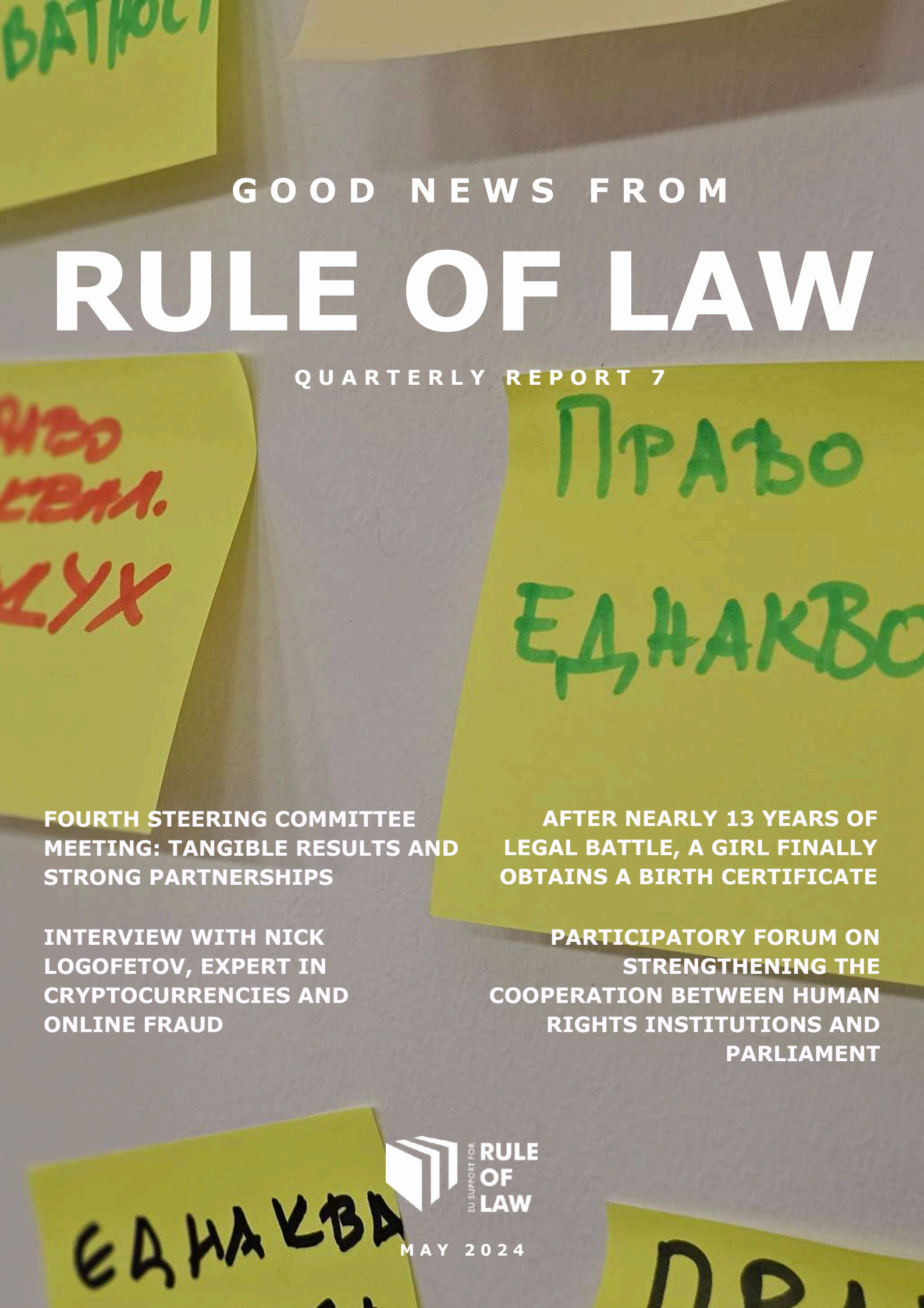


GOOD NEWS FROM

RULE OF LAW

QUARTERLY REPORT 7

FOURTH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING: TANGIBLE RESULTS AND STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

AFTER NEARLY 13 YEARS OF LEGAL BATTLE, A GIRL FINALLY OBTAINS A BIRTH CERTIFICATE

INTERVIEW WITH NICK LOGOFETOV, EXPERT IN CRYPTOCURRENCIES AND ONLINE FRAUD

PARTICIPATORY FORUM ON STRENGTHENING THE COOPERATION BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS AND PARLIAMENT

EU SUPPORT FOR RULE OF LAW

MAY 2024

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FOREWORD



Dieter SCHINDLAUER

Team Leader, EU Support for Rule of Law

"We use this publication to keep up a good spirit and uphold an ethic of belief in the good reason for change, reform, and a continuous improvement process. To do so, we will show steps forward and celebrate them so that they are not lost in the much more dominant noise of disheartening news."

