

Partnership for Good Governance



Results of regional projects under the Council of Europe/European Union Partnership for Good Governance¹

What is the Partnership for Good Governance?

In April 2014, the European Union and the Council of Europe agreed to implement targeted co-operation activities with EU's Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus) to bring them closer to European standards in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The projects under the Partnership for Good Governance, are funded primarily by the EU, and co-funded and implemented by the Council of Europe.

The regional projects under the Partnership for Good Governance bring participants from the six countries together on a peer-to-peer basis and are funded primarily by the EU, and funded and implemented by the Council of Europe.

All Eastern Partnership countries, apart from Belarus, are member states of the Council of Europe.

Regional dialogue on judicial reform in the Eastern Partnership countries

This regional project created a positive dynamic for further justice reforms in the Eastern Partnership countries, while enhancing their representatives' knowledge on European standards. Peer-to-peer dialogue reinforced co-operation and networking among judges, prosecutors, representatives of the ministries of justice and bar associations.

Challenges and best practices were identified and recommendations for national justice reforms issued in specific areas such as: independence, ethics, disciplinary liability, selection, evaluation and immunity of judges; legal aid; efficient case allocation; the use of IT tools in justice systems; and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. Drawing on outcomes of the exchanges, the countries' experiences were reflected in [the working group's reports](#).

► [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

¹ Previously known as the Council of Europe/European Union Programmatic Cooperation Framework for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus

Strengthening constitutional justice

Being implemented by the Venice Commission, this project supported the constitutional process in Eastern Partnership countries through reinforcing peer networking among constitutional courts and legislative review, thus increasing compliance of national legislation and practice with European standards on constitutional justice. Legislative reviews were carried out in five countries with a number of Council of Europe recommendations taken into account in constitutional legislation:

- ▶ Georgia's amended laws on the constitutional court and on constitutional legal proceedings entered into force in 2016, incorporating the Venice Commission's recommendations;
- ▶ Moldova's Constitutional Court rendered a judgment on the constitutionality of Article 27 of the Law on Government Agent, taking into account most of the recommendations in an amicus curiae brief;
- ▶ Ukraine incorporated into their constitutional legislation many Council of Europe recommendations.

Reinforcing peer networking among constitutional courts, constitutional court judges met in multilateral forums to take stock of the developments on constitutional justice, exchanging on solutions to current challenges faced by constitutional courts. The [CODICES](#) database is instrumental in promoting the independence of constitutional courts by providing a tool for collecting references to foreign and international law in constitutional courts' judgments. In 2016, the CODICES database was improved, enabling better access of Eastern Partnership constitutional courts to other jurisdictions' judgments.

- ▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

Improving women's access to justice in Eastern Partnership countries

This project supported the identification of barriers to women's equal access to legal protection and remedies as well as the development of gender-responsive justice systems. It contributed to improving national legal, policy and institutional frameworks on access to justice for women and bolstered national dialogue and expertise on the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). A series of regional and national activities brought together representatives of the Ministries of Justice and other government and civil society stakeholders, including legal professionals, to review progress and challenges with the aim of designing justice systems that advance women's equal rights, opportunities and participation.

National research studies were developed, and specific legal, procedural, socio-economic and cultural obstacles to equal access to justice for women were identified and discussed, resulting in the improved quality and availability of information and analysis. The capacity of judges, prosecutors and other legal professionals to incorporate a gender-sensitive approach in their work has improved as a result of the implementation of national trainings in all beneficiary countries with more than 510 national participants in 2016-2017, of which slightly more than 50% were women. Gender equality advocates in the Eastern Partnership region were supported with the development of a guidebook on assisting women to seek justice and bring claims on human rights violations before national courts and international human rights venues.

- ▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

Civil participation in decision-making process

The project reinforced regional co-operation between civil society and the authorities in the six countries to improve the environment for the functioning of non-governmental organisations, create mechanisms for their active participation in democratic decision-making and promote a culture of civil participation. Extensive research and analysis of existing laws and policies were conducted² and generated important practical knowledge highlighting the most effective mechanisms for interaction and consultation between the authorities and civil society. An informal multi-stakeholder network was established at regional level aimed at seeking solutions for shared or similar problems, with the input and combined leverage of both public authorities and non-governmental organisations.

