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Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025

Mid-term review 2023

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Contents

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025 was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 4 May 2022 with the goal of guiding the Council of Europe's key strategic priorities in the digital environment. All actions identified focus on three main, Organisation-wide objectives:

- **Consolidating the existing digital regulation** by supporting the implementation of Council of Europe standards to have a coherent set of effective legal mechanisms to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the digital environment;

- **Responding to new challenges raised and taking advantage of the opportunities** provided by emerging digital technologies by developing new legal instruments, and/or adapting and updating existing ones as appropriate, to help member states meet present and future challenges raised by the digital transition and to do so in line with Council of Europe standards;

- **Accompanying member states for a digital transition with European values** based on Council of Europe standards, through monitoring and co-operation activities.

Two years down the implementation road, the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025 has proven to be an organic part of organisational activities, an instrument driving change and an area of growing expertise. The Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025 provides that the Secretary General will carry out a mid-term review of progress on the implementation (taking into account lessons learnt and proposing amendments to the agenda, as appropriate), taking the form of a report to be submitted to the Committee of Ministers for consideration. The present document responds to this request. It should be seen as a transversal snapshot of many more digitally bound and/or influenced initiatives of the Council of Europe and as a selection of the more pertinent and impactful actions of the last two years.

Each of the 12 chapters of the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025 Mid-Term Review describes concerted actions to advance human rights-centred digitalisation in target areas. The concluding chapter indicates new opportunities arising in the fields of legal technology, online training, mutualisation of expertise and co-operation with business and civil society. It also highlights the increase of the global reach of the Council of Europe's digital standards, enhanced relations with the European Union (EU) and crucial support for Ukraine.

The key progress benchmarks at the halfway point are:

- **Supporting the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights**: numerous digitalisation projects are enhancing judicial administration and access to information, and several Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) programme courses provide e-training to thousands of professionals from around Europe. New multilateral co-operation projects were launched in 2022 on "Enhancing Subsidiarity: Support to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) Knowledge-sharing and Superior Courts Dialogue" and "Support to efficient domestic capacity for the execution of Court's judgments" to foster the development and integration of technological solutions aimed at enhancing the transparency of national judicial decision-making and the national implementation of the ECHR.

- **Promoting freedom of expression**: new recommendations to member states have addressed the impacts of digital technologies on freedom of expression, have promoted a favourable environment for quality journalism and have tackled hate speech. These are supported by digital literacy projects and freedom of expression campaigns such as "Journalists Matter" and "Free to Create – Create to be Free".

- **Fighting growing social inequalities and poverty**: new instruments addressing the impact of digitalisation and IT developments on social rights and social cohesion and on the effects of transition to a green economy, have been launched.

- **Non-discrimination and ensuring the protection of vulnerable groups**: several new instruments were launched to protect women and children in the digital age, including through action against cybercrime, together with a guideline on "the place of men and boys in gender equality policies". New initiatives include promotion of regional or minority languages with the help of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and providing digital education, including for Roma children.

- **The fight against inequality, racism, xenophobia and discrimination** was driven by the recommendation on combating hate speech and a study on preventing and combating hate speech in times of crisis, supported by guidance concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems. Work has been launched on assessing the impact of AI systems on equality, including gender equality, counter-narrative strategies, combating sexism and promoting regional and minority languages.

- **To strengthen independence, efficiency and resilience of the judicial system** of member states, a number of initiatives focus on digitalisation for a better justice, including the "ICT-Index" assessing the use of Information and Communications Technology in the European judiciaries, guidelines on "Electronic Court Filing and Digitalisation of Courts", as well as several co-operation projects to enhance the digital capacities of the national judicial systems.

- **To support member states in the fight against the misuse of digital technologies and AI** for criminal purposes, a solid body of policies, norms and instruments has been implemented to fight online crime, notably cybercrime, money laundering and theft of cultural property. The signatures of the Second Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention against Cybercrime on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence, opened for signature on 12 May 2022, have reached 42 on 31 October 2023. Over 500 activities supported the implementation of these norms in member states.

- **To advise member states on combating human trafficking**, a dedicated report was published in 2022. Reviewing online and technology-facilitating trafficking, the report offered evidence-based recommendations on how to enhance the detection, investigation and prosecution of technology-facilitated trafficking, enhance co-operation with private companies, strengthen international co-operation, as well as build national capacity.

- **To accompany the development of AI**, several initiatives have been launched, such as the publication of "The administration and you" handbook on the use of automated decision making in public service, the Resource Centre on Cyberjustice and AI, as well as a conference on "IT and better election governance". Work has been launched on several other projects such as the "Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law Impact Assessment" (HUDERIA, a risk and impact assessment methodology for AI systems), a report on AI in healthcare, as well as the establishment of a working group on AI-impact in the fields of culture, creativity and cultural heritage. The Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI) has made significant progress in developing a new framework convention, scheduled for adoption in spring 2024, while the "Convention 108+" on personal data protection has been ratified by 31 states parties by 30 November 2023 and is expected to enter into force in 2024.

- **Fight against environmental degradation and climate change:** numerous youth projects encouraged and supported youth activism, and a recommendation on climate action and young people has been developed. A Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Culture on 1 April 2022 has emphasised the role of culture, creativity, and cultural heritage in addressing climate change and digital transformation. A platform of case-files of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats has been launched in early 2023. HELP online courses on Environment and Human Rights are used to train legal professionals and university students.

- **Supporting the role and diversity of civil society:** numerous civil society organisations, mostly presented through international professional associations and academia, have given valuable input to activities across the Organisation related to digitalisation and AI as observers and multipliers.

- **Education for democratic citizenship and inclusion of young people in decision making** has been advanced through the new Education Strategy 2030 "Learners First", the Digital Citizenship Education Promoters Network, new educational and training resources, and grants to support relevant projects by youth organisations, notably on participation and digital literacy. A pilot youth forum on "AI in healthcare" was held in 2023 and a research report on "Artificial intelligence and education" has paved the way to a new legal instrument to regulate the use of AI systems in education and a recommendation on teaching and on teaching and learning about AI systems.

- **Overall progress** has been made in each of the planned actions. The implementation of the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025 will be continued in the next biennium.

II. PROGRESS ACHIEVED

1. Implementing the European Convention on Human Rights

Summary of the key strategic priority

The European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention) is the cornerstone of values on which the Council of Europe is founded. Its member states are legally bound to secure to everyone within their jurisdiction the rights and freedoms defined in the Convention. Enjoyment of these rights and freedom must be ensured in the digital environment just as they are offline, as visible from the European Court of Human Rights (the Court) case law on information technology (tackling issues of privacy, freedom of expression, non-discrimination, access to an effective remedy in cases dealing with, for example, mass surveillance, the editorial responsibility of platforms and electoral interference).

The use of digital technologies has also led and can lead to further improvements in the enjoyment of rights and liberties defined by the Convention. This is the case for example for the right to a fair trial within reasonable time, the use of digital technologies in judicial systems having allowed for improvements in their efficiency and quality.

Several specific substantive issues constitute strategic priorities of their own, developed under the relevant chapters of this document.

Lastly, the deployment of digital technology offers an important opportunity to foster the sustainability and effectiveness of the human rights protection system established by the European Convention on Human Rights. This includes knowledge-sharing tools aimed at strengthening ECHR implementation at national level.

Actions in progress

To support member states in the implementation of the Convention in the context of the digital transformation:

- Several co-operation projects reinforced member states in initiatives of digital transformation, in particular in the justice sector, with a focus on human rights compliance.

- Progress has been made on the analysis of methods of anonymisation of judicial texts and the respective regulatory framework, consistency of jurisprudence through publication and dissemination of materials, tools and methodologies used by national courts for automated detection of divergence of case law.

- New Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) programme online courses have been / are being produced and / or adapted to national contexts, offering training for legal professionals on issues pertaining to the implementation of the Convention in the context of digital transformation (including on the use of the ECHR knowledge-sharing platform).

Other co-operation programmes supported the development or upgrade of various IT tools of the judicial institutions, for example in the Western Balkans, to improve the internal processing of judicial decisions, in line with requirements under Article 6 of the Convention.

To support member states in the full and swift execution of judgments of the Court regarding information technology:

- Efforts are ongoing in the context of the project "Digital by default: Optimisation of Efficiency and Quality of Judicial Services and Transparency of Judicial Decisions" in Croatia to curb excessive length of judicial proceedings.

- Progress is made in the context of a project "Support to efficient domestic capacity for the execution of Court's judgments" to identify the needs, including potential digital and IT needs of national interlocutors. The project is also exploring the potential use of online instruments to strengthen networking between national execution focal points.

- The Committee of Ministers continues to supervise the implementation of judgments related to information technology, including those on secret surveillance laws, bulk interception and the obtention of communications data from communication service providers and blocking of websites.