Dear reader,

This publication again encapsulates some remarkable achievements with and around the "EU Support for Rule of Law" project in North Macedonia. Over the past months, significant collaborative strides have been made in advancing judicial reform, combating organised crime, strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms, and promoting fundamental rights.

The project has successfully supported the Ministry of Justice in preparing the draft amendments to the Law on Judicial Council and strengthened disciplinary proceedings for judicial accountability. A draft law on public prosecution was finalised, while the Law on the Council of Prosecutors is in development.

Efforts to reinforce anti-corruption mechanisms have included the development of a Human Resource Management System for the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), key trainings, and the preparation of the new National Anti-Corruption Strategy, as pointed out in the interview with our Component Leader, Roman Prah.

FOREWORD

One of the most poignant success stories highlighted in this publication is the case of a girl who, after nearly 13 years of legal battle, finally obtained a birth certificate. Born without being recognised by the system, she was invisible to the authorities and deprived of basic rights such as healthcare. The Ombudsman, with direct support from experts engaged in our project, resolved the case, allowing her to be registered in the civil registry and access the rights provided by the country. It was a long way, and by accompanying the case, it became clear that the implementation of the principle of the best interest of the child needs a significant brush-up, in order not to continue affecting the daily lives of minors by bureaucratic hurdles and seemingly endless procedures.

In our Human Rights Forum, the topic of cooperation between the Parliament and human rights institutions resulted in engaging discussions and concrete takeaways.

Another critical area covered in this report is the evolving landscape of crypto crime. As the use of cryptocurrencies becomes more widespread, so do the risks associated with online fraud and digital crime. A fascinating interview with Nick Logofetov, an international expert in cryptocurrency-related crime, discusses the threats we face in 2025, the limitations of current regulations, and the realities of digital investigations. Nick's insights offer a clear-eyed perspective on the challenges and opportunities in combating crypto crime.

On April 3rd, the fourth Steering Committee for the project took place and showed that all achievements reflect the strong partnerships and collaborative efforts of international and national experts, consortium partners, and beneficiary institutions. The continued support of the Delegation of the European Union has been crucial in driving these efforts forward.

As we move forward, let us build on these accomplishments and strive for a more just and transparent society. The journey ahead may be challenging, but with collective efforts, we will achieve our goals and make a lasting impact on the rule of law in North Macedonia.

Enjoy the good news!



Dieter Schindlauer
Team Leader

MAY WE PRESENT:

FOURTH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Tangible results and strong partnerships marked the fourth Steering Committee Meeting, held on 3 April 2025. The meeting focused on presenting results from August 2024 to February 2025 and the planned next steps.

AFTER 13 YEARS OF LEGAL BATTLE, GIRL GETS A BIRTH CERTIFICATE

After nearly 13 years of legal battle, a girl finally gets a birth certificate. The case was reported to the Ombudsman (OO) for faster resolution. With direct support from experts engaged in the Project, the case was resolved.

HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM

Members of Parliament and representatives of beneficiary institutions of the EU Support for Rule of Law Project came together for the Participatory Forum on Strengthening the Cooperation between Human Rights Institutions and Parliament.

Let's talk about...

- Tangible results and strong partnerships mark the Fourth Steering Committee Meeting
- After nearly 13 years of legal battle, a girl finally obtains a birth certificate
- Understanding crypto crime: An interview with Nick Logofetov, expert in cryptocurrencies and online fraud
- Finalised draft Law on public prosecution and initiated work on the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors
- Participatory Forum on Strengthening the Cooperation between Human Rights Institutions and Parliament
- Roundtables on prosecutors' supervision and performance evaluation
- The EU Support for Rule of Law project assisted the Ministry of Justice in preparing the draft amendments to the Law on Judicial Council
- Strengthening disciplinary proceedings for judicial accountability in North Macedonia

Tangible Results and Strong Partnerships Mark Fourth Steering Committee Meeting

The EU Support for Rule of Law project held its fourth Steering Committee Meeting on 3 April 2025 at the premises of the **State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC)**. The meeting focused on presenting project results from August 2024 to February 2025 and outlining the next steps.

