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Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2013 – 2015 Final Report

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¹ This document has been classified restricted until examination by the Committee of Ministers.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2013-2015 was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in October 2013. This final report presents progress made in 2013-15.

Like the previous Progress Review Report covering work done in 2013-14, this document consists of a narrative about major achievements to date in each of the priority areas as well as an appended financial table.

The Action Plan priorities took into account national reforms agenda and obligations of Georgia as a member state of the CoE. The recommendations of the CoE monitoring and advisory bodies served as a basis for the activities in 2013-15. The Action Plan covered the following areas: protection and promotion of human rights, independence and efficiency of the judiciary, penitentiary system and police reform, media freedom, elections, good governance, local democracy, anti-discrimination and confidence-building measures in areas affected by the conflict. The Action Plan was backed by over €10 million in funding from the EU and CoE member states.

Overall progress in 2013-15 in reforming legal framework and strengthening institutional capacity brought Georgia closer to European standards and practices. Achievements of the Action Plan include: revision of the Criminal Code to ensure increased compatibility with human rights standards once adopted by the Parliament; increased capacity of judges, prosecutors and lawyers to domestically implement the European Convention on Human Rights; revised procedures on the selection, appointment and disciplinary procedures of judges to increase their independence; enhanced capacity of training institutions to deliver modern courses to legal professionals; strengthened legal protection of whistle-blowers; increased capacity to prevent and investigate cases of ill-treatment; improved procedures for execution of criminal sanctions; improved healthcare in prisons; enhanced capacity to prevent suicide and implement rehabilitation programmes in prisons; enhanced capacity of the Central Election Commission to deal with electoral dispute resolution; improved women's participation in politics; and increases in both scope and number of contacts between professional groups and civil society in the regions affected by the conflict.

The Council of Europe is ready to provide further assist to the Georgian authorities in order to sustain the pace of the reform process and ensure the implementation of existing legal framework. At the same time, there is a need to strengthen efforts in raising awareness among state officials and the public at large about reform agenda and results.

The 3-year Action Plan concluded in December 2015. The Council of Europe and Georgian authorities have agreed to continue co-operation within the framework of the new Action Plan 2016-2019 that was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in March 2016.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AML/CFT	Anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism
CEC	Central Election Commission
CM	Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
CoE	Council of Europe
Congress	Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
EaP	European Union Eastern Partnership
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
ECRML	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EU	European Union
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
GBA	Georgian Bar Association
GR-DEM	Rapporteur Group on Democracy
GRECO	Group of States against Corruption
HELP	European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP Programme)
HCoJ	High Council of Justice
HSoJ	High School of Justice
MONEYVAL	Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism
MoC	Ministry of Corrections
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PCF	European Union/Council of Europe Programmatic Co-operation Framework for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus
PDO	Public Defender's Office
RESC	European Social Charter (revised)
SC	Supreme Court
TDI	Temporary Detention Isolator
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of the implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2013-2015² (AP). The AP was adopted by the Committee of Ministers (CM) in October 2013 after extensive consultation with Georgian authorities and launched by the Secretary General in February 2014 in Tbilisi. The AP, with its main objective of assisting Georgia in fulfilling its obligations as a Council of Europe (CoE) member state, was backed by over €10 million in funding (63% of the initially estimated budget of €16 million) from the European Union (EU) and CoE member states.

The AP included the following sectors for co-operation: domestic implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Court of Human Rights' (ECtHR) case law; further reforms of the judiciary and penitentiary systems; reform of police and liberalisation of criminal justice policies and practice; drug policy reforms; the fight against cybercrime; promoting the independence and professionalism of the media; electoral standards; co-operation between authorities and civil society; protection of minorities and other vulnerable groups; education reforms; local self-governance; intercultural strategies; and confidence building measures to strengthen contacts among civil society and professionals in the areas affected by the conflict.

This report consists of a narrative with consolidated information about major achievements to date in each of the priority areas and funding information.

The 3-year AP concluded in December 2015. The reform process to adopt legislation and enhance effectiveness of institutions to meet the requirements of a democratic society is a long-term process requiring commitment. Therefore, the CoE and Georgian authorities have agreed to continue co-operation within the framework of the new Action Plan 2016-2019³, adopted by the CM in March 2016. The total budget of this AP is estimated at €25.37 million (with about €5 million already secured).

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

The AP included 34 projects for a total amount of €16 million. As of December 2015, there were 15 projects implemented by the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, the Directorate General of Democracy, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (Congress). From 2013 to 2015, 11 projects were completed. In 2015, 15 projects were launched, seven of them funded through the joint EU/CoE Eastern Partnership Programmatic Co-operation Framework (PCF).

It should be noted that, in the areas where the CoE is active, impact is non-linear, sometimes unpredictable and mostly visible only after a certain length of time. Therefore, a long-term assessment of the AP's impact is envisaged, although some immediate outcomes are already visible.

The main achievements of the AP are as follows.

Protection and promotion of human rights

- The CoE interventions helped to improve professionalism of Georgian judges, prosecutors and lawyers: over 2 000 persons trained on European human rights standards and practices, 50% of Georgian judges strengthened their knowledge on European standards in criminal cases, the Prosecutor's Office has a pool of trainers on anti-discrimination laws and practices, and the High School of Justice (HSoJ) training strategy and curriculum were revised.
- The CoE helped to create a homogenous practice on specific legal issues efforts through the Bench and Bar meetings of judges, prosecutors and lawyers.
- Enhanced cooperation between the Supreme Court (SC) and the Public Defender's Office who provides advice to the judiciary on human rights matter through *amicus curiae*.
- Workshops, roundtable discussions and information sharing contributed to advocating for internally-displaced persons (IDPs), and over 1,500 IDPs were provided with legal consultations in 2013-14.

² ODGProg/Inf(2013)15.

³ GR-DEM(2016)2.

In July 2015, the Secretary General appointed Michael O'Boyle former Deputy Registrar of the European Court of Human Rights, as Special Adviser to the Georgian Government on Human Rights and Rule of Law.

Independence and efficiency of the judiciary

- Once adopted by the Parliament, improved procedures on the selection, appointment and disciplinary procedures of judges will enhance the independence of the judiciary. The CoE also contributed to improved ethical and disciplinary frameworks for the judiciary.
- Enhanced quality, consistency and uniformity of legal reasoning of judicial decisions as a result of the CoE support provided to the Supreme Court of Georgia.
- The CoE contributed to the revision of the Criminal Code to ensure its compliance with European standards.
- Enhanced capacity of the Prosecutor's Office to handle criminal cases and strengthened the rights of victims in criminal proceedings.
- The CoE contributed to revisions of the Law on Advocates, the Statute of the Georgian Bar Association (GBA) and of the lawyers' Code of Ethics thus enhancing the legal and regulatory framework of the profession of lawyers.
- The CoE assisted the HSoJ in revising its methodology and curricula to deliver modern and demand-driven courses for legal professionals.
- Improved capacity of judges regarding the reopening of civil and criminal cases on the basis of judgments/decisions of the European Court of Human Rights.

