

UNODC in South Eastern Europe

NEWSLETTER | Vol. 40

This newsletter provides information about key news and events related to UNODC's action and partnerships in the region. The [UNODC Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe \(2020-2023\)](#) is structured along the three main pillars: (I) Support to law enforcement, enhanced border security and related topics, (II) Strengthening the fight against organized crime and countering illicit financial flows, (III) Drug use prevention and treatment of drug use disorders, and a cross-cutting pillar (IV) on research and emerging types of crime. The Programme focuses on priority actions identified in cooperation with the Governments in the region and through a dialogue with national, regional and international partners. For feedback, queries or comments regarding this newsletter, please contact Ms. Ekaterina Kolykhalova (e-mail: ekaterina.kolykhalova@un.org) and Ms. Lejla Karahasanovic (lejla.karahasanovic@un.org).



NEWS AND EVENTS

UNODC participates in marking the International Anti-Corruption Day in North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

On the occasion of the International Anti-Corruption Day, on **9 December 2021** in **Skopje, North Macedonia**, UNODC participated in an event hosted by the Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister of North Macedonia in charge for fight against corruption and crime, sustainable development and human resources. The event was opened by the President of North Macedonia Stevo Pendarovski and attended by the President of the Assembly Talat Xhaferi and the Deputy Prime Minister Ljupcho Nikolovski as well as the Head of the EU Delegation and other international counterparts, including UNODC. In his address, the Head of the UNODC Programme Office in North Macedonia reiterated the engagement of UNODC in supporting North Macedonia in the fight against corruption and fast-tracking the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). The UNCAC contains the most comprehensive set of legal commitments by Governments to tackle corruption and bribery in all its forms –

target 16.5 of the SDGs – prevention and fight against corruption in public and private



sector, including accountability measures, strengthening professionalism and integrity, and promoting public access to information and the transparency of institutional functions and services. UNODC recalled on this occasion the adoption of the *Regional Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance (ACIF) Roadmap for the Western Balkans* in Ohrid on 25 June this year. The *ACIF Roadmap* serves as a regional platform for future anti-corruption initiatives, including on the three shared priority areas identified by all jurisdictions in the region, including North Macedonia. Through the *ACIF Roadmap*, the region committed to ensure transparency throughout the entire public procurement cycle and enabling better oversight and

accountability in government procurement, funding and contracting services. The region also committed to strengthening the efforts to prevent, identify and manage conflicts of interest, including through transparent financial disclosure systems, and recognized the role technologies can play in the fight against corruption as well as the need for enhancing regional cooperation between law enforcement and prosecutors in investigation and adjudication of corruption cases. UNODC will continue to provide support to the region to accelerate the fight against corruption in line with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development while enabling collective action towards fight against corruption. On **9 December 2021** in **Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNODC took part in a conference on Integrated Investigations organized by the US Embassy in Sarajevo. The conference aimed to introduce good practices in fighting and processing corruption cases to participants from different local and cantonal administrations and anti-corruption bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as to share experiences of international partners including the United States, United Kingdom Customs and Revenue, OSCE and UNODC.

UNODC used this opportunity to introduce its work within the ACIF Roadmap. Following the commitments of the Berlin Process Security Commitments Steering Group (SCSG), UNODC led the facilitation and design of the joint roadmap to improve the implementation of existing anti-corruption and illicit finance measures in shared priority areas of the Western Balkans jurisdictions.

UNODC supports Bosnia and Herzegovina in addressing violence against women

UNODC is mandated to promote crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women, in line with relevant international standards and norms. UNODC developed a series of handbooks and training tools for police, prosecutors and the judiciary on effective and victim-centered responses to violence against women,



including the recent Handbook on gender-responsive police services for women and girls subject to violence, published by UN Women, UNODC and the International Association of Women Police and an ad hoc thematic brief and a global review of emerging evidence concerning the impact on criminal justice responses to gender-based violence against women (GBVAW). On **1 December 2021**, UNODC in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** organized a webinar focusing on key technical needs for ensuring delivery of gender-responsive police and justice services to women subjected to gender-based violence, ongoing shift from a perpetrator-oriented to a victim-oriented approach, training needs among local police as first line responders to GBVAW and among police and prosecution services concerning victim-centered and sensitive responses, the need for police approaches that encourage and empower victims to report, the incorporation of a gender perspective into judicial decision-making, the issue of compensation and reparation as part of the criminal verdict, as well as lengthy criminal procedures. *“Gender-based*

violence is an issue that is important for the whole region of SEE. This is an important issue for my country as well and therefore I am pleased to be able to address you on this topic” said the First Lady of North Macedonia, Ms. Elizabeta Gjorgievska in her statement addressing the event. She emphasized that *“We should all practice enhanced co-operation, both within the UN agencies and national institutions on this important topic and promote a truly gender-responsive police and justice sector, where officials are fully trained, supported by management, and enjoy faith and trust of the communities in which they live and work.”* International experts in the law enforcement and justice systems from the United Kingdom, Canada and South Africa specializing in addressing violence against women shared their experience and insights, while animating a discussion for over 40 professionals/practitioners in law enforcement, police, justice, prosecution and judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina on ways to implement gender-based strategies to the local context and also identify specific needs to ensure a coordinated criminal justice response to GBVAW. This event was organized in cooperation with the UNODC RP SEE and marks this year’s “16 days of activism” campaign against GBVAW as part of the global efforts in addressing this important topic. On **15 October 2021**, online, UNODC organized a webinar for police officers in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** on preventing and responding to GBVAW to enable a productive discussion on the topic and present the available tools to address this issue more effectively. The event elaborated on key, relevant international instruments and tools on police and GBVAW, including the joint UN Women, UNODC and International Association of Women Police (IAWP) Handbook on gender-responsive police services for women and girls subject to violence. The aim of the Handbook is two-fold: to provide practical guidance to police (primary audience) to enable an effective and gender-sensitive response to violence against women and girls by sharing learning that promotes a culture of reflection and learning, leading to institutional transformation; to promote a police service that seeks to balance effectiveness with accountability in their response to violence against women and girls through reviewing, evaluating and monitoring investigation

tools, strategies, policies, and approaches,



with the support of external actors in civil society, women’s and survivors’ organizations and academia. The webinar included session on main gaps and challenges faced by the police officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina and solutions for effectively preventing and responding to GBVAW. A key concern for individual police officers or units was about women withdrawing GBV cases and the importance of improving communication with the victim from the beginning of the process and implementing training sessions for managers. At the structural or institutional level, participants identified the lack of female representation in the police as a key challenge but highlighted promising data on the use of protection orders, which showed a lower reoffending rate among perpetrators with a protection order against them.

