

Funded
by the European Union
and the Council of Europe



Implemented
by the Council of Europe

PROJECT SUMMARY

Title of the Project	Support to Council of Europe for EU Network of prison monitoring bodies (“European NPM Forum”)
Project Financing	EUR 333,333 funded 90% by the European Union and 10% by the Council of Europe
Donor	European Union (EU)
Duration	24 months (1 August 2026 – 31 July 2028)
Target	National Preventive Mechanisms bodies (NPM) from EU member States

1. BACKGROUND AND PRIOR COOPERATION

The European NPM Forum is an interactive peer-to-peer network that brings together National Preventive Mechanisms in EU Member States and beyond, mandated to conduct regular monitoring visits to all places of deprivation of liberty within their respective jurisdictions. The network was set up in 2016 and has been maintained throughout six joint EU/Council of Europe projects.

NPMs are key actors in protecting the fundamental human rights of people deprived of their liberty in prisons, as well as in other places of deprivation of liberty, such as police stations, psychiatric establishments, social care homes and immigration detention centres. The role of NPMs is to independently visit these places at national and local levels, report on their findings, and assess compliance with the fundamental human rights of people deprived of their liberty. They also issue recommendations to the authorities concerned and propose improvements.

Since the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) in 2006, the Council of Europe has assisted in establishing NPMs in Europe and provided support to these bodies. Building on previous efforts and cooperation, the Forum helped establish and maintain a loose network of NPMs. This included support for their establishment, initial training for their members and staff, and the transfer of knowledge and expertise from its expert monitoring body, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT).

The Forum provides a platform for regular exchange and discussion to assist European NPMs in carrying out their mandates effectively and independently, thereby enhancing mutual trust in detention conditions in EU Member States and beyond. While the project funds support only for European Union NPMs, participation in the Forum extends beyond the European Union. NPMs from non-EU Member States, as well as from states that are not members of the Council of Europe—particularly countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, such as Morocco and Tunisia—actively participate in the exchanges. This broadens the range of expertise, experience and practices available to the Project’s direct beneficiaries.

2. OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN NPM FORUM

By engaging a wide audience of policy makers, Ministries of Justice, magistrates, researchers, prison and probation services, NPMs and detention monitoring experts, the joint project aims at contributing to the improvement of detention conditions within EU member States in order to enhance judicial

cooperation within the EU and to protect the fundamental rights of EU citizens as guaranteed by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The main objective of the project is to maintain and support the now well established European NPM Forum. The project will continue to provide concrete advice and recommendations to NPMs, as well as a platform for exchanges of best practices between NPMs. It will also build and strengthen capacity of NPMs based on the Guide for National Preventive Mechanisms on the monitoring of implementation of the European Commission Recommendation on procedural rights of suspects and accused persons subject to pre-trial detention and on material detention conditions, and other tools developed under the previous phases of the Project.

Beyond the topic of pre-trial detention, this new phase of the project aims to strengthen cooperation between NPMs and other monitoring mandates including Independent Monitoring Mechanisms (IMMs) under the EU Migration Pact.

The project focuses on the continued operation and further development of the European NPM Forum, with the aim of fostering ongoing peer exchange, critical reflection, and the development of common guidance and working methodologies. Dissemination of relevant information and awareness-raising will be ensured through country fiches, publications and the NPMs Forum's digital platform. Targeted support and capacity building for EU NPMs remains a core component of the project, aiming to further strengthen their ability to carry out their mandate effectively and independently, improve working methods and overall impact, and facilitate exchange of experiences and promising practices in detention monitoring.