

MATRA RULE OF LAW TRAINING PROGRAMME

The *Matra Rule of Law Training Programme* is a two-year (2017 – 2018) programme designed to strengthen institutional capacity in the field of *Rule of Law* within government organisations in the Western Balkans, Turkey, Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. To this end seven training programmes are offered per year, each introducing the participants to Dutch best practices in a wide range of rule of law themes. Through interactive sessions combining theory, practical skills and study visits, policy advisors, members of the judiciary and other civil servants working in the government and justice sectors acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to drive reforms in their home countries. In addition, by taking part in the training programme, participants become part of a large transnational network of alumni, lecturers and relevant government departments in the Netherlands and in the target countries. This network offers a platform for learning, exchange and collaboration.

The Matra Rule of Law Training programme is designed and delivered by the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, Leiden Law School, and The Hague Academy for Local Governance, and is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

The application procedure for the training programme *Integrity of civil servants* (10 – 19 May, 2017) has opened, and runs from 6 – 23 March, 2017. To apply, please visit www.nhc.nl/matrarolt.

The following training programmes are offered in 2017 and 2018:

- 1. Integrity of civil servants** (*May 10 – 19, 2017 and March 7 – 16, 2018*)
Corruption is a key challenge for the rule of law and good governance in Europe. In addition to prosecuting corruption cases, it is essential to establish an institutional and legal framework to promote the integrity of civil servants and prevent corruption. Moreover, civil servants need to be trained on how to manage and communicate about integrity dilemmas.
- 2. The administration of justice** (*June 7 – 16, 2017 and March 7 – 16, 2018*)
Independent and impartial courts provide the foundation for the rule of law. It is crucial that the courts enjoy the confidence of both the parties appearing before them and the public at large. But this requires continuous reflection on key themes such as access to justice for all, efficiency, professional ethics, transparency, communication and court management.
- 3. Public procurement** (*June 21 – 30, 2017 and October 3 – 12, 2018*)
In the EU government spending on goods and services amounts to appr. 20% of the GDP. Because of the huge financial stakes and the need for close interaction between the public and the private sectors, it is crucial to set clear rules for public procurement. This requires continuous reflection on fair and appropriate procedures that guarantee equal opportunities among competitors.



- 4. Human rights & minorities** *(September 13 – 22, 2017 and September 5 – 14, 2018)*

The promotion and protection of human rights is inextricably linked to the rule of law. However, despite existing legislation, the protection of vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, LGBTI, and women remains problematic. This requires continuous reflection on the importance of human rights in a wide range of policy areas, on the relationship of countries with the European Court of Human Rights, and on the necessity to take EU guidelines and international human rights treaties into account when drawing up policies and legislation.
- 5. Decentralisation and Citizen participation** *(October 4 – 13, 2017 and June 6 – 15, 2018)*

Decentralisation brings decision-making processes closer to citizens. Thus, it can contribute to more participatory, transparent and responsive governance. However, it raises a number of questions that should be addressed. How should inter-administrative relations be managed in a decentralised system? How can sub-national governments be established that have the capacity to effectively provide services in an inclusive manner? How does one balance fiscal, political and administrative decentralisation?
- 6. Freedom of the media** *(October 5 – 11, 2017)*

A free press is crucial for democracy. As a public watchdog the press can provide a platform for public debate; where necessary it can denounce instances of maladministration. But the freedom of expression carries with it duties and responsibilities. How does one deal with situations where the press is used for propaganda purposes or for the distribution of 'fake news'? What is the role of social media?
- 7. Public finance management** *(November 8 – 17, 2017 and April 11 – 20, 2018)*

A healthy state of public finance requires careful management of government spending, revenues, loans and debts. Deficits and debts should remain within the limits set by international and domestic standards. Key values should be legal certainty and predictability, transparency, integrity, effective policies to prevent corruption and fraud, and also decentralisation.
- 8. Detention and alternative sanctions** *(June 6 – 13, 2018)*

A rising rate of incarceration, including pre-trial detention, causes a financial burden on national governments and impacts social cohesion. This raises a number of questions that should be addressed: How can prison conditions be improved? What increased risks do youth in detention face? What are possible alternatives to detention and how can these, and improved re-integration strategies, have a positive effect on perpetrators, victims and society as a whole?

For more information on the training programme and the application procedure, please visit www.nhc.nl/matrarolt.