Marzia Palotta, representative of the Delegation of the European Union to North Macedonia (DEU), reiterated the importance of joint efforts and their crucial role in implementing reforms related to the rule of law in North Macedonia. She encouraged the beneficiary institutions to continue making full use of the support and resources provided by the Project.

Agnes Taibl, Project Director from the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Fundamental and Human Rights, expressed appreciation for the efforts of all project team members and beneficiary institutions, and welcomed Roman Prah as the new Component 3 Leader. She acknowledged the importance of the joint commitment of international and national experts, the strong collaboration among consortium partners—CILC, the Ministry of Interior of Slovenia, and the Ministry of Justice, Public Administration and Digital Transformation of Croatia—and the continued support of the Delegation of the European Union (DEU).

The meeting was moderated by **Dieter Schindlauer,** Team Leader of the Project, who reflected on the key achievements to date and outlined the vision for the upcoming period. “Much has been accomplished, but much more remains to be done. I firmly believe that the citizens of this country deserve to see tangible results and improvements,” he said.



Component Leaders presented key achievements from the reporting period, highlighting the project's role in advancing judicial reform, combating organised crime, strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms, and promoting fundamental rights.

From August 2024 to February 2025, the project achieved substantial progress across all four components. **Component 1** contributed to judicial reform by organising nationwide consultations on the Law on the Judicial Council, reaching over 100 judges, delivering specialised IT training for court and prosecution staff, and supporting the implementation of the Judicial Strategy 2024–2028. **Component 2** strengthened efforts to combat organised crime through targeted capacity building on online fraud, financial investigations, and corruption, and by drafting national strategies on organised crime and cybercrime.



Component 3 focused on reinforcing anti-corruption mechanisms, including the development of a Human Resource Management System for the SCPC, the delivery of key trainings, and the preparation of the new National Anti-Corruption Strategy. **Component 4** made significant strides in promoting fundamental rights and alternatives to detention. Over 183,000 people were reached through awareness campaigns, the National Action Plan for Children's Rights was finalized, and the mandates of key institutions were enhanced through capacity building, strategic partnerships, and inter-institutional forums. A campaign against peer violence was also presented and implemented.

Representatives of partner institutions from the Republic of North Macedonia expressed their appreciation for the project's support and its ongoing contribution to strengthening the rule of law.

The meeting, attended by 48 representatives from the EU Delegation, consortium partners, beneficiary institutions, and experts, underscored the collaborative effort toward fostering a more just and transparent society in North Macedonia.





Capturing Success:

A Visual Celebration











After nearly 13 years of legal battle, a girl finally obtains a birth certificate

She should have had the same rights as any other child in our nation since she was born in 2012. Instead, she was not recognised by the system. She eventually obtained a birth certificate after nearly 13 years of legal battle, establishing her basic right to exist in front of the authorities.

It all started in June 2024, when the case was reported to the Ombudsman (OO) for faster resolution. With direct support from experts engaged in the “EU Support for the Rule of Law” project, the Ombudsman resolved the case.

At a press conference organised by the institution, Gjulizar Sulejman, the girl’s grandmother, did not hide her happiness that her granddaughter was finally registered in the Civil Registry.



> "She didn't have a birth certificate for 12 years. Only now, after so much time, thanks to the Ombudsman, did we get a birth certificate for my granddaughter. I am very happy and grateful for the help," she said.

Merima Fizulai, head of the day care center in Shuto Orizari, which the girl attended, noted:

> “After 12 years, the girl can finally use all the rights provided by the country. Previously, she did not have access to healthcare and other fundamental rights.”



Her mother had been trying to sort out the documentation for years, but unfortunately, she got stuck in a bureaucratic maze. Instead of a simple solution, officials asked her for additional documents, complicating the procedure.