Penitentiary system and police reform

The CoE achieved significant progress in this sector, notably a comprehensive capacity-building programme⁴ improved general and mental health care standards in the penitentiary system and strengthened suicide prevention. These resulted in a radical drop in prison mortality and tuberculosis rates and a drastically reduced rate of suicide. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe closed its supervision of a group of cases against Georgia relating to medical care in penitentiary system⁵.

Media freedom, freedom of expression and association

- The mapping report on the status of self-regulatory institutions identified major deficiencies in media self-regulation.
- Enhanced and sustainable cooperation of the Georgian journalists' self-regulatory bodies with international partners.
- Bringing Internet governance policies and practice in line with the European standards began with the organisation of the first Internet Governance Forum in Georgia.

Free and fair elections

- The amendments to the Election Code take into account the CoE recommendations conducive for democratic elections, including permitting independent candidates.
- The Central Election Commission (CEC) improved capacity to resolve electoral disputes following CoE training seminars; non-governmental organisations (NGOs) enhanced their election monitoring reporting skills; and the capacity to provide media coverage of the election campaign was enhanced.
- Of the 35 women who completed the CoE training programme on participation of women in political life, 15 were elected, making this the most successful recent case of increased women's participation in politics in Georgia.
- The CoE enhanced the capacity of election commissions and administrative judges to deal with election dispute resolutions.
- The CEC began to introduce changes to its internal and external communication policy as a result of recommendations provided by CoE.

⁴ The training programme covered more than 700 prison staff (approximately 60% of all prison nurses and 36% of prison doctors, all governors, deputy governors, 10 % of prison regime and security staff), 100% of the half-way house staff and 100% of TDI staff.

⁵ See Ghavtadze Group of cases v. Georgia (no. 23204/07), Resolution CM/ResDH(2014)209, Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 12 November 2014 at the 1211th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.

Good governance

- Improvements to the legal protection of whistle-blowers in line with CoE recommendations;
- The assessment of corruption risk within the prosecution service, which focused on the legal framework and the current exercise of discretion;
- The launch of the National Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment.

Local democracy

- The CoE support mayors and district governors in overcoming the challenges they face when engaging citizens in local decision making and to implement ethical governance. In addition, CoE capacity building and awareness-raising focused on financial and human resource management and inter-municipal co-operation.
- The Congress strengthened the political dialogue with Georgian authorities in the framework of the post monitoring process with a view of assisting the ratification process of the remaining non-ratified provisions of the European Charter on Local Self-Government.

Tolerance and anti-discrimination policies

The CoE organised awareness-raising and advocacy activities covering 16 minority languages in the framework of preparation for the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML).

Confidence-building measures

The CoE focused on creating an environment conducive to confidence building by strengthening interaction among non-state actors, civil society and professionals in such areas as multicultural education, language learning and architectural heritage management.

MODALITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND CO-ORDINATION

Responsibility for monitoring AP implementation lies, at the CoE level, with the CM and in particular its Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM).

CoE and Georgian authorities established a joint Steering Committee to assess AP implementation. The Committee's meeting took place in February 2015 in Tbilisi, and the Committee endorsed the results of the AP implementation and contributed to the programming of the new co-operation framework between the CoE and Georgia for 2016-2019. The outcomes of the meeting were reflected in the Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2013-2015 Progress Review Report⁶ which the CM took note of in May 2015.

The consultations with Georgian authorities continued throughout 2015 in the course of the AP implementation and development of the new Action Plan for Georgia 2016-2019 (adopted by the Committee of Ministers in March 2016). The next Steering Committee meeting will take place in the first half of 2017.

CoE activities in Georgia receive the full support of the government and other stakeholders such as the Parliament, professional groups and civil society, which ensures sustainability of CoE interventions.

Tbilisi Office

The CoE office in Georgia plays an important role in AP co-ordination and implementation. It currently employs six core staff members and 18 project staff. The office is directly involved in project implementation and assists Major Administrative Entities with regional and thematic programmes.

⁶ GR-DEM(2015)12.

The office facilitates contacts with international partners present in the field. It also contributes to the increased visibility of the Organisation's actions in Georgia and significantly contributes to efficient use of resources through de-centralised project management. The office provides regular support to various CoE Institutions and bodies for organising events and project activities in, and monitoring visits to, Georgia.

CoE contribution to donor co-ordination in Georgia

The AP is implemented in close co-ordination with the Georgian Government and international partners active in Georgia, notably the EU Delegation to Georgia, development agencies of the CoE member states and the UN.

The Georgian Government co-ordinates donors' efforts through the Donor Co-ordination Unit (DCU) under the auspices of the Prime Minister. According to the DCU, the CoE scope of technical assistance is surpassed only by the EU, the US, and Sweden.

In an attempt to stimulate donor involvement, the DCU has invited donors to co-chair co-ordination meetings in five areas, as follows:

- rule of law and justice – CoE;
- economic growth – EU;
- good governance – United States Agency for International Development (USAID);
- human capital development – Germany;
- environment – Sweden;
- social welfare – Czech Republic.

FUNDING AND PARTNERS

The revised overall AP budget amounted to approximately €15.8 million. Funding of just over €10 million (63% of the total budget) was secured for the programming cycle 2013-15. The Office of the Directorate General of Programmes co-ordinated fundraising, in line with CoE resource mobilisation strategy.

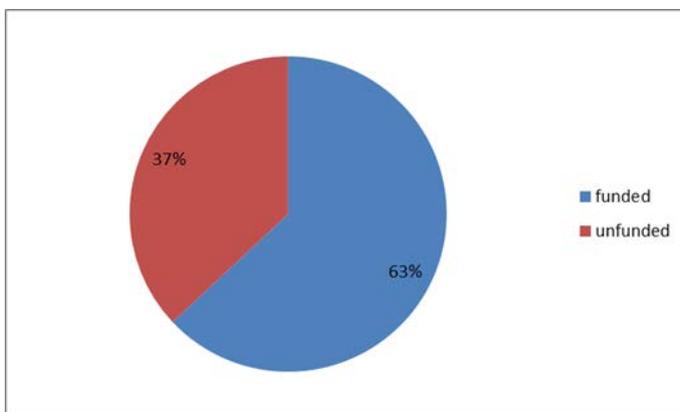


Figure 1: Funding situation of the CoE Action Plan for Georgia 2013-2015 as of December 2015

