international community-led initiatives in this field.

Other relevant activities

- On 5 October, the First Horizontal Facility III Beneficiary Steering Committee meeting took place in partnership with the Horizontal Facility Beneficiary Co-ordinator from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the Head of DPC Programming and Resource Mobilisation department attending and the Head of Office moderating.
- On 9 October, the Head of Office participated, with the Ambassadors of Norway and Germany, in the launch of the master studies programme "Law of the Council of Europe" at the Law Faculty of Sarajevo University.
- On 22 November, the Head of Office opened a round table discussion on the introduction of a legal remedy against the excessive length of proceedings in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), together with the Minister of Justice of the FBiH.
- On 5 and 6 December, the Deputy Head of Office attended the meeting of the Policial Directors of the Peace Implementation Council in Sarajevo.

Programme Office in Skopje

Situation of the Office

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

The Office implemented nine projects, six in the framework of the EU/CoE Joint Programme “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey”, two EU/CoE Joint Programmes and one funded through a voluntary contribution from Germany.

State of implementation of projects/programmes

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Freedom of expression and freedom of the media in North Macedonia”:** The Training Handbook on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media was adapted to the local context and printed. This was complemented by the translation of the “Analysis of the trends in the application of European standards in the case-law of Macedonian courts on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists”. The action also successfully advanced the capacities of local media professionals through the workshop presenting the Guidelines on monitoring of the application of reporting standards in gender-based violence cases in the media.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Strengthening anti-trafficking action in North Macedonia”:** To help the Government set up shelters for the victims of trafficking in human beings (THB), the action organised a study trip to Belgium and supported the drafting of the Feasibility study on shelters for victims. The child trafficking prevention was enhanced by transfer of knowledge among the peers from Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia and by the delivery of two HELP courses on THB and child-friendly justice, as well as by preparation of the Handbook on THB for foster families. The criminal law response was strengthened by the setting-up of the network of NGOs and lawyers for providing a quality legal aid to THB victims and by drafting a Guide on information and communication technology in the THB context.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Towards a consolidated and more efficient Free Legal Aid (FLA) System in North Macedonia”:** [Photo competition “Let’s bring justice closer to the citizens”](#) has been launched on the occasion of the European Day of Justice and culminated with a [photo exhibition and panel discussion](#) celebrating the International Human Rights Day, during which the winners were announced. The number of people reached by the FLA awareness raising initiative increased to more than 60 000 as a result of additional micro promotions and TV broadcasts of the FLA animation video.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Enhancing the capacities of the penitentiary system in North Macedonia”:** The External Oversight Mechanism, which the action supported on many levels, is now fully functional, following the selection of civil society representatives by the Parliament. A bakery oven and children’s corner were donated to the Kumanovo Prison (250 inmates, visited by 90 children). Healthcare in prisons was discussed at a roundtable with the Minister of Health, the Deputy-Minister of Justice, prison governors and relevant stakeholders. An initial assessment mission on enhancing the professional oversight of prisons was carried out in December.

- **EU/CoE HF III, “Combating hatred and intolerance in North Macedonia”:** The action organised the launch of the HELP course on Hate Speech and Hate Crime, in cooperation with the Bar Association and HELP in Western Balkans. The course is being introduced in Macedonian for the first time.
- **EU/CoE HF III, “Action against economic crime”:** The working group responsible for the revision of the Law on whistleblower protection proposed amendments to the Law in line with the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec (2014)7 on the protection of whistleblowers and the EU Directive (EU) 2019/1937 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law. With this, the process of finalising the draft law based on the recommendations is completed. Furthermore, the draft Law was published on the online e-governance platform for public consultations.
- **EU/CoE Regional JP, “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED II)”:** The implementation of 30 small grants-scheme projects continued in 15 partner municipalities, tackling several areas of support. 10 partner municipalities joined the global initiative “[16 days of activism against gender-based violence](#)” in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The Risk Plan for vulnerable groups at local level was developed and will enable urgent responses of local authorities to health crises and natural hazards. Memoranda of Understanding were signed between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and partner municipalities for free enrolment of 430 Roma children in preschool education.
- **EU/CoE JP, “Roma integration Phase III”:** The inception phase was concluded on 31 October and the implementation commenced on 1 November. The action primarily focused on presentation of objectives to stakeholders, including international and non-governmental organisations, and relevant governmental bodies responsible for monitoring the integration of Roma. Additionally, an analysis was conducted on the structure and capacity of partner institutions involved in the implementation process. Its findings contributed to the assessment of commitments outlined in the Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement.
- **Germany VC, “Quality education for all – North Macedonia”:** The action conducted focus group sessions involving Steering Committee members, pilot school representatives and local officials, refining the draft mapping report. The round table convened key civil society representatives, emphasizing inclusive, multicultural education and gender equality. In December, 25 pilot schools initiated a program with 90 participants, focusing on the Council of Europe’s Framework for Democratic Culture.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 20 October, PACE President Tiny Kox opened the Conference on inter-parliamentary dialogue to promote the European integration of the Western Balkans in Skopje.
- On 18 November, Congress Secretary General Mathieu Mori addressed the Global Parliament of Mayors Annual Summit 2023 in Skopje.
- On 1 December, Bjørn Berge, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, participated in the opening of the 9th International Roma and Traveller Women’s Conference as well as in the 30th OSCE Ministerial Council in Skopje.
- On 13-14 December, Claus Neukirch, Director of Programme Co-ordination, paid his first official visit to Skopje.