To make full use of digital technologies to reinforce access to information and knowledge-sharing about the Convention and in particular about its implementation at national level:

- In September 2022 the Committee of Ministers adopted the "Guidelines on the prevention and remedying of violations of the Convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms", calling on states to make greater efforts to publish and disseminate the Convention, the case law of the Court, and other relevant texts, with a strong emphasis on the use of "electronic means".

- A new multilateral project on "Enhancing Subsidiarity" started in 2022.[1] It aims at expanding the reach of the Court's Knowledge-Sharing platform (ECHR-KS) to users all over Europe, strengthening the pan-European judicial dialogue on human rights through the Superior Courts Network, and strengthening the use of ECHR-KS by national courts and their ability to identify Convention-related issues and address them in a coherent manner at home.

- In 2022-2023, this "Enhancing Subsidiarity" project worked on developing non-official language versions of the ECHR-KS Platform. *Inter alia*, the project has developed a tool for testing the suitability of using machine translation tools for this purpose. It also explored possibilities of digitally linking national case law and legal information systems to information and knowledge about the Convention.

- The activities implemented under the project "Foster Transparency of Judicial Decisions and Enhancing the National Implementation of the ECHR (TJENI)" provided support to national authorities' initiatives regarding translation of the case law of the Court available through its publicly accessible database HUDOC into national languages (Romania), as well as the improvement in preparation of judicial decisions for publication (Cyprus).

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[1] The full project name is "Enhancing Subsidiarity: Support to the ECHR Knowledge-sharing and Superior Courts Dialogue".

- Other co-operation programmes supported the development or upgrade of various IT tools of judicial institutions in the Western Balkans to enable better access to judgments of the Court.

- The rise in the number of HELP courses, including its national versions, and the continued augmentation of the number of users of these courses is a prime example of how to make full use of digital technologies to reinforce access to information and knowledge-sharing about the ECHR. HELP users went from 85 000 in January 2022 to 140 000 in November 2023.

2. <u>Ensuring freedom of expression, both online and offline</u>

<u>Summary of the key strategic priority</u>

Freedom of expression is a pillar of any democratic society. It is protected by Article 10 of the ECHR. This applies equally in the digital environment.

Any regulation of online expression, including measures aimed at restricting access through blocking, filtering or moderating, must be strictly compliant with Council of Europe standards.

States must also secure an "enabling environment" in which those participating in public debate can express their opinions and ideas without fear and this includes the online world. They must protect journalists and other media actors from all forms of threats and harassment online, as much as offline. Ensuring that freedom of thought is protected from algorithmic manipulation and that the plurality of views is heard in the public debate also requires protecting segments of the population, that are particularly targeted by hate speech and online violence, such as women and human rights defenders, and persons belonging to minority groups. They also must take into account the need to ensure age-sensitive information and media.

Reliability and trust in information online is equally fundamental, to enable citizens to participate in public debates in an informed manner and to preserve trust in democratic institutions. This requires preserving quality journalism and sustainable, free, independent and pluralist media in the digital environment. Reliability and trust in information online also requires addressing mis- and disinformation, including the potential manipulative uses of algorithmic processes which may entail dangers of influencing social and political behaviours. The latter, in addition to the problem of the dissemination of contentious, harmful and illegal content online, highlights the importance of democratic control, and oversight over digital platforms and search engines in line with Council of Europe standards.

Closely related issues (such as the fight against racism, xenophobia, discrimination and violence against women and children online) constitute strategic objectives of their own, addressed under the respective chapters.

Finally, freedom of expression must also be promoted by fostering diversity and pluralism in the audio-visual and cultural sector.

<u>Actions in progress</u>

To ensure follow-up to the Resolutions and Recommendations already adopted, and to the texts relating to freedom of expression in the digital environment adopted at the 2021 Conference of Ministers Responsible for Media and Information Society and related Committee of Ministers' decisions:

- Several new instruments provide guidance to member states and other stakeholders in facing the challenges of the digital age for freedom of expression, both in terms of media freedom and sustainability and users' right to freedom of expression and access to information in the online environment.

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)13 on the impacts of digital technologies on freedom of expression was adopted in 2022. Two follow-up instruments are currently being elaborated by the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) on specific freedom of expression dimensions: a "Guidance on the use of AI tools by and for journalists" and a "Guidance note on countering disinformation online (through platform design and fact checking)".

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on combating hate speech was adopted in 2022; it is being followed up by a questionnaire to member states on promising practices in combating hate speech, notably online, in view of the preparation of a first follow-up report.

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age was adopted in 2022.

- Several major international events promoted the new policy instruments in the digital environment in member states.

To support member states in reinforcing the safety of journalists and all those participating in public debate online:

- A review of the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors has been undertaken, indicating progress in certain member states.

- A workshop bringing together existing national initiatives in the field was held in Strasbourg on 1-2 June 2023, involving exchanges around the dangers facing journalists and other media actors in the online environment.

- The Council of Europe Campaign for the Safety of Journalists, aiming to increase awareness and urge action during the period 2024-2027, was launched on 5 October 2023. Throughout the campaign, particular attention will be given to the pressure and attacks faced by journalists online, and possible ways to address these challenges.

To support member states in ensuring access to official documents, including in electronic format**:**

- The Access Info Group, an independent monitoring body established under the Council of Europe Convention on access to official documents (Tromsø Convention), which entered into force in December 2020, is preparing its first baseline evaluation report of the first 11 parties to the Tromsø Convention.

To support member states in putting in place legal guarantees for freedom of expression online in line with the ECHR, including regarding the blocking, filtering or moderation of content, so as to fight online misinformation, disinformation and hate in accordance with Council of Europe standards:

- Two innovative policy instruments are being finalised for final adoption by the CDMSI by the end of 2023: "Guidelines on the responsible use of artificial intelligence in journalism" and a "Guidance note on countering the spread of online mis and disinformation through fact checking and platform design solutions in a human rights' compliant manner".

To provide support for quality journalism and sustainable, free, independent and pluralist media in the digital environment, as well as to identify human rights and rule of law compliant responses to the changing paradigm of the media environment:

- Principles enshrined in the Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism have been promoted; relevant aspects of quality journalism have been addressed in the context of the current work on future guidance on AI for/by journalists and, respectively, on countering disinformation and misinformation online.

To foster media and information literacy:

- Two reports have been published which are to inform the design of practical tools, one on digital literacy for seniors and another one on community media's contribution to media and information literacy. The policy guideline on digital literacy for seniors "Digital Era? Also my Era!" has been issued and promoted in six languages.

- A media and information literacy project involving a self-assessment tool is being finalised and will be launched online. The work on media and information literacy will continue under the next terms of reference of the CDMSI (2024-2025).

- In 2022-2023, the European Youth Foundation supported several projects by youth organisations on the digital environment and activism, on media literacy as well as on the prevention of misinformation and fake news.

To expand the Council of Europe's digital exhibition "Free to Create – Create to be Free" to all member states and promote the collection of related good practices:

- In 2022, multiple international events have supported the "Free to Create, Create to be Free" digital exhibition showcasing it online and through physical exhibitions.

- In 2023, the digital exhibition and related activity have expanded, with the first report entitled "Free to Create: Report on the Freedom of artistic expression in Europe" to be published and numerous promotional activities carried out.

To strengthen co-operation between platforms, governments and civil society, especially to support new forms and modalities of data sharing between them to better document and analyse risks of disinformation:

- An analysis on the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)2 on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries has been presented to the CDMSI in June 2023.

- In the framework of the Council of Europe Digital Partnership, exchanges have been held with META regarding the impacts of the metaverse developments on the protection of human rights, the rule of law and other values promoted by the Council of Europe and, on the policy on users' rights.

- A joint report with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the world's largest technical professional organisation, on developments related to the metaverse is currently being finalised.

- Following the adoption of the "Guidelines to support equitable partnerships of education institutions and the private sector", adopted by the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice" in 2021, an information exchange mechanism has been developed to communicate progress and useful practices of such partnerships concerning the development and promotion of digital citizenship education; a number of companies have pledged to report on their initiatives.

3. Fighting growing social inequalities and poverty

Summary of the key strategic priority

The fight against social inequalities and poverty can be facilitated by digital technologies or, on the contrary, hindered by the use of systems that reinforce existing inequalities: this has been underlined by the 2021 Committee of Ministers' Declaration on the risks of computer-assisted or artificial-intelligence-enabled decision making in the field of the social safety net. Also, as evidenced by the Covid-19 crisis, the digital divide (lack of equipment, broadband connections and digital skills) accentuates social exclusion. More broadly, digitalisation has a profound impact on social rights, particularly on access to services, social protection, education, training and employment. Protection from exploitation of workers in the platform economy and the right to health and safety are some of the concrete challenges to be addressed.