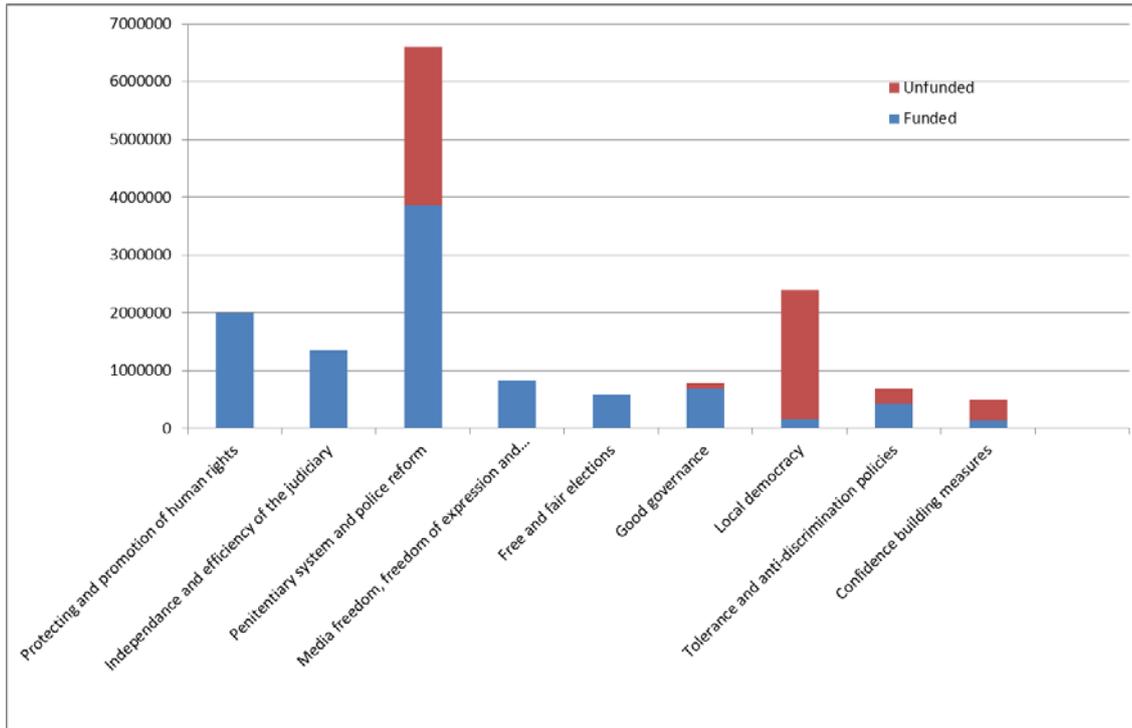


Figure 2: Funding situation per sector of the CoE Action Plan for Georgia 2013-2015 as of December 2015

Substantial funding was secured under the partnership between the CoE and the EU, including within the Eastern Partnership Facility. In 2015, Georgia was also included in projects under the PCF between the CoE and the EU in areas related to ECHR application, the harmonisation of national legislation and judicial practice with European standards, promoting education for democratic citizenship and human rights, the functioning of the GBA, further improving treatment conditions and respect for human rights in prisons, police detentions and psychiatric care, media freedom, Internet freedom, electoral assistance, anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT), and the integration of national minorities. Funding from the EU to the AP totalled over €6.9 million.

Voluntary contributions from CoE member states amounted to almost €1.9 million and enabled the implementation of projects in the areas of the protection and promotion of human rights, the independence and efficiency of the judiciary, media freedom and electoral assistance. Denmark provided funding of approximately €600 000, closely followed by Norway, Switzerland, the Human Rights Trust Fund and the Netherlands. Norway contributed non-earmarked funding to the AP. CoE Ordinary Budget funding amounted to €1.2 million.

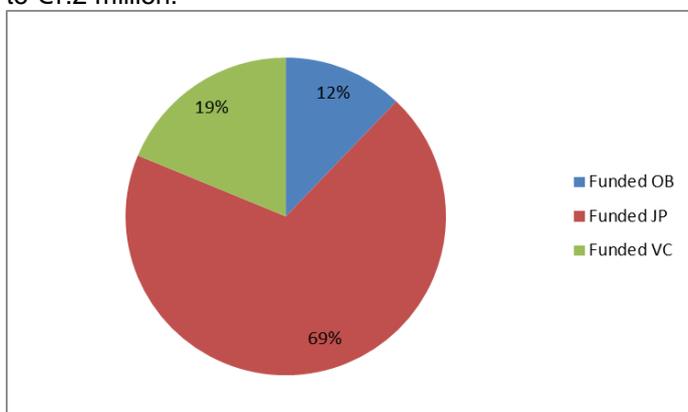


Figure 3. Funding sources for the CoE Action Plan for Georgia 2013-2015 as of December 2015

In 2012 and 2013, the CoE Development Bank (CEB) approved three loans in favour of projects in Georgia for a total amount of €42.7 million to be lent to small- and medium-sized enterprises for the partial financing of productive investments.

LESSONS LEARNED

The following list summarises the operational lessons learned during AP implementation:

- The implementation of the CoE recommendations depends on efficient national co-ordination mechanisms to follow-up on legislative expertise. Further interventions to enhance the co-ordination between national stakeholders on legislative matters will be important. The CoE's constant support and guidelines contribute to the development of reform strategies in line with European standards;
- Firmly anchoring the CoE's co-operation activities in its standards and monitoring findings, while maintaining a human rights based approach has a clear added value in comparison with other international assistance programmes in Georgia;
- Defining a baseline for concisely capturing the context of the project and indicators of achievement to quantify improvements are important elements of project development, implementation and assessment. Systematic use of public opinion surveys in developing baselines and formulating indicators should be encouraged along with the use of monitoring reports and recommendations of the advisory bodies.

PROGRAMMING OUTLOOK

The new Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2016-2019⁷ was adopted by the CM in March 2016. The priorities for co-operation were decided, taking into account such factors as the relevance of activities to the government's reform agenda; recommendations of CoE monitoring bodies and post-accession commitments to the CoE; the established presence and added value of the CoE in the sector; the capacity of national interlocutors to co-ordinate and implement programmes; and the sufficient availability of CoE human resources to implement, report on and co-ordinate the programmes with international partners at the sector level.

The Plan for 2016-19 includes the following priority sectors:

- **protecting and promoting human rights and dignity and ensuring social rights** by harmonising national legislation and judicial practice with European standards and strengthening the capacity to implement new legislation;
- **ensuring justice** by assisting reforms pursuing independence, transparency, impartiality, and efficiency of the justice system, including judiciary, prosecution, law enforcement and penitentiary;
- **strengthening democratic governance** by improving the integrity, transparency and quality of the electoral process and strengthening mechanisms for regional and municipal development;
- **countering threats to the rule of law:** corruption, money laundering and terrorism financing, cybercrime and manipulation of sports competitions;
- **building confidence** by developing a dialogue among non-state actors, civil society and professionals in conflict-affected areas.

The CoE stands ready to support the constitutional reform process if requested to do so by the Georgian authorities. Where relevant and in agreement with national stakeholders, an impact assessment of the CoE programmes in Georgia implemented in 2013-15 will be also conducted.

⁷ Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2016-2019 (GR-DEM(2016)2).

SECTOR REVIEW

1. PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Background

The CoE assisted with strengthening legal and institutional frameworks for implementing European human rights standards in Georgia. Most activities in 2013-15 focused on providing expertise on the drafting of new legislation or amendments to existing legislation. They also focused on enhancing the knowledge and skills of legal professionals (judges, prosecutors and lawyers) in the practical application of the ECHR, the Revised European Social Charter (RESC) and ECtHR case law.

