

OHCHR in the field: Europe and Central Asia



Type of presence	Location
Special mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ukraine
Regional offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Asia (Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic) Europe (Brussels, Belgium)
Human rights section in UN Peace Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kosovo**
Human rights advisers/officers in United Nations Country Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Republic of Moldova Russian Federation Serbia South Caucasus (based in Tbilisi, covering Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

** Reference to Kosovo should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

The work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the Europe and Central Asia region covers 54 countries, including candidates, potential candidates and Members of the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as well as disputed territories run by de facto authorities. During the course of the year, OHCHR continued strengthening its engagement with these countries and authorities

and provided backstopping for 10 field presences: Regional Offices in Brussels (for Europe) and in Bishkek (for Central Asia); human rights advisers in the Russian Federation, Serbia, South Caucasus (based in Tbilisi, covering Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia), Tajikistan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; national human rights officers in the Republic of Moldova and Kosovo⁵; and the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU). The Office continued to strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations and its close partnerships with UN agencies and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs).

OHCHR continued providing support to the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Belarus (with reports presented to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly) and drafted the annual report to the Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Cyprus. OHCHR also contributed to the 2015 Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Georgia,

⁵ Reference to Kosovo should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

which called on relevant stakeholders to become more decisively engaged in upholding their human rights obligations. With assistance from headquarters, the HRMMU released four quarterly reports on the human rights situation in Ukraine, in line with Human Rights Council resolution 29/23, and co-led the Protection Cluster with UNHCR.

In the context of the Secretary-General's Human Rights Up Front Action Plan, OHCHR continued to identify and analyse early signs of emerging crises, with a view to recommending innovative ways to address situations likely to result in human rights violations. These efforts included the substantive preparation of, participation in and follow-up to three Europe and Central Asia Regional Quarterly Reviews, covering Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Together with the Department of Political Affairs, OHCHR provided operational support for the joint mission led by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and for the human rights surge capacity deployment to the Republic of Moldova.

OHCHR supported missions undertaken by the High Commissioner of Human Rights (to France, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights (to Ukraine) and also provided substantive inputs prior to the visits of the Secretary-General to Belgium and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

Special Mission

Ukraine

Year established	2014
Staff as of 31 December 2015	34
Expenditure in 2015	US\$3,677,836

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *A National Human Rights Action Plan, deriving from the Human Rights Strategy for Ukraine developed in 2014, integrates recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms (EA 6)*
A draft national human rights action plan



Local residents in the Luhansk region of Ukraine talk to OHCHR staff about violations to their economic and social rights.

was developed by the Government and is currently pending approval. OHCHR supported the preparation of the draft by stressing the importance of reflecting the recommendations issued by the UN human rights mechanisms in relation to Ukraine and advising the drafters to structure the draft plan in accordance with the guidelines found in the OHCHR Handbook on National Human Rights Plans of Action. The Government eventually endorsed an appropriate structure and the draft action plan now identifies key objectives, well-defined activities, a clear implementation timeframe, responsible actors as well as benchmarks and indicators in order to monitor their implementation. The Office facilitated the participation of UN agencies in the drafting process by organizing a working group, composed of 10 UN agencies, which met regularly to coordinate their inputs to the draft. In addition, a UNCT assessment of the draft, which was based on consultations with UN agencies and substantive support provided by OHCHR, was submitted to the Government of Ukraine by the UN Resident Coordinator in November.

- ▶ *Enhanced systematic engagement by the UNCT with international human rights mechanisms (EA 11)*
The UNCT in Ukraine increasingly engaged with the human rights mechanisms in 2015. To raise the awareness of the UNCT regarding the recommendations issued by the mechanisms in relation to Ukraine, OHCHR prepared a compendium of the recommendations, clustered by theme, which it updated twice during the year. The Office also organized briefings for the UNCT on the occasion of the September visit of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and in anticipation of the presentation of its four public reports on human rights developments in Ukraine.



The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights visits a church in the Luhansk region which was damaged during shelling in 2014.

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *Anti-discrimination legislation is in line with international standards (EA 4)*

A draft human rights action plan, yet to be approved by the Government, outlines activities aimed at addressing discrimination against minorities by, for instance, calling for the harmonization of anti-discrimination legislation. It also provides for amendments to the Criminal Code which would punish hate crimes, including those committed as a result of the sexual orientation of the victim. OHCHR participated in the working groups that developed the draft human rights strategy and its action plan. Another encouraging development was Parliament's adoption, on 12 November, of amendments to labour legislation which now expressly identifies sexual orientation and gender identity as prohibited grounds of discrimination in employment relations. Throughout the year, OHCHR recalled Ukraine's international human rights commitments and its obligation to implement anti-discrimination recommendations issued by the international human rights mechanisms.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- ▶ *Torture prevention and accountability mechanisms are in place and functioning (EA 3)*