The European Social Charter (the Charter) system is essential to support member states in the design of social rights policies capable of addressing today's challenges. It should also play a transversal role in the delivery against specific priority action areas referred to throughout the present document. To enhance the Charter's effectiveness in both the short and longer terms, the Organisation will focus on a reform of its treaty system. The use of digital technologies is an important aspect to integrate into this reflection and reform work, including with a view to supporting the Charter's implementation at national level and to facilitate the communication between Charter stakeholders.

<u>Actions in progress</u>

To promote the effective implementation of the European Social Charter at the national level in the face of the challenges of digitalisation:

- In recent years, the European Committee of Social Rights has adopted several statements of interpretation on digitalisation issues, including under Article 2§1, Article 3, Article 23 and Article 26 of the Charter. These statements aim, *inter alia*, at providing guidance to states on the implementation of the Charter at national level.

To assist member states in addressing new challenges to social cohesion in relation to digitalisation (including the platform economy and the digital components of the transition to a green economy):

- Within the remits of the Council of Europe Committee for Social Cohesion (CCS), two reports have been prepared and published, namely on "The impact of digitalisation and IT developments on social rights and social cohesion" and "The transition to a green economy: A review of the distributional effects in Europe".

- On 14 June 2023, a "Conference on Transition of Jobs" was organised in Malta to assess risks and possible policy-level responses to the challenges for the labour market stemming from digitalisation and IT developments, as well as from the transition to a green economy.

In the context of the reform of the European Social Charter system, to consider how to maximise the use of digital technologies to reinforce access to information and knowledge-sharing about the Charter and to diversify remote working models in Charter proceedings:

- The Department of Social Rights works to provide user-friendly output information in the form of a dashboard, accessible to states parties and to the public in general. In 2023, several graphics with statistical information have been added to the Charter website, which are intended as a precursor to the full-fledged dashboard.[2] Efforts are made also to maintain and develop its internal IT tools.

- Remote working models became an established part of the modus operandi of the monitoring mechanism during the pandemic and showed their efficiency in practice, including cost efficiency. Specific consideration is being given to the feasibility of remote or hybrid models for the conduct of public hearings under the collective complaints procedure.

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[2] See for example the webpage: Stats-compliance - Social Rights (https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-social-charter/stats-compliance).

4. **Non-discrimination and ensuring the protection of vulnerable groups**

Summary of the key strategic priority

Technology, including internet and social media, have empowered women, and those who are subject to discrimination and/or persons in vulnerable situations, and given them a platform to express their views and opinions. At the same time, it provides users with opportunities to publish discriminatory material "pseudonymously", with a potentially very broad impact and with apparent impunity, and to commit various forms of crime in almost all sectors of economy or society, including sexual exploitation and abuse against children. This needs to be tackled in a systematic way. More specifically, the digital dimension of violence against women takes the form of sexist hate speech, online and technologically facilitated stalking and sexual harassment, including image-based sexual abuse widely known as revenge porn, cyberflashing and filmed rape.

Structural inequalities determine to a significant extent whether people, including young people and children (children in migration, children living in poverty or on the streets, children living with disabilities, children belonging to Roma and Traveller[3] communities) can access the opportunities afforded by digital tools. In turn, a lack of access may exacerbate their vulnerability.

Access to digital technology among persons belonging to national minorities and those in vulnerable situations, and its use in complementing conventional forms of education are important matters for national policies on the rights of persons belonging to minorities as well as on policies on regional and minority languages.

Actions in progress

To support member states and other stakeholders on the most efficient ways of preventing and combating the digital dimension of violence against women and children (including cyberbullying), to raise awareness and disseminate information on best practices through monitoring and standard-setting work and by drawing on the complementarity of the Istanbul and Budapest Conventions[4]:

- The "General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women", adopted by the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), has been promoted through several co-operation activities and awareness-raising events.

- The recently adopted "Guidelines on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and in policies to combat violence against women" encourage member states to take measures to incite men and boys to adopt respectful behaviour, notably in the digital sphere, and particularly in relation to young women and girls, and women journalists, politicians, public figures and human rights defenders.

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[3] The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

[4] The child-related actions are described throughout this Chapter.

- GREVIO has looked into the digital manifestations of violence against women in its country evaluations, highlighting the need to ensure effective application of criminal offences to respond to online psychological violence and other forms of violence against women committed via Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

- In 2022-2023, GREVIO published 12 baseline evaluation reports, including how states parties to the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence tackle online and technology-facilitated violence in their policy frameworks, as well as in the education, protection and criminal justice sectors.

- On 29 November 2022, the "Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women"[5] launched its first thematic paper on the "Digital dimension of violence against women".

- The study "Protecting women and girls from violence in the digital age – The relevance of the Istanbul Convention and the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime in addressing online and technology-facilitated violence against women" was published in December 2021.

- The high-level Conference "Joining forces: applying the cybercrime frame to digital violence against women", held on 6 December 2022, shed light on the digital dimension of violence against women by presenting legal instruments from both the cybercrime and the violence against women fields.

- In June 2023, the Budapest Convention Committee (T-CY) adopted a "Guidance note on the scope of procedural powers and international co-operation provisions", outlining synergies between the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and other international agreements, such as the Istanbul Convention or the Lanzarote Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

- An online resource on cyberviolence was developed, including the area of cyberviolence against women or children.

- Projects in the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina are devoted to capacity-building and awareness-raising on the digital dimension of violence against women. The report "The digital dimension of violence against women: recognising and combating the phenomenon" raised awareness and initiated dialogue among stakeholders in Kosovo*[6].

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[5] The Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform) gathers seven United Nations and regional independent expert mechanisms on violence against women and women's rights operating at the international and regional levels, including GREVIO.
[6] * All references to Kosovo, whether 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.

To support member states in addressing the impact of digital technology on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities (in particular education and media) in light of their undertakings under relevant conventions:

- Several new opinions of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities contain recommendations to states parties to protect persons belonging to national minorities against hate speech on social media and to promote online minority language media.

- In 2022, the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages published a study on "Facilitating the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages through artificial intelligence" and issued a statement on this topic with recommendations to the state parties.

To support member states in an inclusive education approach for children belonging to Roma and Traveller communities and other categories of children in vulnerable situations or children left behind by digitally supported education during the pandemic:

- Several projects were awarded to municipalities in the Western Balkans within the EU-Council of Europe joint programme ROMACTED, which covered the area of digital education of Roma children, including the setting-up of digital classrooms in Roma settlements or on the premises of Roma cultural centres or multi-functional centres.

- Within the context of the EU-Council of Europe joint programme INSCHOOL, a policy guidance for schools on identifying segregation and implementation of school desegregation measures is currently taking place in the Czech Republic, as part of the digital resource platform of the Ministry of Education.

- In 2022 - 2023, the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe delivered capacity-building workshops in Armenia, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Latvia, Montenegro, Norway, Poland and Serbia to support teachers in using digital tools to strengthen linguistic and cultural inclusion.

- The Council of Europe published a guide entitled "Video game culture – A map for teachers and parents" to raise the awareness of teachers and parents of the complexity of video games, as well as the potential risks and opportunities that come with them. Building on this publication, a series of online webinars, entitled "EduTalks@Council of Europe", have been organised.

To support member states and other stakeholders in the implementation of existing recommendations and instruments and develop new guidance and tools to protect the child in the digital environment including in co-operation with the private sector:

- The Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) includes a particular focus on "Access to and safe use of technologies for all children" as one of its main objectives.

- The Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) is preparing a report on the rights of the child and AI.

- The Council of Europe Education Strategy 2030 "Learners First" includes "advancing education through a human rights-based digital transformation" as one of its three pillars. It addresses the "digital learner' who uses emerging digital technologies competently and positively and participates actively and responsibly in the digital environment.

- The Lanzarote Convention criminalises online solicitation of children for sexual purposes (grooming), offences related to child sexual abuse material (child pornography) and all other forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children facilitated by ICTs. In March 2022 the Lanzarote Committee adopted a report specifically on "The protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICT): addressing the challenges raised by child self-generated sexual images and/or videos (CSGIV)."

To promote new forms of engagement between governments and the IT industry in order to enhance internet safety and to make those risks better known among the public, especially persons in vulnerable situations:

- Social media companies have participated in studies on preventing and combating hate speech in times of crisis; and on the impact of AI systems, their potential for promoting equality, including gender equality, and the risks they may cause in relation to non-discrimination.

- Public awareness-raising initiatives, digital literacy skills and use of counter speech, particularly by groups in vulnerable situations, were supported through EU-Council of Europe joint programmes in several member states.