In March 2014, the Georgian Government adopted the National Human Rights Strategy for 2014-2020 reaffirming its primary concern to ensure the continued compliance with European standards of protection of human rights. The CoE has contributed to the implementation of the Action Plan of the Government of Georgia on the Protection of Human Rights 2014-2016.

In 2014, Georgia adopted the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. Thus the CoE interventions focusing on the application of ECHR Article 14 on the Prohibition of discrimination and its protocol 12 were very timely for Georgia. The CoE assisted in building the capacity of the PDO to eliminate all forms of discrimination. In addition, the CoE continued to support the PDO in monitoring the situation of IDPs.

The CoE assisted Georgian authorities in ensuring compatibility of school curricula with the CoE Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE).

Sector impact and main achievements

The CoE achieved significant results in enhancing capacity of the Georgian lawyers and human rights defenders to successfully litigate cases based on the ECHR and on the RESC in proceedings before national courts and the ECtHR in the case of well-substantiated claims. A group of 18 professionals trained by the CoE has organised cascade training for 1160 lawyers and human rights defenders on ECHR, RESC and on the application of European anti-discrimination standards. In addition, over 550 lawyers and human rights defenders have received information on the ECHR. As an *ex post* evaluation of the CoE regional programme on “Strengthening the capacity for domestic application of the ECHR and of the RESC” shows, by the end of 2015 all Georgian programme participants had formed a stable network with which to exchange knowledge and practice. All of them reported using CoE materials in their work.

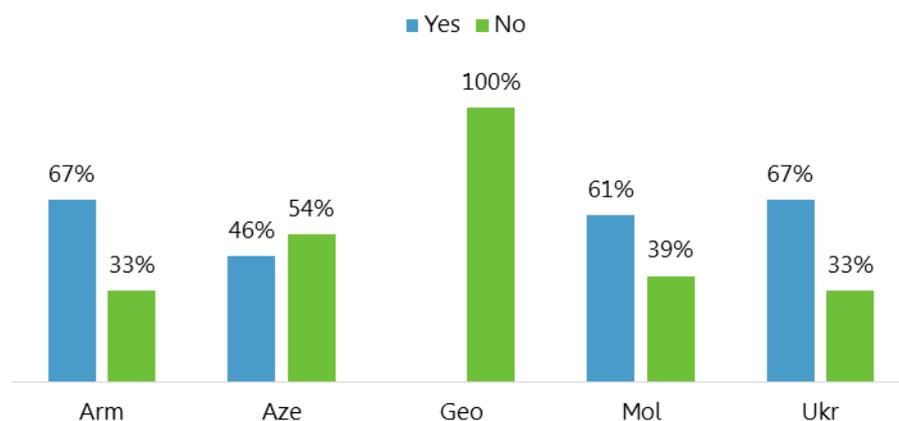


Figure 4: Establishing of networks among trainees after participation in the training

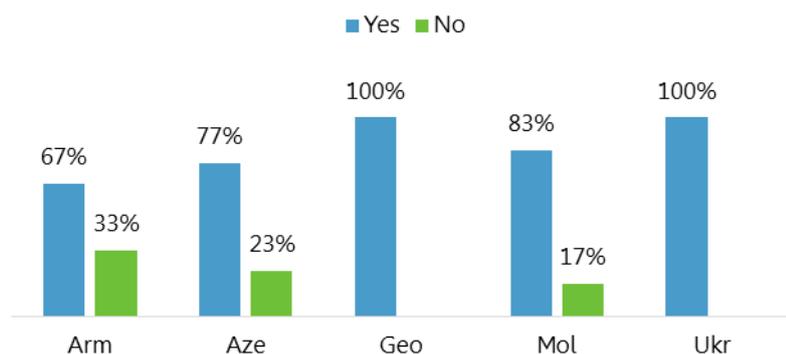


Figure 5: Trainees' use of CoE training materials on the ECHR and the RESC

The Venice Commission contributed to the Opinion on draft amendments to the Law on the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, prepared jointly with the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODOHR). Georgia adopted the Law in September 2015 taking into account most of the recommendations, in particular regarding the procedure of the Chief Prosecutor's appointment and dismissal. The CoE supported the establishment of a working group to identify key procedural shortcomings. Also, a pool of trainers for the Chief Prosecutor's Office on anti-discrimination issues has been identified.

Through a number of CoE activities under different projects 80% of judges were made aware of the procedure of 're-opening of cases'. The Bench and Bar meetings of judges, prosecutors and lawyers were organised and they serve to create a homogenous practice on specific legal issues among legal professionals.

A HUDOC's⁸ Georgian interface was created which is a major step forward in the functioning of the Supreme Court's database of cases.

With CoE assistance, the Georgian Parliament's Human Rights Committee introduced systematic parliamentary screening of draft legislation for compliance with the ECHR.

Since 2012, representatives of the Georgian national training institutions and bar association took part in the work of the European Human Rights Training Network (HELP Network). The network assists judges, prosecutors and lawyers to apply the ECHR nationally by developing curricula and training materials adapted to different needs and aimed at facilitating their everyday work.

Over 1,200 monitoring visits were conducted by the PDO staff and over 1,500 IDPs were provided with legal advice in 2013 and 2014. A report on IDPs' human rights situation has been issued⁹.

The CoE has provided concrete recommendations to relevant departments of the PDO to increase their analytical skills. The PDO's capacity to provide *amicus curiae* on human rights issues was strengthened through the Memorandum of Understanding between the PDO and the Supreme Court.

The CoE conducted an in-depth analysis of the Georgian national policy framework on the EDC/HRE, complemented by training organised for 45 Georgian education professionals on EDC/HRE standards.

⁸ The HUDOC database provides access to the case-law of the Court (Grand Chamber, Chamber and Committee judgments and decisions*, communicated cases, advisory opinions and legal summaries from the Case-Law Information Note), the European Commission of Human Rights (decisions and reports) and the Committee of Ministers (resolutions).

⁹ Report by the Public Defender of Georgia on human rights situation of internally displaced persons and conflict affected individuals in Georgia in 2013: <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/1/1621.pdf>

Programming outlook

In this sector the following priorities were identified jointly by the CoE and Georgian authorities for the period 2016-2019:

- The application of the ECHR and the RESC is improved at national level and the execution of ECtHR judgments is supported;
- The protection and integration of persons belonging to minorities is enhanced;
- The legislative framework on ill-treatment is improved in line with international and European human rights standards and an effective mechanism for investigating complaints against law enforcement officers for alleged ill-treatment is established;
- Internal regulatory framework and operational capacity of the Prosecutor's Office are improved in line with European standards;
- National anti-discrimination and hate speech mechanisms are reinforced;
- Gender equality and protection of women and children from violence is advanced; and
- The effectiveness of the education system to initiate young people for life as active and responsible citizens in a democratic society is increased.