OHCHR supported accountability for human rights violations, including in the context of torture and ill-treatment of people deprived of their liberty, through a number of activities. As an example, the Office provided the NPM with lists of detained individuals who are alleged victims of mistreatment. As a result, the NPM began to undertake regular visits to places of detention. Representatives of law enforcement agencies, the Ministry of Defence and the Offices of the Prosecutor General and the Military Prosecutor of

Ukraine raised their awareness about international standards relating to protection and accountability due to training activities jointly organized by OHCHR and the Ombudsman's Office. Additionally, over 300 victims of torture received legal aid and psychological support from an NGO supported by OHCHR. Together, these and other activities have resulted in enhanced knowledge among relevant stakeholders about international standards relating to protection systems and accountability mechanisms. These efforts must continue to be pursued, however, as there is little evidence that the human rights protections of people deprived of their liberty have significantly improved in 2015 or that violations are being better addressed.

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

- ▶ *Mechanisms and initiatives are adopted to increase human rights protection in contexts of conflict, violence and insecurity (EA 3)*

OHCHR actively advocated for protection issues with State and non-State actors in the context of the conflict. The need for the evacuation of civilians from the conflict area was discussed with Government officials and in mid-February, the State Emergency Service announced that over 7,000 civilians would be evacuated from endangered locations in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The Office also urged the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights not to support two draft laws that would prohibit trade between Government-controlled territories and areas controlled by de facto authorities. The economic and social impact of the laws would have been devastating for the most vulnerable groups. Neither of the draft laws were adopted. Additionally, OHCHR participated in an international conference on the role of NHRIs in conflict and post-conflict situations that was

organized by the Ombudsman's Institution of Ukraine in October. The Office shared its methodology on monitoring and documenting human rights violations, moderated a panel discussion on the role of NHRIs in protecting civil rights and contributed to the development of the "Kyiv Declaration" that was adopted by the participants. The Declaration states that NHRIs are required to monitor, document and investigate human rights violations objectively and impartially; promote a dialogue between conflicting parties to ensure respect of human rights; and take measures to overcome the consequences of conflict, including by contributing to the fight against impunity and the promotion of transitional justice processes.

In 2015, OHCHR prepared and presented four public reports on the human rights situation in Ukraine. The reports contained recommendations related to the human rights challenges in the east and Crimea, as well as to issues of accountability, administration of justice, respect for fundamental freedoms, minority rights, women's rights and economic and social rights. The reports were translated into the Ukrainian and Russian languages and disseminated throughout the region.

- ▶ *Increased responsiveness of the international community to potential, emerging or existing human rights crisis situations, with human rights protection as an integral element of this response (EA 10)*

OHCHR strived to ensure that human rights were mainstreamed in the international community's response to humanitarian challenges in Ukraine in different ways. As co-lead of the Protection Cluster, the Office advocated with the Emergency Directors of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for increased engagement with Mine Action; greater freedom of movement to and from the conflict area; and the need to ensure that the needs of vulnerable groups and at-risk persons who are living outside the protection areas of concern are fully taken into account when planning the humanitarian response. Consequently, the outcome messages published by the Emergency Directors largely reflected the human rights issues advocated by the Protection Cluster. OHCHR provided human rights-specific input into the drafting of 18 UN publications, such as guidance notes, fact sheets and advocacy documents. It also ensured that human rights were integrated in the Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment that was conducted by the Government of Ukraine, the EU, the UN and the World Bank, as well as in the UN Humanitarian Needs Overview and the Humanitarian Response Plan.

Ukraine: Expenditure in 2015		
	Regular budget expenditure in US\$	Extrabudgetary expenditure in US\$
Personnel and related costs	-	2,166,214
Activities and operating costs	-	1,138,730
Subtotal	-	3,304,944
Programme support costs	-	372,892
GRAND TOTAL	-	3,677,836

Regional Offices

Regional Office for Central Asia (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)

Year established	2008
Staff as of 31 December 2015	18
Expenditure in 2015	US\$811,316

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *Recommendations from all human rights mechanisms related to, inter alia, the administration of justice and the right to adequate housing implemented in Kazakhstan (EA 6)*
The Government of Kazakhstan developed a draft action plan for the implementation of recommendations issued during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). OHCHR provided comments on the plan and co-organized a national workshop with UN Women for State authorities on the development of a national human rights action plan. This contributed to their increased understanding about the topic and enhanced their awareness about the importance of human rights indicators.
- ▶ *Establishment and/or fully functioning participatory standing national coordinating bodies on reporting/replying to individual communications and enquiries; and integrated follow-up to recommendations of all human rights mechanisms in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (EA 6)*
As a result of OHCHR's advocacy, a system of human rights focal points was established within each of the institutions that compose

the Coordination Council on Human Rights of Kyrgyzstan. The Office also contributed to the establishment of two working groups under the Coordination Council's Secretariat. The first working group was tasked with drafting the National Human Rights Action Plan and the second was tasked with developing a mechanism for the implementation of recommendations issued by international human rights mechanisms. In addition, OHCHR developed a compendium of all recommendations received that were clustered into 25 thematic areas. The compendium is being used by the working group in charge of developing the first draft of the National Human Rights Action Plan which is expected to be ready in 2016.