► [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

Promoting Human Rights Education and Democratic Citizenship

This project supported Eastern Partnership countries in integrating and further developing education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE) in their national education systems, thus contributing to the education reform processes at national level. It provided a focus and catalyst for action in each individual country, while disseminating good practice and raising European standards regionally.

Results at national level include a series of positive progresses such as the development of EDC/HRE-related capacity-building programmes for education professionals; the development of a pool of trainers able to disseminate their knowledge to peers, the integration of EDC/HRE principles in school curricula and in teaching practices.

In 2016, training courses for more than 190 educational professionals were conducted in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine emphasising training for practising teachers in schools in addition to pre-service education. In Ukraine, the training programme was focused on priorities outlined in the National Action Plan for Human Rights and involved 25 regional centres. It provides for a potentially high impact, as every teacher in the country is entitled to receive in service training every five years. In Georgia, the training was provided to the core group of national experts, who would act as multipliers.

At regional level, a co-operation agreement for the period of 2017-2022 was signed between the National Institutes of Education of Belarus and Armenia to support common key measures in integrating EDC/HRE principles in the formal systems of education. This includes *inter alia* the development of an EDC/HRE online portal (with educational resources, online courses and collaborative space), integration of Competences for Democratic Culture in the national curricula, promotion of the intercultural communication, and the development of peer learning in EDC/HRE.

► [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

² [Civil Participation in Decision-Making in the Eastern Partnership Countries. Part One: Laws and Policies](#)
[Civil Participation in Decision-Making in the Eastern Partnership Countries. Part Two: Practice and Implementation](#)
[Measures for strategic development of Civil Participation in decision making in the Eastern Partnership Countries](#)

Promoting penitentiary reforms: from a punitive to a rehabilitative approach

This regional project provided Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine with strategic guidance in introducing policies to reduce overcrowding. Measures proved effective in one country can be an inspiration for others. The project strengthened regional co-operation setting up a forum for exchanges of experiences among high-ranking officials and practitioners from the four participating Eastern Partnership countries on how best to combat prison overcrowding. The fact that some countries had already recognised – and to some extent dealt with – the problem of overcrowding, increased the desire for regional co-operation and exchange of experiences for those countries where overcrowding has not yet received proper attention. Based on regular international and regional exchanges, reports were produced with country-specific suggestions for measures to combat the overcrowding in prisons. The project was implemented from August 2015 to June 2016.

► [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

Criminal justice responses to drug dependency in prisons

This regional project of the [Pompidou Group – Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs](#) established regional co-operation on good practices on prison overcrowding, alternatives to imprisonment and drug rehabilitation in Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. It supported Georgian policy makers to develop national policies on prison overcrowding and on alternatives to punishment in line with European standards. In Ukraine, the project helped the prison administration to improve the therapeutic tools, such as family therapy and risk assessment methodology in two juvenile prisons. In Armenia, a professional exchange of experience with international experts led to an improvement of harm reduction services, drug treatment programmes and HIV prevention in prisons. Moreover, the project strengthened and diversified drug treatment and rehabilitation services in Moldovan prisons. Prison staff and social workers were trained on how to establish and run a prison-based Therapeutic Community. The training has been followed by the refurbishment a prison ward which now accommodates the first Therapeutic Community in a prison in the Republic of Moldova.

► [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

Fight against corruption, money laundering, and fostering good governance

This project supported Eastern Partnership countries in strengthening their institutional capacities to fight corruption and money laundering. The project reinforced regional exchanges of good practices and cross-border co-operation involving all six Eastern Partnership countries. The project combines regional and pilot country activities, complementing the Partnership for Good Governance country-specific projects. Regionally, the Council of Europe's technical assistance contributed to improving practices in corruption proofing through recommendations for the countries. Corruption risk assessment in the health sector identified health sector corruption risks and vulnerabilities, and recommended actions to improve the control of these risks in five countries.

Country-specific expert opinions and assistance fed into the on-going national reform processes:

- ▶ the authorities of the Republic of Moldova received advice on draft criminal legislation to strengthen its sanctions regime for corruption offences;
- ▶ Azerbaijan fostered the risk management in public service following project support;
- ▶ Belarus will benefit from the Council of Europe's expertise to strengthen integrity in the education sector through assessment of good governance risks.