UNODC initiates a new project on addressing trafficking in persons in South Eastern Europe

October/November 2021, North Macedonia, Serbia: UNODC has completed the formation of the new team in the region who will support the UNODC efforts in the area of criminal justice response on countering trafficking in persons in SEE. Accordingly, two National Project Officers and a Project Assistant have now joined UNODC in North Macedonia and Serbia and will also be covering UNODC's cooperation on this topic with Albania and Montenegro. More specifically, the project team will support the implementation of the new project *“UN.Locking Impunity of Traffickers and Supporting Justice for Victims of Trafficking in Persons in Southeastern Europe”* (2021-2024). The project is in line with UNODC's overall objectives set out in the RP SEE, which aim to reduce transnational organized crime and related threats, enhance security and promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The project aims to

accurately identify the gaps and weaknesses in the response to trafficking in persons at the national and regional levels through partnership and continuous interaction with the government, the judiciary, civil society, academia, regional/international organizations and other relevant expert practitioners, and to develop and provide sustainable and targeted capacity building support to relevant stakeholders. Within the project, UNODC will conduct national reviews and analysis of recent trafficking cases to identify factors and vulnerabilities that contributed to inadequate investigation, prosecution and adjudication of cases. Based on findings, UNODC will develop thematic recommendations and training plans to foster victim-centered and trauma-informed investigations and prosecutions in each country. In addition, UNODC will support the addressed countries with multidisciplinary national and regional trainings and workshops for investigators, prosecutors and other stakeholders, and will develop and adopt a regional mentoring plan with Belgium and France as mentor countries. The project is implemented by the UNODC Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section in cooperation with the UNODC RP SEE and with the financial support of the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

UNODC launches the Organized Crime Strategy Toolkit for the development of high-impact strategies and moves towards its implementation

1 October 2021, online: The mandate of UNODC in supporting States in this undertaking was reiterated by Resolution 10/4 entitled “Celebrating the twentieth anniversary



sary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and promoting its effective implementation”, adopted by the 10th session of UNTOC Conference of the Parties (COP). Through this resolution, UNTOC COP requested UNODC to provide to Member States, upon request, “assistance in the development of national strategies to prevent and fight transnational organized crime”. In line with this mandate, UNODC Global Programme on Implementing the Organized Crime Convention, with the financial support from the United Kingdom, has created the *Organized Crime Strategy Toolkit* for the development of high-impact strategies, as

well as two supporting issue papers on gender and human rights considerations in the implementation of UNTOC. The *Toolkit* was officially launched in a High-Level side event of the 76th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, addressed by the UNODC Executive Director, who presented an overview of UNODC efforts in strategy development against organized crime and charted the way forward. Other distinguished speakers included the UK Minister for Security, the Minister of Justice of Mozambique and the Assistant Minister for Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who welcomed the expansion of UNODC technical assistance to the process of development of national strategies to prevent and combat organized crime and underlined the way forward in this area in the country that is currently developing its new national strategy against organized crime for 2021-2024. Relying on the *Toolkit*, UNODC will continue to support Bosnia and Herzegovina, among other States, in developing comprehensive responses against organized crime that respect human rights, incorporate gender considerations, and promote sustainable development. This will entail the organization of a regional dialogue on strategic priorities against organized crime for SEE as well as national follow up activities with States in the region. This support will be provided by the UNODC Global Programme on Implementing the Organized Crime Convention in cooperation with the UNODC RP SEE. *(For more info on all above: Ekaterina Kolykhalova)*

PROMOTING BORDER CONTROL MEASURES/CCP/AIRCOP

UNODC continues its partnership with the EU through the initiative within the UNODC Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe (RP SEE) entitled “**EU-UNODC joint action promoting rule of law and good governance through targeted border control measures at ports and airports in SEE**”. The action involves the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme (CCP) and the UNODC-WCO-INTERPOL Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP). It supports the implementation of the UN Conventions on drugs and crime and the EU Acquis, notably the Chapters 23 and 24 addressing serious organized crime, rule of law, good governance and security. More information on the initiative is available at the below link. *(For info on the below: Alen Gagula and Bill Wood).*



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



This project is funded by the European Union

ANTI-CORRUPTION/ASSET RECOVERY

The UNODC project *'From Illicit Financial Flows to Asset Recovery'*, supported by the UK Government, within the UNODC RP SEE, is a regional initiative that supports the Western Balkan jurisdictions in enhancing their capacities to detect, trace and seize proceeds and instrumentalities of crime, with a view to ensure future confiscation, enhance asset recovery capabilities, and pursue proceeds and instrumentalities of crime through national coordination and regional and interregional cooperation while enabling the collection of appropriate statistics on the different steps within the asset recovery process. The **Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance (ACIF) Roadmap** was formally endorsed and adopted at the Ministerial level by the Western Balkan jurisdictions, on 25 July 2021 in Ohrid, North Macedonia. The three goals agreed under the ACIF Roadmap are: (i) preventing and countering corruption in public procurement, including in times of crises; (ii) further strengthening conflict of interest and asset declaration systems as well as (iii) enhancing criminal justice responses to corruption and economic crime through creation of a regional network of specialized prosecutors, law enforcement and financial intelligence units. The first two phases of the ACIF Roadmap work were supported by the Governments of the UK and Germany. Both projects work in line with the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

UNODC organizes a conference on challenges in the implementation of the legislation on asset confiscation

21-23 December 2021, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNODC in partnership with the Asset Management Agency of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, organized a conference on challenges in the implementation of the current Law on Confiscating Illegally Acquired Assets of the



Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The conference gathered judges and prosecutors across Bosnia and Herzegovina to discuss challenges in the implementation, offer solutions and synchronize court practices, with the aim of increasing the number of confiscated goods and assets long-term. This event was attended by over 30 participants from the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Supreme Court of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Court Police of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and cantonal and municipal courts and prosecutors' offices. The event covered the topics of management of confiscated assets and their practical challenges, international legal practice of the European Court for Human Rights, court practice of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Supreme Court of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, experiences in financial investigations related to this legislation and institutional cooperation and support with a view of

seizing and confiscating illegally obtained assets. The conference highlighted the need to provide comprehensive specialization in asset seizure for judges and prosecutors, to network and exchange relevant data amongst the relevant institutions and groups of experts, and a clear need to amend or harmonize the current legislative framework to allow easier asset confiscation and management but also, within the current solutions, to use good practices from neighbouring jurisdictions in order to ensure a more efficient use of confiscation and seizure tools.

UNODC advances Asset Recovery activities in North Macedonia, and Serbia

2-4 November 2021, Belgrade, Serbia: UNODC met with the Ministry of Justice and the Judicial Academy of Serbia and presented the upcoming activities to be implemented in Serbia, including the development of practitioners' guides on different aspects of Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) for the purposes of asset recovery; the development of asset recovery roadmap and data collection methodology in the asset recovery processes. The counterparts agreed to pursue cooperation in the area of asset recovery to ensure the smooth implementation of the initiative. On **20 December 2021 in Belgrade, Serbia**, UNODC organized a coordination meeting with the focal points from the Ministry of Justice, Directorate for Management of Seized Assets, Public Prosecutor's office, Ministry of Interior, Financial Investigation Unit and Judicial Academy. UNODC provided an overview of the objectives and outcomes of the action related to the detection, tracing and seizing of proceeds and instrumentalities of crime, as well as enabling the sharing of relevant information or evidence for their seizure and confiscation in other jurisdictions with increased regional and inter-regional cooperation, and



introduction of datasets, research and evidence base. The scope of the discussions included the applicable legal framework to asset recovery in the country as well as the identification of operational and capacity building needs for the practitioners that would be mapped with the support of UNODC. The counterparts agreed to pursue cooperation in the area of asset recovery to ensure a smooth implementation of the initiative and achieve better results in the area of asset recovery. On **25 November in Skopje, North Macedonia**, UNODC held a meeting with the Government's focal point for the *ACIF Roadmap* and the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption to discuss the implementation of the *ACIF Roadmap* in North Macedonia and to review the legislative, institutional and operational needs in order to support long-term and sustainable anti-corruption framework development and the alignment of the *ACIF Roadmap* objectives with the National Strategy for the prevention of corruption and conflict of interests. The parties identified the outstanding priorities in the fight against corruption and agreed on the next steps and the continuation of the dialogue along the Goal 2 objectives of the *ACIF Roadmap*, which will result in the delivery of tangible anti-corruption/anti-illicit finance measures in line with the international standards.

