

Towards a common goal



Working together
with international
organisations



WORKING TOGETHER THROUGH THE GRANTS

Through the EEA and Norway Grants, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway aim at contributing to reducing social and economic disparities in the European Economic Area and fostering bilateral cooperation. To this end, 150 programmes are running in 16 beneficiary countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltics.

The donors aim at upholding European and international standards in all programmes, whether it is in the area of environment, justice and home affairs or addressing the situation of Roma and vulnerable groups. Promoting human rights is also a horizontal concern within all relevant programmes.

Inter-governmental organisations such as the Council of Europe and organisations within the United Nations system have long been engaged in setting standards on human rights and furthering democracy and the rule of law across Europe. They also have a wealth of experience

and expertise in various programme areas of the Grants. In order to ensure the highest possible quality, and where it is assessed that the involvement can bring a strong added value in programmes and projects, international organisations have been invited to join as partners.

As experiences and lessons learned from the involvement of international organisations and partners are being collected, all involved actors in the beneficiary countries and donor countries are gaining valuable insight into how these partnerships can be further enhanced in the 2014-2021 programme cycle of the Grants.

A close-up photograph of two hands clasped together, one slightly larger than the other, set against a background of a grey paved surface. The hands are positioned centrally, with the fingers interlaced. The lighting is bright, casting soft shadows on the pavement below. The overall tone is warm and supportive.

ABOUT THIS LEAFLET

This leaflet presents examples of projects and programmes where partnerships with international organisations have added value. They can serve as inspiration for what can be achieved by bringing on board the right experts.

WHO WE WORK WITH

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

As the leading inter-governmental organisation promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Europe, the Council of Europe (CoE) is the largest international partner of the EEA and Norway Grants. The close partnership draws on the Council's wealth of experience and its role in setting European and international standards in areas such as justice reform, fighting corruption, trafficking and gender-based violence and promoting social inclusion.

CoE houses the European Court of Human Rights and has adopted more than 200 international conventions in areas linked to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It monitors member states' progress in these areas and makes country-specific recommendations through independent expert monitoring bodies. Through the Grants, the CoE can provide technical assistance and expertise to member states on how to reach and maintain European standards.

In the 2009-2014 programme cycle, the CoE is involved in 20 programmes of the Grants, covering nine beneficiary countries. It provides advice in the development of programmes and is also a partner in a range of projects.



Country	Programme	Role
Bulgaria	Children and youth at risk	● ●
	Domestic and gender-based violence	● ●
	Schengen cooperation and cross-border crime	● ●
	Judicial capacity building	● ●
	Correctional services	● ●
Croatia	Judicial capacity building	●
Cyprus	Home for Cooperation: support to civil society (including strengthening dialogue on history teaching)	● ●
Czech Republic	Capacity building and institutional cooperation (in the areas of anti-corruption and anti-money laundering)	●
	Correctional services	● ●
Latvia	Correctional services	●
Malta	Capacity building and institutional cooperation	●
Poland	Domestic and gender-based violence	●
	Schengen cooperation and cross-border crime	●
Romania	Children and youth at risk	● ●
	Domestic and gender-based violence	● ●
	Judicial capacity building	● ●
	Correctional services	●
	Schengen cooperation and cross-border crime	●
Slovakia	Local and regional initiatives	● ●
	Domestic and gender-based violence	● ●

● Donor programme partner ● Project partner ● Expert

OTHER INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS INVOLVED IN THE GRANTS

In areas where international organisations and partners can bring an added value to the successful implementation of the Grants, they have become involved as associated to or partners in projects, advisors at programme level or as strategic advisors to the donor countries. In addition to the CoE, the following organisations are involved with the Grants:

- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- International Organization for Migration
- Open Society Foundation (OSF)
- Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
- Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)
- Roma Education Fund (REF)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- The World Bank
- The World Health Organisation (WHO)

In addition, Transparency International (TI) provides expert input in identifying and addressing corruption risks in the implementation of the Grants.