In Tajikistan, the Inter-Agency Commission functions as a coordinating mechanism. OHCHR assisted the Commission with the creation of a website that included information on the implementation of recommendations. It also provided support on the holding of a public consultation regarding the UPR State report. More than 50 representatives of State authorities, NGOs and international organizations participated and provided comments.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- ▶ *Criminal justice legislative and policy frameworks, including in relation to past human rights violations, significantly improve their compliance with international human rights standards in Kyrgyzstan (EA 1)*

With the support of OHCHR and other international organizations, seven key draft laws were finalized in 2014 in relation to the administration of justice, including the Criminal Code, the Code on Misdemeanours, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Criminal Executive Code, the Civil Procedure Code and legislation on enforcement proceedings. The Laws were adopted by Parliament in the first reading in June. While the Criminal Procedure Code contains a number of progressive provisions in compliance with international human rights standards, a number of shortcomings were identified, for instance, in relation to excessive use of pre-trial detention. As a result of OHCHR's advocacy, a Working Group was established to ensure harmonization between the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code and their further compliance with international standards.

- ▶ *Human rights training institutionalized for judges and prosecutors in Kyrgyzstan (EA 1)*
The Lawyers' Training Centre and the Bar Association are developing a mandatory training

for all newly licensed lawyers based on OHCHR's training course on human rights for lawyers. The Office is supporting this process by developing training materials and carrying out a number of training-of-trainers sessions for judges, prosecutors and lawyers. In Tajikistan, the Judicial Training Centre of the Council of Justice agreed to use the training manual, developed with OHCHR's support, for the training of judges on fair trial standards.

- ▶ *National Preventive Mechanisms against torture as provided for under the OP-CAT are fully functioning in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (EA 3)*
In Kyrgyzstan, prison authorities and law enforcement agencies granted the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) with full access to places of detention for the first time. In Kazakhstan, the Office contributed to strengthening the capacity of the 145 newly elected members of the NPM on the standards of preventive visits and supported the Ombudsman on the launch of the first public report of the NPM.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *Legislative and policy frameworks increasingly preserve and guarantee democratic space in Kyrgyzstan (EA 1)*

New legislation that would have increased State control over civil society actors in Kyrgyzstan, such as a law granting broad powers to State authorities to interfere in the internal affairs of NGOs, did not enter into force. The Office contributed to this result by undertaking consistent advocacy, providing expert advice to State authorities and issuing press releases on the draft laws, in addition to other advocacy and outreach activities.

- ▶ *National legislation and policies in the area of public freedoms improve compliance with international standards in Kazakhstan (EA 1)*
In Kazakhstan, despite concerns repeatedly raised by OHCHR and other actors, legislation was adopted which reduced the democratic space of NGOs. The Office's advocacy efforts were nevertheless instrumental in the improvement of a draft law on access to information and in a ruling handed down by the Constitutional Council on the draft law on protecting children from harmful information which eliminated its potentially discriminatory effects.
- ▶ *Strengthened and meaningful participation of rights-holders, especially minorities, in selected processes, and particularly those related to housing, land and property rights in Kyrgyzstan (EA 5)*

At the end of a national conference on the participation of minorities in public affairs that

was co-organized by UN partners, including OHCHR and the OSCE, the Presidential Administration proposed to establish four working groups to develop and agree on concrete measures to promote the increased participation of minorities. Moreover, through collaboration with the Training Centre of the National Commission on State Language, OHCHR contributed to the development of materials to teach the Kyrgyz language to civil servants, in particular those from ethnic minority communities who do not speak Kyrgyz and may otherwise risk losing their jobs. As of November, approximately 300 civil servants have started taking the language classes. In addition, as a result of the Office's training of youth and civil society representatives on human rights, diversity and civic participation, youth groups have implemented a number of awareness-raising activities, including a campaign on minority rights in the south of Kyrgyzstan.

Regional Office for Central Asia (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan): Expenditure in 2015

	Regular budget expenditure in US\$	Extrabudgetary expenditure in US\$
Personnel and related costs	394,354	159,928
Activities and operating costs	155,274	70,910
Subtotal	549,628	230,838
Programme support costs	-	30,850
GRAND TOTAL	549,628	261,688

Training for youth on minority rights and human rights

In the framework of the UN project, "Unity in Diversity," the Regional Office for Central Asia conducted a series of training sessions for 75 young civil society activists that covered basic human rights concepts and civil society participation. Following the training, a number of participants approached the Office to request support for some awareness-raising activities that they wanted to organize to promote minority rights. Arseniy Maslov, who facilitated a session on human rights and diversity management for the staff members of his civil society organization, said "I gained comprehensive knowledge of effective tools and instruments to promote ethnic tolerance and diversity management and deepened my knowledge of human rights. It is amazing to see how these mechanisms can help in solving difficult problems such as ethnic intolerance. The OHCHR trainings have motivated and inspired me immensely, and I want to share this experience as much as possible." He also conducted diversity management classes for school students in Bishkek, including through interactive games, which addressed the issue of stereotyping of ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan. "Through the trainings, I learned about useful instruments to break stereotypes and promote ethnic tolerance. It is amazing to witness how pupils can change, giving away their stereotypes. I believe it is very important to continue my commitments and to reinforce an environment where we can build a tolerant society," stated Arseniy.