The Ombudsman's Office, which underlines that this is not an isolated situation, ultimately provided assistance. About 400 "invisible persons" have applied for a birth certificate since 2021, following the legal amendments, but the procedure is difficult. Since the fight for identity continues for hundreds of others, Ombudsman Naser Ziberi stated that he would suggest that the Civil Registry Office resolve these cases more quickly.



Understanding Crypto Crime: An Interview with Nick Logofetov, Expert in Cryptocurrencies and Online Fraud

As the use of cryptocurrencies becomes more widespread, so do the risks associated with online fraud and digital crime. In this interview, we speak with **Nick Logofetov,** an international expert in cryptocurrency-related crime, about the evolving landscape of crypto fraud, the limitations of current regulations, and the most common misconceptions surrounding blockchain and anonymity. Drawing from his extensive experience and cross-border collaborations, Nick offers a clear-eyed perspective on the threats we face in 2025 and the realities of digital investigations in a rapidly changing environment.



Nick, you are an expert in cryptocurrencies and digital fraud. What is your role within the "EU Support for Rule of Law" project, and what are your goals in this engagement?

I am engaged in the project as an expert supporting the police in North Macedonia, specifically the digital fraud unit, in strengthening their capacity to investigate cryptocurrency-related crimes. The project runs until 2026, but our goal is to achieve rapid progress by the end of 2025.

We are starting from what I would call level 0 in terms of crypto investigative capacity and aiming to reach level 2 on the international scale, ranging from 0 to 5, defined by Europol and Interpol. Level 2 means being proficient in several cryptocurrencies and networks and being able to independently conduct investigations unless specialised international support is needed.

How did your collaboration with the authorities in North Macedonia begin?

The first contact was quite straightforward, it happened through the Project.

Then, around two or three months later, the management of the Macedonian police came to Slovenia for an official visit. During that visit, we had deeper discussions, and they clearly expressed their needs. I had already been in communication with Macedonian colleagues. We discovered overlapping cases involving the same perpetrators and methods across Slovenia and North Macedonia. North Macedonia had also acquired a different investigative tool from us, and we began pooling our research and intelligence for more effective outcomes.

Given the lack of regulation in the Western Balkans compared to the EU's MiCA framework, are similar regulations expected to reach the region?

MiCA has just been implemented in the EU, but it only covers certain aspects of crypto exchanges. Two more regulations are expected soon—one of them is called Digital Europe. Together, these will form a comprehensive regulatory framework for cryptocurrencies in the EU. Eventually, similar policies may be adopted or adapted by countries in the Western Balkans.

How much crypto activity is criminal compared to traditional financial systems?

According to data from Chainalysis, the total daily crypto volume fluctuates between $100 and $120 billion. Out of that, around $30 to $35 billion annually is linked to criminal activity, which is a relatively small percentage. The current market cap of all cryptocurrencies was around €3.25 trillion just a few months ago, although that figure can be inflated by market fluctuations. For instance, it was proven that €850 million worth of transactions were scams—again, not negligible, but not overwhelming.

Many people believe crypto transactions are untraceable. How accurate is that perception?

It is mostly a myth. The majority—about 95%—of crypto transactions are traceable. Blockchains are public ledgers, and although some platforms require specific tools or web access, the information is not hidden. There are privacy coins like Monero, which are used in illegal markets and are intentionally untraceable, but they represent a minority. Even smart contracts designed for anonymity are visible on the blockchain and can be examined.

What are the biggest crypto-related crime risks for 2025?

We expect to see an increase in commercial fraud, investment scams, Ponzi schemes, and breaches of information systems.

Most scams still begin with direct contact—scammers call victims, build trust, and then lure them into investing with promises of huge returns. These trends are prominent in Slovenia and are likely to be mirrored in the region.

Are criminals always one step ahead, or is regulation starting to catch up?

Unfortunately, technology evolves so rapidly that investigators are often a step behind. You cannot predict every new method criminals will use. While we can anticipate some trends, staying fully ahead is nearly impossible.

Can artificial intelligence (AI) help close that gap?

AI can assist, but its usefulness is currently limited due to the complexity and scale of the data involved. Some tools, like TRM and Chainalysis' Reactor (formerly Genesis), use elements of AI to trace paths between wallets and exchanges. But ultimately, it is still the analyst who must interpret the data and make investigative decisions.

Do you think crypto-based crime will ever become virtually impossible?