UNODC holds a conference on Financial Investigations and Asset Recovery in North Macedonia

23 November, Skopje, North Macedonia: UNODC in cooperation with the

ANTI-CORRUPTION/ASSET RECOVERY

OSCE Mission to Skopje organized a conference to support the implementation of North Macedonia's 'National Strategy for



conducting financial investigations and confiscation of assets' and the work of the newly formed National Commission for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy. The main commitment of the strategy is to contribute to strengthening the capacities of the national institutions as well as their coordination in monitoring the illicit finances, as well as detecting possible concealment and transfer of illegally acquired assets. The conference aimed to present the activities within the strategy related to strengthening the institutional capacities to conduct financial investigations and confiscation of assets as well as to discuss the UNODC support to North Macedonia for the successful implementation of the strategy. Mainly, the conference served to kick off the process of the development of a national Asset Recovery Roadmap, which will provide the basis for assessing the existing capabilities and identifying gaps in the processes and resources allocated for conducting financial investigations and confiscation of assets in North Macedonia. A number of national and international stakeholders in North Macedonia took part in the event, including the Public Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Interior, Financial police, Customs office, Agency for Management of seized assets, Council of Europe, GIZ, Embassies of Sweden, France, The Netherlands and UK as well as representatives from the National Commission for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy. The participants recognized the need for donor coordination amongst international partners within the national Asset Recovery Roadmap with the aim to develop coherent approach to the implementation of the Strategy and to ensure improved and efficient use of resources in providing support to North

Macedonia in conducting financial investigations and confiscation of assets.

UNODC meets the Albanian and Montenegrin authorities to discuss cooperation in fighting financial crime and corruption

On **15-16 November 2021** in **Tirana, Albania**: UNODC conducted a series of meetings with the national authorities of Albania to discuss future cooperation in the area of asset recovery. The meetings were held with representatives from the High Court, Ministry of Justice, the Economic and Financial Crime Branch of the General Directorate of State Police, High Inspectorate for Asset Declarations (HIDAACI), Special Anti-Corruption Structure (SPAK), Financial Intelligence Unit, the Agency for Public Procurement and the Agency for Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets (AAPSK). UNODC provided an overview of the objectives and outcomes of the regional initiative related to asset recovery processes and shared plans in mapping out the priorities for each of the jurisdiction, ensuring coordination and synergy of efforts between technical assistance providers in Albania. In addition, UNODC used this opportunity to discuss the *ACIF Roadmap* and the UNODC support to the Western Balkans jurisdictions, including Albania, in the implementation of the three goals agreed under the *ACIF Roadmap*. The Albanian counterparts provided insights on the national priorities and plans, including the establishment of an Asset Recovery Office and highlighted the challenges and opportunities for the successful implementation of the asset recovery and anti-corruption efforts in the country. Other discussed topics included the applicable legal framework in the country as well as the identification of operational and capacity building needs for the relevant practitioners. On **8 November 2021** in **Podgorica, Montenegro**, UNODC organized the first operational meeting in the framework of the regional initiative in Montenegro and provided an overview of the objectives and outcomes of the action related to detection, tracing and seizing of proceeds and instrumentalities of crime, as well as enabling the sharing of relevant information or evidence for their seizure and confiscation in other jurisdictions with increased regional and inter-regional cooperation, and introduction of datasets, research and evidence base. The participants

from the relevant institutions in Montenegro provided insights on the national priorities in conducting financial investigations and countering illicit financial flows and described the challenges and obstacles to the successful implementation of the asset recovery processes. The scope of the discussions included the applicable legal framework to asset recovery in the country as well as the identification of operational and capacity building needs for the practitioners. The participants agreed to start the work on the development of an Asset Recovery Roadmap for Montenegro, which will aim to map the country's outstanding priorities in conducting financial investigations and asset recovery. Additionally, the Roadmap is intended to ensure coordination and synergy of efforts between technical assistance providers in the country, ensuring the ownership over the process and a tailor-made approach for stronger impact and efficiency. On **9 November 2021**, UNODC in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice of Montenegro organized a consultation meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Interior, State Prosecutor's Office, Public Procurement Directorate, Supreme Court, Police, Agency for the Prevention of Corruption and the Financial Intelligence Unit. The follow-up consultation meeting focused on the next steps in the implementation on the *ACIF Roadmap* in Montenegro aimed to support a strong and sustainable anti-corruption framework development, contributing to achieving a continuous improvement in the citizens' quality of life. During the consulta-



tion, Montenegro's national Anti-Corruption priorities were reviewed with the objective to strengthen and support the national efforts in preventing and combating corruption, in line with UNCAC, as well as to map the ongoing initiatives and implementing counterparts in the relevant areas under the *ACIF Roadmap*.

ANTI-CORRUPTION/ASSET RECOVERY

Working together with CSOs and private sector against corruption in South Eastern Europe

16 December 2021, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt: The special event 'Southeast Europe TOGETHER Against Corruption' organized during the 9th session of the UNCAC once again emphasized the importance of working together in the fight against corruption. The hybrid event was organized under the auspices of the Regional Programme "Southeast Europe – Together Against Corruption (SEE-TAC)" implemented by the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) and the UNODC Civil Society Unit with the support of the Austrian Development Cooperation. The special event provided a platform for different stakeholders across SEE, including regional organizations, CSOs and the private sector to engage in a discussion on the best approaches for cooperation and partnerships. The added value of the multi-stakeholder workshops on the UNCAC was discussed along with the exchange of data in asset disclosure and conflict of interest, as well as other relevant initiatives in the region, which could be replicated and extended to other parts of the world. The RAI Secretariat moderated the sessions and underlined that it is essential to unite under the idea of 'togetherness' when working on anti-corruption initiatives in SEE while the President of the Council of the Agency for Prevention of Corruption Montenegro acknowledged that multi-stakeholder cooperation is essential to counter corruption. "It's important to have civil society and media next to us and we have listened to NGO advice and implemented their ideas and proposals in our everyday work", he said. UNODC highlighted the work of the UNODC towards bringing together governments, civil

society and the private sector to advance the implementation of the UNCAC while increasing the knowledge and building trust among stakeholders, referring to the UNODC RP SEE, which provides the framework for UNODC initiatives throughout the region. In the same token, representatives from the civil society and the private sector stressed that the fight against corruption is a collective effort involving both the governments and the citizens and highlighted that CSOs should be perceived as one of the main partners in this endeavour. A collective approach in countering corruption remains at the core of the 'Southeast Europe TOGETHER Against Corruption' programme, with a common goal: curbing corruption while partnering with peers.