Cybercrime: projects on regional/international and public/private co-operation

On the topic of international co-operation, the Council of Europe supported mutual legal assistance authorities and staff of the 24/7 points of contact to further develop skills for international and regional co-operation. The project team conducted training of both mutual legal assistance and 24/7 points of contact officers in all Eastern Partnership countries, also offered further support to ensure compliance with country-specific recommendations, and continued to further improve online tools for international co-operation. This has helped enhance information exchange between the target countries on cybercrime and electronic evidence, and increased efficiency of communication with multinational service providers.

In an effort to enhance public/private co-operation in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, the Council of Europe engaged Eastern Partnership countries in national and regional dialogue between the law enforcement and the internet service providers (including multinational companies), aiming to improve access to data and evidence in criminal investigations. This process was supported by various regional and international studies on different themes of public-private co-operation. As a result, five out of six Eastern partnership countries are revising their criminal procedure legislation, and two countries are considering adopting new or expanding existing co-operation agreements. Through the first ever regional real-time technical exercise, project counterparts acquired skills necessary for interagency co-operation to handle computer incidents, cybercrime investigations and exchange of financial intelligence.

- ▶ [Link to the factsheet on Cybercrime in EaP II: regional and international co-operation](#)
- ▶ [Link to the factsheet on Cybercrime in EAP III: Public/Private Cooperation](#)

Enhancing respect for the protection of human rights online

This was the first co-operation project in the field of internet governance and had the active engagement of national stakeholders from Eastern Partnership countries in regional and global internet governance debates. Interventions through the regional dimension also intensified and facilitated the establishment of forums for multi-stakeholder dialogue in the beneficiary countries, and put the internet and human rights on the agenda of national policy makers. The project enabled the Council of Europe to have an outreach to wider group of national stakeholders in Eastern Partnership countries and establish regional exchanges of experience.

- ▶ National stakeholders from six Eastern Partnership countries engaged in global and regional internet governance dialogue and policy discussions;
- ▶ Multi-stakeholder dialogue established and reinforced in Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine;

- ▶ Increased knowledge and commitment of internet service providers to Council of Europe human rights guidelines for in the Republic of Moldova and Georgia;
- ▶ Enhanced knowledge among state and non-state actors on the European standards concerning freedom of expression online, privacy online, etc. through targeted activities, regional exchanges and promotional material in Eastern Partnership countries;
- ▶ Public awareness raised on preventing and combating human rights abuses on the internet in Eastern Partnership countries through translation and dissemination of Council of Europe standards;
- ▶ Expert recommendations provided to national authorities on improving national policies and legislation in line with Council of Europe adopted standards on internet and human rights in Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

Developing and strengthening national data protection systems

The project provided resources to focus more intensely on the needs and requirements of each Eastern Partnership country and to follow-up on the work already done by the Council of Europe and build on previous achievements. The progress and achievements of some of Eastern Partnership countries which have more advanced data protections systems (Ukraine and Georgia for example) were used as a model and best practice that the other Eastern Partnership countries could learn from. There were fruitful exchanges between the six Eastern Partnership countries, in a privileged format, which is leading to closer links and co-operation between the countries.

- ▶ The capacities of the Georgian Data Protection Agency strengthened. Based on the expertise provided under the project Georgian legislation on data protection revised in line with Council of Europe standards;
- ▶ The capacities of the Moldovan Data Protection Agency strengthened. Based on the expertise provided through the project Moldovan draft legislation on data protection is prepared;
- ▶ The project provided expert recommendations were on Armenian legislation and the draft Strategy for Development of an Armenian National Data Protection Agency for 2017-2021 prepared;
- ▶ A training manual for Data Protection Authorities of Eastern Partnership countries was developed and disseminated;
- ▶ Guidelines on safeguarding privacy in media were developed and disseminated;
- ▶ Belarus authorities were supported in developing a concept paper for national legislation on data protection and the establishment of a data protection authority. Based on the Council of Europe expert support the national legislation will be prepared by Belarussian authorities.

Promoting professional and responsible journalism through regional network of self-regulatory bodies

This regional project was developed with the purpose of further strengthening self-regulation, increasing journalistic ethical and professional standards, and reinforcing regional exchanges targeting press councils (self-regulatory bodies) of all six Eastern Partnership countries.

