

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. The regional exchanges resulted in reports based on the countries' experiences while reflecting challenges, best practices and recommendations for national justice reforms. The post project survey showed encouraging results:

- ▶ 70% of respondents attributing their increased knowledge on judicial reforms to the exchanges held in the regional setting;
- ▶ 50% of the respondents used the acquired knowledge to update policy strategies and/or legal frameworks related to judicial reforms in their countries;

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

- ▶ 50% of the respondents considered mediation and e-justice the most topical areas, the examination of which should be further pursued. 20% listed judicial ethics, access to justice for women and free legal aid as further priorities for judicial reforms while 15% considered restorative justice to be a priority area.
- ▶ [Link to the factsheet on this project](#)

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](#)

Strengthening access to justice for women victims of violence

The 2018 project continues to develop resources for legal professionals in the Eastern Partnership countries and to provide support in the implementation of Council of Europe standards and good practices on women's access to justice with a focus on women victims of violence. One such resource is an online e-learning course on Women's Access to Justice with the [Council of Europe Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals Programme](#) that used as its basis the Training Manual for Judges and Prosecutors on Ensuring Women's Access to Justice. It will target judges, prosecutors and lawyers, and address issues of gender-responsiveness of the justice system, including gender stereotyping and violence against women.

To facilitate that national legal training institutions have more gender sensitive materials available, the project translated into national languages select Council of Europe standards, reports or documents dealing with access to justice for women and violence against women. The translations will supplement the training curricula for judges and prosecutors, and will be widely circulated among legal professionals to raise awareness on relevant standards and good practices dealing with women's access to justice and the Istanbul Convention. A Factsheet summarizing the standards on access to justice of the Istanbul Convention is developed and distributed widely among legal professionals in order to raise awareness on the link between access to justice and the wide spread phenomena of violence against women. A regional conference dealing

with Access to Justice for Women Victims of Violence will review progress made, including in the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention, exchange on existing challenges and define follow-up for the Eastern Partnership countries.

► [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

The project supported the countries in integrating and further developing education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE) in their national education systems. It raised awareness of the main principles of EDC/HRE at the policy level and facilitated the practical implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The project was a catalyst for action in each country individually, while disseminating good practice and raising European standards regionally.

Results at national level included a series of positive progresses such as the development of EDC/HRE-related capacity-building programmes for education professionals; the composition of a pool of national trainers able to disseminate their knowledge to peers, the integration of EDC/HRE principles in school curricula and in teaching practices; translation of relevant EDC/HRE publications and increased awareness of the EDC/HRE principles; production of the EDC/HRE Glossary containing 230 key terms with their translation into national languages.

In all countries there was a significant impact at the policy level, particularly in the revision of the curricula. In all countries there was a significant impact at the educational policy level. In Armenia the guidelines for teachers were developed to better integrate the EDC/HRE principles into the curricula. In Azerbaijan a new training programme was developed for school directors focusing on the CoE Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC Framework). In Belarus the focus was on the competency-based approach in education and the elements of the CoE CDC Framework were introduced into the revised school curricula. In Georgia there were 15 new courses in universities developed or revised to include the EDC/HRE provisions. In

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](#)

the Republic of Moldova the Ministry of Education received expert advice on integration of human rights education into the newly elaborated school curricula. A trainer's pack containing 30 syllabuses of in-service training modules was produced. In the Ukraine the "Strategy on EDC/HRE integration in the subject curricula and Standards of the New Ukrainian School" was developed upon the request of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and contributed to the development of new secondary education standards.

The main impact in the project was achieved through capacity building for education professionals. The CoE experts developed six models of cascade trainings that were aimed to support systemic implementation of national priorities. In the course of the project implementation trainings for 260 educational professionals (direct participants) were conducted in the six countries. All participants in trainings were education professionals, who were in constant direct contact with teachers either through the pre-service or in-service teacher training systems. That ensured wide dissemination of innovations, sustainability of project results and natural integration of EDC/HRE approach in the education systems. It is estimated that a minimum total of 8500 persons have been reached through the cascade trainings, piloting sessions and awareness-raising events.

Following the end of this project the work continues to be carried out by the authorities at the national level. One of the spin-off effects is the request of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Moldova of CoE expert support on curriculum reform in the field of EDC/HRE and negotiations for a follow-up project.