A delegation of anti-corruption officials from Bosnia and Herzegovina on a study visit to Austria

4 November 2021, Vienna, Austria: A delegation from Bosnia and Herzegovina visited UNODC Headquarters in Vienna as a part of a broader study visit supported by the United States Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. The delegation comprised anti-corruption practitioners from the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of Fight against Corruption of Bosnia and Herzegovina and other relevant institutions as well as representa-

tives from the US Embassy in Sarajevo. UNODC hosted the delegation and provided an overview of UNODC work in the area in



line with its mandate as well as the available anti-corruption tools developed by UNODC to support Governments in the efforts against corruption. The ongoing and future anti-corruption work in the Western Balkans was also presented, with a special focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNODC gave an overview of the work conducted with the Governments of the Western Balkans in establishing the *ACIF Roadmap*. In addition, UNODC presented the project "From Illicit Financial Flows to Asset Recovery". Finally, the UNODC representatives also used this opportunity to present the recently launched Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE) which offers a platform for information exchange between frontline anti-corruption law enforcement practitioners in all countries across the globe as well as the Mutual Legal Assistance Request Writer Tool. UNODC will continue providing targeted programmatic support to authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to advance efforts in preventing and countering corruption and will promote the use of tools and knowledge products to this end, which were recognized by the practitioners as invaluable resources. (For info on all of the above: Aleksandar Dordevic and Jasna Pekic)

ORGANIZED CRIME

UNODC and Turkey support capacity of law enforcement officers in South Eastern Europe

13-17 December, Ankara, 20-24 December 2021, Istanbul, Turkey: UNODC in cooperation with the Counter Narcotics Training Academy (NEA) of Turkey organized two training courses on countering drug trafficking and securing borders for participants from law enforcement agencies of the SEE jurisdictions. The first training course in

Ankara on "Drug Identification, Current Drug Trafficking Routes and Trends" enabled law enforcement officers deployed at borders and in counter-narcotics units to be better equipped with the necessary knowledge, experience and skills on illicit drug types, trafficking routes, methods, new routes and trends from production to consumption areas. The training took place in the Dog Training Center of Counter Narcotics Department (CND) which allowed to stress the role of the detection dogs in law enforcement during the training on drug

identification methods. The training course in Istanbul focused on "Airport Passenger Risk Analysis and Search Techniques" and covered the topics of risk assessment, selectivity, profiling, and search techniques at airports strengthening thereby the participants' knowledge and expertise in this field. This training particularly focused on how the passenger's profiling, couriers examination and x-ray scanning techniques are implemented by the law enforcement officers at the Istanbul International Airport. The training was very practically oriented

and included study cases examining criminal behaviour and interview methods in addition to luggage profiling and cargo search techniques. Both training courses were delivered by experienced trainers from NEA and served as a platform for the participants to share good practices and risk assessment procedures implemented by their respective agencies. The training courses were organized in the framework of the UNODC RP



SEE and are fully complementary to the other UNODC work in this region. The RP SEE benefits from long-standing support of the Government of Turkey.

UNODC holds the first Regional Multi-stakeholder Event on Strategies to Prevent and Combat Organized Crime in South Eastern Europe

14-15 December 2021, Skopje, North Macedonia: UNODC held the first Regional Multi-stakeholder Event on Strategies to Prevent and Combat Organized Crime – the first step in the regional dissemination in SEE of the *Organized Crime Strategy Toolkit* for Developing High-Impact Strategies. The *Toolkit* was developed in response to the mandate conferred upon UNODC by resolution 10/4, entitled “Celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and promoting its effective implementation”, adopted by the 10th session of the Conference of the Parties to UNTOC. Through this resolution, the Conference of the Parties requested UNODC to provide assistance in the development of national strategies to prevent and fight transnational organized crime. The *Organized Crime Strategy Toolkit* was developed as a basis for such assistance and launched in a high-level side event of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in October 2021. Alongside the upcoming regional chapters, the *Toolkit* will play a key role in supporting Member States in the development of national strategies. In order to facilitate the dissemination of the *Toolkit* and support the devel-

opment of effective national strategies to prevent and counter organized crime worldwide, UNODC is organizing multi-stakeholder events on strategies to prevent and combat organized crime in four regions: South Eastern Europe, Eastern and Southern Africa, Western and Central Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. These events aim at fostering the discussion on regional strategic priorities in preventing and combatting organized crime, enhancing the reach and potential of the *Toolkit* with information on challenges and opportunities in the fight against organized crime in selected regions, as well as training policymakers on its use, thus also creating a blueprint for national-level follow-up support. The multi-stakeholder event in Skopje became the first regional event of the series, gathering over 50 stakeholders from 9 jurisdictions across the region, as well as international and re-



gional organizations, civil society and academia. The high-level opening ceremony counted with remarks from Ljupco Nikolovski, Deputy Prime Minister of North Macedonia for the Fight against Corruption, Sustainable Development and Human Resources, Oliver Spasovski, Minister of Internal Affairs of North Macedonia, Rachel Galloway, Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Republic of North Macedonia, and Bill Wood, Head of the UNODC Programme Office in North Macedonia. During the event, the participants presented and exchanged views on a variety of topics, including international and regional mechanisms available to strengthen responses to organized crime, the current state-of-play in terms of strategic frameworks in jurisdictions in the region, as well as the importance of a whole-of-society approach to the development and implementation of strategies to prevent and combat organized crime. The event culminated in a practical exercise, through which participants analyzed the root causes and most pressing threats posed by organized crime in the region, as well as the key pragmatic actions that should be taken against organized

crime. UNODC will rely on the information, knowledge and expertise shared during this event to produce the regional chapter for SEE that will complement the *Organized Crime Strategy Toolkit*. This publication, and this project more broadly, were made possible through collaboration with a large number of partners worldwide, from national institutions to international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector. UNODC will continue fostering these essential partnerships and forging new ones as we start concretely supporting States across SEE in developing comprehensive national strategies against organized crime. This work is made possible with the generous financial contribution of the United Kingdom as well as substantive support and partnership on all stages of this project.

UNODC attends 22nd Meeting of the PCC SEE Committee of Ministers

30 November 2021, Skopje, North Macedonia: UNODC attended the 22nd Meeting of the Police Cooperation Convention for South East Europe (PCC SEE) joining regional actors and partner international organisations including OSCE, Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) in attending the event. The participants discussed the ‘Enhancement of cross-border cooperation related to illegal immigration and the return of foreign terrorist fighters’. UNODC expressed support to PCC SEE initiatives as a partner agency and echoed IISG remarks on the value of mapping international technical assistance in this field. UNODC addressed the seriousness of the threat whilst detailing support to North Macedonia and the other Western Balkan jurisdictions through cur-



rent programme activity in the framework of the UNODC RP SEE addressing trafficking in persons, border control and countering terrorist financing among other areas. (For info on the above: Bill Wood)

Currently, UNODC through its Global Firearms Programme (GFP) is implementing the following projects in South Eastern Europe: (i) **A regional project on Criminal Justice Response against Arms Trafficking**, aimed at supporting the six Western Balkan jurisdictions in strengthening their criminal justice response to firearms related criminality, particularly illicit arms trafficking and their links to transnational organized crime; (ii) **the joint UNODC – UNDP project on Halting arms and lawbreaking trade (HALT)** aimed at enhancing the capacities of the ITA, as well as Border Police, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations and three postal agencies of Bosnia and Herzegovina to better combat illicit arms trafficking through development of standard operating procedures, provision of training, and procurement of specialized equipment for the detection of smuggled firearms. The financial support for these projects is provided under the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024 (Roadmap) Multi-Partner Trust Fund by Germany, UK, Netherlands, France, Sweden and Norway.

