



PRESS RELEASE

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European Union supported the Rule of Law Forum in Kazakhstan

ASTANA – The Rule of Law Forum 2025: **“The Penal System of Kazakhstan – Modernisation, Law and Law Enforcement”** was held on 21 November 2025 in the framework of the European Union funded projects.

The Forum brought together more than 80 participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Mongolia, including members of parliament, representatives of government, judicial and law enforcement agencies, civil society, lawyers, research and international organisations.

In her welcome address Ambassador of the European Union to Kazakhstan H.E. Aleška Simkić stated: *“The European Union and Kazakhstan have a long partnership in the area of the rule of law. The EU continues dialogue and technical support for reform initiatives, having in mind the need to enhance local ownership for building a fair and humane justice system to uphold human dignity in line with international standards”*

The key topics included strategic directions for modernizing criminal enforcement policy, international standards for the enforcement of sentences (including the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules), probation and social reintegration of convicts, as well as human rights guarantees and effective management of the enforcement system.

The Forum provided a unique opportunity for Kazakhstan to demonstrate its commitment to the principles of the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms in the criminal justice system as an integral part of law enforcement. The Forum's recommendations will serve as a guide for further legislative and institutional improvements, as well as a tool for uniting the efforts of state authorities and civil society organisations in Kazakhstan towards building a fair, humane and effective penal system that meets the expectations and challenges of the present and the future.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime acted as a partner to the forum.

Background: *The Forum was a result of the synergy between two projects supported by the European Union (EU). The project “Coordinated Civil Society Action to Promote the Rule of Law for All”, implemented by the Public Foundation “Legal Policy Research Centre” (LPRC) and the International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR), with the duration of three years (2024-2026), aims to increase the capacity of civil society to support the rule of law and respond to challenges in the criminal justice system in Kazakhstan. The total budget of the project is EUR 777,895, including the EU contribution of EUR 739,000. The project “Breaking the Cycle: a Multifaceted Approach to Combat Torture in Kazakhstan” is being implemented by the Taldykorgan Human Rights Centre, the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, and the Representative Office of Penal Reform International (International Prison Reform) in Central Asia, with the duration of three years (2024 -2027), aims to promote freedom from torture in Kazakhstan through a multifaceted and systematic approach based on three key areas: prevention, effective investigation and compensation for victims. The total budget for the project is EUR 768,490, including the EU contribution of EUR 730,000.*

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