Office in Tirana

Situation of the Office

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

The Office is currently implementing 10 projects, out of which eight are co-funded by the EU, one by the Swedish Sida and one by the German Government. Except for two regional projects, 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"**: 150 non-judge staff, including chancellors, legal advisors and judicial secretaries from all first instance courts of Albania, were introduced to the CEPEJ tools on judicial time management aiming to use these tools in their daily work to increase courts' efficiency. 18 Albanian press judges and public relation officials enhanced their capacities on judicial communication with particular focus on the use of social networks in judicial communication and communication on specific cases. The web-based court user satisfaction survey platform was launched in the first instance court of Vlora. The Action also provided recommendations to the High Judicial Council's "Guide for the Communication of the Courts with Media and the Public".
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Enhancing the protection of human rights of prisoners in Albania"**: The knowledge and professional conduct of Albanian prison staff towards mentally vulnerable prisoners was improved, following a training for 25 professionals from all over the country on important aspects such as identification, types and symptoms of mental health disorders, involuntary treatment, means of restraint, and response to incidents while maintaining dignity and avoiding ill-treatment. Two treatment programmes were developed by the Action concerning 1) the introduction to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and 2) Trauma Informed Therapy for women prisoners solely.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Action against Economic Crime in Albania"**: A national information campaign in border crossing points and social media supported the national authorities' efforts against illicit cross-border transportation of cash and other valuables through. The Action provided recommendations on the draft law on the Asset Recovery Office to increase compliance with international standards and European good practices. It continued to assist the Financial Intelligence Agency, collaboratively with other public authorities, private financial and non-financial sector to finalise the fourth National Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment based on the Council of Europe methodology. In close cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and Albanian School of Public Administration, the Action supported the setting up of an online course on "Introduction to corruption prevention" in Albanian language adapted to domestic legal framework and context.
- **EU/CoE HF III, "Supporting effective domestic remedies and facilitating the execution of judgments (D-REX III)"**: A regional exchange took place on case-law harmonization, research, and dissemination of court decisions with participation of judges and senior representatives from the European Court of Human Rights, Supreme Courts of Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia as well as self-governing judiciary bodies of Albania and Bosnia & Herzegovina. The final regional case-law harmonisation forum was held in Tirana with district and appeal court judges. As a follow-up, a selection of relevant decisions discussed in all the

forums was compiled and disseminated by the High Court. An assessment on implementation of the legal framework on property confiscation and demolition (group of cases v. Albania) was compiled in December 2023.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Advancing the protection from discrimination in Albania":** The protocol on "Access to gender affirming hormone treatments for transgender and gender diverse persons" was translated into Albanian. The second Steering Committee meeting took place in Tirana. In coordination with D-REX III, ROMACTED and Roma Integration - Phase III projects, the Action raised awareness of domestic authorities to address the segregation situation of Roma children in Korca, in view of the related decision of the European Court of Human Rights.

- **EU/CoE HF III, "Protecting freedom of expression and of the media in Albania (PRO-FREX-A):** The pool of trainers of the Albanian School of Magistrates, the General Directorate of State Police, and the Academy of Security was enhanced with 10 additional prosecutors and 15 law enforcement instructors. The resource material for legal professionals "Guide to Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights—Freedom of Expression" was translated into Albanian.

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "ROMACTED Programme":** Three publications involving "Roma Responsive Human Resource Management at Local Level, A Guide for Local Administration", "Monitoring and evaluation of local action plans" and "ROMACTED at a glance on local level, 2021-2023" (factsheet on each municipality) were finalised.

- **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) VC, "Strengthening Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania:** Four Council of Europe's online LEMON courses were translated into Albanian and accredited by the Albanian Ministry of Education and Sport. 220 teachers were trained on the Council of Europe's Reference Framework for Democratic Culture. 30 representatives of students' government from five schools in Tirana participated in information sessions on the Fake vs Fact initiative and dedicated trainings on how to organize student-led initiatives on the subject with their peers and respective communities. An international seminar on "The use of State Security documents for teaching the history of totalitarian regimes as part of education for democracy in schools" was organised in Tirana. Technical Support was provided to the University "Aleksander Xhuvani" in Elbasan to design the syllabus for a new course on "Introduction to Human Rights Education" for two Bachelor Programs.

- **Germany VC, "Sustaining Public Administration Reform at Local Level in Albania":** Relevant Albanian authorities were supported with comprehensive recommendations for developing a relevant, operational and user-friendly Competency Framework Model for public administration. The Action assisted the preparations of the Terms of Reference for the operationalisation and upgrade of the Training Needs Assessment module of the Albanian School of Public Administration. The Council of Europe's Leadership Academy Programme was further consolidated as 60 newly elected local representatives enhanced their leadership skills through running its full cycle. The second Steering Committee of the project took place in Tirana.

Other relevant activities

- The 1st HF III Beneficiary Steering Committee meeting took place in Tirana in October.
- On 11-12 October, the Secretary General of the Congress for Local and Regional Authorities visited Tirana to address the Local Self-Governments Forum on "Green

cities: exchanging experiences across the region” whereby he held side official meetings with senior representatives of Albanian authorities and international institutions.

- A team of Council of Europe experts carried out an evaluation visit to Albania on 5 and 6 December, to assess the country’s anti-doping programme, practices and policies in the context of its implementation of the Anti-Doping Convention. The findings, recommendations and best practices identified during the visit will be transmitted in 2024 to the Albanian authorities for their implementation.

Office in Tunis

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Tunis has 22 (four men, 18 women) staff members, out of which six (three men, three women) are core staff and 16 (one man, 15 women) project staff.

The Office implemented one programme and seven projects: the EU/CoE Regional JP "Protecting Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Democracy through Shared Standards in the Southern Mediterranean" (South Programme V, 11 components), and six projects funded through voluntary contributions at the Neighbourhood Partnership-level.