2. INDEPENDENCE AND EFFICIENCY OF THE JUDICIARY

Background

The CoE aimed to improve compatibility of the Georgian justice system with European standards to increase its efficiency and quality. The CoE interventions in 2013-15 focused on strengthening judicial self-governance, improving quality of judicial decisions and procedural guarantees for handling criminal cases as well as enhancing the capacity of national training institutions for the judiciary. Work with the justice sector concentrated on supporting the Supreme Court and the HCoJ, the HSoJ, the prosecution service and the GBA.

The CoE carried out its work just as the National Criminal Justice Reform Strategy and its Action Plan has started to deliver concrete results, which included initiatives aimed at strengthening efficiency, accountability, transparency and independence of the judiciary and of prosecution, as well as to improve the criminal law by bringing it in line with European standards. The CoE also helped to enhance the capacity of the Chief Prosecutor's Office to implement amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia that strengthen the rights of victims in criminal proceedings. As a result, the CoE had to adjust its plans in order to address the new emerging needs of the beneficiaries resulting from a rapidly changing legal environment.

In January 2016, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights noted¹⁰ that judicial reforms have taken place at a dynamic pace. However, a number of concerns regarding the independence and functioning of the justice system remain, notably in relation to the selection, appointment and transfer of judges, as well as disciplinary proceedings against judges.

Sector impact and main achievements

The CoE assisted with revising legal and institutional frameworks of the judiciary, prosecution and lawyers. Nevertheless, adoption of legislation by the Parliament is still pending and the institutional capacity to enact new legislation has to be strengthened.

The CoE contributed to ongoing judicial reform through facilitating exchange of views between CoE experts and Georgian authorities. These exchanges resulted in concrete proposals for legislative amendments on procedures for selection, appointment evaluation of judges, which are currently under discussion in the Parliament. The CoE also supported process of revision of the ethical and disciplinary framework of the judiciary and provided recommendations which should become a basis for the relevant legislative amendments' package for the next wave of the judicial reform. The CoE will continue to follow up on the legislative amendments prepared during the third wave of judicial system reform to bring it fully in line with European standards and practices.

¹⁰ Observations on the human rights situation in Georgia, CommDH(2016)2.

The CoE carried out a comprehensive assessment of a range of amendments to Georgia's Criminal Code. A legal opinion was submitted to the Georgian authorities in March 2015 and public consultations took place in September-November 2015. The draft amendments are under development by the authorities.

Georgia adopted the Law on the Prosecutor's Office in September 2015 taking into account most of the recommendations of the Venice Commission, the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors and OSCE/ODIHR, in particular regarding the procedure of the Chief Prosecutor's appointment and dismissal. According to the newly adopted amendments the Parliament elected the Chief Prosecutor in November 2015.

The CoE contributed to the increased knowledge of Georgian prosecutors on the current approach and case law of the ECtHR on Articles 2 (Rights to Life), 3 (Prohibition of Torture), 5 (Right to Liberty and Security) and 6 (Right to Fair Trial) of the ECHR.

The CoE assisted the Prosecutor's Office in developing a Guidebook for prosecutors on drafting of and reasoning for procedural acts and other documents, such as prosecutor's rulings and motions.

The CoE contributed to the implementation of the recent amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia, strengthening the rights of victims in criminal proceedings and enhancing the capacity of relevant structures of Chief Prosecutor's Office.

The CoE supported the work of the Supreme Court Commission on Reasoning, Form and Stylistic Coherence of the Judgments in Criminal Cases. As a result of the Commission's work, a Guidebook on reasoning, form and stylistic coherence of judgments in criminal cases was developed and widely disseminated among judges and other court staff. The Guidebook and training contributes to increasing judges' skills in writing the reasoning for their decisions and will have a long-term impact on the quality of justice and fairness of court proceedings in Georgia.

The CoE supported the Supreme Court in strengthening its role within the judiciary through a chain of capacity building activities on procedural improvements, strategic planning and effective communication, court management and expertise related to the accessibility of its decisions, as well as legal assessment.

The CoE contributed to the implementation of the mechanism of reopening of civil and criminal proceedings on the basis of judgments/decisions of the European Court.

The CoE also provided expertise on the draft concept on electronic case allocation system that would transform the existing alphabetical distribution of cases into a random case assignment system. The CoE conducted a study on European standards and best practices of judicial ethics and recommendations for the improvement of the Georgian Judicial Code of Ethics.

The CoE assisted the HSoJ in elaboration of the Strategy and Action Plan for 2014 – 2018 (adopted in July 2014) following a comprehensive needs assessment. Through a combination of training-of-trainers programme and study visits to the CoE member states, the CoE contributed to increasing knowledge and improving skills of the management of the HSoJ and trainers to address the needs of the judiciary of Georgia. The CoE helped to create a pool of 20 national trainers available to further cascade trainings on issues of court organisation and management.

Support to the GBA resulted in amendments to its Statute, a review of the law on the profession of lawyers (the draft law is ready for submission to the Parliament) and an amendment of the Code of Professional Ethics to improve disciplinary procedures. Additionally, the CoE supported the GBA in preparing its mandatory traineeship program for lawyers entering the profession. As a result, new rules for the professional traineeship of Georgian lawyers will be introduced in 2016. Lawyers' access to on-line distance learning programmes, including HELP courses, was improved.

Programming outlook

In order to enhance the professionalism of the members of the judiciary and court staff, to improve accountability and impartiality of judiciary, to develop a sustainable basis for modern training of the legal professionals, to increase the independence and effectiveness of the Prosecutor's service and to improve lawyers' ethical standards and professionalism the CoE and Georgian authorities will focus on achieving the following objectives in 2016-2019:

- CoE standards and the recommendations of its advisory and standard-setting bodies (such as the Venice Commission, CCJE, CDCJ,) are reflected in the legislation related to the functioning of the Georgian judiciary;
- Management structure and practices of the courts are modernised;
- System of selection, appointment and promotion of judges is enhanced in line with international standards;
- An independent, transparent and trusted High Council of the Justice functions in line with European standards and recommendations;
- The concept of the alternative dispute resolution is defined, respective mechanisms are introduced and developed;
- Capacity of the High School of Justice to deliver modern and demand-driven courses for legal professionals is strengthened;
- A new human resources management system and procedures are implemented;
- A quality management system is implemented in the courts increasing effectiveness of the court services delivery;
- Access to modern and comprehensive judicial training is provided to judges, court staff, prosecutors and lawyers;
- The professionalism and transparency of the Prosecutor's Office is improved specifically in application of the ECHR and legal reasoning as well as improved management of the cases and human resources; and
- The Georgian Bar Association enhances its self-governance capacity towards fulfilment of its role in the administration of justice and the protection and promotion of human rights.

3. PENITENTIARY SYSTEM AND POLICE REFORM

Background

Most of the activities in this field in 2013-15 focused on protecting human rights in prisons and other closed institutions. The CoE aimed to improve the provision of healthcare, including mental health care in prisons, police detention and other closed facilities in line with European standards. The Public Defender issued a report in 2014 underlining the progress achieved in the prison healthcare system. However, the report also underlines a need to bring the healthcare in prisons further in line with established standards and improve the provision of psychiatric treatment for prisoners.