Regional Office for Europe (Brussels, Belgium)

Year established	2009
Staff as of 31 December 2015	8
Expenditure in 2015	US\$1,179,133

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- *Increased use of United Nations human rights mechanisms and bodies by diverse rights-holders (especially Roma and migrants), NHRIs and civil society organizations acting on their behalf in at least three States in the region (EA 7)*

In 2015, OHCHR organized a series of trainings, briefings and meetings on international human rights mechanisms and directly contributed to the increased awareness of national human rights institutions (NHRIs), civil society organizations

and rights-holders in the region. By way of illustration, a workshop was organized for rights-holders and civil society organizations from six States on the preparation of alternative reports to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and individual complaints under its Optional Protocol. Some participating civil society organizations are currently preparing alternative reports.

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *Comprehensive non-discrimination directive aimed at protecting individuals from discrimination on the grounds of disability, age, religion and sexual orientation in education, health care, social protection and access to goods and services, including housing, is closer to adoption (EA 4)*

In 2015, no progress was achieved regarding the adoption of the EU comprehensive non-discrimination directive, despite the statement made by the President of the European Commission when taking Office in November 2014 that the adoption would be a priority for the new Commission. OHCHR will continue to advocate for its adoption with member states and other stakeholders.

- ▶ *Roma inclusion policies in at least three States in the region comply with the recommendations of international human rights mechanisms, with a particular focus on article 3 of ICERD (prohibition of segregation) (EA 4)*

In some States in the region, no progress was achieved in relation to Roma inclusion policies. During a mission to France, prior to the planned forced evictions of two migrant Roma settlements, OHCHR met with State officials in an effort to persuade the Government not to carry out these plans. OHCHR highlighted the recommendations issued by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in June regarding the need for alternative accommodation and access to education for children. Nevertheless, the evictions took place as planned. On the other hand, the European Commission published a draft guidance note on combating segregation in education and housing in the use of European Structural and Investment Funds. The draft was strongly influenced by the outcome of OHCHR's international colloquium held in Madrid, in 2014, entitled *Roma housing segregation as a human rights challenge*. This can be regarded as a major step forward in contributing to the implementation of article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in the 28 member



A refugee child at a reception centre in Rome, Italy.

states of the EU. The Office also provided written comments on the draft.

- ▶ *NHRIs and equality bodies take concrete measures to address discrimination issues; increase direct participation of rights-holders from groups at risk (especially Roma and migrants) and involve civil society organizations representing these groups in their activities in at least two States in the region (EA 5)*

OHCHR contributed to increasing the capacity of NHRIs and rights-holders to address discrimination issues through a series of activities, including the organization of seminars and other advocacy events. On Roma rights, activities continued to highlight the importance of a human rights-based approach to Roma integration policies at the EU and member state levels. At a workshop on the rights of Travellers in Belgium, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, focus was placed on how NHRIs and civil society organizations can make better use of international human rights mechanisms in their efforts to strengthen the promotion and protection of their rights. At the 10th conference of Ombudsmen of EU member states in Warsaw, a broader effort was made to engage Ombudspersons, NHRIs and equality bodies in Europe in more activities vis-à-vis the Roma, among other vulnerable groups.

- ▶ *Increased integration of human rights of migrants in international and regional processes relevant to migration (EA 10)*

OHCHR issued press releases in relation to several countries where the treatment of migrants gave rise to serious concerns. In the Czech Republic, this led to an improvement in detention conditions and practices. In cooperation with UNHCR and national partners, OHCHR delivered two training-of-trainers workshops to

border guards, mainly from EU member states, on human rights, with a particular focus on the rights of migrants. The Office delivered training modules on interception and the deprivation of liberty and contributed to other elements of the training to ensure that international human rights standards were fully incorporated. As a result, the understanding of participants increased regarding international and regional human rights standards as they relate to migrants. Since then, border guards from several States have begun to deliver their own trainings.

