

CZ-HUMAN RIGHTS

ANNUAL PROGRAMME REPORT 2019: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The programme Human Rights is in its initial implementation stage. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs approved the programme in June 2018 and a year later signed the Programme Agreement.

The Programme Operator inaugurated the programme at a launch conference in March 2019. Relevant stakeholders at national, regional and local level from public sector, academia and NGOs received valuable information about programme's objective and aims. The Programme Operator furthermore promoted calls of the programme to relevant stakeholders and potential eligible applicants at different other events such as e.g. at a meeting of representatives of the specialised services for victims of gender-based violence. In order to keep the information about the programme available and up-to-date, the Programme Operator created a website <https://www.eeagrants.cz/en/programmes/human-rights>.

In December 2019, the Programme Operator approved altogether six pre-defined projects (projects No. 1 Creating system for quantitative data collection to evaluate the situation of Roma in the Czech society", No. 3 "Strengthening the Public Defender of Rights' activities in human rights protection (Towards establishing NHRI in the Czech Republic)", No. 4 "Place for All - Building a Space for Mutual Coexistence", No. 5 "The Awareness Raising on the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and other international human rights obligations of the Czech Republic", No. 6 "Improvement of access to justice for vulnerable groups" and No. 7 "Improvement of perpetrators treatment and victims support in cases of domestic and gender-based violence in the Czech Republic" out of total number of eight projects and issued one implementation contract for project No. 3. During the application process of pre-defined project No. 9 "Implementing European standards to combat gender-based violence and domestic violence in the Czech Republic", the applicant Council of Europe cancelled the project. As a result, the FMO approved modification of the programme leading to increase of funds for other three pre-defined projects at the end of December 2019.

The Programme Operator learned several valuable lessons from both programme development and initial implementation stage. For the future, we recommend organizing separate stakeholder consultation for each of the programme area as well as separate strategy meeting following each stakeholder consultation. We have also learned that it is necessary to keep additional reasonable time reserved for "red tape" in the programme development timeline including the Concept Note development phase. Thanks to pro-applicant approach, we managed to assess and approve six out of eight grant applications for the pre-defined projects in the second half of year 2019. We would like to take similar approach during management of Calls and Small Grant Scheme through seminars for applicants/project promoters.

Limited programme contribution to strengthening of bilateral relations due to low capacity of Norwegian organisations to join projects and due to absence of Donor Programme Partner together with time risk remain one of the Human Rights programme's greatest challenges. In order to encourage and promote bilateral relations, the Programme Operator in cooperation with the National Focal Point created a shared partner database that gathers partner requests from the Czech Republic and donor states from all programme areas supported in the Czech Republic and promotes synergies in projects. Furthermore, it is a risk of a lack of personal capacity to administer and professionally manage the programme that represents one of the main operational risks. We are therefore taking measures to strengthen the capacity such as hiring new staff or external entity especially for preparation of calls and ensuring smooth selection process at this stage.