



Between 2006 and 2010 the European Union has provided Georgia with € 22 million to support the reforms in the justice system

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European Union

Supporting the development of rule of law, justice and democratic institutions in Georgia

A good start and challenges ahead

The European Union's recent enlargements have been matched by an ever deeper relationship between the Union, Georgia and the countries on its Eastern borders. The closer relationship, established through the European Neighbourhood Policy, implies concrete steps towards the strengthening and supporting of rule of law and justice, strengthening democratic institutions and respect for human rights. These three priorities are included in the EU Georgia Action Plan that lays out important and strategic reforms that will assist consolidation of stability, security and prosperity in the country. The European Union is committed to greatly strengthen its ties with Georgia by:

- supporting the reform of the whole justice system - judiciary, prosecution, penitentiary, probation, police, legal aid service and
- strengthening democratic institutions, including the Office of the Public Defender.

Supporting criminal justice reforms

Between 2006-2010, the European Union provided around €22 million of assistance in the area of rule of law, supporting both government institutions and non-governmental organisations working in the justice sector.

Today, the European Union is the major donor in the area of criminal justice reform by providing support to governmental agencies as well as non-governmental organisations and international organisations. A number of programmes have been carried out in cooperation with the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe (CoE).

The support has addressed:

- major reforms of the criminal justice system, and
- the strengthening of the role of the Public Defender and civil society, and those who act as promoters of public awareness and effective monitoring of the protection of human rights.

With its programmes the European Union is supporting Georgia:

- to make justice more effective and more accessible, through an enhanced coordination between those institutions involved in the formulation and enforcement of laws. This will ensure that the mechanisms of the criminal justice system are transparent and predictable, and
- in setting up an effective monitoring system for the institutions to ensure their accountability before the Georgian people.

Out of the € 22 million, the European Union is paying €15 million directly into the Georgian state budget for the period 2009-2010 subject to Georgian Government's compliance with the following conditions:

The European Commission is the European Union's executive body

"The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".



European Union



- further refinement of criminal justice legislation, notably in the area of Juvenile Justice. Among the positive developments will be the establishment of education and rehabilitation programmes for juvenile inmates, and raising the minimum age for criminal responsibility from 12 to 14;
- improvement of living conditions for young offenders, including the set up of education programmes;
- effective reintegration of offenders in the community;
- effective Legal Aid Service provided by state lawyers for vulnerable people;
- empowerment of the Public Defender's Office as national monitoring institution of Human Rights protection.

Political dialogue between Georgia and the European Union also focuses on human rights and democracy. Besides the application of international standards for the Prevention of Torture in 2009, a remarkable achievement was the adoption of the new Code of Criminal Procedure. Support has also been given to develop the areas of fundamental freedoms, civil society, public administration and public finance management. For the development of sustainable democracy in Georgia it is important that state institutions function effectively. To this end, the European Union has funded projects aiming at providing training in human resources and financial management, as well as specialised trainings in key areas of human rights and criminal justice, established communication networks, provided office equipment, and vehicles.

The reform of the Civil Registry and reform of local government for a more effective decentralisation process are also benefitting from projects funded by the European Union.

Three priorities: Justice, Liberty and Security (JLS)

Another priority sector of cooperation is border and migration management, including readmission, visas and asylum, and fight against trans-national organised crime, e.g. smuggling of migrants, trafficking in human beings or illegal trade in firearms.

To complement this cooperation process at the regional level the €6 million South Caucasus Integrated Border Management Programme is being carried out, and the €7.5 million Regional South Caucasus Anti-Drug Program has just been completed. Small grants have been allocated in order to counter the trafficking in human beings. The European Union remains focused on tackling the underlying causes of crime, particularly poverty and inequity.

Support for youth on probation

Rehabilitation of young people responsible for offences against the law is a priority for the European Union's support to Georgia in the criminal justice reform. Advocacy, psychological rehabilitation, targeted trainings and inclusion of youth into educational activities have been rewarded by a number of successes. Project "Accomplishment and extension of juvenile advocacy in Ajara" is a very good example.

Nodar A. is a young man who has benefitted from the project, which the Institute of Democracy is carrying out. Nodar is one out of seven children in a family living below the poverty line. At the age of 16, he was detained for stealing scrap metal in Makhinjauri but thanks to the mediation of the Institute of Democracy he was not sentenced to 4 years of imprisonment but his sentence was substituted with 5 years of probation. He got a job at a restaurant. Within the programme Nodar also attended computer, driving and Russian language classes, but still the most important for him was the job enabling him to sustain his family. Following these positive developments, the local government of Ajara allocated state funding to the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. Another initiative followed: the rehabilitation programme for juveniles in conflict with the law. The project was conceived by the Institute of Democracy as a follow-up to the previous project funded by the European Union. This is the first case in Georgia when NGO activities become sustainable through continued funding from the state budget.

€15 million have been directly allocated to the Georgian state budget to support reforms in the criminal justice sector

€6 million of support in fighting the trafficking of human beings and in setting up a better border management

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