5. **Fighting inequality, racism, xenophobia and discrimination on grounds of religion or belief or any other ground**

Summary of the key strategic priority

Discrimination is a serious and frequent human rights violation. Inequality, reinforced by racism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim racism, antigypsism, xenophobia and intolerance, divides and destabilises democracies. The increasingly widespread use of artificial intelligence (AI) also raises risks of direct or indirect discrimination. A systematic approach to all these interrelated phenomena is required to build resilient and inclusive societies.

The development and use of emerging technologies can indeed contribute to the creation of societies free from discrimination. To this effect, emerging technologies, including AI, must be designed and used so as not to create, reinforce or reproduce discrimination based on — among other things — social, gender, age, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious differences.

Hate speech online and other forms of online violence should be addressed through comprehensive and gender sensitive approaches in partnerships between public authorities, civil society and the internet industry and involving legislative, judicial and administrative measures, public awareness, self-regulation/co-regulation for media, internet intermediaries and political bodies, and the elaboration and dissemination of alternative and counter narratives.

Actions in progress

To support member states in addressing online hate speech through monitoring and through the development of policies and tools, awareness raising and dissemination of information on best practices:

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on combating hate speech stresses the importance of pursuing a principled, human rights-based approach that takes account of the specific features of different media and digital technologies and the potential impact of hate speech that is disseminated through them on the targeted persons and groups.

- A study on preventing and combating hate speech in times of crisis was published in November 2023. The study found that many of the guidelines outlined in the 2022 recommendation are reflected in the successful responses launched by member states.

- The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) continues in its sixth monitoring cycle to review member states' efforts to address hate speech, in line with both ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 15 on combating hate speech and the 2022 recommendation.

- Guidance to the member states in implementation of the First Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems, is provided. Two states (Iceland, Slovak Republic) ratified the Protocol in 2023, bringing the number of parties to 35.

To support member states and other key stakeholders in addressing the challenges and opportunities for effective equality and non-discrimination and for combating hate speech posed by the use of AI tools (including sexual orientation and gender identity):

- A "Study on the impact of AI systems, their potential for equality and gender equality, and the risks they may cause in relation to non-discrimination" was published in September 2023. A webinar on "AI and Gender: preventing bias, promoting equality" was organised in April 2023.

- The second edition of the online training course on "AI and discrimination" was held in France in 2022, presenting the current and upcoming French and European regulations and standards in the field of algorithms and AI, the right to non-discrimination, and identified examples of algorithmic discriminations. The third edition was launched in October 2023 and also addressed local authorities, while the first edition was launched in Belgium.

To support member states and other stakeholders in the implementation of existing instruments and in the development of new ones:

- New online tools to support awareness-raising and counter-narrative initiatives were published in 2022, providing a hate speech severity test, a human rights narrative builder and a communication strategies toolbox.

- A Council of Europe-EU joint project was launched in September 2023 to research the effectiveness of counter-narrative strategies and enhance capacity of civil society organisations and other key stakeholders to deploy human rights narratives to counter hate speech online.

- Particular efforts were deployed in 2022 for the promotion and implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism, which is a relevant tool to fight against sexist hate speech, including online.

- In January 2023, the "Guide to health literacy – contributing to trust building and equitable access to healthcare" was issued, referring, *inter alia* to the importance of digital skills for everyone, including people in vulnerable situations, to use devices and applications in order to find, navigate and use digital health system sites and services.

6. <u>Independence, efficiency and resilience of the judicial systems of our member states</u>

<u>Summary of the key strategic priority</u>

The use of digital technologies in judicial systems has already led to a significant improvement in their efficiency and quality. Technological developments, in particular in artificial intelligence or blockchains, are likely to have a further, profound impact on the functioning of justice. Smart contracts, where protocols and computational contracts could become more autonomous and decentralised, or the use of complex technological systems designed to assist judicial decision making or even automate the decision-making process through the use of AI are only some examples of this. How to deal with digital evidence also continues to be a challenge for member states.

It is key to ensure that human rights and rule of law principles are an integral part of any solutions that link technology and justice. Increased use of technology must not undermine the judiciaries' integral values such as transparency, independence, impartiality, accountability or diversity. Relevant online tools and mechanisms must be designed taking into account the requirements from Articles 6 and 13 ECHR and offer an adequate level of cybersecurity. These should not affect the rights to access to a judge and judicial oversight, to individualised court rulings and to a fair trial, as well as not affect the secrecy of investigations. They should comply with requirements for transparent and comprehensible court rulings.

Existing Council of Europe standards and legal instruments must be applied, including the Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers on electronic evidence in civil and administrative proceedings, or the European Commission on the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) European Ethical Charter for the use of artificial intelligence in judicial systems and their environment, and its Guidelines on how to drive change towards cyberjustice. Member States will be further supported to address emerging challenges and Council of Europe instruments will be reviewed and further developed as appropriate.

<u>Actions in progress</u>

To support member states in ensuring that the creation or use of digital technologies and AI mechanisms in judicial systems are fully in line with the ECHR and other relevant Council of Europe treaties, as well as to ensure the primacy of the rule of law:

- The European Cyberjustice Network (ECN) of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)[7] held two annual meetings to identify emerging issues of digitalisation and AI in justice and five seminars exchanging on related practical measures.

- The newly formed CEPEJ Artificial Advisory Board (AIAB) convened five times to discuss and advise on emerging issues of AI in relation to justice, contributing to the development of related instruments by the CEPEJ.

- The dedicated CEPEJ Working Group on Cyberjustice and AI convened twice a year to work on concrete guidance, such as "Electronic Court Filing and Digitalisation of Courts", "Judicial Electronic Auctions", "Online Alternative Dispute Resolution" and the "Digital Publication of Judicial Decisions".

- A HELP course on "Quality of Justice: the work of CEPEJ", including a module on digitalisation, was published in December 2023.

- The TJENI project provided support to Romania for the design of an AI-based tool for automated summarisation of judicial decisions; to Cyprus for the automation of processes for the publication of judicial decisions; and to Lithuania for the integration of a speech-to-text solution for courts.

- Under a co-operation project in Croatia, the process of communication with national courts was analysed and improvements from technological and procedural points of view were proposed, with due considerations of fair trial standards and requirements. The draft law on e-delivery was analysed and respective recommendations were provided.

To promote and raise awareness of existing Council of Europe standards and instruments relevant to the use of new technologies to enhance efficiency in, and the quality of, judicial proceedings:

- The CEPEJ adopted the 2022-2025 Action Plan entitled "Digitalisation for a better justice", recalling relevant Council of Europe standards and guiding the work of the CEPEJ in this area.

- Upholding Council of Europe standards in the context of digitalisation was broadly discussed at the 20th anniversary conference of the CEPEJ in June 2022.

- The CEPEJ published the "ICT-Index", assessing the use of ICT in European judiciaries and giving states the opportunity to adjust their digitalisation policies.

- Visits of representatives of national judiciaries[8] to the Court were organised in the framework of the ECHR Visiting Professionals Scheme, dedicated to discussing tools for effective case management and digitalisation.

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[7] The network consists of more than 100 professionals fom 43 Council of Europe member states and observers involved in the digital transformation of the judiciary.
[8] Cyprus, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovenia.

To review existing instruments in the light of technological developments as appropriate, keeping in mind the need to ensure coherence:

- The Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE) prepared its 26th Opinion on the use of technologies in the judicial system, which was adopted in December 2023.

- The Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE) worked on digitalisation in the work of the prosecution services and international co-operation, in view of the adoption of a thematic study examining the state of play in member states in this area.[9]

To assist member states in identifying and addressing emerging challenges:

- Under the TJENI project, targeted support was also provided in the following initiatives of national authorities: anonymisation tool development (Romania); automatisation of publication of law reports (Cyprus); tests of AI tools for the automatic summarisation of judicial decisions in Greek for their publication (Cyprus and Greece).

- Digital capacities of the Croatian Judicial Academy, the Macedonian Academy for Judges and Prosecutors, the Kosovo* Justice Academy[10], the Serbian Justice Academy and the Albanian School of Magistrates are being/were enhanced with high quality online training (Croatia) and upgraded e-libraries, supported through bilateral and regional co-operation programmes.

7. **Fight against corruption and money laundering as well as combating cybercrime**

Summary of the key strategic priority

Digital technologies can be used to facilitate or commit crimes, but also support the fight against various forms of crime.

Cybercrime has an impact on corruption, money laundering and terrorism/financing of terrorism (notably in relation to cryptocurrencies), as well as online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA), violence against women, xenophobia, racism and other forms of hate speech and discrimination, counterfeit medicines, election interference, trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking and others. Also, evidence gathering in the cloud poses challenges to existing investigative techniques and procedural frameworks.

While governments have the obligation to protect individuals and are using digital technologies to do so, such measures need to be compliant with human rights and rule of law requirements (including data protection), and co-ordinated between states as well.