The Public Defender mentioned in reports that prison conditions should ensure prisoners' re-socialization and reintegration. In May 2015, the Parliament of Georgia approved a legislative package of amendments to the Code of Imprisonment which included envisioned structural reforms to the Ministry of Corrections (MoC). In connection to this, a number of MoC's orders recently were issued governing, among other things, areas of risk assessment for adult prisoners and adult and juvenile probationers; individual sentence planning for adult and juvenile probationers; and co-operation between the Department of Prisons and the National Probation Agency in preparing prisoners for release. However, there is a need to have an overall assessment of the current legislation and there is a need to strengthen the capacity of the MoC to deal with pre- and post-rehabilitation activities.

A comprehensive assistance programme to the police reform is under development in close consultation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

The CoE supported the international dimension of fighting cybercrime by enhancing the capacity of the 24/7 law-enforcement point of contact for cybercrime and electronic evidence.

Sector impact and main achievements

The CoE achieved significant progress in enhancing the provision of health care in prisons and police detention facilities. The CoE has contributed to changes in both policy and practice in this field.

The Prison Healthcare Development Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2017 was developed and adopted in July 2014 following CoE recommendations. The CoE also supported the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs to finalise and bring in line with best practices and standards the Strategy (adopted in December 2013) and Action Plan on Mental Health for 2015-2020 (adopted in December 2014). The CoE assisted in developing a model for an independent investigative mechanism, and provided technical assistance on drafting by-laws on the use of special means of restraint, electronic surveillance, and helped to amend the by-laws on prison security measures and transportation of inmates. The CoE closely worked with the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Corrections and Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs facilitating constructive dialogue and sharing experience.

The CoE organised a number of capacity-building activities on penitentiary healthcare reform, forensic psychiatry, suicide prevention, internal inspection and independent investigative mechanisms to provide information and to trigger discussions and exchange on topical issues among prison staff, law enforcement and healthcare professionals. These measures contributed to a significant drop in the suicide rate in prisons. The mortality and tuberculosis rate in prisons has also dropped radically¹¹.

In November 2014, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe closed its supervision on a group of cases concerning structural problems of the medical treatment of hepatitis C and tuberculosis within the penitentiary system of Georgia.

The CoE has supported introduction of basic training for every newcomer in the prison system by helping to develop the curriculum and assisting in implementation of two 6-months training cycles for newly recruited prison.

The CoE is currently helping Georgian authorities to develop a national roadmap for policy and legislative changes to prevent prison overcrowding. The CoE's Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (Pompidou Group) provided additional support to improve punitive drug legislation and prison drug treatment services.

Programming outlook

The CoE will aim to assist Georgia in building national capacity of the penitentiary and probation system to prevent ill-treatment, protect human rights and enhance its rehabilitative potential. In the report (CPT/Inf (2015) 42) on its 2014 periodic visit to Georgia, made public in December 2015, the CPT welcomes the significant progress in reducing prison population, renovating old and building new prisons and improving prison health-care services and points at the outstanding problems including cases of impunity and ill-treatment.

The work in 2016-2019 will focus on achieving the following objectives:

- Penitentiary legislation, including relevant by-laws, is in line with the CoE standards;
- The penitentiary and police system's legal and procedural safeguards and capacity to effectively prevent ill-treatment and fight against impunity is improved;
- Provision of healthcare during detention is enhanced;
- Provision of mental healthcare and respect of human rights in closed institutions is improved;
- Alternatives to imprisonment are promoted;
- The Probation Service structure and operations are in line with European best practices;
- Research capacity in penitentiary and probation sectors is enhanced;
- Training activities for prison and probation staff is enhanced;

¹¹ In accordance with the official data provided at the website of the Ministry of Corrections of Georgia (www.mcla.gov.ge):

- December 2012–19 349 inmates, death toll: 67, including 4 cases of suicide;
- December 2013–9 093 inmates, death toll: 25, including 6 cases of suicide.
- December 2014–10 372 inmates, death toll: 27, including 7 cases of suicide;
- December 2015–9 716 inmates, death toll: 7, including 1 case of suicide.

- Police reforms are supported to establish a more professional, transparent, accountable and community-oriented law enforcement structure;
- The police is able to effectively investigate cases of gender violence, domestic violence, crime against children, hate crime and cases of complaints against police actions as well as to combat impunity and fight corruption within law enforcement;
- The CoE will also continue its assistance to the Georgian authorities to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cybercrime.

4. MEDIA FREEDOM, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

Background

The relevant legislative framework has improved significantly since 2013, notably the provisions for making media groups' financing more transparent. Nevertheless, among the core challenges facing the Georgian media remains the financial stability of institutions (particularly that of the regional media), shortage of investigative and analytical journalism, lack of employment security for journalists, and combating libel and hate speech.

Georgian media successfully switched from analogue to digital broadcasting in the summer of 2015. In 2014, to enhance the protection of privacy, the Parliament passed legislative amendments to the Law on Information Security of 2012. There is still a need to raise awareness and knowledge of European standards about the Internet and human rights and the related ECtHR case law.

Georgia has ratified the 2001 Additional Protocol to the CoE Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data in January 2014. On 1 August 2014, the Parliament adopted a package of relevant legislative amendments. Further assistance in developing complete legislation and good practice regulating data collection and surveillance is needed.

Sector impact and main achievements

The CoE helped to identify major deficiencies in Georgia's media self-regulation and increase journalists' awareness about their rights and ethics. In 2015, the CoE launched actions to improve the quality of journalism education and training, improve the visibility of minority groups in the media and increase promotional activities that address hate speech and intolerance. The CoE has also promoted the independence of the broadcasting regulatory body.

Other planned activities, including a legislative compatibility review, have been postponed until the Law on Freedom of Information is prepared. Bringing Internet governance policies and practice in line with European standards began with the CoE's organisation of the first Internet Governance Forum in Georgia in December 2015 and bilateral activities to discuss public policy issues related to the Internet.

Programming outlook

The CoE will continue to support Georgia in improving legislative and institutional framework and capacity of national partners to ensure freedom, independence, pluralism and diversity of media. The main objectives of the cooperation include:

- Increased compliance of national legal frameworks and policies with CoE standards on freedom of expression;
- Enhanced professionalism, responsibility and respect of ethical rules among journalists;
- Improved quality of journalism education and training;
- Enhanced independence of the broadcasting regulatory bodies and public service broadcasters;
- Enhanced protection of the internet freedom through legislation and arrangements for multi-stakeholder dialogue. The CoE plans to organise the second National Internet Governance forum in 2016.

Special attention will be paid to the visibility of minority groups in the media and there will be an increased number of promotional activities that address hate speech and intolerance. The CoE will continue co-operation with the Georgian authorities (notably the Personal Data Protection Inspector) in the field of data protection, specifically focusing on improvement of the legal framework, such as: the provision of support for drafting amendments to the data protection legislation; training of staff in the Personal Data Protection Inspector's office; developing guidelines and recommendations to reinforce the effective implementation of data protection legislation and safeguards in the law enforcement sector. Other possible areas for co-operation in this include capacity building for legal professionals, handling media freedom cases and in data protection and the implementation of standards and practices.

5. FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

Background

The international organisations assessed Georgia's recent election cycle (2012-14) as largely positive. The year 2012 saw the first peaceful change of the government through parliamentary elections. The report by the OSCE/ODIHR on the presidential election of October 2013 stated that the "election was efficiently administered and transparent, and took place in an amicable and constructive environment. During the election campaign, fundamental freedoms of expression, movement, and assembly were respected and candidates were able to campaign without restriction".

The media was less polarized than during the 2012 elections and presented a broad range of viewpoints.

The observation mission of the Congress concluded that 2014 local elections "were carried out in an overall calm and peaceful manner". It acknowledged the efforts made by the Georgian authorities to prevent electoral fraud by the introduction of a new system of verification of voters' identity and encouraged them to revise registration of voters and no-confidence procedures in order to increase equality of the vote. In addition, the Congress recommended Georgia to permit independent candidates to run for city mayors and regional governors.

The CoE will continue its support to enhance trust in the election process through Georgia's current election cycle 2016-18. The Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) 2015 report¹² positively assessed the adoption of the new Electoral Code and welcomed certain amendments to the Law on Political Unions of Citizens. Nevertheless, GRECO recommended "to proceed with the efforts to revise existing legislation in the area of political finance, with a view to establishing a more uniform legal framework, notably by aligning the (new) Election Code with the Law on Political Unions of Citizens (and vice versa)"¹³. In terms of strengthening the electoral process, the issues of women's and youth participation and domestic election monitoring also require improvement.

Sector impact and main achievements

The rules on donations and restrictions applicable to donations and donors as established by the new Election Code and the Law on Political Unions of Citizens have been harmonised and more stringent reporting and monitoring mechanisms introduced in line with previous recommendations by the OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission.

The CoE activities to increase women's participation in politics have been praised as some of the most successful recent cases in Georgia. Out of the 35 women who completed the CoE training programme, 15 were elected.

In 2013-14, the representatives of the district election commissions and administrative judges incorporated international best practices of election disputes resolutions into their work.

¹² RC-III (2015) 4.

¹³ Ibid.

The CEC began to introduce changes to its internal and external communication policy as a result of CoE recommendations. The Political Party and Campaign Finance Monitoring Department of the State Audit Office enhanced its knowledge on good practices from political party and campaign finance monitoring in France and other countries.

Programming outlook

The CoE will help to increase capacity of the authorities and civil society to ensure effective implementation of the electoral legislation and practices. Specifically, the CoE aims to achieve the following objectives in 2016-2019:

- The process of improving election legislation to meet international standards is supported;
- Institutional and operational capacity of election administration to organise electoral process in line with the CoE standards is enhanced. The administrative, operational and management capacity of the Political Party Finance Monitoring Department of the State Audit Office is increased;
- The capacity of domestic election observation organisations is increased;
- Women's political is enhanced;
- Participation of national minorities and youth (first time voters) in the elections is increased;
- The capacity of media to provide professional coverage of elections is increased.

6. GOOD GOVERNANCE

Background

The CoE conducted most of its technical assistance in this field in 2013-14 in the framework of the EU/CoE regional Eastern Partnership programme on strengthening anti-corruption measures in the public sector. Starting in 2015, the CoE assists Georgia in strengthening its AML/CFT measures, as identified in the latest Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) Fourth Evaluation Report¹⁴ on Georgia and the EU's Progress Report on the implementation of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan by Georgia¹⁵ and through the CoE/EU Programmatic Co-operation Framework Project "Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing" in Georgia.

Sector impact and main achievements

Among achievements in this sector are amendments to legislation that enhance the protection of whistle-blowers, developed in line with international standards and best practices following CoE advice. The new legislation adopted in 2015 expands the status of whistle-blowers to any person, not only to former or current public servants. It also allows both anonymous and confidential whistleblowing.

The CoE helped Georgian authorities with the development of the new Georgian Anti-Corruption Strategy, in particular the design of monitoring and evaluation indicators. In addition, the CoE performed an assessment on corruption risks in the prosecution services.

The CoE provided relevant Georgian institutions with guidance on conducting a national anti-money laundering and terrorist financing risk assessment and gave advice on specific steps to be taken by different authorities. As a result, Georgian authorities are currently in the first phase of the risk assessment aimed at, *inter alia*, addressing systemic shortcomings identified by MONEYVAL. This activity will shortly be complemented with advice on remedying legislative shortcomings.

¹⁴ MONEYVAL(2012)18.

¹⁵ The European Commission's "Fourth progress report on Georgia's implementation of the action plan on visa liberalisation" (SWD(2015) 299 final).

Programming outlook

The CoE will continue to assist Georgia in strengthening its legal and institutional capacity to combat corruption and effectively implement AML/CFT measures. In addition, at the request of Georgian authorities, the CoE will aim to extend its assistance to such areas as strengthening good governance of the national sports organisations and education system.

7. LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Background and programming outlook

In December 2014, Georgian authorities decided to launch a post-monitoring procedure with the Congress following political dialogue during the monitoring of the application of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which gave rise to a Congress recommendation¹⁶. This post-monitoring programme was concluded in December 2015 with the signature of a road map between the Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia and the Congress that defines the implementation modalities of the recommendations by the end of 2016. The road map will assist Georgian authorities in local government reform, launched in 2013, that aims at the gradual decentralization of the management system and finances.

The CoE assisted Georgian local administrations by sharing knowledge and expertise on local finance benchmarking. The CoE launched activities to improve inter-municipal co-operation mechanisms. The CoE also supports mayors and regional governors in addressing challenges they face for an inclusive and ethical local democratic governance in their communities. In addition, the EU/CoE Joint regional action on Community-led Urban Strategies in Historic Towns, launched in January 2015, helps local authorities to promote heritage protection, conservation and landscape preservation, considered as factors in regional social and economic development.

8. TOLERANCE AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES

Background

In this field, the CoE mainly focused on assistance with Georgia's fulfilment of its commitment to the CoE to sign and ratify the ECRML. The draft of a ratification instrument was prepared in June 2013 with the support of the CoE. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe strongly encouraged Georgia to sign and ratify the Charter without further delay¹⁷.

The Secretary General's 2016 report to PACE about the application of the ECRML contains the following¹⁸: "In June 2013, further to a request for expert support by the Georgian authorities, the Georgian high-level inter-ministerial commission on the Charter and CoE experts prepared a draft instrument of ratification... Awareness-raising activities carried out in its framework in 2015 confirmed the strong support by the national minorities for the ratification of the Charter. However, the Georgian Government still does not show the necessary political will to sign the treaty and to initiate the actual ratification procedure. Further to the comprehensive legal advice received and the awareness-raising activities carried out, Georgia is strongly encouraged to sign and ratify the Charter in 2016".