State of implementation of projects/programmes/Neighbourhood Partnership

• NP VC, "Enlarging common legal space with Tunisia":

- ✓ Combating corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing
 - Several training sessions were held as part of the 8th promotion of the International Academy for Good Governance / *Académie Internationale de la Bonne Gouvernance* (AIBG), which is organised through a tripartite cooperation between the National School of Administration / *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (ENA), the General Directorate for Governance and Corruption Prevention at the Presidency of the Government and the Council of Europe. This eight-month training programme aims to build the capacity of senior civil servants, as well as representatives of civil society and the private sector, in the field of good governance. It will culminate in the development of a short- and medium-term project for change, which will be presented to ENA's scientific council and relevant ministries.
 - On the occasion of the International Anti-Corruption Day, a seminar was held on 5 December at the Municipality of Tunis in partnership with the latter and the Presidency of the Government to promote international standards as tools to fight against corruption. The event gathered 80 good governance units of the Presidency of the Government with focus on public institutions and enterprises.
- ✓ Combating cybercrime
 - In partnership with the joint regional EU/CoE CyberSouth project, a series of consultation meetings were carried out on 4-5 December with regard to Tunisia's accession to the Budapest Convention. Representatives of the Council of Europe Cybercrime Programme Office (C-PROC) and Council of Europe Office in Tunis met with representatives of the Assembly of People's Representatives, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), and the Ministry of Communication Technologies (MoCT) to discuss national legal provisions not in line with the Budapest Convention and to explore further cooperation to combat cybercrime.
 - The participation of a five-member Tunisian delegation comprising of representatives of the MoFA, MoJ, MoI, MoCT was supported for the Octopus conference and its side events organised by the C-PROC on 12-15 December. The focus for the 2023 edition was on securing and sharing electronic evidence and taking stock of 10 years of C-PROC implementation. More than 500 global cybercrime experts from around the world attended the 2023 Octopus Conference.

- **NP VC, "Support to the School of Political Studies of Tunisia":** A regional seminar on the impacts of climate change in the Middle East and North Africa region was organised by the Tunisian School of Political Studies (TSOP) on 28-30 November in Hammamet in the framework of an annual grant provided for the TSOP under the voluntary contributions as well as part of the cooperation of the schools of political studies in the framework of the South Programme V. The seminar gathered 30 youth representatives, experts and professionals from Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Lebanon and published a seminar report with conclusions and recommendations for action.

- **NP VC, "Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Tunisia":** In partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Embassy of Austria, the Arab League and the Arab Institute for Human Rights, a workshop on the protection of victims of gender-based violence was organised on 24 November during the 16 days of activism. A list of recommendations based the four Ps (Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership) was issued and will be published in January 2024. In the same context of the 16 days of activism, the Council of Europe Office in Tunis joined the headquarters' online campaign on combatting VAW. The Office also contributed to the MENA Regional Newsletter on the theme with activities organised in Tunisia.

- **NP VC, "Combatting violence against children in Tunisia":** Online awareness campaign was implemented on the occasion of the European Day to combat child sexual abuse on 18 November and the World Children's Day on 20 November. In the context of action promoting child-friendly justice, two videos on standards and best practices to interview child victims of sexual violence are currently in process of preparation. They aim at showing to justice stakeholders the importance of a coordinated approach in interviewing victims, using the Barnahus Model. As a follow-up, a workshop on interviewing victims will be co-organised in January 2024 with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health.

- **NP VC, "Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings in Tunisia":** On the occasion of the 16 days of activism, the President of the National Anti-THB Authority contributed to Council of Europe campaign through an online publication on the number of women victims of THB. The message also aims at encouraging the public to report cases trafficking. The Guide on Gender Mainstreaming during the Referral of THB Victims was finalised and will be tested in February 2024 during a national simulation with key stakeholders. It will be launched in March 2024 on the occasion of the International Women's Day.

- **NP VC, "HELP in Tunisia":** In the context of the HELP course on the protection of personal data, a certification ceremony was organized for the first tutored course in Tunisia on 27 October at the Council of Europe Office in Tunis. 25 professionals were certified. The second tutored course on the same course was launched with 70 lawyers in partnership with the ONAT (*Ordre National des Avocats de Tunisie*).

- **EU/CoE Regional JP, "Protecting Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Democracy through Shared Standards in the Southern Mediterranean" (South Programme V):** The second South Programme V steering committee meeting was organised online on 10 October with representatives of the DG NEAR and Council of Europe, National Coordinators from Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia as well as representatives of the EU Delegations in Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia and the European Union Representative Office for the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Palestinian and Lebanese participants had confirmed but could not attend due to technical and other reasons. The meeting took stock of the results of the first year of implementation of the programme and outlined priorities for the next phase. During

the first year, 60% of activities were regional of nature, several high-level milestone events were organised and progress observed by all logframe indicators.