TOGETHER FOR A STRONGER JUDICIARY

In Bulgaria, the Council of Europe is involved as a donor programme partner in the 'Judicial Capacity-building and Cooperation' programme funded by Norway through the Norway Grants. As such, the CoE has been actively involved in the development and implementation of the programme and provided expert knowledge on legal instruments, including the European Convention on Human Rights. The CoE also takes part as a partner in the five projects implemented within the programme.

"I apply the acquired knowledge in my everyday work as a judge. Now I look at the court proceedings from a different perspective, which guarantees the parties higher standards of justice."

Irina Ganeva (pictured left), one of the Bulgarian judges seconded to the European Court of Human Rights.





BUILDING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Nine Bulgarian judges have been seconded to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg for up to one year with support from Norway. These placements with the Council of Europe are a part of a project aimed to improve the competence and efficiency of the Bulgarian judiciary so that they better comply with and implement provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights.

By participating in the project, the judges get a unique opportunity to expand their horizons: *“You get to fully integrate for a specified term of time in the work of this unique international institution – which would otherwise be hard to achieve for members of the Bulgarian judiciary,”* explains Iliyana Baltova (pictured center), a judge participating in the project.

The placements have also contributed to a reduced number of pending applications against Bulgaria before the ECtHR. According to statistics of the ECtHR’s backlog, Bulgaria now ranks 16th with less than 800 applications, after previously ranking 7th – 9th with over 2000 applications pending.

Project promoter: Supreme Judicial Council

Project amount: € 667 250

Project link: bit.ly/1SbrRLy

IMPROVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Access to justice is a fundamental right. However, lack of knowledge about rights and low income can prevent individuals from vulnerable backgrounds from seeking legal advice.

The National Legal Aid Bureau in Bulgaria and the Council of Europe have implemented a pilot initiative in order to address this issue. With support from Norway, two legal aid centres were opened in Vidin and Sliven – two of the country's largest Roma communities. A national telephone hotline was opened, providing those in need with legal advice.

Close to 10 000 people from vulnerable backgrounds received free legal assistance, either by attending appointments or phone consultations. Official records show that since the introduction of the pilot services the number of filed applications for legal representations in the areas have decreased by 18%.

Project promoter: National Legal Aid Bureau

Project amount: € 261 670

Project link: bit.ly/1N3Zlcw



“The cooperation and the understanding of CEPEJ experts for problems of the court arising in the current legal framework and procedures has not only led to a greater transparency regarding work results, but also to a more positive atmosphere among judges to achieve the set goals despite obstacles.”

Tomislav Maras, President of Karlovac Municipal Court

TOWARDS A MORE USER-FRIENDLY JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Among the key challenges faced by the Croatian judicial system are long court procedures and a significant backlog of cases. To counter this and bring the judicial practices in line with European standards, the SATURN tools developed by Council of Europe's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) are being introduced in 16 courts in Croatia with funding from Norway. The tools are designed to improve time management and the quality of delivery of justice and have been widely used across Europe.

The SATURN tools are also being used to increase understanding on how people experience using the system. This is done through pilot satisfaction surveys for users of the court. The results of the surveys are analysed in order to find out where improvements are needed, and action plans developed on how to attend to those needs.

Project promoter: Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Croatia

Project amount: € 3 649 543

Project link: bit.ly/23A05tb

A DIGNIFIED RETURN HOME

Greece is an entry point for migrants to the EU and the borderless Schengen area, with thousands entering the country each year. Most intend to continue to other European countries but often end up homeless and living on the streets. Given the difficult economic situation in Greece, many wish to return to their home countries. An EEA Grants project aimed to assist migrants wishing to return voluntarily to their home countries.

The project was implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which has decades-long experience in the field worldwide. The IOM provided pre-departure briefings, obtained travel documents and made travel arrangements and in some cases assisted with reintegration. A total of 851 migrants (mostly from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan) and 23 victims of trafficking (from Romania, Bulgaria and Latvia) were ensured a safe return home.

Project promoter: *International Organization for Migration*

Project amount: € 832 290

Project link: bit.ly/23APq2p



“The project was a success not only because more migrants than anticipated were returned home, but also because it ensured a dignified and safe return back to their respective countries.”