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[9] The first CCPE thematic study.
[10] * All references to Kosovo, whether 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.

<u>Actions in progress</u>

To support member states in the fight against the misuse of digital technologies and AI for criminal purposes, including corruption, money laundering, terrorism/financing of terrorism and any form of cybercrime, in line with Council of Europe standards:

- The Second Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence, prepared by the Convention Committee (T-CY), was opened for signature in May 2022. The T-CY also adopted two Guidance Notes: one on aspects of ransomware and one on the scope of procedural powers and international co-operation provisions.

- In November 2022, the T-CY commenced the fourth round of assessments of the implementation of the Budapest Convention, covering Article 19 on the search and seizure of computer systems. The Cybercrime Programme Office of the Council of Europe (C-PROC) has been assessing progress made in countries that are priority countries for capacity-building. C-PROC prepared updated reviews of the global state of cybercrime legislation (January 2022 and January 2023) which monitors legislative developments worldwide in terms of their compliance with the Budapest Convention.

- C-PROC co-operation activity results include that some 130 states worldwide now have substantive laws, and some 100 states also have procedural laws in place which are in line with the Budapest Convention. 68 states are Parties to the Convention (Nigeria and Brazil acceded in 2022), and an additional 11 states were invited to accede in 2022 and 2023. The Budapest Convention remains the most relevant international treaty in the field of combating cybercrime.

- A "Typologies report on money laundering and terrorist financing risks in the world of virtual assets" was adopted by the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) in May 2023. The report presents an overview of the money laundering and financing of terrorism risks in the world of virtual assets and their service providers in MONEYVAL member countries and jurisdictions. The report includes a horizontal analysis of MONEYVAL members' level of compliance with the technical requirements regarding virtual assets, an overview of the measures taken to regulate and supervise virtual asset service providers (VASP), as well as some features of the identified risks of the use of VASPs by criminals to launder the proceeds of crime.

- The global anti-money laundering and countering terrorist-financing standards for virtual assets and VASPs are part of the monitoring activities conducted by MONEYVAL. Of the 25 jurisdictions assessed since June 2021 through evaluations and follow-up, the majority require major or moderate improvements. Further improvements are needed on assessing the money laundering risks related to virtual assets, supervision of VASPs and the application of preventive measures by the private sector.

- In March 2022, the MONEYVAL Secretariat asked the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global standard setter in the field, to consider issues relating to the regulation and supervision of VASPs. The MONEYVAL Secretariat provided input into the FATF project to identify jurisdictions with a materially important VASP sector.

- A dedicated methodology for assessing threats and vulnerabilities for money laundering and terrorist financing (ML/FT) associated with virtual assets and VASPs was developed by the Economic Crime and Cooperation Division. Starting from 2022, the methodology was made available to beneficiary jurisdictions within the framework of the Council of Europe technical co-operation activities.

- To date support on the application of the methodology was provided to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic and Ukraine. The assessment of risks was complemented by reviews of the regulatory and institutional framework for the supervision of virtual asset transactions and the sector of VASPs.

- Support was also provided on the development of the regulatory and institutional frameworks for oversight of the use of new technologies and payment methods in the provision of financial services, with the notable examples of such support provided to the payment services sector of Croatia, Portugal, Serbia and other member states.

- The use of digital assets and financial technologies for criminal purposes have been increasingly topics of dedicated capacity-building activities by the Council of Europe (in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic and Ukraine).

- The technical assistance activities have also focused on the development of capacity for strategic analysis of the use of digital assets for criminal purposes and the data-driven approaches in the prevention of abuse of digital assets and financial technologies for ML/FT purposes. Related activities and support focused on building the capacity of member states (particularly those which are also members of the EU), to prevent the use of cryptocurrencies for the purpose of circumventing the EU sanctions regime introduced in relation to the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

- The Nicosia Convention on Offences related to Cultural Property has among its objectives the fight against crime by criminalising acts like theft, illegal exportation and importation, placing on the market, destruction or damage of cultural property.[11] The Secretariat of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) has therefore worked on an explanatory brochure to promote accession to the Convention. It also published the Factsheet "The Nicosia Convention in ten questions and answers". An international conference on the matter has been organised in 2023 in Riga under the Latvian Presidency of the Council of Europe which addressed, in particular, the use of AI to search stolen works of art on the internet.

To support member states in ensuring that law enforcement authorities use digital technologies to combat crime in a way that is compliant with Council of Europe standards:

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[11] The convention expressly mentions the preventive measures to be developed with providers and online platforms where these objects are traded. Its strong criminal law aspects make this instrument more complex than the usual instruments in the field of culture.

- Between January 2022 and November 2023 C-PROC supported some 540 activities. These activities strengthened domestic legislation in line with the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and its protocols, as well as related standards (data protection, the protection of children); reinforced criminal justice capacities for the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of cybercrime and the use of e-evidence, for financial investigations, for addressing ransomware attacks, for interagency and international co-operation; prepared guides, online resources and other tools and exercises for practitioners; improved public/private co-operation and co-operation between criminal justice and cybersecurity institutions; provided specific support to Ukraine, including on electronic evidence of war crimes; and ensured participation of experts from parties in the "UN Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes" (UN AHC).

- In the context of the "Typologies report on money laundering and terrorist financing risks in the world of virtual assets", a meeting was organised in March 2023, with the participation of more than 120 delegates representing MONEYVAL members, including representatives of law-enforcement agencies, to exchange experiences and good practices.

- The Economic Crime and Cooperation Division, further to the development of dedicated risk assessment methodologies, has undertaken research with regard to the use of technology in strategic analysis by Financial Intelligence Units (Estonia), the use of supervisory automated tools (Croatia, Lithuania and Portugal), the use of blockchain analytics for developing financial intelligence and the use of tools for financial investigations conducted by law-enforcement authorities (Serbia).

To advocate for a rapid entry into force and implementation of the Second Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.

- The Second Additional Protocol was opened for signature on 12 May 2022 in Strasbourg and signed on that occasion by 22 states. As of December 2023, 43 states have signed the Protocol, and two of those (Japan and Serbia) have also ratified it. A high-level conference for the opening for signature was held in Strasbourg in May 2022. Multiple capacity-building activities have since been carried out to explain the provisions of this Protocol and to encourage signature, ratification and implementation. New C-PROC projects, which were prepared in 2023 and are to be launched in early 2024, focus on the implementation of the new Protocol.

8. **Fight against human trafficking**

Summary of the key strategic priority

Digital technologies are increasingly used to commit human trafficking offences, including recruitment of victims, grooming, financial transactions, advertisement of services, sexual exploitation via live streaming, and control and monitoring of the victims. This creates difficulties in investigating and prosecuting human trafficking offences, identification of victims and their referral to assistance.

At the same time, digital technologies and artificial intelligence create new opportunities to prevent and investigate crimes, and to identify and assist victims, by breaking their social isolation and providing a way to report abuse. They can also play a significant role in addressing data gaps and increasing efficiency of data sharing, leading to more effective use of resources and co-ordination between governments, law enforcement, businesses and civil society.

Actions in progress

Provide guidance to member states to address the challenges faced under the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in relation to the detection, investigation and prosecution of online and technology-facilitated human trafficking, to the protection and support of victims, international co-operation in this respect and to help prevent and combat technology-enabled trafficking in human beings.

- The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) launched the "Report on online and technology-facilitated trafficking in human beings" in March 2022. The report offers recommendations on how to enhance the detection, investigation and prosecution of technology-facilitated trafficking, enhance co-operation with private companies, and strengthen international co-operation.

- This report has been presented to member states at several meetings and events, and it is also being promoted through the Horizontal Facility projects on combating human trafficking in the Western Balkans. Plans are being made for the organisation of a regional event in the Western Balkans in the autumn of 2024.

- GRETA's 4th evaluation round of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, launched in July 2024, has a thematic focus on vulnerabilities to human trafficking and the use of ICT, which brings structural changes to the way offenders operate and exacerbates existing vulnerabilities.

9. **Artificial intelligence**

Summary of the key strategic priority

Artificial intelligence (AI) and more broadly digital transformation has a very concrete impact on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The various applications of artificial intelligence present major development opportunities for our societies, for example to facilitate decision making in complex domains, improve industrial business processes, reinforce the efficiency of healthcare or judicial systems, protect and promote cultural heritage and European landscapes. At the same time, AI applications raise certain challenges, notably as regards the protection of privacy and personal data, risks of discrimination, lack of oversight of decision-making systems and the difficulty of applying existing legal frameworks to issues raised by AI.