- ✓ Enlarging the common legal space between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean
 - As part of the needs assessment exercises on the protection of personal data with South Programme V partners, two events were held during the reporting period. On 9-10 October, a two-day reflection workshop on the Libyan legal and institutional framework for the protection of personal data was organised in Tunis with a high-level Libyan delegation. On 12 December, an online workshop with Jordanian stakeholders was held on to identify needs and priorities in this area. Country-specific reports will be finalised during the next reporting period to identify next steps, including the potential mobilization of the Quick Response Mechanism of the South Programme V for the provision of legislative expertise to support the Libyan and Jordanian partners in this area.
 - The South Programme V supports the participation of Southern Mediterranean partners in various technical meetings and high-level events organised by the Council of Europe to encourage peer-to-peer exchanges and awareness of partners on Council of Europe work and standards. This included support for the participation of Moroccan representatives to the 17th meeting of the CEPEJ Network of National Correspondents held in Strasbourg on 18 October (Morocco is an observer to the CEPEJ) and to the 84th Plenary meeting of the European Committee on Crime Problems held in Strasbourg on 20-22 November, Lebanese and Egyptian partners to the 41st plenary meeting of the CEPEJ held in Strasbourg on 4-5 December, as well as members of the School of Political Studies of Tunisia to the 2023 World Forum for Democracy held in Strasbourg on 6-8 November.
- ✓ Strengthening capacities to address global challenges through common tools and responses
 - A two-day workshop on "Preventing the abuse of virtual assets – tools and comparative experiences against economic crime" was organised on 24-25 October jointly with "Promoting Transparency and Action against Economic Crime" in the framework of the Central Asia Rule of Law Programme 2020-2023, "Project against Economic Crime in Kosovo*" and the South Programme V. This inter-regional workshop brought together more than 50 representatives of Financial Intelligence Units, Central Banks, Prosecution, Anti-corruption Authorities and other competent ministries and institutions from 12 Central Asian and Southern Mediterranean jurisdictions and Kosovo* as well as the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) with the aim of increasing practical knowledge and awareness of possible abuses of virtual assets for illicit activities.
 - On 19 December, an online presentation of the Council of Europe money laundering and terrorism financing risk assessment methodology was carried out with Southern Mediterranean partners (Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia) as a first step for a more targeted action in this area.
 - Two country-specific capacity building activities were implemented by the Freedom of Expression and pluralistic media component. A first draft of the updated strategy and operational plan of the General Authority of Monitoring Content Media (GAMMC) of Libya were elaborated in a workshop on 24-26 October in Tunis. On 21 November, an interprofessional workshop gathered more than 20 participants to discuss the challenges faced by media in the digital age in Rabat. Representatives of the Ministry of Youth, Culture and

Communication, of the High Authority for Communication (HACA) and Moroccan media organizations reflected on the policy orientations as well as professional initiatives to be adopted to create a conducive environment for quality media to thrive online.

✓ Enhancing co-operation and dialogue

- 29th edition of the Lisbon Forum "Human Rights, Environment and Economic Crimes: Youth at the forefront" was organised jointly by the South Programme V and the project "All Informed, All Concerned" of the North-South Centre funded by the governments of Portugal and Spain on 16-17 October in Lisbon, Portugal. Building on the Council of Europe priorities of the Reykjavik Summit in May, the Forum emphasized the pivotal role that young people play as catalysts for change in the ongoing battle against corruption, particularly in safeguarding the environment. The launch of a new network RoLYN (Rule of Law and Youth Network) was announced at the Forum. It has currently an open call for members (deadline 2 January 2024) with a launch of the network foreseen in March 2024 in Tunis.
- The 17th UniDem Med Seminar "Digital transformation and artificial intelligence: rules and applications" was organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Digital Transformation and Reform of the administration of the Kingdom of Morocco on 21-22 November in Rabat. It gathered 50 senior civil servants from the Southern Mediterranean (Jordan, Lebanon Morocco, Palestine**) as well as experts from European countries (Germany, Spain, UK) to discuss Council of Europe standards and initiatives with regard data protection and artificial intelligence.
- The 3rd online meeting of the South Mediterranean Network of Justice Inspection Services (SUDMEDIJ), organised on 23 November, welcomed Qatar as a new member of the network, making it the second country to join since July. Tunisia also confirmed their official adoption of the network's Charter. The SUDMEDIJ network was established in 2022 in the framework of the fourth phase of the South Programme by the CEPEJ. The South Programme V supports the consolidation of this network and promotes it to new members. In addition to Qatar and Oman who recently joining the network (without financial support of the South Programme), Mauritania has also expressed interest in becoming a member and Egypt is ready to promote it in the Arab world.

Office in Ukraine

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Ukraine has 70 (20 men, 50 women) staff members, out of which 11 (seven men, four women) are core staff and 59 (13 men, 46 women) project staff. From the 70 staff members, 16 (project staff) live permanently outside Ukraine and 54 (core team and project staff) permanently in Ukraine.

The Office implemented 24 projects: four in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Joint Programme "Partnership for Good Governance", two EU/CoE Joint Programme, and 18 funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level.

State of implementation of projects/programmes

- **AP VC, "Strengthening Ukrainian Law Enforcement Agencies During War and Post-War Period":** The Project reached out to 240 criminal justice professionals (83 women and 157 men) including 109 investigators of the Security Service, National Police and State Bureau of Investigation, 21 prosecutors, 110 inspectors and other staff of law enforcement agencies. Support was focused on three aspects, covering (1) capacity building in the spheres of documenting and investigation of war crimes, gross human rights violations, innovative methods of evidence collection and investigation techniques, prevention and effective investigation into ill-treatment; (2) support in aligning institutional frameworks of law enforcement agencies with Council of Europe standards in the domain of personal data processing, performance evaluation of investigators, uninterrupted in-service staff training; (3) dialogue and interinstitutional cooperation for key actors in prevention and investigation of torture.
- **AP VC, "Combating Violence against Women in Ukraine (COVAW II)":** Information materials were prepared for the 16 days of activism campaign under the project's awareness raising component, including quotes from key project stakeholders and partners (MPs government agencies, professional associations, civil society organisations) that were posted to showcase the progress made regarding the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Ukraine in 2023. This included information on measures, events, practices, and documents developed to implement the provisions of the Istanbul Convention in Ukraine in 2023, in particular regarding the protection of victims of domestic violence and violence against women, as well as conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). Several new Ukraine-specific publications on issues related to violence against women are currently being finalized to be posted at the beginning of 2024.
- **AP VC, "Protecting the rights of Ukrainian children during and in post-war context":** Three four-day trainings on "Models of effective interagency cooperation in criminal proceedings involving children" were organised. The objective of the trainings is to develop child-friendly approaches and effective Standard Operating Procedures of interagency collaborative response model interaction. The Comprehensive review and analysis of existing draft legal acts on child-friendly justice was prepared and presented in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine and the Interagency Coordination Council on Juvenile Justice. An in-depth analysis of the juvenile justice system of Ukraine was conducted with the aim of identifying the main trends and key difficulties in ensuring the procedural rights of the child in criminal, civil and administrative cases concerning children and the protection of their rights and interests.