Daniel Esdras, Head of Office of IOM in Greece


IOM International Organization for Migration
ΔΙΟΜ Διεθνής Οργανισμός Μεταναστευτικής
ΓΡΑΦΕΙΟ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ - OFFICE IN GREECE

ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΕΘΕΛΟΝΤΙΚΗΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΡΟΦΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΑΝΕΝΤΑΞΗΣ
ΥΠΗΚΟΩΝ ΤΡΙΤΩΝ ΧΩΡΩΝ ΣΤΗ ΧΩΡΑ ΚΑΤΑΓΩΓΗΣ ΤΟΥΣ
ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION
PROGRAM OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS TO THEIR COUNTRY
OF ORIGIN


Home Office

Το Πρόγραμμα χρηματοδοτείται από το Τομέο Επιστροφής & Επένταξης
του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου
The Assisted Voluntary Return Programme is Funded by the UK Returns and
Reintegration Fund.


Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

PROVIDING SERVICES FOR THOSE IN NEED

With a large number of migrant arrivals, the Greek asylum service has faced serious challenges, one of them being a shortage of reception places. Through the EEA Grants' SOAM programme funded by Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein, four reception centres are being supported in Greece. The centres are run by NGOs but the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is responsible for the overall management of the programme. IOM's vast experience in working with migrant communities in Greece allows it to work as a bridge between government and NGOs.

The centres place a particular focus on providing shelter to groups at risk of being exploited – unaccompanied minors, disabled individuals and single parent families. At the centres, they have a place to stay and receive much needed services including medical care, psychological support and legal aid. Through the programme, 1755 unaccompanied children, 121 lone mothers and 380 other vulnerable asylum seekers have been given shelter.

Programme promoter: Financial Mechanism Office

Programme amount: € 8 349 367

Programme link: bit.ly/1TqRxc4





"The impact of the programme cannot be underestimated, particularly for the children on their own. There are only around 400 places nationwide for minors. The programme is providing a quarter of these."

Natassa Arapidou, IOM Assistant Project Coordinator.

TOGETHER AGAINST CORRUPTION

The Czech Republic has taken on significant measures to counter corruption in the past years. Among those is a project supported by Norway, aiming at strengthening the country's anti-corruption and anti-money laundering systems. This is being done by supporting the implementation of selected recommendations made by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) within the Council of Europe.

Involving the CoE has allowed the project team to develop high-quality proposals and training courses together with international experts which they otherwise would have difficulties reaching. It has also made it easier for the project team to compare Czech anti-corruption measures with law enforcement in different European countries and participate in study visits abroad. Several workshops have taken place and papers published covering anti-corruption topics. In addition, over 600 people from public institutions dealing with anti-corruption matters and from academia, businesses and NGOs have received training.

Project promoter: Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic

Project amount: € 696 935

Project link: bit.ly/1SC5BW4

“The Council of Europe has definitely brought added value to the project: in the organisation of workshops and seminars, quality assurance of papers and documents as well as providing a network of contacts, we have benefited from CoE involvement. The cooperation has also led to closer cooperation between us and the CoE outside of the project.”

Jana Ružarovská, International and Legal Department Officer and administrator of the project, Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic





SHARING EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE

The two-day international conference 'Developing trends in combating corruption, money laundering and recovering criminal assets in Europe' took place in Prague 20-21 October 2015.

Organised by the Norwegian Government, the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic and the Council of Europe, the conference brought together 250 participants from 47 countries. The CoE played a leading role in the design and organisation of the conference by choosing relevant agenda subjects and ensuring international expert participation.

During the two days, international experts addressed anti-corruption approaches from several angles, such as election campaign funding, whistle-blower protection, transparency of beneficial ownership and conflict of interest. The conference also provided a useful venue for the different finance intelligence units (FIUs) from across Europe to discuss approaches, challenges and solutions in implementing the EU Directive on money laundering or terrorist financing.

"The discussion within this conference supported some of our thoughts during the preparation of the draft amendment to the Czech legislation. It also showed us other possible approaches chosen in other jurisdictions. Money laundering is an international criminal activity so the cooperation between all Financial Intelligence Units in Europe is crucial."

