

Factsheet

Tbilisi Office

ODGP Open Day 2020
Council of Europe





ROLE

Georgia has benefited from Council of Europe co-operation programmes already before becoming a Member State in 1999 and particularly under consecutive Action Plans for the 2013-2015 and 2016-2019 periods. The current Action Plan covering the period of 2020 – 2023 has been launched in November 2019. For the new Action Plan, the Council of Europe Office in Tbilisi organised national consultations bringing together more than 70 participants from over 20 partner institutions and civil society organisations.

Currently, the Office has 23 staff members who work in cooperation programmes on legislative and institutional reforms in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS for 2019

Protecting and promoting human rights and dignity

- Increased role of the European Convention on Human Rights and its application by judges, prosecutors, lawyers;
- A Georgian-language interface of the ECtHR HUDOC database. More than 11.000 views were registered in 2019. Increased number of legal summaries and reports available in Georgian language. HELP (human rights education for legal professionals) online course on Reasoning Criminal Judgments adapted to the Georgian legal order and included in training curricula of the High School of Justice;
- The capacity of partners was strengthened to ensure effective implementation of existing and newly adopted policies in the area of anti-discrimination;
- Tailor-made capacity building implemented for legal professionals including through HELP online platform largely contributed to the increased statistics and improved practice of investigation and prosecution of hate crimes;
- Contributing to national efforts to carry out awareness raising activities on importance of equality and diversity based on the results of a comprehensive survey. Launch of a nationwide awareness raising campaign “I choose Equality” in partnership with 10 state institutions and the Coalition for Equality (a large network of Georgian NGOs);
- The first ever “Equality Week” organised together with public institutions and CSOs included over 1000 meetings which engaged more than 26 000 persons throughout Georgia;
- Strengthening national capacities in data collection on hate crime and discrimination, improved knowledge on policing hate crime against LGBTI persons.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS for 2019

Protecting and promoting human rights and dignity

- Increased capacity of legal professionals to deal with violence against women and domestic violence cases in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention); the National Communications Commission (GNCC) and broadcasters better equipped to carry out media monitoring during elections and ensure objective coverage;
- Enhanced capacities of journalistic self-regulations and better awareness about the work of the Charter of Journalistic Ethics through supporting the latter to create networks and host the Alliance of Press Councils of Europe in Georgia in 2019 as well as through drafting case-law review of the Charter;
- Improved legal framework in the field of child online safety, through development of secondary legislation by the Georgian National Communications Commission (GNCC) to be implemented as a by-law of the Code on the Right of the Child.
- Improved legal framework on ensuring access to audio-visual services for persons with disabilities; adoption of special rules for the Supreme Court of Georgia, which clarify the provisions related to access to court decisions by journalists;
- Launching of two tools in the field of data protection for local legal practitioners: the Georgian edition of the Handbook on European Data Protection Law (prepared by the CoE and FRA) and the HELP online course in Georgian on Data Protection and Privacy Rights; publication of the Guidelines on Safeguarding Privacy in the Media aimed at media practitioners, followed by the capacity building of representatives of more than 15 media outlets;
- Establishment of Georgia's Internet Governance Forum (GeoIGF) - a platform for discussions on how to address challenges and develop internet regulations and policies while taking into account the right to information and freedom of expression. The CoE has supported GeoIGF as of its creation in 2015, which has resulted in EuroDIG taking place in Georgia in 2018 as well as establishment of the Youth School of GeoIGF in 2019 allowing young persons including students and young professionals to be part of the discussions about internet governance in the country.



Ensuring Justice

- The 4th wave of judicial reform legislative package, developed with Council of Europe expertise and support, has been adopted by the Parliament in December 2019; considering the new legislation, judicial appointments and disciplinary proceedings are more transparent and reasoned;
- Nine new training modules have been developed for the High School of Justice, and 20 national judges trained to continue the capacity development of peer judges. All the modules are now part of the High School curriculum and the School now holds the ISO 9001:2015 Certificate for Quality Management System;
- Georgian Bar Association 4 years' strategy has been developed and adopted by the Executive Council of the Bar;
- Judicial Assistants and Court Managers continue to enhance professionalism and share experiences through the biannual Managers' Forum and School of Justice;
- Independent Inspector is better equipped to reason referrals on disciplinary liability of judges, 92% of which has been approved by the High Council of Justice in 2018 (compared to 60% in 2019);
- Measures have been promoted to ensure women judges' enhanced participation in leadership positions;
- A strategic policy document regulating the Mental Health-care service delivery in penitentiary establishments was developed in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and entered implementation phase;
- The staff of the penitentiary agency, both medical and non-medical, were trained to treat the prisoners with mental health problems in line with European standards and to deal with crisis situations in a professional manner;
- The legal documents regulating the treatment of prisoners with mental disorders were updated and policy on mental health-care treatment was developed.



Strengthening democratic governance

- Increased transparency, inclusiveness and integrity of electoral processes through promoting dialogue platforms and thematic consultations among electoral stakeholders, sharing values of Europe's electoral heritage, supporting improvement of electoral legal framework;
- Enhanced administrative, operational and management capacity of the election management body, capacity building of electoral officials, new online electronic registration system for electoral stakeholders, efficient mechanisms to provide gender equality within election administration, as a follow up of a Participatory Gender Audit commissioned with CoE support;
- Enhanced capacity of Georgian common court judges to adjudicate electoral disputes.
- A permanent training course on Election Law and Election Dispute Resolution has been introduced at the High School of Justice of Georgia;
- Enhanced administrative, operational and management capacity of Political Party Finance Monitoring Department of the State Audit Office (SAO), capacity building of the SAO staff, new information technology necessary for effective monitoring of equality and transparency of political finances and providing better access for general public;
- Increased youth and vulnerable groups' participation in the electoral processes through voter education campaigns under Electoral Development Schools project.



Countering threats to the Rule of Law

- With the Council of Europe assistance, Georgia adopted its first ever National anti-money laundering risk assessment (NRA) report in October 2019, thereby identifying and setting out key areas where measures are needed;
- In addition to the national risk assessment, in October 2019, Georgia introduced new AML/CFT legislation aligned with international standards based on CoE recommendations;
- Improved knowledge of private organisations and law-enforcement agencies about practices to counter money laundering and terrorism financing, as well as enhanced capacity to assess corruption risks in public procurement;
- Stronger capacity of criminal justice authorities to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate money laundering and terrorism financing cases.



ABOUT

Tbilisi Office

34 Chavchavadze Ave.
Pixel Business Centre, VIII Floor
Tbilisi 0179, Georgia
+99 532 291 38 70

informtbilisi@coe.int
<http://www.coe.ge>
www.coe.int/en/web/tbilisi

Office of the Directorate General of Programmes

www.coe.int/en/web/programmes