- **AP VC, "Strengthening multi-level governance, democracy and human rights at local level in Ukraine":** A consultative platform between the Ombudsperson Office and members of the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) has been set up to facilitate exchanges of experience between central and sub-national authorities on the practical implementation of human rights. During the first platform meeting focused on the right to equality and non-discrimination at the local level, 17 representatives of municipalities and regional offices of the Ombudsperson discussed practical ways to embed human rights principles in local policies. 10 municipalities representing eight oblasts were selected to receive expert support and funding to introduce democratic innovations at local level, through open government approaches and a better protection of human rights. The project supported the AUC in organising the XVII Ukrainian Municipal Forum in Kyiv in December, with the participation of almost 400 mayors from all regions of Ukraine. Peer exchanges notably focused on open government policies and consultation mechanisms.

- **AP VC, "Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase III":** 22 teachers (eight men, 14 women) from 11 regions strengthened competencies to train civil servants and local self-government officials through applying the developed Manual and the approved Model Programme "Participatory Youth Policy". 64 directors of youth centres (18 men, 46 women) took part in research by communicating their needs and experiences. 19 youth workers (all women) from 15 youth centres took part in study visits to youth centres with the Council of Europe Quality Label in Finland and Ireland. 24 members of 10 new NGOs (five men, 19 women) strengthened competencies in project management to implement open youth work.

- **AP VC, "Supporting democratic post-war elections in Ukraine":** Following two expert discussions on security and eligibility criteria for the post-war elections, High-level dialogue-II on good democratic governance summed up the agreements reached and outlined further steps forward. Risk assessment on introduction of e-voting was launched and working meetings were held with stakeholders concerned. Desk research and 29 interviews with major stakeholders were held to develop a communication strategy for post-war elections in Ukraine. Syllabus for online training course on gender balanced representation in post-war elections was developed for political parties/candidates following thematic brainstorming session held. Communication support was provided with regard to VII Ukrainian Women's Congress.

- **AP VC, "Strengthening Good Democratic Governance and Resilience in Ukraine":** The Project facilitated a multi-level policy dialogue via (i) "Strasbourg format" meeting on the reform of local state administrations and transitioning to the civilian regime, (ii) High-level Dialogue on good democratic governance (jointly with the electoral assistance project and secretariats of the VC, PACE and Congress). It also contributed to the public service system reform and advised on implementation of the new law on local service, co-organised two dedicated workshops, two national best practice contests and carried out a training needs analysis of local public officials. It also successfully completed elaboration of the Lviv Agglomeration Development Strategy, presented the overview on "Governance of European metropolitan areas" and produced two clarifications for local authorities as well as prepared a Policy advice to improve public ethics for local level officials.

- **AP VC, "Strengthening democratic resilience through civic participation during the war and in the post-war context in Ukraine":** In the framework of 22 participatory events in Lutsk and Zvyahel territorial communities, 708 citizens formulated their proposals to community development strategies. 22 local officials and civil society organisations (CSO) representatives from eight pilot territorial communities were trained in participatory monitoring of community strategy implementation. As a result of the expert support of the project, Regulations on School participatory budgeting were developed in 11 territorial communities.

Two pilot territorial communities were supported in the implementation of the Volunteer days to enhance the culture of voluntarism. 20 representatives of CSOs raised their knowledge and acquired practical skills in monitoring and evaluation of projects for the restoration and development of Ukrainian communities.

- **AP VC, "Support the reform of the national minority legal framework and the resilience of the national minorities and Roma in Ukraine":** The Project provided expert support to the Ministry of Education to update the roadmap for teachers working in schools teaching minority languages. The project supports the working group on ID registration for undocumented Roma, where three working meetings were held. A guide on registration of the IDs has been prepared. The Local Initiative Groups of the national minorities (LIGs) conducted nine events: on national minorities IDP issues, education, art therapy for IDP children and women, dialogue and communication as well as regional recovery plans. The events covered 210 representatives of the national minorities. The project contributed to the UNDP and the World Bank event on a "Multi-country Survey on the socio-economic vulnerabilities of Roma in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine".

- **AP VC, "Fostering Human Rights in the Criminal Justice System in Ukraine":** On October 19-20, representatives of the Council of Prosecutors of Ukraine, the Qualification and Disciplinary Commission of Prosecutors and the Office of the Prosecutor General visited the headquarters of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. On 6-8 November a delegation of the Office of the Prosecutor General, State Bureau of Investigations, Security Service of Ukraine and National Police of Ukraine visited the Council of Europe Headquarters to exchange on the progress in investigation of war crimes and gross human rights violations. On November 30 the annual conference "JustConf" was held with the support of the Council of Europe, serving as a platform for the discussion of acute problems of criminal justice by representatives of the legal profession. The Strategic Session of the Department of International Legal Cooperation of the Office of the Prosecutor General took place on December 17-18 with the support of the Council of Europe jointly with the EU Project "Pravo-Justice".

- **AP VC, "Support to the functioning of justice in the war and post-war context in Ukraine":** Upon a request from the High Council of Justice the project contributed to the delivery of the Joint Opinion of the Venice Commission and DGI on draft law no. 9454 introducing use of lie-detector in various contexts of judicial careers. The Opinion delivered in October prevented adoption of legislation that could jeopardize the independence of the judiciary. Materials for the standardized training course for judges on application of the principle of legal certainty were finalized and included in the curriculum of the National School of Judges of Ukraine. An Overview of the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights on application of the principle of legal certainty was developed and published. Guidelines on the general principles of remote court hearings were published.