Integrating human rights in development and in the economic sphere

- ▶ *Increased participation of rights-holders and CSOs which represent them, in the design and monitoring of public policies in the region, particularly: EU development policies; public policies and budget processes affecting socially excluded ethnic groups (Roma and Travellers) in at least three States of the region; public policies dealing with the right to independent living of persons with disabilities and family or family-type care of children in at least five States of the region (EA 5)*

OHCHR contributed to the increased capacity of rights-holders in Belgium, France, Greece, Latvia and Northern Ireland to design and monitor public policies. For example, the Office cooperated with the European Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community-Based Care to deliver a seminar in Greece on independent living and alternative care of children. A total of 30 participants attended the seminar, including local authorities, civil society organizations and the Ombudsman institution. OHCHR also held a series of meetings and workshops with civil society organizations in Belgium and France to increase the capacity of participants to advocate for legislative and policy reforms regarding the right to independent living. OHCHR also organized a workshop on the rights of Travellers in Belgium, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom for civil society organizations, NHRIs and other rights-holders. This contributed to their increased capacity to engage with the human rights mechanisms.

- ▶ *Global, regional, and national actors increasingly integrate international human rights principles and standards, including the right to development, in their development, finance, trade and investment policies (EA 10)*

The revised EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, aimed at mainstreaming human rights into all EU external policy areas, was adopted in

July. The Action Plan reflects international human rights standards and provides greater detail on a human rights-based approach than the previous versions. OHCHR contributed to this result by providing input and advice during the drafting process.

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

- ▶ *Implementation of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive, the Strategy and the Action Paper, in accordance with international human rights law in countries in the region (EA 1)*

Representatives from the Ministries of Interior, Justice and Foreign Affairs in Albania, Estonia, Georgia, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine, increased their awareness and understanding of international and regional human rights standards related to trafficking following two training-of-trainers sessions on combating and preventing trafficking in human beings. The trainings were organized by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU. OHCHR delivered training modules on the human rights-based approach to identifying and interviewing victims and emphasized the need to integrate a gender perspective in all phases of identifying and interviewing victims of trafficking. In addition, OHCHR contributed material on international human rights obligations in relation to human trafficking for the online training tool targeted to national trainers to increase their capacity and knowledge on the subject.



OHCHR staff members and the Secretary-General for Human Rights of the Greek Ministry of Justice meet with a representative of the Orthodox Church's charity Agalia, which has been operating a reception centre for migrants in Skala Sikamniis.

Regional Office for Europe (Brussels, Belgium): Expenditure in 2015

	Regular budget expenditure in US\$	Extrabudgetary expenditure in US\$
Personnel and related costs	733,292	8,240
Activities and operating costs	121,303	278,962
Subtotal	854,595	287,202
Programme support costs		37,336
GRAND TOTAL	854,595	324,538

Strengthening engagement with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

On 14 October, the Regional Office for Europe, in collaboration with the European Disability Forum, organized a workshop in Brussels for civil society organizations to strengthen their engagement with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Participants included civil society organizations from Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Serbia and Slovakia in anticipation of the upcoming reviews of their respective countries by the Committee. Two Committee members were featured speakers at the workshop. The sessions focused on the role of NGOs in the reporting cycle and included practical exercises on drafting an alternative report and/or replies to lists of issues. The workshop provided the Regional Office with a unique opportunity to join forces with a leading disability organization. It was also the first time that the Office organized a fully accessible event. Participants informed OHCHR that they would be preparing input for their respective reviews and called for the organization of an annual workshop.

Human Rights Section in UN Peace Mission

Kosovo⁶

Year established	Stand-alone office closed in 2015 and was replaced by a Human Rights Section within the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
------------------	---

Staff as of 31 December 2015	4
------------------------------	---

Results

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *Legislation to combat discrimination is adopted and implemented in line with international human rights standards (EA 4)*

In May, the Human Rights Law Package, including the Law on the Ombudsperson Institution, the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Non-discrimination, was endorsed by Kosovo's Parliament. The drafting of the laws, which are in broad compliance with human rights standards, was supported by the Council of Europe and OHCHR.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- ▶ *A transitional justice strategy that conforms to international human rights standards is adopted and being implemented (EA 3)*

The appointment of a new chairman of the Interministerial Working Group on Dealing with the Past and Reconciliation reactivated the transitional justice process in 2015, following a year of limited improvement. The Working Group, with the strong engagement of civil society, initiated a mapping and assessment of the existing transitional justice legislation, policies and programmes in order to inform the development of a strategy document. With the support of UN organizations, including OHCHR, seven thematic workshops were held to contribute to the Working Group's increased understanding of the transitional justice process. The workshops focused on institutional reform, transformative reparations, truth finding initiatives, conflict-

⁶ Reference to Kosovo should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

related property issues, use of official languages and archiving and political prisoners. Several public debates and other advocacy initiatives were carried out to ensure the visibility of the process and promote the recognition of the rights of victims, particularly victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). OHCHR was particularly instrumental in ensuring minority representation in the Working Group.