For several years, the Council of Europe has produced guidance on these issues. In May 2021 (Hamburg Ministerial Session), the member states' Foreign Ministers were clear in their determination to give priority to the work on an appropriate legal framework for the development, design and application of artificial intelligence based on the Council of Europe's standards on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and conducive to innovation. They were equally clear on how this work shall be structured: the Council of Europe's work on AI should continue to be articulated around two main strands.

Firstly, the development of a cross-cutting legal framework for the development, design and application of artificial intelligence, as proposed in the document "Possible elements of a legal framework on artificial intelligence, based on the Council of Europe's standards on human rights, democracy and the rule of law" and conducive to innovation.

Secondly and in addition, the development of sector-specific guidance and instruments (for example on the impact of AI on justice, freedom of expression, cybersecurity, healthcare, electoral processes, equality including gender equality and anti-discrimination, children and youth, migration, criminal liability, education, culture and cultural heritage as well as on its use by prisons and police or other public services). Priorities for such sector-specific guidance are also presented in the separate chapters.

In this work, it is essential to ensure overall co-ordination, consistency and complementarity between respective Council of Europe entities. The Ministers in Hamburg were also explicit on the importance of this work being based on strong evidence and an inclusive consultation process as well as it being undertaken in co-ordination with relevant international partners to ensure global consistency on the subject, taking into account the supporting role of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI).

The work on data protection also remains fundamental in the age of artificial intelligence. The Protocol amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (generally referred to as "Convention 108+") is of particular relevance in this context.

<u>Actions in progress</u>

To develop a cross-cutting legal instrument for the development, design and application of artificial intelligence, including notably general common principles as proposed in the document "Possible elements of a legal framework on artificial intelligence, based on the Council of Europe's standards on human rights, democracy and the rule of law" and conducive to innovation:

- The Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI) is in the process of finalising the negotiations of a draft framework convention for the design, development, use and decommissioning of AI systems based on the Council of Europe and other relevant international standards on human rights, democracy and the rule of law and conducive to innovation.

To develop additional binding or non-binding instruments, as well as any relevant document or action to address challenges relating to the application of artificial intelligence in specific sectors (specific sub-priorities presented in respective chapters):

- The CAI has started work on a legally non-binding risk and impact assessment methodology for AI systems in the area of human rights, democracy and the rule of law ("HUDERIA"). It is expected to be finalised by 31 December 2024.

- In 2023, the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) revised the handbook "The administration and you", which highlights a number of principles based primarily on Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)7 on good administration, in order to take account of the increasing use of AI systems and Automated Decision Making (ADM) by the administration in its relationship with individuals.

- In the framework of its "Strategic Action Plan on Human Rights and Technologies in Biomedicine (2020-2025)", the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO) explored the impact of AI on the doctor-patient relationship. In June 2022, the committee issued an independent report on the subject, followed in October 2022 by the setting-up of a drafting group to prepare a report on AI in healthcare (which is to be finalised by 2024).

- The Venice Commission explored the crossroads between IT and better election governance in its 19th European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies (14-15 November 2022) under the headline "Artificial intelligence and electoral integrity" discussing, *inter alia*, AI's potential impact on the fairness in electoral processes, turnout, voter choice and privacy.

- In February 2022, the Committee of Ministers approved the "Guidelines on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in electoral processes" in Council of Europe member states.[12] These guidelines deal with a variety of issues, including the usability and the accessibility of ICT solutions in the electoral process by applying a human-centred approach, ensuring protection against unauthorised intervention and cyberattacks on databases.

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[12] The Guidelines were prepared by the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG).

- A conference to review the implementation of the above guidelines and Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)51 on standards for e-voting took place in June 2023. The event also gave opportunities to discuss key issues such as trust, cyber threats and resilience, transparency and respect of key principles of the electoral cycle (such as privacy and secrecy of vote).

- In 2022, the "CEPEJ Resource Centre on Cyberjustice and AI" went online, providing progressively an overview of judicial AI applications to improve transparency and foster debate on the application's risks and opportunities. The CEPEJ launched the development of an Assessment Tool, operationalising the "European ethical charter on the use of AI in judicial systems and their environment".

- A "Study on the impact of artificial intelligence systems, their potential for promoting equality, including gender equality, and the risks they may cause in relation to non-discrimination" was published in September 2023, jointly by the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) and the Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI).

- On 28-29 September 2023, the Conference of Ministers of Education adopted a Resolution on harnessing the potential of AI in and through education, welcoming the proposals for developing a legal instrument to regulate the use of AI systems in education and for elaborating of a CM recommendation on teaching and learning about AI.

- Under the supervision of the CDCPP, a new working group has started work on policy guidelines to complement the Council of Europe standards in the fields of culture, creativity and cultural heritage, given the latest technological developments, such as AI.

To support a rapid entry into force of "Convention 108+" on data protection, as well as the implementation of relevant data protection standards.

- The "Convention 108+" was promoted through the work of the Convention 108 Committee (T-PD), which adopted a number of relevant guidelines in 2022 and 2023, in the fields of national digital identity, the processing of personal data for anti-money laundering/countering financing of terrorism purposes, and the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by and for political campaigns. The T-PD also adopted the updated model contractual clauses for the transfer of personal data.

- "Convention 108+" benefited from large-scale visibility through several international events, such as the "Computers, Privacy and Data Protection (CPDP)" conferences in Europe and Latin America, as well as of the Privacy Symposium Venice or the Privacy Symposium Africa.

- As a result, an important acceleration of the ratification process has taken place, reaching one ratification per month. By November 2023, "Convention 108+" was ratified by 31 states parties.

10. **Fight against environmental degradation and climate change**

Summary of the key strategic priority

A variety of relevant initiatives and work are underway in different parts of the Organisation, such as the drafting of a recommendation on human rights and the protection of the environment. Indeed, the environment and human rights are intrinsically linked and the Council of Europe is contributing to the global efforts against environmental degradation and climate change from the perspective of its specific mandate.

In the digital field, this notably implies that online activities relating to the protection of the environment and the fight against environmental degradation and climate change (which are matters of general interest) shall benefit from an enabling environment which includes the free imparting and reception of information on environmental questions, the protection of environmental human rights defenders against cyber harassment and attacks, but also the use of the latest IC technologies in the protection of cultural heritage from climate change effects and in fostering its contribution to addressing the climate crisis.

Intergovernmental co-operation work will continue on various topics related to environmental degradation, in accordance with the relevant Committee of Ministers' decisions. In this context, it will be important to duly consider the substantive and procedural implications of the digital transition.

Actions in progress

To support an enabling online environment for the exchange of information and ideas on environmental matters, as well as for the work of those who act to protect the environment, including environmental and indigenous human rights defenders (including youth), and fight environmental degradation and climate change:

- In co-operation with the Icelandic Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, a conference was organised on "Green Public Administration in the Context of Good Democratic Governance: Exchange of Good European Practice" (Strasbourg, 26 April 2023), where good practice and experience in member states was discussed, including in relation to the use of information and communication technologies (e.g. "smart digitalisation"). A report on "Green Public Administration" was completed in 2023.

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)20 on human rights and the protection of the environment, in its accompanying explanatory report, draws on the standards of the Aarhus Convention[13] to encourage member states to make environmental information available to the public in electronic form, accessible online.

- The energy of youth activism online in combating fake news related to climate change and in promoting correct information and know-how for action on combating climate change was a highlight in the activities of the European Youth Foundation.

- In 2022-2023, the European Youth Foundation provided four annual grants for international projects, mostly tackling the role and capacity-building of young environmental digital activists.

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[13] United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention).

- To support the Youth Department's efforts at greening the youth sector and the institutional work on the impact of climate change, the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership has developed several resources, including the T-kit on Sustainability and Youth Work, a Sustainability Checklist "Greening the youth sector", an analytical paper "Disobedient youth: Lessons from the youth climate strike movement", and numerous videos and podcasts.

To support the development of innovative online tools for collecting, processing and assessing data related to nature conservation with a view to facilitate decision-making processes in the framework of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention):

- An online case-file dashboard has been launched in early 2023, containing searchable data and information on the more than 200 case-files of the Bern Convention.

- The Emerald Network Barometer is updated once a year after each annual meeting of the Standing Committee. It provides an overview of the Emerald Network in the non-EU Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention in terms of number and area of terrestrial and marine sites.

- The Bern Convention Online Reporting System is an electronic reporting platform developed to streamline the Bern Convention's reporting processes of parties through the creation of customised online questionnaires.

To support the preparation of policy guidance on the application of IC technologies and AI in addressing the climate crisis through culture and cultural heritage and to take full account of the substantive and procedural implications of the digital transition in relevant intergovernmental co-operation work:

- The Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Culture (Strasbourg, 1 April 2022) has emphasised the culture, creativity and cultural heritage potential to address unprecedented challenges, such as climate change and digital transformation, by driving the societal and developmental changes needed to achieve sustainability and contribute to the quality of life in our constantly evolving societies.