UNODC held workshops on inter-institutional exchange of information in North Macedonia

UNODC hosted several workshops to foster inter-institutional exchange of information in firearms-related cases in North Macedonia. On **19 November in Ohrid, North Macedonia**, the workshop gathered 21 participants from three different institutions competent for processing firearms-related cases. The primary goal of the event was to provide the practitioners with a platform for the exchange of experiences and an opportunity to review the implementation of the Criminal Procedure Code. Each institution shared their perspective and the challenges they face in firearms related cases illustrating the issues faced by the practitioners in the implementation of the Criminal Procedure Code. Specifically, the need for an improved inter-agency cooperation was underlined, stressing that it is a key to achieving better results and coordination. Accordingly, the participants recommended further developing the exchange of information during pre-investigation, investigation, and indicting stages of firearms-related cases, as well as support the development of the prosecutorial investigative centres, which are foreseen by the law but are still not operational. The need for a standardized format of information exchange between the institutions was emphasized and UNODC's assistance was sought for the development of operational guidelines that will set the standard for information exchange between national institutions involved in firearms cases. Additionally, on **7 December in Mavrovo, North Macedonia**, UNODC hosted a workshop for 26 participants from Prosecution, the Ministry of Interior including border police, and the Customs Administration. The discussions focused on different issues detected by the practitioners during their daily obligations, one of which being the vulnerability of the customs officials who as first responders are doing the physical inspections but are not armed and depend on the police for addi-

tional security and armed support. The dilemma discussed by the participants was whether to arm all customs officials or simply increase the cooperation with the police officers presented physically on the border crossings. The participants highlighted the need to support the development of Operational Guidelines, the adoption of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and UNODC's assistance was sought by the participants to support the establishment of a working group that will draft such SOPs. Finally, on **10 December in Berovo, North Macedonia**, the fourth and final event of this series was organized gathering 27 participants and focused on the south-eastern part of the country, including the border crossings with Bulgaria and Greece. With the series of four events on inter-institutional cooperation, the entire territory of North Macedonia was covered and the first responders from the biggest border crossings with all neighboring



jurisdictions (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Kosovo (1)) were engaged during the workshops and their experience was used to detect the bottlenecks in the implementation of the Criminal Procedure Code. The discussion focused on the importance of the statements given by the perpetrators to the first responders from police or customs, which are later rendered unusable in front of the court. This raised the question posed by the practitioners on collecting statements

from the suspects in line with all the procedural aspects of the Criminal Procedure Code and all relevant by-laws and them not being used in court. This further raised the debate on the changes that need to be introduced in the Criminal Procedure Code regarding the stages at which statements can be obtained from the perpetrators and placing more precise rules in the by-laws regarding the same issue.

(1) All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

UNODC conducted a training for Public Postal Operators in Bosnia and Herzegovina on detection of firearms in postal parcels

1-2 December 2021, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNODC delivered a training for 14 representatives from Hrvatska posta Mostar, Poste Srpske a.d. Banja Luka, and BH Posta on detecting firearms, their parts and ammunition in postal shipments, focusing on the implementation of the SOPs for the detection of firearms, their parts and ammunition by public postal operators and covered topics such as risk assessment, evidence handling, identification of firearms, health and safety. The participants learned about the threat of firearms trafficking, expanded their knowledge on the applicable legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the requirements to counter firearms trafficking during the process of import and export of postal parcels.

UNODC held a training on identification and tracing of firearms for prosecutors in North Macedonia

26 November 2021, Skopje, North Macedonia: UNODC held a training on the identification and tracing of firearms for 17 prosecutors from all 4 different appellate areas in the country. The event was conducted on a shooting range near Skopje. The prosecutors had a chance to participate in a practical

session and assemble and disassemble pistols, carbines, shotguns, sub-machine guns and assault rifles, and fire from pistols and revolvers. In the theoretical session, the prosecutors learned about firearms tracing and identification. The end of each presentation was subsequently followed by a questions/answers session on a specific topic, allowing the prosecutors to make remarks, ask for clarifications and share their experiences. As a result of the training, the prosecutors acquired the basic knowledge on different types of firearms, their components and ammunition, and were introduced to the tracing procedures based on firearms markings. The training further focused on the use of this information in the investigations of illicit firearms trafficking and its possible links to organized crime. The need for more trainings of this nature was underscored by the prosecutors to familiarize themselves with tracing as an instrument for solving crime and ensure its use in practice.



UNODC conducts a workshop on case law on firearms trafficking: judicial practice from the courts in Kosovo (1)

10 November 2021, Kosovo (1): UNODC and in cooperation with UNMIK conducted a workshop for judges on the case law developed under Chapter XXIX “Weapons offences” of the Kosovo Criminal Code. UNODC presented the draft firearms case law collection encompassing 30 court verdicts that have entered into force in the period 2015-2020. The collection contains examples of cases with a large number of firearms, trafficking in firearms and illicit possession among others. The activity resulted in identifying verdicts that could help in further harmonizing the sentencing practice, taking into consideration the type of firearms (automatic vs hunting rifles), the use of the firearms (shooting in public places vs transportation) and the location of the seized firearms (household vs public places). This activity was implemented with the financial support provided by Germany, France, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway through the Western Balkans SALW Control

Roadmap Trust Fund and supported by the European Union.

(1) All references to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Global Firearms Programme held a workshop on the Criminal Code harmonization and UNTOC Review Mechanism in Serbia

3 November 2021, Belgrade, Serbia:

UNODC held a workshop on the Criminal Code harmonization with UN Firearms Protocol and Serbia’s participation in the UNODC’s Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and Protocols thereto. The event gathered representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Prosecutor’s Office and the judiciary, as well as the EU Delegation, Embassy of France in Serbia and the academia. UNODC presented its Gap Analysis on domestic criminal justice legislation and the Executive Summary on illicit trafficking offences in Serbia. This allowed the criminal justice practitioners and UNODC representatives to have fruitful exchange of opinions and to evaluate the scope of harmonization of the firearms-related offences within the Criminal Code. The second session of the workshop was dedicated to UNODC’s Review Mechanism. The processes and the specialized system which will structure the online collaboration of reviewers were presented and discussed. The main outcomes of the event were feedback from the representatives of the Ministry of Justice on formation of the Working Group that will be engaged on the Criminal Code amendments, potential timeframes and agreed modalities on UNODC further technical assistance, in addition to facilitation of direct communication between national experts and UNODC experts in relation to the UNTOC Review Mechanism.



UNODC supports Bosnia and Herzegovina in information exchange on criminal procedural law applicable in firearms investigations

21 October 2021, Bihac, Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNODC conducted the 3rd workshop on information exchange on criminal procedural law applicable in firearms investigations. Eleven criminal justice practitioners, including prosecutors, State Investigation and Protection Agency representatives, and Border Police, attended the workshop and discussed a review of adjudicated trafficking cases under Article 193 of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including facts of the case, profile of the perpetrators, type, and quantity of firearms, the qualification of the offense, the indictment, the arguments before the court and the appeal court, and the arguments in the final verdict. The discussions resulted in identifying several challenges in applying the criminal procedure law and substantive criminal law. Examples of such challenges include court panels having different interpretations of the facts and applicable law. Mistakes made in the reports on special investigative actions or orders of seizure of objects lead to procedural errors and verdict acquitting the accused. On **28 October 2021 in Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNODC conducted the 4th workshop on information exchange on criminal procedural law applicable in firearms investigations for nine criminal justice practitioners that reviewed trafficking cases adjudicated under Article 193 of the Criminal Code (CC) of Bosnia and Herzegovina and identified criminal procedural challenges. The participants noted that on several occasions court panels have reached different interpretations of the same facts and applicable law. Another important observation was the lack of clarity between the offences “Smuggling of good (Article 214, CC BiH)” and the “Illicit Trafficking in Arms and Military Equipment and Products of Dual Use (Article 193 CC BiH)”, which has led to dilemmas on how to qualify certain activities.