Integrating human rights in development and in the economic sphere

- ▶ *Human rights duly taken into consideration in the drafting process of the new United Nations Common Development Plan document. Human rights accountability of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo/European Union Rule of Law Mission is increased (EA 11)*
OHCHR actively participated in the preparation of the new United Nations Common Development Plan for the period 2016-2020 which addresses three priority areas: governance and the rule of law; social inclusion; and the environment and health. The Plan received positive feedback from Government officials, including the Minister of Health, the Deputy Minister of Finance and a representative from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, as well as others. The officials indicated their commitment to collaborate to ensure the Plan's implementation.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *Increased level of meaningful participation of women in selected public processes, notably those relating to sexual and gender-based violence (EA 5)*
The Legal Office of the Prime Minister and civil society organizations, with the support of OHCHR, UNDP and UN Women, worked together in a participatory manner to draft the regulation on verifying the status of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence survivors and the related administrative instructions. This helped to ensure that the regulation was in compliance with international human rights standards and principles of equality and non-discrimination. In addition, with the support of OHCHR, regional coordination mechanisms composed of representatives from the police, municipalities, education and health care institutions and civil society organizations were established in four municipalities in northern Kosovo to deal with cases of gender-based violence. Furthermore, through a partnership with local NGOs, OHCHR established integrated psychosocial services for gender-based violence survivors.

Human Rights Advisers in United Nations Country Teams

Republic of Moldova

Year established	2008
Staff as of 31 December 2015	2

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *Women, as well as individuals from marginalized or vulnerable groups, including Roma, persons with disabilities, older women or persons from the Transnistrian region, make effective use of the individual communications procedures of CEDAW, the two Covenants and ICERD (EA 7)*
As of December, and with the support of the HRA, one individual complaint had been submitted under ICERD. Three more are expected to be submitted between the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016; one under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (OP-CEDAW); and two under the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR-OP1).
- ▶ *UNCT increasingly engages with international human rights mechanisms (EA 11)*
The UNCT engaged with the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT), during its May visit and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities during the September mission. Within the framework of the Human Rights Up Front Initiative, the UNCT and the surge team deployed to the country engaged in discussions in September and October. As a result of the deployment, a country situation analysis was developed which included recommendations for action to be taken by the UNCT under different scenarios such as civil unrest or a deepening of intercommunity divisions. Another outcome of the deployment was the development, in close collaboration with UNCT, of a recommendations matrix. The matrix was prepared on the basis of Thomas Hammarberg's report on human rights in the Transnistrian region and represents an important tool for further work on the development of a regional human rights action plan.

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *Regulations and official scenarios (such as Gay Pride events or segregated school districts) brought substantially into compliance with non-/anti-discrimination international human rights law and standards (EA 4)*

The HRA worked to improve a number of laws to bring them in line with international human rights standards, including Law 121 on ensuring equality, Law 52 on the People's Advocate and amendments to the Criminal Code and Contravention Code with a view to combating hate crimes. The HRA assisted the Ombudsman's Office and the Equality Council to document 20 discrimination cases and provide adequate support to the victims. Moreover, the 2015 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI) Pride parade was organized without major incidents due to the committed involvement of the HRA and relevant national stakeholders.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- ▶ *Increased number of remedy decisions and decisions in discrimination cases in compliance with international human rights law (EA 1)*
- During 2015, the Equality Council, supported by the HRA, handed down over 100 decisions on discrimination cases. As a follow-up to Thomas Hammarberg's report on human rights in the Transnistrian region, legal advice was provided to the de facto Transnistrian authorities on adopting a regulatory framework for preventing and combating domestic violence in conformity with international human rights standards.

The voice of people with disabilities: Making a difference in Bender

On 8 May 2015, the local public administration of the City of Bender in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova embarked on a new programme and established an Accessibility Evaluation Committee. The Committee is mandated to develop, promulgate and monitor the implementation of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services that are provided or open to the public. Shortly afterwards, the City Programme on Accessibility was endorsed. One of the important activities the Programme is considering is the mandatory creation of minimum accessibility for public spaces.

This breakthrough comes after laborious and extensive advocacy efforts carried out by Mr. Dmitrii Kuzuc, Director of the World of Equal Opportunity organization. Mr. Kuzuc is also the Chairperson of the Accessibility Evaluation Committee and recently pointed out, "The establishment of this Committee was like a wake-up call for the architects, the building planners and building owners who are now actively seeking our advice before engaging in any construction or renovation so as to avoid accessibility mistakes. For example, the biggest shopping and recreational centre to be built in Bender will be fully accessible for all persons with disabilities." With OHCHR's support, Mr. Kuzuc has emerged as a strong leader who has organized a group of women and men with disabilities which meets regularly and plans for activities to promote the social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Russian Federation

Year established	2008, following the adoption of cooperation framework in August 2007.
Staff as of 31 December 2015	6

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *Increased implementation of recommendations issued by treaty bodies, special procedures and the Human Rights Council relating to human rights institutions, judicial reform, human rights training for law enforcement officials, the rights of children and the rights of women (EA 6)*
- In 2015, OHCHR organized another Geneva-based edition of the Human Rights Orientation Programme for civil servants of the Russian

Federation. Fourteen senior staff members from key ministries, the Constitutional and Supreme Courts, as well as the General Prosecutor's Office participated in the Programme. It enabled the participants to enhance their understanding of the UN human rights mechanisms and contributed to improving the coordination between Government officials who are involved in reporting to and interacting with the human rights mechanisms.