Not entirely. The EU is working on stronger regulations, and there is even speculation that future laws might ban certain crypto activities altogether, like mining or unrestricted trading. China has already done this. The European Commission has the legal power to do the same under MiCA or future regulations.

Having seen the sector evolve closely, do you personally trust crypto? Do you invest in it?

No, I do not own any crypto. I consider myself financially savvy and rely on a financial advisor who works with high-net-worth individuals. None of them invest in crypto due to its volatility and lack of safety nets. With traditional banking in the EU, for example, deposits up to €100,000 are guaranteed even if a bank collapses. Crypto offers no such security, even for so-called "stablecoins" linked to fiat currencies or gold.

If someone insists on trying, I recommend setting a fixed monthly amount—say €100 to €300 of disposable income—and investing it over six months. Then wait another six months or a year and evaluate. If you're in profit, it may be for you. If you're in the red, it probably isn't.



Finalised draft Law on Public Prosecution and initiated work on the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors

The process of drafting and adoption of the new Law on Public Prosecution represents a crucial milestone within the Reform Agenda, with a deadline set for December 2025. As a fundamental part of the judicial system, this law is classified as a "systematic law," requiring a two-thirds parliamentary majority for adoption, the same majority as for constitutional amendments. Its significance lies in regulating the overall structure and functioning of the public prosecution system, with wide-ranging implications for the criminal justice sector and legal protection standards.

Recognising the importance of aligning the law with the EU acquis, European standards, and the opinion of the Venice Commission, the project provided substantial support throughout the drafting process. Project experts participated in all working group sessions and presented reports addressing key aspects of the public prosecution framework, including supervision, performance evaluation, disciplinary procedures, and budgetary independence. These reports offered a detailed assessment of the existing legal framework, identified systemic challenges, and presented concrete recommendations in line with European best practices.



In addition to supporting the development of the Law on Public Prosecution, the project continues to provide the same assistance in drafting amendments to the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors. This ensures consistency across the institutional framework governing prosecutorial operations.

The drafting process of these laws will mark a critical step forward, but it is only the beginning. The real test of success lies in their adoption and implementation. The project remains committed to supporting national institutions in this next phase, ensuring that legal reforms are effectively translated into practice and that the public prosecution system becomes more independent, efficient, and aligned with European values.

Participatory Forum on Strengthening the Cooperation between Human Rights Institutions and Parliament

On 9 April 2025, Members of Parliament and representatives of beneficiary institutions of the EU Support for Rule of Law Project came together for the Participatory Forum on Strengthening the Cooperation between Human Rights Institutions and Parliament. Hosted at the MP-Club in Skopje, the forum created a dedicated space to reflect on current challenges and identify concrete ways to enhance human rights protection in North Macedonia through stronger inter-institutional cooperation.

Participants explored how collaboration between parliament and human rights institutions can be improved to ensure more effective oversight, stronger legal frameworks, and better protection of citizens' rights. The event enabled informal exchange and networking among key stakeholders, with a clear focus on generating actionable ideas for future cooperation.

Participants particularly appreciated the diversity of perspectives in the room, the open and respectful atmosphere, and the opportunity for meaningful dialogue across institutional boundaries. The outcomes of the discussions will feed into a report to the EU, helping to inform ongoing efforts to strengthen human rights advocacy and inter-institutional collaboration.



Take-Away: How to Strengthen Parliamentary Work on Human Rights

- **Establish human rights committees** and subcommittees, ensuring an effective structure.
- **Release and share reports** on human rights.
- **Strengthen external relationships** with the executive, courts, and national human rights institutions.
- **Conduct investigations** into human rights violations and organise public hearings with affected communities.
- **Engage in capacity-building and training programs** on human rights (e.g., those offered by CSOs and international organisations).
- **Establish accessible channels** for individuals and civil society to raise human rights concerns directly with parliament.
- **Promote open debates,** consultations, and digital platforms for public participation in human rights discussions and lawmaking.
- **Ensure national budgets** allocate sufficient resources for human rights institutions and protection programs.