GFP held an online meeting with the Working Group on amending criminal law in North Macedonia

6 October 2021, online: UNODC continued to support the Working Group on amending the Criminal Code in North Macedonia by organizing an online meeting with its members. In 2021, UNODC presented a comparative analysis of criminalization of crimes linked to illicit trade in the Criminal Code, including Unauthorized Production and Release for Trade of Narcotics, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors – Article 215 of the Criminal Code; Human Trafficking - Arti-

obligations by North Macedonia concerning harmonization of the criminal law with the criminalization provisions of the UN Firearms Protocol. Accordingly, UNODC elaborated on the procedural aspects of the analyzed crimes with focus on the possibility of implementation of special investigative measures for every type of incriminated acts as part of the crime of Unlawful Possession, Production, Mediation and Trade with Firearms or Explosive Materials as regulated in the Criminal Code of North Macedonia.

EMPACT and GFP jointly held a regional training on the detection of firearms in fast and postal parcels within the framework of Operation Armstrong

5 October 2021, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: The European Union through its European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) and UNODC through its GFP organized a regional training on the detection of firearms in fast and postal parcels within the framework of Operation Armstrong, which implements the EU action plan on firearms trafficking 2020-2025 adopted by the European Commission in July 2020. During the operation, police and customs authorities in the participating jurisdictions carry out enhanced controls of suspicious parcels and postal shipments. UNODC has developed a comprehensive methodology on the detection of firearms in fast and postal parcels and currently implements a project in Bosnia and Herzegovina supporting Customs, public and private post operators in the detection of illicit firearms, their parts, components and ammunition in

fast and postal parcels. UNODC has carried out needs assessments in Albania, Ukraine and North Macedonia on the same subject and plans to conduct an assessment also in Serbia and develop projects in these countries. The training brought together customs and law enforcement representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. In the first session of the event, UNODC has provided detailed descriptions of its methodology for supporting the public and private sector in countering firearms trafficking in fast and postal parcels. UNODC representatives provided specific information about the ongoing activities and preparations for future projects. The event provided an opportunity for sharing experiences among Western Balkan jurisdictions. Albanian and Macedonian representatives described the challenges and success stories from their participation in the Operation Armstrong. They also identified how their institutions benefited from participating in internationally coordinated operations with lessons learned. In addition, representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia received feedback from the Action Leader, Albanian and Macedonian counterparts on specific details related to the exchange of information during the operational phase and coordination among national counterparts. It was concluded that EMPACT and UNODC will continue cooperating on Operation Armstrong and provide further information to interested third parties. *(For more info on all of the above: Dimitirje Ristic, Dubravka Pitrovski, Kiro Cvetkov)*



cle 418-a of the Criminal Code; Organizing a Group and Abetment in Performing Crimes of Human Trafficking, Trafficking with Minors and Smuggling of Migrants - Article 418-c of the Criminal Code; Child Trafficking - Article 418-d of the Criminal Code; Manufacture and Acquisition of Firearms and Means Intended for Committing a Crime - Article 395 of the Criminal Code and Unlawful Production, Possession, Mediation and Trade with Firearms or Explosive Materials from Article 396 of the Criminal Code. The comparative analysis has identified the discrepancy in the implementation of international

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING, FINANCING OF TERRORISM

UNODC and OSCE further strengthen capacity of Bosnia and Herzegovina to counter the financing of terrorism

UNODC Global Programme against Money Laundering (GPML) jointly with the RP SEE implements a capacity building programme on applying targeted financial sanctions to terrorists and terrorist organizations, including practical sessions on how to use sanctions pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) on this topic. Combating terrorism financing, disrupting the terrorist networks, recovering the proceeds of crime requires that the law enforcement

and Financial Intelligence Units' (FIUs) specialists possess appropriate competencies and skills. Terrorists regularly adapt how and where they raise and move funds, hence identifying, assessing, and understanding terrorist-financing risks is an essential part of dismantling and disrupting terrorist networks. Government agencies should be able to use UNSCR 1267 and 1988 sanctions, to detect and disrupt illicit financial flows connected with terrorists and terrorist organizations. The training course in **Bosnia and Herzegovina in December 2021**, implemented with the financial support of the Government of Norway, is part of a compre-

hensive multi-annual training programme on countering the financing of terrorism, jointly implemented by OSCE and UNODC. It enhanced the participants' understanding on how inter-agency cooperation can contribute to disrupting terrorist financial networks and strengthened their skills in the use of instruments and techniques for countering terrorist financing, including through learning how to write and submit UN sanctions listing proposals. As a result, the course contributed to the implementation of the mentioned UNSCRs, and strengthened compliance with international standards in this area, including the Financial Action Task

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING, FINANCING OF TERRORISM

Force (FATF)'s standards, and UN conventions. As part of the same training programme, in **November 2021, Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNODC organized a three-day training course focused on how to undertake financial investigation to effectively cut off terrorism financing channels, with the financial support of the Governments of the United States and Italy. Twenty participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina including senior experts and practitioners from the Ministry of Security, the Prosecutor's Office, and other governmental bodies at all levels took part in the training course, which is part of a comprehensive, progressively advanced training programme on countering the financing of terrorism. The training was delivered by seven local trainers who previously participated in the UNODC-OSCE train-the-trainer programme and supported by lead experts. As a result of the training, the participants learned about analytical techniques and methods that can be applied for the successful conduct of proactive and reactive financial investigations. The national experts together with the participants also practiced how to apply these techniques to realistic and localized scenarios. In **October 2021 in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNODC in cooperation with OSCE held a three-day Foundation course on countering the financing of terrorism that was led by international experts alongside eight local trainers who have been trained through a UNODC-OSCE train-the-trainers programme. The participants included experts from the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the State Investigation and Protection Agency as well as institutions at the entity level. The Assistant Minister of Security also attended

the course and stated that "*Coordination and better use of financial intelligence and operational data, as well as information derived from analyzes of law enforcement agencies, knowledge enhancement, enhanced cooperation between institutions and agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, can greatly contribute to effectively cutting off terrorist financing channels*". The Foundation course was delivered with a high degree of participation by the national trainers and participants from a range of agencies. The international experts demonstrated robust experience in team building and delivering a localized course to a group comprised of a range of agencies and regional entities. More than half of the course was devoted to practical work using exercises and case studies specifically tailored to the country, emphasizing the key role of inter-agency cooperation in countering financing of terrorism. Western Union, a private financial services company was also convened to the training and presented the importance of public-private partnerships in addressing this threat.