- ▶ Strengthened institutional capacities of the self-regulatory bodies of the Eastern Partnership countries by supporting organisation of the bi-annual meetings of the network of regional self-regulatory bodies;

- ▶ Regional exchanges enabled the members of the Network to increase their knowledge about the latest developments in the European self-regulatory sector and related the Council of Europe standards and best practices;
- ▶ Reinforced capacities of members of the Eastern Partnership network of self-regulatory bodies through establishment of the cross border advisory body/Commission, entrusted to deal with cross border complaints from general public from Eastern Partnership countries on alleged unethical behaviour of journalists.

▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

Reforming electoral legislation and practice, and developing regional co-operation in electoral matters

The capacity of the Eastern Partnership countries' Central Election Commissions to organise genuine and credible elections was strengthened through regional and country-specific initiatives. Regional exchanges enabled CEC members to improve their knowledge about fundamental aspects of electoral processes. For this purpose, the Venice Commission organised two European Conferences of Electoral Management Bodies: on how to ensure neutrality, impartiality and transparency in elections, as well as on operational electoral management bodies for democratic elections.

In order to enhance gender participation in electoral processes, it also organised a multilateral conference on gender equality with the participation of the Central Election Commissions from five partner countries. Representatives of the Central Election Commissions from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine as well as parliamentarians and representatives of the civil society improved their knowledge in the field of (free) media and elections on the occasion of exchange of views during the conference on media freedom as a cornerstone for democratic elections, co-organised by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and the Venice Commission.

A regional training for domestic observers and two handbooks "Using international election standards" and "Reporting on elections", available in English and local languages of Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Armenia and widely disseminated among more than 1,000 domestic observers, contributed to professionalise the domestic election observation based European standards in Eastern Partnership Countries. Additionally, an [e-learning course](#), based on the Council of Europe's Handbooks, is currently used not only by election observers, but also civil society organisations working on elections and persons interested to improve their knowledge on elections (July-August 2017: 105 users, 29 certificates).

A "Regional study on women's political representation in Eastern partnership countries" has been published and disseminated among 1,700 electoral stakeholders in the Eastern Partnership countries. It is used as baseline for projects aimed to increase women political participation and as input for public discussion, identifying key barriers that restrict women's political empowerment and engagement, as well as examining good practices and examples. The study is available in [Armenian](#), Azerbaijani, [English](#), [Georgian](#), [Romanian](#) and [Ukrainian](#)

During four regional conferences about 400 participants exchanged lessons learned and best practices and formulated recommendations how to further improve gender equality in politics, the implementation of recommendations of international election observation missions, and transparency and control relating to money in politics.

▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

Strengthening institutional frameworks for local governance

This project supported Eastern Partnership countries in making their local public administrations more transparent, efficient and inclusive, according to the principles of the [European Charter of Local Self-Government](#). While promoting higher ethical standards, 60 mayors from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine exchanged with peers on practical tools and methods to develop citizen-oriented policies. Twelve municipalities from these countries were supported in implementing local initiatives on ethical governance and transparency which will lead to improvements in the quality of local democracy and public services.

Moreover, a community of practice – network involving experts on good governance and citizen participation, as well as representatives of associations of local and regional authorities – was established. Meeting regularly, the network provides a useful platform to exchange on the challenges of local democracy, particularly in the context of territorial reforms, and to support national associations of local authorities in their contributions to improving the legislative frameworks. Results include the signature of a memorandum of understanding between the national associations of local and regional authorities of Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, to increase regional co-operation.

To help improve the provision of services to local communities, the project also promoted the development of inter-municipal co-operation and local finance benchmarking which are practical tools to reinforce the capacity of individual countries for their local development. Specific recommendations were addressed to the national authorities; while at municipal level the project funded five local initiatives to promote inter-municipal co-operation which will improve the quality of service in water supply and sewerage, waste management, road maintenance, and tourism. The project supported 50 municipalities in Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova to improve the financial management of local administration. To ensure further use of innovative tools on local finance benchmarking, it supported the development of special IT software and dedicated portals in partnership with national administrations. Other examples of support include the assistance given to the Autonomous Authorities of Gagauzia to improve the drafting of legislative initiatives and legal opinions; and co-operation on the issues of leadership, planning and accountability, with the regional and local authorities of Belarus.

► [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

More information: <http://partnership-governance-eu.coe.int>

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