- Such potential in addressing climate change is reflected in the "L.I.N.K.E.D – Guiding principles for an integrated approach to culture, nature and landscape management" was adopted by the CDCPP in November 2023. It emphasises the need for more effectively co-ordinated approaches encompassing both culture and nature.

11. **Supporting the role and diversity of civil society, including human rights defenders, as well as national human rights institutions in member states**

Summary of the key strategic priority

The interaction between democracy and technology is a key challenge of our time. It is important to continue to raise awareness of the risks posed by digital transformation to democracy and to identify enabling factors and best practices for digital transformation to contribute to better quality governance. The involvement of civil society, including organisations representing persons subject to discrimination and/or persons in vulnerable situations, in debates on the elaboration of policies related to the development, the deployment and the use of digital technologies is a democratic guarantee, particularly for the defence of rights in a dematerialised environment. National human rights institutions and equality bodies are also an essential link between public authorities and citizens in the construction of public policies, as shown by their various interventions during the health crisis. It also remains essential to support the development of a favourable environment - online just as offline – for civil society development and participation. In this respect, the protection of whistle-blowers could also continue to be followed up within the scope defined by the Committee of Ministers (notably in 2020 in its reply to the Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation "Improving the protection of whistle-blowers all over Europe").

Actions in progress

To promote and support, where relevant, the participation of civil society in activities related to the implementation of the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025, in accordance with the Secretary General's proposals on follow-up to the Helsinki and Hamburg decisions on civil society:

- Multiple civil society organisations have the role of observers and are take part on activities on the Council of Europe committees. For example, international professional associations and academia give valuable input to all CEPEJ activities related to digitalisation and AI as observers. Around 70 civil society organisations have participated in different forms in CAI negotiations on the new AI convention.

- In 2022-2023, four international projects on reinforcing the role of civil society in the digitalisation process and youth participation, as well as eight local youth projects on reinforcing youth citizenship using the digital environments within the framework of the campaign "Democracy here. Democracy now" were supported by the European Youth Foundation.

- Civil society organisations took part in a two-day seminar on promoting human rights to counter hate speech online, along with national authorities and internet industry.

- HELP online courses dealing with the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025 are actively being used by representatives of the civil society, particularly on freedom of expression and on privacy rights.

To support the implementation in the digital environment of relevant Council of Europe standards and good practices related to civil society (including Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11 on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe):

- In March 2022, a training course brought together youth activists and youth workers to support AI literacy and address the impact of AI on young people's lives and their access to human rights.

- Two study sessions organised at the European Youth Centre enabled multipliers in youth organisations to develop their ownership of digitalisation and democracy matters: a study session on "Debugging Artificial Intelligence" with a particular focus on unwanted consequences on minority youth (discrimination, exclusion, racism, e.g.), and a session "Developing Digital Literacy and Responding to Hate Speech in the Age of AI", addressing specifically hate speech generated by or because of AI.

12. Education for democratic citizenship and empowerment, and strengthening of young people's role in decision making

Summary of the key strategic priority

Digital technologies enable people to express themselves in new ways, to explore, learn and create, to connect and socialise, and to gather and participate in unexpected ways. As a result, a thorough understanding of the digital environment and the complexities of digital technologies, and mastery of digital skills, have become critical to democratic participation, social inclusion, personal and professional development, and labour-market access.

The Council of Europe developed the concept of digital citizenship education to assist its member states in preparing their citizens for the digital age and standards on developing and promoting digital citizenship education. However, further action is needed to apply these policy instruments and integrate digital citizenship education into education systems throughout Council of Europe member states.

Education and the digital world are now closely interwoven, whether at home, school, universities, or elsewhere where digital tools and technology are employed to support and promote learning.

The Council of Europe has developed guidelines to support equitable partnerships of education institutions and the private sector. They represent a framework for establishing effective, equitable and fair collaborations between public authorities in charge of education systems, educational institutions at all levels and internet companies that extends beyond digital citizenship education.

The digital challenges upon which the Council of Europe is focusing in the youth field (in partnership with the EU) primarily concern the access to rights: digital gap in terms of social inclusion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, use of digital tools in youth work, for inclusion of young people with disabilities, youth from marginalised socio-economic backgrounds, ethnic minority youth, mental health of young people and digitalisation, digitalisation and young people's participation in decision making.

<u>Actions in progress</u>

To promote digital literacy and digital citizenship education at the European level and assist member states and other stakeholders in implementing existing policy instruments and guidelines in this area, more specifically Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 on developing and promoting digital citizenship education and the Ministerial Declaration on citizenship education in the digital era:

- The mandate of the Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) Promoters Network has been extended until 31 May 2026. The main objectives of the Network are to contribute to the implementation of the CM recommendation on developing and promoting digital citizenship education in their respective countries and to support the further development of the Council of Europe's intergovernmental programme on digital citizenship education.

- Various educational and training resources, including online courses and thematic leaflets on DCE have been developed to support educators and parents to help their children/students to become digital citizens.

- A policy development toolkit has been released to support policy makers to identify the gaps concerning DCE and to draw a road map/strategy to develop and promote DCE accordingly.

- The online course "What is Digital Citizenship Education?" has been developed and published in co-operation with the European Wergeland Centre.

- The Council of Europe co-organised an event on "Digital citizenship skill and artificial intelligence in learning and teaching processes: A human rights perspective" in the framework of the United Nations Transforming Education Summit.

- The year 2025 was declared as "European Year of Digital Citizenship Education" at the 26th Session of Standing Conference of Education Ministers on 29 September 2023.

- The online learning platform LEMON offers practical teaching and training resources to education professionals across Europe. The resources focus on the mission of the Council of Europe and include, among the 18 courses on offer, "The Key to Media Literacy: Creating safer and more democratic schools in the digital age" and "Using Social Media as an Educational Tool for Democracy".

- The new project on the "Democratic mission of higher education" includes actions on promoting academic freedom in the advent of the digital society and combating misinformation and disinformation. The project will also seek to draw up recommendations for policy makers and the leadership of higher education institutions to combat algorithmic discrimination in higher education.

- Digitalisation and its impact on young people's commitment to democracy was one of the three strands of the youth campaign for revitalising democracy, "Democracy Here | Democracy Now". Eight youth-led projects supported by the European Youth Foundation were integrated in the campaign and addressed youth and digitalisation. The Youth Action Week (July 2022) addressed digitalisation through workshops covering AI, online discrimination and hate speech, online youth participation or internet governance.

- A consultative meeting on education about digital citizenship in youth activities was organised in June 2023. The meeting resulted in several proposals for the future work of the Youth Department, including training on AI and digital citizenship, embedding discussions in the framework of human rights education.

- In the framework of the Council of Europe-EU joint project HISTOLAB, a digital hub has been established with the dual purpose of gathering valuable resources for history educators and researchers while also fostering professional collaboration among history educators worldwide in alignment with the Council of Europe's principles. HISTOLAB also aims to combat historical misinformation by creating a toolkit that enhances students' critical thinking skills in the face of manipulations of history online.

- The first general report on the state of history teaching in Europe, released by the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe in December 2023, underscores a pronounced demand for ongoing professional development courses in the field of "ICT and innovative teaching resources" among history educators.

To analyse the implications of advanced digital technologies, in particular AI systems on education, and develop new policy tools to provide guidance and support to member states in the digital transformation of school education and higher education towards enhancing education opportunities for all and improving the quality of education:

- The report "Artificial intelligence and education – A critical view through the lens of human rights, democracy and the rule of law", published in 2022, examines the connections between AIO and education through the lens of the Council of Europe.

- A survey "State of artificial intelligence and education in Council of Europe member states" was released in 2022 to gather data from the 46 member states of the Council of Europe to enable a better understanding of the different connections between AI and education.

- The Education Department organised a series of EduTalks to explore and discuss various aspects of AI and its implications in the field of education, such as "Data Protection and the Right to Privacy in Education and in The Face of AI", "Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity", "Teaching and learning with and about AI".

- Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers adopted in July 2022 the Recommendation CM/Rec (2022)18 on countering education fraud that recognises that emerging technologies, including AI, have also the potential to contribute to building trust among all stakeholders in the education environment. In order to assist member states in countering education fraud and promoting ethics, transparency and integrity in education, the Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED) is carrying out a feasibility study to establish an Observatory on countering education fraud with specific focus on the role of emerging technologies.

- Delegations participating in the 26th Session of Standing Conference of Education Ministers held on 29 September 2023 have agreed on the development of a legal instrument to regulate the use of AI systems in education and a Committee of Ministers' recommendation on teaching and learning about AI systems.