- **AP VC, "Strengthening judicial and non-judicial remedies for the human rights protection of the war-affected people in Ukraine":** An Assessment Report was produced on the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Report of the Ombudsman of Ukraine on the rights of people affected by the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The report noted progress in human rights protection of war-affected people. Members of the local compensation commissions from Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Mykolaiv regions gained advanced knowledge on property ownership verification procedures in the context of access to compensation for housing damage through a series of on-line seminars. A high-level International Judicial Conference co-organised by the Project in Lviv on 8-9 December discussed the role of the judiciary in overcoming war challenges. A new Council of Europe Expert Report on Remedies and Redress Mechanisms for War-Affected Individuals in Ukraine

mapped the domestic framework of relief measures and formulated a series of recommendations on possible improvements in line with the "Riga Principles".

- **AP VC, "Facilitating Housing Solutions for the War-Affected People in Ukraine":**

In November 2023 the Project organised a two-day field meeting of the Working Group on enhancing the fundamental principles of housing policies in cooperation with the Ministry of Infrastructure. The key recommendations on revising housing legislation with a focus on housing solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and war-affected people were elaborated. The operational capacities of the Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine and the State Fund for Youth Housing Assistance and its regional departments have been strengthened due to provision of in-demand IT equipment and software aimed at improving data collection and analysis and facilitating access to housing related services.

- **AP VC, "HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals) for Ukraine including during wartime":**

Three Council of Europe HELP courses were launched including "Prohibition of Ill-treatment", "Human Rights in the Armed Forces" and "Internal Displacement" for 84 judges, 25 prosecutors and 44 civil servants. 30 university teachers were trained at the training for trainers for HELP tutors. A Memorandum of cooperation was signed with the Ukrainian State University named after Mykhailo Dragomanov. The content of two new HELP courses "International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights" and "Implementation of EU Temporary Protection Directive" was finalized within a series of working group meetings and the courses are being placed at the HELP online learning Platform. The HELP Platform and courses were presented at the international forum "The Role of the Judiciary in Overcoming the Challenges of War". A presentation of HELP courses was held for the professors of the National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy".

- **AP VC, "Enhanced social protection in Ukraine":**

Expert support was provided to the groups working on development of the Draft Labour Code of Ukraine and Draft Law on Collective Labour Complaints. The project continued to raise awareness on the idea of a barrier-free environment targeting representatives of the executive authorities, police officers, civil society. The online course on Council of Europe social rights standards for lawyers was developed and launched; the judges, civil servants and university teachers were trained on different aspects of social rights protection in the context of the European Social Charter. The capacity of the Ombudsperson was strengthened by procuring IT and office equipment, as well as through the organisation of monitoring visits and provision of support to preparing the special report on the rights of persons who need guardianship in times of war.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Enhancing anti-money laundering, counter terrorist financing and asset recovery regime in Ukraine" (PGG III Ukraine):**

(1) The international forum "Financial Monitoring – 2023" was co-organised, which served as a pivotal platform where experts, policymakers, and stakeholders converged to address the challenges posed by money laundering and terrorist financing; (2) a training for prosecutors on investigation and prosecution of economic crimes took place; (3) separate trainings for notaries and lawyers on anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing compliance were organised; (4) expert advice and support to the development of a thematic guide for the application of risk-based approach for Politically Exposed Persons was provided by the National Bank of Ukraine.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Support to development of the constitutional justice in Ukraine":**

The final session of 2023 of the Commission for International Relations of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine was held with the support of the Project resulting in agreement

on the strategy of international cooperation for 2024, including twinning activities with the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Latvia.

- **EU/CoE JP, "EU and Council of Europe Working together to Support the Prison Reform in Ukraine Plus" (SPERU+):** Three expert analysis regarding three drafts Law of Ukraine were prepared. Two high-level events were organised to discuss enabling convicts to work. The state of implementation of the Penitentiary Reform Strategy and execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights related to the prison system of Ukraine was discussed at a high level meeting. A rehabilitation programme for inmates with alcoholic/drug addiction was developed and presented. 20 psychologists were trained through a Training of Trainers programme. A Manual for prison staff on providing psychological and psycho-social support to inmates was developed and presented. Training of Trainers was delivered to 20 psychologists. 40 sets of IT equipment were delivered to 40 penitentiary institutions. A two-day study visit of a Ministry of Justice delegation to the Council of Europe was conducted aiming to close the JP SPERU+ and to launch VC Project DECOPRIS.

- **AP VC, "Supporting Implementation of the European Human Rights Standards in Ukraine":** The Project continued its support to the Ombudsperson's office in bringing the amended draft law on Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights in line with the Council of Europe and other international standards. The preliminary review of the Council of Europe on the draft law was prepared with a first round of consultations launched in December. The project launched a revision of the monitoring methodologies for various places of deprivation of liberty to better align them with the standards of ill-treatment prevention and changes of the national legislation. Some progress has been made in the data protection area bringing to the decision of the Parliament Committee on Human Rights to recommend the Draft law of Ukraine on "Personal Data Protection" for further consideration of the Parliament. The Project launched a series of trainings on anti-crisis communication.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Combating hate speech in Ukraine":** An in-person training on combating discrimination and hate speech in law enforcement was organised on 4-5 October in cooperation with the Department of the main inspection and observance of human rights of the National Police of Ukraine. A peer-to-peer exchange between the Portuguese and Ukrainian police was organised on 7 December, providing a platform for exchange of experiences on the prevention of discrimination and promotion of diversity in the remit of law enforcement work. A first online session of the tailored training course on anti-discrimination and hate speech was held on 14 of December, aimed at supporting the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights in fulfilling its mandate. The course also includes another online session and in-person training in the first quarter of 2024.