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

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

The project supports 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 (EaP) countries. It combines regional and pilot country activities, complementing the Partnership for Good Governance country-specific projects. Regionally, the Council of Europe's technical assistance equipped EaP national authorities with legislative and practical guidelines in conflict of interest, whistleblower protection, integrity testing, liability of legal persons, lobbying, and corruption proofing of legislation. Corruption risk assessments in health (five out of six countries) and public procurement sectors (four out of six countries) identified risks at the national level in order to inform future policy, regulatory, and organisational reforms.

Criminal justice sector and law enforcement authorities raised professional capacities to conduct financial investigations, understand money laundering and financing of terrorism and other economic crimes, ensure protection of whistleblowers, use special investigative techniques, and seek and respond to informal and formal mutual legal assistance requests. Country-specific expert opinions and assistance fed into the on-going national reform processes through development of anti-corruption training programme for civil servants (Armenia), strengthening public service risk management system (Azerbaijan), formulation of the government Anti-Corruption Strategy Public Relations campaign (Georgia), and provision of legal advice to bring legislation related to integrity, conflict of interest, anti-money laundering and financing of terrorism, and sanctions regime for corruption offences closer to CoE and international standards (Moldova).

In 2018, the technical assistance focuses on enhancing understanding of various mechanisms and their effectiveness in addressing illicit enrichment, raising awareness on international standards, comparative practices and possible policy solutions related to transparency of beneficial ownership, provision of recommendations on strengthening operational effectiveness of specialised anti-corruption bodies, and enhancing capacities for effective supervision by anti-money laundering and countering financing of terrorism supervisory authorities.

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, focusing on practical cooperation tools and templates. Project also supported the states to ensure compliance with country-specific recommendations and continued to further improve online resources 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, including on-going region-wide study on cybercrime strategies and threats, and maintenance of dedicated online resource with focus on the subject. 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 regional real-time technical exercises, 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 and public/private co-operation](#)

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 Electoral Commissions (CEC) to organise genuine and credible elections was strengthened through bilateral support as well as regional cooperation.

- ▶ How to ensure gender equality in electoral processes was an issue explored in 2015. A multilateral conference on gender equality held in Tbilisi allowed the CECs to detect challenges and possible solutions for women's effective participation in elections. The regional exchanges fed into new electoral legislation. Armenia's 2016 Electoral Code is an example of how gender was incorporated in new legislation, resulting in improved conditions for women's participation in elections. Also, the

regional event was followed by the elaboration of the five-year strategic plan of Georgia's Gender Equality Commission, providing a road map for more effective inclusion of women in elections.

- ▶ The Central Electoral Commissions from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine improved their knowledge in the field of media and elections thanks to the regional exchanges of views bringing parliamentarians, members of the central election commissions and representatives of civil society in a unique forum.
- ▶ The regional exchanges on e-voting fed indirectly into the work of the ad hoc intergovernmental committee, which elaborated in a new recommendation on standards for e-voting [CM/Rec \(2017\)75](#) adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2017. The CECs from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova participated in the work of the above ad hoc Committee, contributing to the elaboration of European e-voting standards.
- ▶ Regional reflection on how to ensure proper management of administrative resources during elections helped to share specific examples of malpractices identified during election observation missions. The regional conference in London in 2017 was part of a long term scheme aimed at disseminating the standards established in the Guidelines on preventing and responding to the misuse of administrative resources during electoral processes (CDL-AD(2016)004). The impact can only be assessed in light of the countries' next electoral processes.
- ▶ Access to electoral legislation was strengthened to ensure prompt information exchanges between CECs and all other interested parties, such as electoral observers. The VOTA database has been updated and indexation of national laws and legal opinions in the electoral field completed, thus reinforcing access to electoral documentation. The database will be fully operational in 2018.

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 were developed and widely disseminated among more than 1,000 domestic observers. They contributed to the increased professionalism of domestic observers. 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.

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](#).

- ▶ [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, 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.

The four country-specific [Handbooks on Transparency and Citizen Participation](#) in Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine aim to support local and regional authorities in their efforts to make communities more open, ethical and citizen-oriented. The handbooks outline the national legislative frameworks in these four countries and provide practical guidance for preventing corruption risks and implementing transparency and citizen participation mechanisms.

The [Tool Guide on Management of Change](#) provides step-by-step guidance for local authorities to lead in a more informed manner, developing policies adapted to the demand and needs of their communities. The tool guide supports the assessment of change and the measurement of the effectiveness and responsiveness of local policies. This publication is available in five languages: English, Armenian, Georgian, Romanian and Ukrainian.

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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