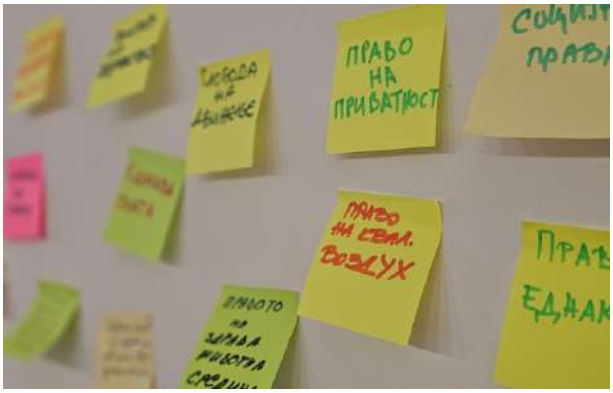


Capturing Success:

A Visual Celebration











Roundtables on prosecutors' supervision and performance evaluation

The supervision and performance evaluation are two different procedures connected with the day-to-day work of the public prosecutors. To address each area effectively, two separate reports were prepared, and dedicated roundtables were organised. These events brought together representatives from the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Council of Public Prosecutors, the Association of Public Prosecutors, as well as a professor from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" in Skopje, who also serves as the president of the working group established to draft amendments to the Law on Public Prosecution and the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors.

At the roundtable dedicated to procedures for supervision, the project presented its comprehensive Report on Supervision. The presentation sparked a productive discussion among participants on the existing legal framework, proposed amendments in the draft Law on Public Prosecution, and current supervisory practices. The event highlighted inconsistencies between the existing law, the relevant bylaw, and practical implementation.

A key conclusion was the recognition of the urgent need to amend the by-law governing supervision, aligning it with the draft law even before its formal adoption. Furthermore, the discussion emphasised the importance of introducing a standardised supervision template to ensure consistency and a uniform approach to the procedure.

At the roundtable focused on the performance evaluation procedure, participants emphasised that regular performance evaluations have not been practically implemented in the past 15 years.

During the event, the Report on Performance Evaluation was presented, providing an in-depth analysis of the EU standards. To address the lack of operational organisation for conducting performance evaluation, the project introduced a practical analysis and implementation plan, which will be submitted to both the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Council of Public Prosecutors. This proactive approach is designed to facilitate the process for performance evaluations according to the deadlines foreseen in the Law on Public Prosecution.



The EU Support for Rule of Law project assisted the Ministry of Justice in preparing the draft amendments to the Law on Judicial Council

On 25 April 2025, the Ministry of Justice of North Macedonia sent the draft amendments to the Law on Judicial Council to the Venice Commission for an opinion. The EU Support for Rule of Law provided active support to the Ministry of Justice in this process, initiated to address the recommendations of the Peer Review Mission Report on the Functioning of the Judicial Council of North Macedonia. The Project supported the working group tasked by the Minister of Justice to draft the amendments by organising broad consultations with judges and the expert public, preparing legal analysis and providing direct contributions to the sessions of the working group.

For the purpose of finalising the amendments, the EU Support for Rule of Law project organised a whole-day workshop on 14 April 2025 at the Club of Representatives.



The objective of the workshop was to review once again the text of the law, discuss any unresolved issues and close the draft amendments at this phase. Within a productive working environment, the working group prepared the draft amendments that were further textually edited and translated before their submission to the Venice Commission. The draft amendments target critical areas from the Law on Judicial Council, including the selection, appointment, and accountability of judges and Council members, as well as enhancing the Council's transparency, communication, and resource management.

Amending the Law on Judicial Council in line with the recommendations of the Peer Review Mission is a key reform for the EU integration of North Macedonia, planned in the Reform Agenda 2024 – 2027, as well as in all other key strategic documents. The EU Support for the Rule of Law project will continue providing advisory and technical support to the Ministry of Justice after the Venice Commission provides its opinion to ensure that the country implements this key reform step that is essential for restoring trust in the judiciary.



Photos: © Ministry of Justice

Strengthening Disciplinary Proceedings for Judicial Accountability in North Macedonia

In our continued commitment to enhancing judicial accountability and efficiency, the project facilitated a workshop on disciplinary proceedings against judges and court presidents in North Macedonia. Held on 6-7 May 2025 in Demir Kapija, the event brought together Judicial Council members, legal experts, and international advisors to address critical challenges in disciplinary procedures and align them with European standards.