- During the pre-ministerial session organised on 28 September 2023, a panel discussion was organised on the topic "Artificial Intelligence and Higher Education – Opportunities and Risks". This panel provided a platform for exchanging perspectives on the challenges posed by AI in teaching and learning processes, with a particular focus on assessment.

- 26 member states have responded to a survey to enable a better understanding of the different connections between AI and education.

To assist member states in further developing effective, equitable and fair collaborations between public authorities in charge of education systems, educational institutions at all levels, and private sector companies in the field of education:

- Guidelines to support equitable partnerships between education institutions and the private sector were published in 2022 and presented at various relevant important events such as EdTech Next Summit (both in 2022 and 2023).

- An information exchange mechanism has been developed to communicate progress and sense making practices of such partnership concerning the development and promotion of DCE. Six companies have pledged to report on their initiatives.

To support with training and educational resources (offline and online) youth workers, NGOs and national youth authorities on AI-related challenges for young people (including addictions, cyberbullying, online safety and digital violence against young women), but also on opportunities arising from digital tools and platforms, as well as on digitalisation and young people's participation in decision-making.

- In 2022-2023, the Youth Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission explored AI and digitalisation, their impact, opportunities and threats on young people and the youth sector in a broad sense. Research papers were published on "Youth work and TECHLASH. What are the new challenges of digitalisation for young people?" (2022); "Technology and the new power dynamics: limitations of digital youth work" (2022); "Automating Youth Work: youth workers views on AI" (2023); and "Young people's participation in AI governance and implementation" (2023).

- Several workshops were organised to discuss the research of the Youth Partnership on AI, to present the findings and discuss their implication for the youth sector.

- In the framework of its Strategic Action Plan on Human Rights and Technologies in Biomedicine (2020-2025), the CDBIO organised in June 2023 a pilot youth forum on AI in healthcare, with a view to supporting the participation of young persons in democratic life and decision-making processes.

III. MOVING AHEAD

1. Strategic framework

According to the Strategic Framework of the Council of Europe, "Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the broader impact of digital transformation and the use of new technologies on human rights, democracy and the rule of law shall be a focus of the activities of the Council of Europe". The digital transformation of our society has indeed a direct or indirect impact on all fields of the Council of Europe's work.

Building on the experience of Internet Governance Strategies (2012-2019), the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025 has combined the implementation of multiple, complex and intertwined organisational programmes in the digital environment.

On 17 May 2023, Heads of State and Government adopted the "Reykjavík declaration – United around our values" to give further priority and direction to the Council of Europe's work. In relation to digitalisation and global governance, the signatories:

- Acknowledged the positive impact and opportunities created by new and emerging digital technologies while recognising the need to mitigate risks of negative consequences of their use on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, including new forms of violence against women and vulnerable groups generated and amplified by modern technologies, and committed to ensuring a leading role for the Council of Europe in developing standards in the digital era to safeguard human rights online and offline, including by finalising, as a priority, the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence.

- Welcomed the Council of Europe's prominent role in international standard-setting on freedom of expression and related issues such as media freedom, access to information and combating hate speech and disinformation, including the instrumentalisation of history in light of the increasing impact of digital technologies on these issues.

- Highlighted that, the Council of Europe has played a pioneering global role in developing standards in emerging and new policy areas and underlined a collective determination to address current and future challenges.

- Engaged to promote increased ratification of Council of Europe conventions that are open to non-member states through targeted universalisation campaigns, to advance compliance with the Organisation's ambitious standards beyond European borders.

- Committed to strengthening the role of the Council of Europe in the evolving European multilateral architecture and in global governance by enhancing its external dimension, through its liaison offices and through a new engagement based on its core values with democracies in the world and its southern neighbourhood.

- Agreed to share and promote these principles together with states and international organisations including the UN, the OSCE and the EU, as well as all those willing to work with the Council of Europe to further the achievement of greater unity and better global governance.

2. **Conclusions**

The multiple results of the implementation of the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025 have revealed several synergies, complementarities, shortfalls and influencing factors which are presented below:

Early risk assessment of new technologies

- New technologies, such as spyware, blockchain, cryptocurrencies, the metaverse, machine learning, generative AI, and many others to come, will continue to generate new risks to human rights, the rule of law and democracy. The early assessment of these risks, along with recommendations to mitigate them and exploit the opportunities they bring, need to be pursued.

Enhancing digitalisation of the judiciary in member states

- Considering new opportunities and challenges brought by technological innovation, addressing human rights issues in every aspect of digitalisation of the judiciary requires a continuous pro-active and systematic approach to designing legal frameworks, safeguards and remedies. In this regard, the new HELP course on CEPEJ (including the module dedicated to cyberjustice) will be a valuable tool for professionals involved in the digitalisation of justice process.

- The further implementation of digital technology systems for national court management should improve the efficiency of justice and enhance the implementation of judgments of the Court. These can include new AI tools for the translation of policy documents and decisions of the Council of Europe bodies into the relevant languages.

Developing online training opportunities

- The digital environment should be further exploited to educate young people about democracy and democratic citizenship, and also enable professionals and civil society to access information and follow e-training courses provided by the Council of Europe.

- Various educational and training resources are provided by the HELP programme, the Digital Citizenship Education programme, the e-learning platform of the Council of Europe Youth Department, the Learning Modules Online Platform for educational professionals. Online training courses and webinars are available on data protection, cybercrime, AI etc. The courses should be further publicised and promoted.

- Given the growing popularity of e-learning and multiple tools and courses offered by the Council of Europe, a single-entry platform could contribute to the wider promotion of the courses, further recognition of the e-certificates, and acknowledgement of the Council of Europe as a leading online training institution for public servants in human rights issues.

Harnessing transversality and sharing expertise

- Co-operation with academic institutions and digital partners has proven useful, notably in the preparation of reports. This partnership should be pursued.

- Co-operation with the private sector will remain important. The platform between the Council of Europe and digital companies and their representative associations, as developed since 2017, has become an important framework for co-operation. It should be strengthened to get the full benefit of the work in this area.

Nurturing the global agenda

- Active participation in global events dedicated to the promotion of open conventions should be extended, specifically regarding "Convention 108+", the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, the Lanzarote Convention and the future Framework Convention on AI.

- Co-operation with the United Nations should be further enhanced to ensure coherence and complementarity of the European and global instruments and standards, also with regards to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

- Promotion of the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025 also requires active participation and promotion of Council of Europe positions in global and regional fora, such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the Governmental Advisory Committee of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

- Coherent follow-up should be provided in the digital sphere to the Reykjavík Declaration to "promote increased ratification of Council of Europe conventions that are open to non-member states through targeted universalisation campaigns, to advance compliance with the Organisation's ambitious standards beyond European borders."

Co-operating with the EU

- Co-operation with the EU has been and will remain crucial both in policy-making and development and implementation of standards. This synergy is particularly relevant in the field of data protection, cybersecurity, new technologies and digitalisation, and should be further strengthened.

Supporting Ukraine

- The aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has had many impacts, including cyberattacks and other forms of cybercrime. The Council of Europe supported Ukraine in the adoption of legislative amendments to facilitate the collection and use in criminal proceedings of such evidence and should continue to provide any necessary support.

- As of November 2023, 33 online HELP courses have been translated and adapted to the Ukrainian legislation and context and users have gone from 4 500 in February 2022 when the war started to over 10 000 in November 2023.

Enhancing co-operation programmes

- More progress can be made in integrating the digital dimension in the Organisation's co-operation programmes.

Marking 2025 as the year of digital citizenship in Europe

- The year 2025 was declared as "European Year of Digital Citizenship Education" at the 26th Session of Standing Conference of Education Ministers on 29 September 2023, and should address the challenges and opportunities of the digital environment in education systems by empowering students to navigate the digital environment responsibly and ethically.

- The "European Year of Digital Citizenship Education" will provide an excellent opportunity to highlight all Council of Europe instruments enhancing the protection of human rights in the digital environment and beyond, promote policies, disseminate research, deliver training courses and sum-up achievements.

Learning from the past and preparing the future

- The Mid-term Review demonstrates that overall progress has been registered in each of the planned actions. It will be continued in the next biennium of the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025, to enhance a co-ordinated approach in developing human rights compliant, democratic and good governance-oriented responses to the challenges raised by new information technologies, including AI.

- The coming period will equally serve to build focus on key strategic priorities, to share more good practices and to increase engagement between the Organisation and its member states It will continue to involve multiple stakeholders, including academia, civil society and our business partners.

- Finally, the next two years should lay the ground for the elaboration of a new, ambitious, structured, co-ordinated and transparent Digital Agenda, to enhance the profile of the Organisation in the digital era beyond 2025.

- As provided in the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025, a final assessment – taking the form of another report by the Secretary General to the Committee of Ministers for consideration in due course – will be conducted towards the end of the Agenda's duration period.