- ▶ *Recommendations of human rights mechanisms are increasingly integrated into the planning and programming of UN agencies (EA 11)*

The Human Rights Adviser promoted the implementation of joint activities and the inclusion of a human rights-based approach in discussions with UN agencies present in the Russian Federation. For example, the HRA coordinated with the UN Information Centre to organize activities related to the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities.

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *NHRI's anti-discrimination programmes significantly improve compliance with international human rights standards (EA 4)*
OHCHR continued its efforts to strengthen the capacities of federal and regional ombudspersons to effectively address claims of discriminated groups in conformity with international human rights principles and standards. In light of the FIFA World Cup that will be held in the Russian Federation in 2018, OHCHR organized a workshop on 4 June which focused on the role of human rights commissioners in countering racism and discrimination in football. The event gathered together human rights commissioners from 11 regions, representatives of the Federal Ombudsman's Office, senior officials from the Ministry of Sport, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Russian Football Union and the Organizing Committee of the 2018 World Cup. As a result of the workshop, the Ministry of Sport supported a recommendation to integrate human rights commissioners into the respective regional organizing committees in charge of preparations.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *A multidisciplinary Human Rights Programme has been integrated into formal higher education and institutionalized in several regions (EA 1)*
In 2015, four new institutions joined the Consortium of Universities implementing the Human Rights Master Programme. The Consortium now comprises a total of nine universities that are based in Kazan, Moscow, Perm, Voronezh and Yekaterinburg. All of the

universities are implementing the four core courses developed by the Consortium under OHCHR's guidance. With this expansion, the number of students enrolled in 2015 reached a total of 70. Furthermore, with the support of OHCHR, the Annual Summer School on Human Rights, held in Kazan, included the participation of more than 50 lecturers such as prominent human rights defenders, senior representatives of the Federal Ombudsman's Office as well as treaty body experts and academics.

Serbia

Year established	Office in 1996 and Human Rights Adviser in 2007
Staff as of 31 December 2015	3

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *Fully functioning participatory standing national coordinating body is in place to report/reply to individual communications and enquiries; and integrated follow-up to recommendations of all human rights mechanisms (EA 6)*

In December 2014, the Government decided to establish an inter-institutional mechanism to implement and report on the recommendations issued by the human rights mechanisms in relation to Serbia. In 2015, OHCHR and OSCE supported the development of the national mechanism and progress was made in terms of securing agreement with civil society actors regarding their representation on the body. Few Government representatives attended the first meeting of the mechanism, held in October, and the second meeting was postponed until 2016.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- ▶ *UN human rights standards increasingly invoked in court proceedings (EA 1)*
The HRA supported civil society efforts to stop a number of forced evictions of Roma living in substandard slum settlements in Belgrade. As a result of these efforts, Zemun authorities applied the right to adequate housing standards pursuant to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The same approach was adopted by the first instance Zemun Court, which halted the evictions. Additionally, the Government



Migrants at the Hungarian/Serbian border, November 2015.

issued the final draft of the new National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2016-2025, in November, which includes a strong focus on human rights. The HRA joined the national team of experts to work on the new Strategy and emphasized the areas of housing, education, health, employment and social protection.

Integrating human rights in development and in the economic sphere

- ▶ *The UNDAF and half of UN programmes and projects fully conform to the human rights-based approach and incorporate recommendations from human rights mechanisms (EA 11)*

As a result of the HRA's engagement with the UNCT, the draft United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2016-2020, which has not been signed, includes a sub-pillar dedicated to the implementation of human rights recommendations, including those issued by the human rights mechanisms. In addition, the HRA joined forces with UNICEF, UN Women and other UN agencies to ensure that the draft UNDAF includes stigmatized groups (like Roma and persons with disabilities) in a range of relevant areas. Gender equality is one of the key areas of the UNDAF and includes a specific goal to strengthen the representation of women in public life.

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

- ▶ *Human rights are integrated into United Nations preparedness, response and recovery efforts of crises emanating from natural disasters, conflicts and other situations of violence and insecurity (EA 11)*
- In response to the significant increase in the number of migrants and refugees arriving in Serbia, OHCHR undertook a mission to the Hungarian/Serbian border to document

the outbreak of violence and alleged abuse perpetrated by Hungarian police. As a result, the High Commissioner issued a statement of concern. The HRA and other OHCHR colleagues undertook a mission to Bulgaria in order to document the human rights abuses reported by migrants and refugees arriving in Serbia and engage with Bulgarian authorities to discuss potential improvements related to the management of the migrant crisis.