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Promoting equality and non-discrimination: towards more resilient and inclusive societies":** A training workshop on addressing racism through the work of law enforcement institutions and civil society organisations was held in Strasbourg from 24-26 October. More than 60 participants representing Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans regions including five representatives of the Department of the main inspection and observance of human rights of the National Police of Ukraine and two representatives from civil society organisations exchanged good practices and challenges related to promoting equality and diversity based on European standards and tools.

- **AP VC, "Safeguarding Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Media in Ukraine" (SFEM-UA):** Three delegates attended the Council of Europe Campaign for Journalist Safety launch. 30 administrative court judges were trained on access to information standards. The Project supported the Donbas Media Forum 2023. Eight delegates participated in the Council

of Europe Regional Media Forum in Chisinau on war-time freedom of expression. A lawyer from a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) joined the 8th Plenary Meeting of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence as an observer. Ukrainian and Latvian media regulators shared experiences on media strategies and media monitoring. Three legal expertise pieces were provided to the authorities to align national laws with Council of Europe and EU standards.

- **EU/CoE JP, "Support for implementing European standards relating to anti-discrimination and rights of national minorities in Ukraine":** Expert support was provided to the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience (DESS), the Ministry of Education and the Vice Prime Minister Office on European Integration on issues related to legislation on national minorities and the EU negotiation process. The project conducts institutional capacity assessment of DESS and capacity assessment of the Department of Equal Rights of the Ombudsman Office. A roundtable discussion was held with 17 NGOs representing the LGBTI+ community to strengthen cooperation. Three trainings were conducted to capacitate: 1) 71 representatives of the regional administrations working on national minorities and Roma issues; 2) 60 police officers on sensitive communication with vulnerable groups; 3) 20 representatives of the Ombudsman Office on anti-discrimination standards.

- **AP VC, "Promoting Gender Equality in Ukraine":** Between 1st November and 31 December, the inception phase of the project was conducted. During this period, 15 stakeholder meetings were arranged with diverse ministries to discuss cooperation and strategic planning. The inclusive inception phase and needs assessments led to adjustments in the project design, preventing overlap and addressing emerging priorities.

Follow-up actions:

- **AP VC, "Strengthening multi-level governance, democracy and human rights at local level in Ukraine":**
 - ✓ Launch of local initiatives on open government and human rights at local level in Ukraine with experts support;
 - ✓ Development of a Training of Trainers programme on open government for local authorities.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Enhancing anti-money laundering, counter terrorist financing and asset recovery regime in Ukraine" (PGG III Ukraine):**
 - ✓ Training for judges of the High Anti-Corruption Court.
 - ✓ Training for justices of the administrative courts on anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing legislation.
 - ✓ Expert advice and support on developing the legal framework for financial investigations.
 - ✓ Research on the implementation of the updated international standard for non-profit organisations.

Other relevant activities

- On 3-6 December, senior Council of Europe staff members from Strasbourg (Claudia Luciani, Director of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities; Louise Barton, Directorate of Human Dignity and Sustainable Development, Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly; Cristian Urse, Deputy to the Director, Head of Political Advice

Division, Directorate of Political Affairs and External Relations; Daniel Popescu, Head of the Department of Democracy and Governance, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities; Pierre Garrone, Head of the Opinions and Reports Division, DGI; Sylvie Affholder, Head of the Elections Division, Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly) visited Kyiv to participate in the High Level Dialogue on Good Democratic Governance.

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- On 2 October, Leyla Kayacik, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on migration and refugees paid a working visit to Kyiv.

Office in Yerevan

Situation of the Office

The Council of Europe Office in Yerevan has 29 (five men, 24 women) staff members, out of which six (three men, three women) are core staff and 23 (two men, 21 women) project staff.

The Office is currently implementing 10 projects: three projects in the framework of the EU/CoE "Partnership for Good Governance", one funded through a voluntary contribution from Austria, one funded through the Human Rights Trust Fund and five funded through voluntary contributions at Action Plan-level.

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

- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Enhancing national capacities for effective prevention and fight against economic crime in Armenia":** The project supported a two-day training on ["Investigation and prosecution of Terrorism Financing cases"](#) to enhance investigative capacities of investigators, prosecutors, analysts and representatives of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). In October, the [Technical Steering Committee meeting](#) took place to discuss the proposed areas of intervention with the beneficiary institutions, presenting achieved results and agreeing on the workplan. The project has joined forces with the MoJ and provided support to launch an [an awareness raising initiative on the protection of whistleblowers](#). Moreover, the results of a review of the public funding system of political parties and related improvement suggestions were presented during a two-day [workshop](#) organised on 27-28 November, in Yerevan.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Promoting equality and non-discrimination in Armenia":** From October 24-26, two representatives from Armenian NGOs participated in the [regional conference](#) to address racism through the work of law enforcement institutions and CSOs. In October, [two online sessions](#) for teachers and youth workers were organised to raise awareness about the importance of promoting a human rights education. It was followed with an [in-person event](#) on 18 November during which Council of Europe educational tools to tackle hate speech and discrimination were presented. The project supported the Ombudsperson with the [first inaugural session](#) of the Public Council on national minorities on 30 November. On 4 December, a [capacity building training](#) was carried out for her staff to raise the understanding on the Council of Europe and EU standards in combating discrimination.
- **EU/CoE PGG III, "Support to the justice reform in Armenia":** In November, a comprehensive [mediation training program](#) was organised with the participation of 20 prospective mediators. The program, spanning 40 hours, aims to enhance the country's alternative dispute resolution system by cultivating a skilled pool of mediators. Developed by Council of Europe experts, the curriculum covers fundamental principles of mediation theory and practical application. In December, a series of [professional discussions](#) involved 90 specialists from the Court of Cassation, the Prosecutor's Office, and the Constitutional Court. These discussions focused on crucial legal aspects related to the criminal proceedings *in absentia* and the confiscation of property of illicit origin.
- **Human Rights Trust Fund (HRTF) VC, "Support to the effective execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in Armenia":** In October-November, 95 judges and 35 prosecutors [were trained](#) on the [topics](#) derived from execution

