Reinforce Democracy and the Rule of Law

Context

Upholding the **Rule of Law** is a **key pillar of well-functioning democracies**. It is a **fundamental principle** and a **value of the EU**, implying both that every person and entity is subject to the law, and no one is above it. The Rule of Law is crucial to maintaining the EU's democratic values and institutions, protecting citizens' rights and ensuring fair and equal treatment under the law.

To this end, on May 3, 2023 the Commission adopted an EU anti-corruption package including a legislative proposal to **combat corruption in the EU**, another on restrictive measures against serious acts of corruption, as well as a joint Communication with HRVP on the fight against corruption in the EU that outlines the overall EU actions in both **fighting and preventing corruption** and sets out possible **longer-term actions**.

In this context, **evidence-informed policymaking** has become an **essential tool in preventing risks for fraud and corruption** and **increasing the credibility of policy choices**.

Finally, an efficient justice system manages its caseload and backlog of cases, and delivers its decisions without undue delay. Investing in digitalisation of the justice system is essential to meet the broader efficiency challenges that exist in a number of Member States.

As part of the objective of combating violence against children and ensuring child protection, the Commission committed in the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child to promote integrated child protection systems and all relevant authorities and services should work together to protect and support the child, in their best interests. As part of this broader objective, the **Commission notably supports the establishment of Children's houses (Barnahus) in the EU**.

To this end, this flagship aims at supporting the EU Member States to implement the policy and guidance provided by the Commission, by **strengthening the capacity of the national authorities** with the ensuing **enhancement of their judicial systems**. This will contribute to ensuring effective and equal protection of the rule of law in the EU.

Objectives

To support Member States by strengthening the capacity of the national authorities with the ensuing enhancement of their judicial systems as well as improving the quality and efficiency of justice systems and in particular digitalisation of justice or the contribution to strengthening effective integrated children protection systems.

Support measures

Member States (i.e. national, regional and local authorities) may choose for technical support under the following [non-exhaustive] list of measures:

- Development of action plans and support to the implementation of targeted actions regarding the quality and efficiency of justice systems, such as digitalisation of justice;
- Needs assessment reports in terms of increasing capacity of evidence-informed policymaking in governance and public administration in Member States;
- Developing national strategies and action plans;
- Piloting the implementation of proposed strategies/action plans;
- Capacity building of administration to implement proposed strategies/action plans;
- Identification of existing EU good practices and gap analysis;
- Developing data-driven framework to identify irregularities and to address fraud and corruption risks in public expenditure;
- Guidance on using Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an anti-corruption and fraud-detection tool;

- Realization of proof of concepts of AI business solutions for anti-corruption and fraud-detection;
- Assessment of existing initiatives, national policy frameworks, organisational structures and financial support mechanisms in terms of science-for-policy ecosystem as a way to prevent fraud and corruption in policymaking, identifying gaps and needs and producing actionable policy recommendations;
- Support to the development and promotion of multidisciplinary intervention centres for child victims and witnesses of violence and more integrated child protection systems;
- Developing methodologies for conducting assessment of corruption risks in relevant sectors;
- Support for the development of institutional capacity, aimed at improving the effective implementation of ethics and integrity instruments (such as on financial disclosure, codes of conduct, lobbying, whistleblowing, anti-bribery compliance programs);
- Support for the development of institutional capacity, aimed at improving the detection, investigation, prosecution and adjudication of high-level corruption cases.

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