South Caucasus (based in Tbilisi, covering Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia)

Year established	2007
Staff as of 31 December 2015	5

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *Fully functioning participatory standing national coordinating bodies are in place for reporting/replying to individual communications and enquiries; and integrated follow-up to recommendations of all human rights mechanisms in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (EA 6)*

In Georgia, OHCHR continued to support the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan by updating the Plan and collecting information on human rights challenges and priorities in all regions of Georgia. OHCHR's efforts were carried out in collaboration with the National Human Rights Action Plan Secretariat, based at the Office of the Prime Minister of Georgia.

- ▶ *International human rights standards and recommendations of international human rights mechanisms are partially integrated in UN common country programmes in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (EA 11)*

In Azerbaijan, OHCHR chaired the UNCT Human Rights Thematic Group and regularly briefed UNCT members on the reporting status of Azerbaijan to the human rights treaty bodies. Furthermore, one of the priority areas of the United Nations-Azerbaijan Partnership Framework includes providing assistance to the Government to achieve progress in the implementation of recommendations issued by the international human rights mechanisms. In Georgia, the UN Partnership for Sustainable Development, signed at the end of the year, included relevant recommendations issued by the human rights mechanisms, as advocated by OHCHR.

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *Legislation, policies and practices increasingly comply with anti-discrimination and equality standards (EA 4)*

In Georgia, in response to a request from the Legal Committee of the Parliament, OHCHR undertook research on the legal capacity of persons with disabilities and was requested to contribute to the finalization of amendments to legislation on the legal capacity of persons with psychological disabilities. The amendments were adopted in 2015.

- ▶ *Increased use of national protection systems by women and persons living with disabilities in Azerbaijan (EA 5)*

In February, OHCHR and the NHRI of Azerbaijan co-organized a round table discussion on the implementation of recommendations issued by the UN human rights mechanisms concerning the rights of persons with disabilities. The event, which brought together representatives from Government institutions and civil society organizations, resulted in the drafting of a list of

proposals for the implementation of a national action plan on social rights in Azerbaijan.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- ▶ *Institutions in the justice sector show significant improvement in their compliance with international human rights standards (EA 1)*

In Azerbaijan, OHCHR contributed to the increased understanding of international human rights standards by the legal community through the translation and dissemination of publications on the treaty bodies and other OHCHR training tools, which will be used in training activities at the Baku State University and the Justice Academy. In Georgia, a number of training activities on human rights standards and mechanisms, fundamental freedoms and prohibition of discrimination have been held to increase the skills of members of the Georgian Bar Association, such as training sessions in Tbilisi and in the regions of the country. As a result of this collaboration, the Office was granted a Gratitude Award by the Bar Association on the occasion of its 20th anniversary. In addition, OHCHR developed a curriculum for the High School of Justice on the role of judges in the prohibition of torture.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *Training programmes on human rights institutionalized in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (EA 1)*

The Free University in Georgia continued its work to incorporate human rights into its law programme, with a special focus on the human rights mechanisms. For instance, 40 law students received in-depth training on the human rights mechanisms, in particular on the development of jurisprudence by the treaty bodies, as a result of winter and summer schools supported by OHCHR. The University also organized a number of ad hoc discussions on human rights developments in Georgia and elsewhere for



Group photo of an OHCHR training event on international human rights standards for the youth in Batumi, Georgia, April 2015.

52 youth representatives in order to enhance their knowledge about minority and discrimination-related issues. The University also expanded its publication activities, including the publication in Georgian language of selected General Comments and General Recommendations issued by the treaty bodies.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Year established	2007
Staff as of 31 December 2015	1

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *Government coordination body for integrated reporting and/or implementation of outstanding recommendations is functioning in line with effective, transparent and participatory operating modalities (EA 6)*

An Expert Working Group was established in April within the national mechanism for reporting and follow-up. The Working Group will provide substantive support to the national mechanism in preparing annual workplans, publishing the human rights treaty bodies' concluding observations relevant to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and improving information sharing and coordination between Government actors concerned with the national-level implementation of their human rights obligations. The Human Rights Adviser built the capacity of the Working Group in relation to the international human rights system and the human rights-based approach.

- ▶ *An increased number of diverse national CSOs participate in State reporting and implementation of recommendations and make submissions to the UN human rights mechanisms (EA 7)*



Training on the human rights treaty bodies for State officials in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, January 2015.

As the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was to be considered by four of the treaty bodies in 2015, the Human Rights Adviser organized a workshop with the Ombudsman and civil society organizations to discuss strategies for their interaction with the human rights mechanisms. At the request of some civil society organizations active in the areas of economic, social and cultural rights, the Adviser facilitated another workshop to develop their skills in producing alternative reports to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. As a result of the workshops, civil society organizations prepared a total of 14 public submissions for the four treaty bodies. All submissions, with the exception of one, were jointly prepared by 15 different national civil organizations, coalitions and networks. The Ombudsman also prepared four submissions, one of which was prepared in its capacity as the National Preventive Mechanism. The issues that the civil society organizations and the Ombudsman brought to the attention to the four committees were central to the respective dialogues between the committees and the State and were largely reflected in the recommendations.