UNODC and OSCE support North Macedonia in combatting terrorism financing

On **11-13 October 2021 in Vienna, Austria**, UNODC in cooperation with OSCE held a train-the-trainer course as part of a multiannual training programme focused on strengthening North Macedonia's capacities in countering terrorist financing. Eight national trainers from Ministries of Defense, Finance and Interior, the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption, and Customs took part in the course, which focused on how the analysis of financial information can support counter-terrorism investigations and high-

lighted a range of analytical techniques. Together with the lead trainers, the national experts co-produced scenario-based exercises to further localize and adapt the UNODC and OSCE training course to the needs of North Macedonia. The trainers also learned how to facilitate presentations and discussions with representatives from multiple agencies. The national trainers will gradually take over the training and maintenance of the programme in North Macedonia using a national curriculum that will have been developed with UNODC and OSCE assistance. On **1-3 November 2021**, UNODC continued the cooperation with OSCE and delivered a training on how to undertake financial investigations to better assess terrorist threats. In total, 17 experts from Ministries of Defense, Finance, Interior, Justice, Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption, Customs, and the Intelligence Agency attended the training and learned about techniques and methods to assist in the successful conduct of counter-terrorism investigations. The national experts also practiced how to apply these techniques to realistic and localized scenarios. A group of national trainers, supported by lead experts, delivered this analysis course. The trainers were prepared through a UNODC/OSCE train-the-trainer course held in Vienna. Both activities are part of a comprehensive 2-year programme to support North Macedonia in detecting, investigating, and strengthening compliance with international commitments and standards in countering terrorism financing. This work is conducted in the framework of the UNODC RP SEE in cooperation with the UNODC GPML funded by the USA Government. (*For info: Oliver Gadney*)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

UNODC meets with the stakeholders in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia to discuss cooperation in addressing trafficking in persons

In **November 2021, Podgorica, Montenegro and Belgrade, Serbia** and in **December 2021, Tirana, Albania**, UNODC held a series of meetings with the national authorities, international organizations and civil society organizations in three jurisdictions to discuss future cooperation in the framework of the project "UN. Locking Impunity of Traf-

fickers and Supporting Justice for Victims of Trafficking in Persons in Southeastern Europe" currently implemented in the region. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of national law enforcement agencies and criminal justice practitioners to better identify, investigate, prosecute and convict trafficking in persons (TIP) cases, protect and support TIP victims and improve cross-border criminal justice cooperation in SEE. The project is implemented by the UNODC Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section (HTMSS) in cooperation with the

UNODC RP SEE and with the financial support of the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. During the meetings, UNODC provided an overview of the objectives and outcomes of the regional project related to developing and delivering sustainable and targeted training and mentoring for the project countries. Namely, UNODC will be conducting national reviews and analysis of recent trafficking cases to identify the gaps and weaknesses in the TiP response at the national

and regional level that may contribute to inadequate investigation, prosecution and adjudication of cases. Based on findings, UNODC will develop thematic recommendations and training plans to foster victim-



centered and trauma-informed investigations and prosecutions in each addressed country. In addition, UNODC will support the addressed countries with multidisciplinary national and regional trainings and workshops and will develop and adopt a regional mentoring plan with EU mentor countries. Finally, the project sustainability was particularly discussed with representatives from the Ministries of Interior and the respective National Anti-trafficking Coordination Offices to strengthen and reaffirm commitment, coordination, and cooperation among the competent stakeholders that have the primary responsibility for ensuring that common and shared goals to prevent human trafficking, protect and assist victims of this serious crime and secure convictions of the perpetrators are effectively integrated into domestic policies and practices. The counterparts in the three jurisdictions expressed their readiness to participate in the implementation of the project activities and recognized the importance and need to significantly improve results in this area. The parties agreed to cooperate with the aim to efficiently and effectively identify the main risk factors, challenges and systematic gaps that contribute to the non-investigation or inadequate investigation, prosecution or adjudication of trafficking cases by the courts. The national institutions in Albania will be involved in the analysis of the TIP cases in the period 2016-2021 based on a previously elaborated methodology that addresses different aspects of the actions. These specific cases will be analyzed, focusing on the process of the identification of the victims of TIP to the adjudication of the cases of TIP. Given the ongoing judicial reform in Albania, the collaboration with UNODC was assessed as an opportunity to provide support, expertise and

capacity building to contribute to an improved criminal justice response and conduct effective victim-centered and trauma-informed investigations and prosecutions of TIP.

UNODC conducts Smuggling of Migrants simulation-based trainings in South Eastern Europe

16-18 November, Igman, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 23-25 November, Budva, Montenegro and Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 21-23 December 2021:

UNODC conducted three joint simulation training courses in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro on investigating and prosecuting migrant smuggling (SOM) for multidisciplinary practitioners from both coun-



tries. This initiative was funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden. The purpose of simulation trainings was to increase understanding, knowledge, expertise and skills of criminal justice practitioners in the Western Balkans to effectively investigate and prosecute migrant smuggling cases, to address threats related to the smuggling route through one of the global hotspots for migrant smuggling, the so-called Western Balkan route. It builds on previous work on the same topic in the region (national curricula on SOM developed and piloted in North Macedonia and Serbia in 2017-2018) and is adapted to the Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro current contexts. Representatives from law enforcement, judiciary, protection and assistance services, academia and civil society from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro were trained through applying blended learning with combined use of three UNODC e-learning localized modules on SOM and case-based simulation in multidisciplinary and cross-border classroom and outdoor training settings. A specific module on gathering, preserving and sharing electronic evidence with the overall aim to ensure efficiency in mutual legal assistance practice will be developed

and piloted. Maximized utilization of local expertise was prioritized by engaging as trainers the practitioners from both countries with personal experience working on SOM cases on which the simulation exercise was built on. UNODC plans in 2022 to follow up on Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro SOM simulations by organizing three joint North Macedonia – Serbia SOM simulations and applying the same concept of delivery that has proven to be effective.

UNODC supports South Eastern Europe in addressing trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants

9-10 December 2021, Skopje, North Macedonia: UNODC organized a Regional Expert Group Meeting (REGM) on effectively detecting, investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons and aggravated migrant smuggling offences, from and through SEE, with a particular focus on gender and human rights. The event was addressed by the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal migration in North Macedonia and the Embassy of France in Skopje, as the donor to this UNODC work. The purpose of the REGM was to advance the discussion on the trends of migrants smuggling in SEE and to identify and analyse challenges in addressing aggravated migrant smuggling. A particular focus was given to the exploitation of migrants both during and after a transnational smuggling operation and the interlinkages between smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons, gender and human rights. Findings of the most recent UNODC study entitled “Abused and Neglected – A Gender Perspective on Aggravated migrant Smuggling Offences and Response” were used as a basis for discussing the regional dimensions of aggravated smuggling in SEE. This Study considers the underlying risk factors that lead to abuse and violence during the smuggling operation and analyses whether gender influences the type of violence that is inflicted upon smuggled migrants. It also analyses the criminal justice responses to these abuses and the practical obstacles that may hamper the reporting, investigating or prosecuting of these “aggravations”. Finally, the Study provides recommendations for reducing the impunity of the people involved in such offences along the smuggling routes. Accordingly, the REGM served as a platform to discuss the international obligations, conceptual approaches

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

and policy responses to aggravated migrant smuggling offences, and to exchange challenges and good practices in addressing them. A set of concrete actions were proposed for future engagement at the regional and sub-regional or bilateral level, including with international organizations to tackle the issue of aggravated migrant smuggling.

UNODC became a member of the operational bodies of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration in North Macedonia

24 November 2021 Skopje, North Macedonia: UNODC became an official member of the operational bodies (Secretariat and Subgroup for Combating Trafficking in Children) of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration.