The workshop opened with introductory remarks by Grzegorz Borkowski, Component Leader of the EU Support for Rule of Law Project, who emphasised the importance of fair, transparent, and efficient disciplinary mechanisms in maintaining judicial integrity. The first day featured Herman von Hebel, our international expert, who provided an in-depth analysis of the latest international and European Court of Human Rights standards. His insights underscored the necessity of ensuring due process and safeguarding judges' rights while upholding accountability. Voislav Stojanovski, our national expert, presented an analysis of disciplinary proceedings conducted by the Judicial Council between 2019 and 2023, identifying opportunities to further enhance efficiency and consistency in line with evolving best practices.



The second day featured presentations by Judicial Council members, who walked participants through each stage of disciplinary proceedings. Antoaneta Dimovska and Tanja Chacharova-Ilievska explained the initiation of proceedings, the role of the rapporteur commission, and case investigations. Vesna Dameva discussed deliberations before the commission and the preparation of investigation reports. Ivica Nikolovski outlined the Judicial Council's decision-making process, stressing the need for clear reasoning and consistency. Selim Ademi examined repeated disciplinary proceedings following appeals, emphasising procedural safeguards.

This workshop marks another milestone in North Macedonia's judicial reform efforts, reinforcing the Judicial Council's commitment to accountability, efficiency, and transparency. By refining disciplinary procedures in line with European standards, the Council is taking decisive steps toward a judiciary that is both independent and accountable, fostering greater public confidence in the rule of law.





PRAH ROMAN

INTERVIEW

MEET THE TEAM

COMPONENT LEADER

ROMAN PRAH: “FIGHTING CORRUPTION IS A LONG-TERM PROCESS, THERE IS NO QUICK RECIPE”

Meet the team: The interview session is designed to introduce and familiarise you with the team members of the “EU Support for Rule of Law” project.

As part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen institutional capacities and promote good governance, we are pleased to introduce **Mr. Roman Prah,** Component Leader for Component 3 - Improve the prevention and fight against corruption. A Slovenian expert with over 38 years of experience in anti-corruption, justice reform, public administration, and institutional development. Mr. Prah has led numerous EU-funded projects across the Western Balkans, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Turkey and Serbia. His work has focused on strengthening institutional mechanisms to prevent and combat corruption, particularly emphasising transparency, accountability, and ethical standards in public institutions. As Team Leader of the EU-funded project in Serbia, he coordinated key reform initiatives and public awareness efforts.

Having recently joined our team, Mr. Prah is contributing his extensive expertise to activities implemented under Component 3. This interview provides an opportunity to learn more about his professional background, current priorities, and vision for supporting systemic reforms through the project.

As the leader of Component 3, focusing on prevention and the fight against corruption, how do you define the rule of law in this context?

From a legal perspective, the rule of law is the paramount principle in democracy, ensuring that everybody is equal before the law.

As you recently began your work with the team, what are your priorities in the upcoming months, and what do you hope to contribute to the project's goals?

First of all, I think that the role of Component 3, working with the main beneficiary—the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), is to strengthen their capacities with regard to their responsibilities under the law. These include asset declarations, promoting and improving integrity, conflict of interest issues, and raising general awareness of moral and integrity values. This is number one.

The second key objective involves providing daily, on-the-job training aimed at reviewing and enhancing institutional processes to ensure they remain effective and sustainable beyond the duration of the project. I think these are the two main goals of Component 3.

Talking about sustainability, from your experience, what makes anti-corruption reforms sustainable, and what role do partnerships, like the one with SCPC, play in this?

Anti-corruption reforms in North Macedonia have been underway for some time. Ensuring their sustainability now requires continued support for the SCPC and other key institutions involved in shaping the anti-corruption framework.

The ultimate objective is to strengthen national capacities so that once international project support concludes, institutions in North Macedonia are fully equipped to uphold and advance integrity standards.

Strategic partnerships, such as the one with the SCPC, are vital to this process as they foster local ownership, enhance institutional resilience, and contribute to long-term impact.



This being said, what are the key ingredients for building a strong and credible anti-corruption system in North Macedonia?

The first ingredient is a proper legislative framework. Compared to other countries in the region, I do not see any big differences in legislative systems. The anti-corruption legislative framework in North Macedonia is broadly aligned with international standards and good practice. The law empowers the Commission to actively promote integrity and strengthen the overall anti-corruption system in North Macedonia.