Georgia has finalised the development of the Civic Equality Strategy and Action Plan. The new strategy includes comprehensive policies and activities for the promotion of integration and protection of national minorities within five major strategic goals: political participation and civic activism; provision of quality education in state and minority languages; equal social and economic opportunities; culture and preservation of identity; and support for religious tolerance and pluralism. The CoE already co-operates with Georgian authorities in the main areas outlined in the Strategy (mainly in the areas of education, culture, etc.). The CoE will prioritise the implementation of this Strategy in the coming years. Special attention will be given to involvement of the representatives of provincial minority groups.

¹⁶ 334 (2013).

¹⁷ Secretary General's 2014 report on the application of the ECRML to the Parliamentary Assembly (Doc. 13436/3 March 2014).

¹⁸ Application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: Biennial Report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to the Parliamentary Assembly, 2 March 2016: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/sgreports/SGreport2015_en.pdf.

In its recent Report on Georgia adopted in December 2015, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) welcomed positive developments since its last report of 2010.

- In 2012, the Criminal Code of Georgia was amended to introduce racial, religious, national, ethnic, homophobic and transphobic intolerance as aggravating circumstances in line with recommendation made in ECRI's 2010 report.
- In 2014, the Georgian Parliament enacted the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination.
- In 2014, the Parliament adopted the National Human Rights Strategy 2014-2020.
- The Georgian authorities implemented the 2009-2014 National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and its associated Action Plan.

Nevertheless, ECRI notes that hate speech against ethnic and religious minorities and against LGBT persons continues to be a widespread problem in Georgia.

Sector impact and main achievements

Progress in ratifying the ECRML was slow. The CoE closely co-operates with the high-level inter-ministerial commission to move the process forward. The CoE put in place a co-ordinated approach to ECRML awareness-raising, with a series of discussions to inform communities about the ratification instrument and an exchange between experts and academics to prepare promotional materials on minority languages. The CoE works both centrally and locally to harmonise the positions of different state institutions with regard to ECRML provisions. In addition, the CoE initiated co-operation with the National Agency for Cultural Preservation of Georgia for development of the "Cultural Route of National Minorities" and with the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Georgia on educational aspects of civic integration of national minorities.

The CoE's campaign to combat Hate Speech in Georgia continued for two years (2013-14) at the initiative of the non-governmental youth organisation, the Georgian School Student Unions' Alliance, and resulted in the organisation of a youth network of 40 young activists. More than 630 participants attended 20 regional one-day workshops that were conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sport Affairs. Most of the seminar participants are now working on the online campaign involving in different online tools.

Programming outlook

In 2016-2019 the CoE will focus its work on improving protection of persons belonging to minorities and promotion of their rights in accordance with the European standards, specifically aiming to achieve the following objectives:

- Enhancing the capacity of the relevant national authorities to deal with the signature, ratification and subsequent implementation of the ECRML;
- The general public, decision makers and professionals are accurately and objectively informed about Rights and standards contained in the FCNM and the ECRML;
- Assisting authorities with implementation of the Civic Equality and Integration State Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2020;
- Implementing effective and evidence-based policies of integration and protection of national minorities;
- Providing technical assistance in implementing necessary measures to address recommendations of the ECRI 2015 report on Georgia in close coordination with Georgian authorities;
- Supporting the No Hate Speech campaign through translation and dissemination of education materials, maintenance of the online platform to signal and discuss hate speech, introduction of the education and training programme in schools and youth organisations.

9. CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES

Background

Since 2010, the CoE CBM programme in Georgia aims at enhancing respect for and compliance with human rights standard and practices in the regions concerned through fostering dialogue between relevant professional groups. The CoE closely co-operates with the Georgian Office of State Ministry for Reconciliation (SMR), but a separate segment has been developed in co-operation with the PDO since November 2014 to address human rights issues as identified by the PDO in its daily work.

In addition, the CoE engages civil society and professional groups from conflict-affected regions in activities on architectural heritage management, environment protection, drug prevention and treatment, museum management and language teacher training. Activities implemented so far have allowed developing contacts among decision makers and relevant networks of professionals to create a climate conducive to building confidence in the communities affected by the conflict.

Sector impact and main achievements

The CoE managed to increase the scope and number of activities which contributed to the sustainability of the CBM programme. As in previous years, the interaction between non-state actors, civil society and professionals was in the focus of the CoE approach to CBM. The following are among the milestones of the programme in 2013-15:

- Civil society representatives from Tbilisi and Tskhinvali learnt about the civil society contribution to peace and dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Representatives of civil society from Tbilisi and Sukhumi reviewed contributions civil society can make to support multicultural education and dialogue between different population groups in the region.
- Architects, town planners, conservationists and art historians from Tbilisi and Sukhumi reached an agreement on the development of a form for collecting data on architectural objects and sites in Abkhazia and agreed on the training modalities.
- Teachers from the Abkhazia region took part in advanced training seminar for language teachers in the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz (Austria).
- Public defenders from Tbilisi and Sukhumi, members of their respective offices and representatives of civil society discussed possible ways to improve the situation concerning four human rights issues: right to health care, rights of persons deprived of liberty, freedom of movement and human rights awareness raising.
- A first series of European lectures by CoE experts on human rights issues took place in Sukhumi region and was attended by local experts and students.

Limited access has restricted the CoE's confidence-building measures concerning the Tskhinvali region.

Programming outlook

The CoE will continue its activities in building confidence between professional groups from divided communities with a view to improve human rights awareness in the conflict-affected regions. The focus of the CBM in 2016-2019 will be on support of public defenders' work in places of detention, on enhancing access to quality healthcare for the population living in the region, on strengthening the capacity of civil society in preventing and combating violence against women and children, on raising awareness about human rights in the region. In addition, the CoE will continue to enhance skills and share experience among local professionals in such areas as conservation of cultural and architectural heritage, multicultural approach to language learning, cooperation and exchanges between media outlets and journalists, awareness and respect of rights of disabled persons.

APPENDIX I. FINANCIAL TABLE

(All amounts in euros)

Sectors		Total revised budget	Funded OB	Funded JP	Funded VC	Funded EU-CoE PCF	Total funds secured	Unfunded
1.	Protection and promotion of human rights	1 993 334	253 333	150 000	660 000	930 001	1 993 334	
2.	Independence and efficiency of the judiciary	1 353 526	40 000	154 000	799 526	360 000	1 353 526	
3.	Penitentiary system and police reform	6 605 700	562 000	3 298 700			3 860 700	2 745 000
4.	Media freedom, freedom of expression and association	830 000	65 000		180 000	585 000	830 000	
5.	Free and fair elections	584 797	27 112	156 000	157 670	244 014	584 797	
6.	Good governance	787 700	0	187 700		500 000	687 700	100 000
7.	Local democracy	2 396 400	94 000	66 000			160 000	2 236 400
8.	Tolerance and anti-discrimination policies	685 000	35 000		85 000	315 000	435 000	250 000
9.	Confidence-building measures	500 000	140 000				140 000	360 000
10.	Action Plan and project management capacity development for national stakeholders	75 000						75 000
TOTAL		15 811 457	1 216 446	4 012 400	1 882 196	2 934 015	10 045 057	5 766 400