Given the shared goals of preventing human trafficking and migrant smuggling, protecting and assisting victims of these serious crimes, and adequately punishing perpetrators, the membership in the National Commission's working bodies further contributes to an effective cooperation and coordination in the fight against this serious crime. The Commission, consisting of 16 members, delegated by the competent institutions, is mandated to monitor and analyze the situation on trafficking in human beings and illegal migration for the purpose of coordinating the activities of the competent institutions and organizing cooperation with the relevant CSOs and international organizations. The Secretariat, as an executive and operational body, is part of the Commission and consists of representatives of the state institutions, international organizations, and CSOs working on preparing reports, anal-

yses, initiatives, and recommendations. The Commission, through the Subgroup for combating trafficking in children, particularly addresses the issue of child trafficking aimed at improving the protection of children who are victims and exercising their rights, as well as coordinating the cooperation among the concerned parties. This cooperation will provide a long-term partnership in strengthening the capacities and exchanging experience through national and international forums to achieve tangible results in fighting human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Moreover, via this partnership, UNODC activities will be included in the National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration in North Macedonia. *(For info on all of the above: Davor Raus)*

DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION

UNODC implements the Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence programme in Croatia

Osijek 3 November, Zagreb 11 November, Rijeka 12 November, Zadar 3 December, Split 6 December 2021, Croatia: In the framework of the Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence (LQSFA) programme implemented by UNODC in partnership with the Lions Quest Foundation, the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education and with the technical support of the Croatian Agency for Education and Training, UNODC conducted the fourth and final round of follow-up sessions with elementary school teachers in 5 Croatian cities to assess the results and prepare for post testing - final step in the implementation of the programme. The follow-up sessions not only provided an opportunity to collect data and make assessments but also to discuss issues linked to the social emotional learning considered as important by young adolescents, including the influence of social media and its potentially negative effects on the user. Upon conclusion of the current piloting cycle and the related assessment, a comparative analysis will be made to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme based on a two-year cycle and provide relevant recommendations accordingly for the further implementation of the programme. The LQSFA programme was initially launched in SSEE in 2014 and gradually expanded to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Monte-

negro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia reaching more than 7700 students in over 180 elementary schools across the region. Following a strict evidence-based implementation modality, the programme proved to be effective and showed encouraging results in substance use reduction, the intention to use drugs and dissuasive effects on the engaged students on substance use in their local environment.

Serbia Successfully Implements 'Listen First'

5 December 2021, Serbia: UNODC's 'Listen First' programme is implemented in Serbia with the support of the Office for Combating Drugs of the Government of the Republic of



Serbia, responsible for implementing drug policies. The Office for Combating Drugs devised an ambitious plan with various state administration bodies and organizations at both the central and local levels of government that deal with drug use issues. 'Listen First' is disseminated through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Devel-

opment, the Ministry of Family Care and Demography, the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs, the Red Cross, and others, reaching people across Serbia with a consistent and engaging substance use prevention message. High-level officials in Serbia agree that mutual cooperation of central and local authorities is needed to effectively prevent substance use. Currently, 'Listen First' is implemented both in Belgrade and in local self-government units with which the Office for Combating Drugs is working, along with multidisciplinary teams in Loznica, Sabac, Novi Pazar, Bor, Majdanpek, and Sremska Mitrovica. The project is implemented in a variety of ways across Serbia, including: pamphlets and videos are available to the public on the websites and social networks of state bodies and organizations participating in the project; the Office for Combating Drugs promotes the project at conferences and meetings; 'Listen First' highlighted in media, including TV appearances; the program is promoted within the local state administration's forums. The government has additionally taken every other chance to promote 'Listen First' as a vehicle to increase awareness and promote effective substance use prevention, including at various international conferences and experts' meetings. 'Listen First' will continue to be promoted in Serbia in 2022. Plans include continuing the promotion in the media and organizing a forum to raise awareness of the

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importance of proper education of children as an initial step toward children growing up healthy and safe. The completion of the project's first phase is planned for January 2022, which will make 'Listen First' the longest project in the field of substance use prevention in the territory of the Republic of Serbia. UNODC is hopeful that based on its successes Serbia will consider investing in "Super Skills," the next phase of 'Listen First' which focuses on developing social and emotional learning for primary age children. This work is made possible with the generous contribution of the Government of France.

UNODC and Slovenia as the President of EU Council discuss cooperation in the Balkans

16 November 2021, online: UNODC held consultations with the Ministries of Health, Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Education and Foreign Affairs of Slovenia to present the UNODC work in the SEE, in particular in the context of the Slovenia's Presidency of the Council of the EU and to express UNODC's readiness to support the ongoing efforts of Slovenia nationally, regionally and globally in the field of early prevention and beyond. UNODC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs discussed future cooperation in the region in the context of the new mechanisms launched by the European Commission in support of the Balkans and agree to continue the dialogue in the future. This future partnership could also support the strategic outcomes of the Brdo Summit as part of the EU Presidency of Slovenia. With regard to the prevention programming, the Ministries of the Ministries of Health, Social Affairs and Education recognized ongoing positive results of the UNODC work in the field of prevention aligned with the UNODC WHO International Standards. They welcomed UNODC's engagement to the introduction of the UNODC - Lions Club International Foundation evidence-based drug use prevention programme "Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence" (LQSFA), as well as the UNODC Strong Families Programme to Slovenia in 2022. Both packages are considered Social and Emotional Learning packages that support the healthy and safe development of youth and can prevent many negative health and social outcomes including drug use, violence (violence against children), mental health and more. Such packages will come to further support ongoing national efforts in Slovenia as well as to sup-

port Slovenia's larger advocacy interest to place such evidence based early prevention approaches front and center in the health response to drugs nationally, regionally and globally.

UNODC supports Bosnia and Herzegovina in implementing the Strong Families Programme

30 September; 1, 5 and 7 October 2021, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina/online: UNODC in cooperation with the NGO Narko-Ne organized a series of online trainings on implementing the UNODC Strong Families Programme for 36 employees from institutions and organisations dealing with protection of children and families at risks in the Sarajevo Canton. The Strong Families (SF) programme is a UNODC developed family skills programme designed to be implemented in all contexts of stress (including in humanitarian settings). The programme is evidence-based and backed by scientific evidence on its effectiveness in terms of developing family skills to support the healthy and safe development of children regardless of their gender and preventing drug use, violence (including against children), mental health and other negative social and health consequences. The training was provided



using the online "eLearning" platform developed in the Bosnian language by UNODC on how to implement the SF within their work. The participants, who are also future facilitators, learned how to deliver SF in terms of teaching both caregivers and children to overcome stress and be an effective facilitator. After the certification, the participants will be able to integrate the acquired knowledge from the training into their work with families, delivering the training they received to their peers for maximum impact.

UNODC supports Serbia in implementing the evidence-based family skills programmes

29 September and 5-6 October 2021, Belgrade, Serbia / online: UNODC organized a

series of events to support Serbian practitioners in implementing family skills tools and programmes. UNODC delivered a webinar on the value of family and life and social skills per the UNODC-WHO International Standards on Drug Use Prevention in this educational sector. The webinar was hosted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological development and attended by many public institutions in Serbia. The available evidence-based family skills prevention programmes provided by UNODC were also introduced to the participants including the universal family skills package 'Families UNited', the selective family skills package 'Strong Families' (SF) designed for families living in stressful contexts (including parenting in refugees, displacement, conflict or events under COVID-19 related contexts). Furthermore, in October, UNODC organized a training focusing specifically on the UNODC SF Programme for 36 school psychologists and pedagogues from selected schools in nine (out of the 18) districts of Serbia in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological development and the OSCE Mission in Serbia. The training on SF particularly familiarized the participants with the content and means of implementation of the programme in their line of work including by teaching how to support parents and their children in overcoming the stresses that the adolescent period brings and what it means to be an effective facilitator and mediator illustrated by practical sessions. Following the completion of the training, the participants received a certificate and as a next step will incorporate the acquired knowledge into their work with



families and will also go on to deliver the same training to their peers to reach maximum impact. An online "eLearning" platform of Strong Families was developed by UNODC in Serbian language to further support the facilitators during the implementation and scale up phases. (For info: Zana Glavendekic)