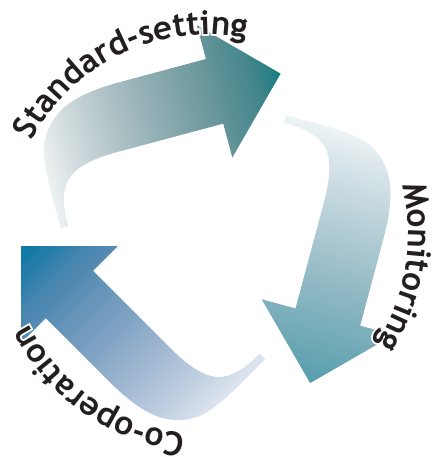




Human Rights and Legal Affairs

Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs

The Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs (DG-HL) comprises three pillars: standard setting, co-operation and monitoring. In addition to these, the directorate general includes the **Venice Commission**, a consultative body providing impartial expert opinions on constitutional questions relating to both member States and non-member States of the Council of Europe.



“The three pillars”: the directorate general’s work is organised within three separate directorates, which interact and are interdependent.

Standards are identified, prepared and set forth by the **Directorate of Standard-Setting**. These standards may be legally binding, such as conventions, or not, such as recommendations. Ministerial conferences and awareness-raising campaigns are also organised within this directorate.

The **Directorate of Monitoring** comprises the secretariats of the independent, expert bodies which evaluate how the standards are implemented in the member States. These monitoring bodies make constructive recommendations in order to assist the member States to meet the standards.

When the monitoring procedures identify areas where measures need to be taken in order for the standards to be met, co-operation activities may be put into place within the member States. The **Directorate of Co-operation** coordinates these activities in the areas of economic crime,

legal and human rights capacity building, and judicial reforms.

Standard-setting

The *Directorate of Standard-Setting* encompasses standard-setting activities in the areas of law reform – in criminal, public and private law – and human rights development and is responsible for preparing a wide range of legally binding and instruments such as conventions, which are legally binding, and recommendations, which are not. It organises ministerial conferences and provides the secretariat of five steering committees, to whom the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe delegates the task of studying contemporary issues of concern within the areas of law reform and human rights.

The steering committees are intergovernmental expert groups made up of representatives from member States nominated by their governments. They submit measures to deal with problems arising in the member States concerning issues within their competence to the Committee of Ministers. These measures may include proposing new legal standards or adapting existing ones. The Committee of Ministers decides how to act on the reports and proposals of the committees. In certain cases it will transmit recommendations to member States or, if the level of concern warrants it, it will open a legally binding convention for signature by States.

Conventions may provide for the setting up of independent monitoring bodies to supervise compliance by the States which ratify them. Such monitoring bodies come under the auspices of the Directorate of Monitoring, which works with the Directorate of Standard-Setting to clarify the standards and pinpoint areas of concern. The Directorate of Standard-Setting also collaborates with the Directorate of Co-operation to identify areas where co-operation activities may be required in order to help a member State achieve compliance with Council of Europe standards.

Expert committees within the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs

- Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH)
- Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG)
- Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services (CDMC)

- European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ)
- European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC)

Monitoring

As a result of standard-setting activities, Council of Europe member States commit to conventions and resolutions and accept that their compliance will be reviewed by monitoring bodies and procedures. The *Directorate of Monitoring* provides the secretariat for various monitoring bodies which evaluate how effectively the member States implement the standards and identify areas where assistance is needed to improve the situation, often through co-operation activities.

- The **Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights** assists the Committee of Ministers in its function of supervising the execution of the Court’s judgments by member States.
- The **European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)** visits places of detention to examine the treatment of people held there with the aims of preventing torture and ill-treatment and of improving conditions for them.
- The **European Committee of Social Rights** is the body tasked with monitoring member States’ compliance with the European Social Charter.
- The **Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)** aims to improve its members’ capacity to fight corruption and its consequences.
- The mandate of the **European Committee Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)** is to fight against racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance within Europe.
- The **Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities** has an independent advisory committee to evaluate the implementation of the Framework Convention in the States Parties.
- The **Select Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures (MONEYVAL)** aims to ensure that States comply with international standards for countering money laundering and terrorist financing.
- GRETA is the monitoring body of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human

Beings, set up to prevent trafficking of humans, prosecute traffickers and protect victims.

Co-operation

The *Directorate of Co-operation* implements targeted co-operation projects in beneficiary countries in the areas of economic crime, legal and human rights capacity building and judicial reforms. The areas and States in which co-operation activities are set up are often identified through the work of the steering committees in the Directorate of Standard-Setting and the monitoring bodies within the Directorate of Monitoring. Co-operation activities may include:

Co-operation with legal professionals

Programmes and training activities are organised for legal professionals and law enforcement personnel, a large proportion of which is geared towards promoting knowledge and awareness of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and other European human rights standards.

Co-operation in capacity building

The Council of Europe can also help to set up and strengthen a State's institutional and legal framework by assisting with the creation and implementation of training structures, professional associations and regulatory bodies. A significant level of support and capacity building is provided as regards the implementation of the ECHR at national level and measures to fight corruption and economic crime.

Co-operation with the European Union and other organisations

The Council of Europe also undertakes co-operation activities in collaboration with other organisations such as the European Union, NGOs and governmental agencies. Co-operation activities can involve co-organising conferences and training courses as well as co-producing publications and information campaigns.

The Council's relations and contacts with the member States enable it to respond to local needs. A number of bodies set up by the Council facilitate this relationship and the implementation of co-operation activities, including:

- The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)
- The Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE)
- The Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE)
- The Lisbon Network

Websites and contact details

European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice:
www.coe.int/cepej

Consultative Council of European Judges: www.coe.int/ccje

Consultative Council of European Prosecutors:
www.coe.int/ccpe

Legal and Human Rights Capacity Building Division:
www.coe.int/awareness

CPT: www.cpt.coe.int

European Social Charter: www.coe.int/socialcharter

GRECO: www.coe.int/greco

ECRI: www.coe.int/ecri/

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: www.coe.int/minorities

MONEYVAL: www.coe.int/moneyval

Action to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings:
www.coe.int/trafficking

Intergovernmental co-operation in Human Rights:
www.coe.int/cddh

Equality between women and men: www.coe.int/equality

Media and New Communications Services: www.coe.int/media

European Committee on Legal Co-operation:
www.coe.int/cdcj

European Committee on Crime Problems: www.coe.int/cdpc

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Justice and respect for human rights for all

DG-HL – at the heart
of the mission



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