Jana Ružarovská, International and Legal Department Officer, Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic

SUPPORTING ROMA EDUCATION

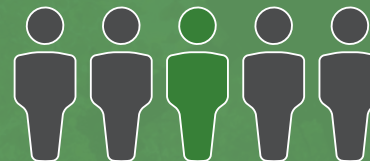
Education is a fundamental human right – without it, people have fewer opportunities to develop skills necessary for the job market and are more likely to suffer from social isolation and poverty. According to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)¹, Roma in Europe continue to face barriers to education.



One out of two Roma children surveyed attend pre-school or kindergarten



Around 15 % of young Roma adults surveyed completed upper-secondary general or vocational education



One out of five Roma respondents aged 16 and above said that they cannot read and write compared to less than 1% of the non-Roma living close by

In Bulgaria, the Center for Educational Integration of Children and Young People from the Minorities is addressing this issue with support from Norway. The project aims to improve the quality of education and counter early school dropout by training over 200 youth workers, preschool teachers and mediators on how to work in multi-ethnic environments.

The Council of Europe takes part as a project partner and provides training materials based on its expertise in the field. CoE also facilitated a working visit to the Council's Youth Centre in Strasbourg where the teachers, youth workers and mediators participating in the project had the opportunity to build on their knowledge and share their experiences with other colleagues from Europe.

Project promoter: Center for Educational Integration of Children and Young People from the Minorities

Project amount: € 850 000

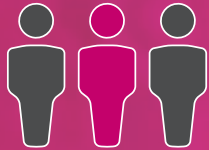
Project link: bit.ly/1NpWzqO

¹ Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States (2012), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights



COUNTERING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is a serious human rights challenge faced by all countries across Europe. It can have drastic consequences on the victims' lives, damaging their physical and psychological health. Gender-based violence places increased financial and economic burden not only on victims, but on society as a whole.



One in three women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since she was 15 years old²

14%

13%

Victims reported the most serious incident of partner violence to the police in 14 % of cases and the most serious incident of non-partner violence in 13 % of cases

"We appreciate cooperation with the Council of Europe very much. They help us by providing strategic and practical advice, recommendations and good practices. In particular, their references to the documents such as CoE minimum standards for support services, WAVE guidelines for setting-up and running a women's refuge and good practice examples at UN level during the open calls preparation were invaluable."


Jana Dacková, Senior Project Manager, Government Office of the Slovak Republic

The Council of Europe is a donor programme partner together with the Norwegian Directorate of Health in the Slovak 'Domestic and Gender-based Violence' programme funded by Norway. In that role, CoE provides strategic advice on the implementation of the programme and ensures compliance with international standards, such as the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).

Project promoter: Government Office of the Slovak Republic

Project amount: € 8 440 000

Project link: bit.ly/1T8uKNK



“Human trafficking affects all our countries. It fuels organised crime and the drugs trade, and it harms our citizens. But worst of all, it destroys the lives of many, stripping them of their freedom and their dignity.”

Ingvild Næss Stub, former State Secretary
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PUTTING VICTIMS FIRST

Protection of victims was the focus of the ‘putting victims first’ conference organised in Warsaw, Poland in cooperation with the Polish Ministry of Interior, the Council of Europe and the International Organization for Migration.

The conference gathered over 200 experts from across Europe working on protecting and promoting the rights of victims of trafficking in line with the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The Convention places an emphasis on trafficked persons as right holders, outlining specific rights including the right to emergency assistance, safe accommodation, compensation, legal redress and rehabilitation.

Photos by Christophe Vander Eecken except the following:
Pg. 5-6: Council of Europe – Sandro Weltin,
Pg. 7: National Legal Aid Bureau,
Pg. 8: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Pg. 13-14: Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic,
Back cover: Sugar David.

The EEA and Norway Grants represent Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway's contribution to reducing social and economic disparities and strengthening bilateral relations with 16 countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltics.

www.eeagrants.org
www.norwaygrants.org

