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PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION & NATIONAL CONVENTION ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Roundtable on Chapter 23 – Progress on achieving the interim benchmarks of Chapter 23
17 February 2026

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the involvement of non-state actors

- Transparency and public communication regarding the negotiation process and reforms under Chapter 23 should be further strengthened through the regular publication of information on progress achieved, existing challenges, and upcoming steps. This would contribute to better public awareness and broader stakeholder engagement. It is also important to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the relevant institutions involved in Chapter 23, so that civil society organisations can better identify which institutions are responsible for specific issues and where monitoring and advocacy efforts should be directed.
- The early and systematic involvement of civil society organisations, academia, professionals, and other relevant stakeholders should be ensured from the initial stages of policymaking and legislative drafting, particularly for initiatives related to justice, fundamental rights, and the protection of vulnerable groups.
- Closer and more practical cooperation should be established between central and local government institutions and civil society organisations working directly with vulnerable groups. CSOs can provide legal expertise, quantitative and qualitative data based on their research and monitoring activities, as well as targeted recommendations addressing the specific needs of vulnerable communities. Such contributions can support both the legislative drafting process and the effective implementation of adopted measures.

The Discussion and Consultation Tables for Chapter 23 are organised pursuant to Prime Minister's Order No. 113, dated 30 August 2019, "On the Forms of Participation, Functioning and Institutional Structure of the Partnership Platform for European Integration".

This consultation session is held within the framework of the project "Building Partnership on Fundamentals: Empowering CSOs for the EU Accession Process", with the financial support of the European Union – IPA Civil Society Facility 2021, implemented by the European Movement in Albania in cooperation with the Academy of European Integration and Negotiations (AIEN), the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA), and the Centre for Transparency and Free Information (CTFI).



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On the functioning of justice institutions and access to justice for vulnerable groups

- Efforts to increase the efficiency of the judicial system should continue through addressing the backlog of cases, strengthening human and institutional capacities, and investing in the physical and digital infrastructure of justice institutions. Further efforts should be made to strengthen integrity, professionalism, and ethical standards within the justice system by supporting reforms related to professional evaluation, continuous training, the role of legal assistants, and the standards applied by the School of Magistrates. Civil society organisations can also contribute through specialised training programmes and courses in these areas, not only for newly appointed magistrates but also for other justice professionals.
- Mechanisms for the protection and support of crime victims should be strengthened by ensuring: (a) enhanced inter-institutional coordination; (b) sustainable financial support; and (c) effective access to services, particularly for vulnerable groups and marginalised communities.
- Access to justice for vulnerable groups should be guaranteed by ensuring that public policies and services adequately address the specific needs of victims, women, children, persons with disabilities, and other communities in need. This should be achieved through regular field consultations with civil society organisations, social workers, and legal professionals who work directly with these groups and possess first-hand knowledge of their challenges and needs.
- Cooperation between central government institutions, local authorities, and civil society organisations should be strengthened in the implementation of the Intersectoral Strategy for the Protection of Crime Victims 2024–2030, with a particular focus on prevention, awareness-raising, and free legal aid. Local government plays a key role in outreach and direct communication, facilitating cooperation with local civil society actors and providing valuable information and data on the situation of vulnerable groups.

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- The Strategy for the Protection of Crime Victims should also address the protection of foreign victims in Albania who may be subject to labour exploitation or sexual exploitation. Given the growing number of foreign nationals employed in Albania in recent years, this category faces increased vulnerability and should be specifically addressed through an adequate legal and institutional protection framework.
- Despite the awareness-raising campaigns conducted, including those organised during the Crime Victims Awareness Week, it is important that clear and accessible information remains available on a continuous basis through close cooperation with organisations working in the field. Information and communication efforts should be adapted to the specific circumstances and needs of vulnerable groups and should utilise a variety of communication tools, including digital information, brochures, leaflets, and in-person outreach activities, while also ensuring coverage of rural and remote areas.

On transparency and integrity

- An inclusive and transparent process should be ensured for the preparation of the OGP National Action Plan 2026–2030, guaranteeing the active and meaningful participation of civil society organisations, experts, academia, and the media throughout all stages of the process.
- Raising awareness and strengthening capacities on Open Government Partnership (OGP) principles, transparency, and integrity remains highly important. While a number of training activities have already been conducted, future initiatives should include not only public institutions but also civil society actors. Training programmes could also focus on practical ways in which civil society can contribute to monitoring, oversight, and the formulation of recommendations in the areas of transparency, accountability, and integrity.

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