of *Poghosyan and Gabrielyan v. Armenia* groups of cases that are under supervision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. On 29 November, at the second [Steering Committee meeting](#) of the Project, all the partners acknowledged the tangible results achieved so far and recognised the crucial importance of the Council of Europe support. [A workshop](#) on recent developments of the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights was organised for the Court of Cassation on 12-13 December. It aimed at facilitating the discussion on application of the house arrest and compulsory measures, as well as on peculiarities of the property claim.

- **Austria VC, “Democratic Development, Decentralisation, and Good Governance in Armenia, Phase II”:** A comprehensive analysis of the current legislative framework for local self-government in Armenia was launched. The resulting document was discussed at the [1st Community Consultation Initiative meeting](#) on 8 November. The [2nd Steering Committee meeting](#) on 9 November set the project’s objectives for the next six months: support to comprehensive local self-government reform and enhanced resilience of local communities. On 10 November, a high-level event, with the participation of 150 authorities, was organised in Yerevan [to celebrate the 27th Anniversary of Local Self-Governance in Armenia](#). [A call for grant proposals on feasibility studies](#) to build up an evidence base in support of inter-municipal and cross-border co-operation was launched in December.

- **AP VC, “Strengthening the Protection of the Rights of Persons in Detention”:** On 9 October, the Abovyan prison hosted an awareness-raising session to mark World Mental Health Day and present a manual on “Specialized Skills and Knowledge for Psychologists and Psychiatrists Working in Penitentiary Institutions”. On 10 November, a workshop was organised to discuss the use of telemedicine and electronic medical files in the prison system. From 15-17 November, an Armenian delegation visited France to learn about their prison healthcare system and telemedicine. From 22 to 25 November, 36 prison personnel were trained on the new resocialisation Risk and Needs Assessment (RNA) tool for convicts – piloted in four prisons from December 2023 to March 2024. On 5 December, a round-table discussion was organised to discuss the recommendations of the report “On resocialisation needs of persons deprived of liberty”.

- **AP VC, “Strengthening the Probation Service in Armenia”:** The project reviewed the probation staff performance evaluation and monitoring system and presented the findings and recommendations at a working group meeting held on 26 October. From 8-10 November, 16 probation and penitentiary staff received training on the RNA tool to prepare for the validation study. The project also presented an assessment report on the inter-agency and inter-disciplinary cooperation framework at a workshop held on 10 November. Work is under way on developing guidelines for new alternative sanctions and measures and a rehabilitation program for probationers with addiction.

- **AP VC, “Protection of Human Rights in Biomedicine II”:** Healthcare and legal professionals strengthened their skills and capacities through the HELP Course on “Key Human Rights Principles in Biomedicine” launched on 13 October. A two-day follow-up training session was organized for the members of Research Ethics Committee under the National Institute of Health. The member of Ethics Committee participated in the 32nd meeting of National Ethics Councils held in Madrid. In December the relevance of human rights principles and standards in the context of healthcare were outlined during the expert-discussion. Parliamentarians of the Republic of Armenia have raised their awareness on key human rights principles enshrined in the Oviedo Convention within two-day capacity-building.

- **AP VC, “Ending violence against women and promoting gender equality in Armenia”:** The project supported the government to draft the State Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-2028, which is now sent for consultation to the relevant state agencies. Research on digital dimension of violence against women (VAW) is initiated; modules of the online course “Gender Responsive Education” are developed. 23 law enforcement officers completed the new HELP [course](#) on preventing VAW and domestic violence (DV) for Law Enforcement, [launched](#) in October. 15 regional Police chiefs were [trained](#) in the specialised training on combating VAW and DV. New [resources](#) on the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention have been translated into Armenian and adapted to the national context. These and other publications were widely promoted during the 16-day campaign against gender-based violence.

- **AP VC, “Fostering Human Rights in the Armed Forces in Armenia”:** In October, a [round table discussion](#) on Human Rights situation in the Armenian armed forces was organised in co-operation with the Human Rights Defenders Office. The discussion focused primarily on non-combat deaths among the military personnel, cases of ill-treatment and the shortcomings in the process of mobilisation for military drills. The objective of the meeting was to join efforts to come up to actions to overcome the emerged issues. In December, a [seminar](#) on human rights in the armed forces was organised in the Armenian Military Academy. 40 persons, members of the armed forces, civil servants of the MoD enhanced their knowledge on prevention of ill-treatment and discrimination in the armed forces.

Follow-up actions

- On 26 September, the Minister of Justice requested an opinion of the Venice Commission and DGI on the draft “Concept Paper on potential directions of empowerment of the Ethics and Disciplinary Commission of the General Assembly of Judges of the Republic of Armenia”. The request was granted in the framework of the Quick Response Mechanism tool. The joint opinion was adopted by the Venice Commission at its 137th Plenary Session (15-16 December).

Council of Europe high level visits and other official delegations

- The co-rapporteurs of the PACE for the monitoring of Armenia, Kimmo Kiljunen (Finland, SOC) and Borianna Åberg (Sweden, EPP/CD), made a [visit](#) to Yerevan from 6 to 8 November.
- A delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, composed of rapporteurs Bernd Vöhringer (Germany, EPP/CCE) and Bryony Rudkin (United Kingdom, SOC/G/PD), carried out a [study visit](#) to Yerevan and the municipality of Masis on 19 December.