For sure, specialised or independent anti-corruption bodies such as the SCPC need sufficient capacity. When I say capacity, I do not mean just knowledge — the level of expertise demonstrated by the people working there is genuinely impressive and highly commendable. However, you also need enough staff to deal with the tasks under their mandate.

The government must also recognise the efforts of the Commission and support them by finding resources to provide additional staffing. This is something the relevant ministries should seriously consider. This issue of understaffing has been discussed for a long time. Of course, there are legal limitations regarding staff increases across public institutions. Sometimes, internal reorganisation can be a solution. This is also something the project recommends to our counterparts—enhancing interdepartmental cooperation.

Now, with the upcoming local elections, according to the law, the election campaign starts three months before the announced date. The Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interests gives the Commission a major responsibility to monitor political party financing and campaign financing. There is a lot of work to be done. If the government does not allow additional employment, then we must look at what can be managed within the existing structure. This may require a new systematisation or organisational setup to ensure the tasks under the law are fulfilled.

When discussing support, how would you describe our collaboration with the SCPC to someone encountering our project for the first time? What kind of support are we providing to the institution, and in what ways are we working together to strengthen its role?

We have established a very frank and trustful collaboration, maintaining open communication about the project’s scope and how it can support the Commission.

This good cooperation resulted in the agreement on our proposed work plan, which we discussed just yesterday. I presented it during a meeting with the Commissioners, and they agreed with the planned activities. These activities align with what was outlined in the inception report, though some modifications have been made to better support their needs.

We have agreed to collaborate on the preparation of the new anti-corruption strategy, which is urgent and needs to be completed by the end of this year. Another key document is the communication strategy, which we will develop together. We also support them in preparing an ICT strategy and developing an HR (Human Resource) ICT systems solution. Daily, we work with colleagues dealing with asset declarations to improve their operations.

Furthermore, we plan to provide expert support in reviewing and developing operational procedures. It is important that everyone follows the same approach in specific work processes. This maintains and strengthens internal integrity and establishes monitoring mechanisms, which are essential for any institution.

Fighting corruption can be a long-term challenge. What motivates you personally in this field, and what gives you hope for real progress in North Macedonia?

What is my driving force? It is the belief that everything is possible—if we want to do it. I am truly optimistic about real progress.

North Macedonia was actually one of the first countries in the Balkans to initiate institutionalised anti-corruption efforts. The first Commission, I believe, was established in 2002. Since then, a lot has happened—ups and downs, which are normal for any country or system. It is now vital for North Macedonia to translate political commitment into tangible actions that advance anti-corruption reforms. We always hear that political will is needed to fight corruption, but too often it is just a phrase. We need concrete steps. An important step also involves drafting amendments to the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interests.

However, the Commission does not solely have responsibility for advancing the anti-corruption system. There must be a whole system in place. The Commission is just one piece of the anti-corruption puzzle. One horse cannot pull a heavily burdened wagon alone—it takes a joint effort.

The Commission is working to strengthen cooperation with its partners, especially with the NGO sector, and through them, to reach the citizens of North Macedonia.

Eventually, political support will be needed too. We cannot ignore the role of politics. Politicians must also strengthen capacities in this regard. When I compare countries in the region, they face similar challenges regarding corruption, public procurement, the judiciary, education, and healthcare. Fighting corruption is a long-standing challenge that requires continuous commitment, institutional resilience, and coordinated action across all sectors to achieve lasting results. It cannot be resolved overnight. There is no quick recipe.

So, we return to the basics: sustainable anti-corruption efforts rely on a solid legislative framework, dedicated anti-corruption professionals—champions—and active support from informed and engaged citizens. Ultimately, it is the citizens who benefit from effective anti-corruption policies.

I'm confident that our project will achieve sustainable results in North Macedonia.



MAY - AUGUST 2025

CALENDAR
UPCOMING EVENTS

22 MAY

Promotion of the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Justice Strategy (2024 - 2028) for 2024

Component 1

JUNE

Conference on Disciplinary Proceedings for Judges with Judicial Council Members

Component 1

17 JUNE

Training on documenting injuries targeting the NPM (National Preventive Mechanism) and the Departments of Internal Affairs – Tetovo & Kumanovo

Component 4

08 JULY

Equality Talks #2: Right to Housing for Roma

Component 4

IMPRINT

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