

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 (2016-2019) is structured along three main pillars: (I) Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime, (II) Enhancement of Integrity and Justice, (III) Prevention, Treatment and Care. 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

Innovative UNODC evaluation leads to increased accountability when countering drugs, crime and terrorism

The UNODC Independent Evaluation Section (IES) has carried out its first-ever strategic evaluation of a regional coordination mechanism for security governance, creating a best practice for future projects while meeting the demands of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specifically, IES planned, conducted and supported the follow-up of an evaluation for the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) Initiative. While maintaining the independence of the evaluation process, the evaluation was carried out in conjunction with the UNODC Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe. Evaluation couples effectiveness with accountability and transparency. UNODC is already at the forefront of countering drugs, crime and terrorism in the Western Balkans, and by offering this innovative evaluation, which fully mainstreamed human rights and gender equality, it has added another important dimension to these efforts. The evaluation carried out by IES found that the IISG is best considered an early-stage entrepreneurial venture that has identified 'the right customer needs', but is yet to develop, establish and institutionalize formal systems and processes. It also found that there is wide support for the concept of the IISG as a potentially effective tool for regional coordination. Among other things IISG's work was recognized as promoting informal collaboration and trust-building among beneficiaries across the region. The IISG Support Group highlighted that "the evaluation process itself has offered space for honest, open dialogue and exchanges, supporting learning and building trust." This space for dialogue and exchange was essential for leading to actionable recommendations. One of the most innovative aspects of this evaluation is the continuous engagement with the IISG also beyond the end of the evaluation, for example through dedicated follow-up workshops, thereby ensuring utility of recommendations. This exercise can also be seen as a model for future evaluations. The results of the evaluation were presented on **26 February 2019, Skopje, North Macedonia, at the 3rd IISG Board Meeting** held under the auspices of the Brdo Process framework and hosted by the Ministry of Interior of North Macedonia. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Director-General for DG NEAR of the European Commission and brought together ministers of interior and security, Brdo Process Members, and high representatives of the IISG partners, including EU Member States, EU institutions and agencies, the UN and members of the international community.



UNODC participates in the consultations on the EU Enlargement Package

12 February 2019, Brussels, Belgium: UNODC took part in the EU Enlargement consultations, organized by the EC in the framework of Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations on the topics of rule of law, justice, corruption, organized crime, migration and others with specific focus on the Chapters 23 and 24 of the EU *acquis communautaire*. The consultations, along with the written contributions of the active international partners in the region, including UNODC, feed into the annual reports prepared by the EC for each of the Western Balkan jurisdictions and Turkey. UNODC has pointed out, among other aspects, the active cooperation with the counterparts in the region in areas of countering illicit trafficking, including drug trafficking (and drug demand reduction), trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, firearms control, corruption, terrorism, money laundering and illicit financial flows, organized crime, as well as other related fields. *(For info on all on the above: Ekaterina Kolykhalova)*

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING, FINANCING OF TERRORISM AND ASSET FORFEITURE

UNODC and TADOC build capacity of South Eastern Europe in Crime Intelligence Analysis

5-8 February 2019, Ankara, Turkey: UNODC in partnership with the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC) conducted a second training session on "Crime Intelligence Analysis" for the new group of law enforcement practitioners from SEE. The recurrence of this training was due to its significant benefit to the participants and the high demand from the region. This training is part of the long-standing partnership between UNODC and Turkey in the Balkans and was undertaken with the Turkish financial support. 18 experts from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 learnt more about different types and the importance of analysis, database management, effective use of integrated data sources, risk analysis, and practice via real case studies on financial and organized crime. This training was specifically tailored for law enforcement agencies who had previous exposure and experience in criminal data intelligence analysis to achieve optimal results in internalizing the information. According to the feedback collected at the conclusion of this event, this training was rated as extremely beneficial in the sense that it equipped the participants with relevant knowledge and skills at both operational and strategic levels, as well as reinforced and promoted regional cooperation.

The **UNODC project on Financial Investigations in South Eastern Europe**, funded by the EU, is delivering activities on building regional anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism capacity and is an integral part of the Integrative Internal Security Governance, namely its Pillar II on the Western Balkan Counter Serious Crime initiative. This joint two-year UNODC/CEPOL project is designed to strengthen the capacities of the law enforcement sector and the judiciary in the six Western Balkans jurisdictions to effectively detect, investigate, prosecute and recover the proceeds of crime. The details of the project achievements are below.

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING, FINANCING OF TERRORISM AND ASSET FORFEITURE

On **12-15 February 2019** in **Skopje, North Macedonia** UNODC initiated the third series of national trainings on financial investigations in South Eastern Europe with the first training delivered at a 50% rate by the UNODC certified national trainers. This training launches the next phase of the Training-of-Trainers programme of this project and will provide the certified national trainers with the first experience in delivering such trainings to their peers. The training curriculum was developed by the trainers and was fully accustomed to the national context. The training brought together 24 participants and covered topics such as planning of information sources and national cooperation in financial investigations; tools and techniques of financial data and its transformation into evidence; analysis and visualization of links, connections and relationships; complex money laundering schemes; tax evasion and money laundering as well as the legal and illegal use of legal structures. This training further contributes to the development of the national curricula on financial investigations in each Western Balkans jurisdiction with the assistance of UNODC and consolidates the knowledge and expertise of the national trainers ensuring the sustainability of the project.



On **12-15 March 2019** UNODC, in cooperation with the French law enforcement authorities and the French Embassy to Bosnia and Herzegovina, organized a practical study visit to **Paris, France** for a delegation from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study visit aimed at reinforcing the operational exchange of information and collaboration between the French and Bosnian law enforcement institutions on money laundering and terrorist financing, drugs and arms trafficking, corruption and tax fraud, crypto-currencies, and the application of a multidisciplinary approach and systematic parallel financial



investigations at the outset of serious and organized crime investigations and other criminal and money laundering cases. The delegation comprised of ten officials/experts from the Police, Prosecution and Financial Intelligence Unit from all levels of the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who had presentations on the practical aspects of work from four law enforcement institutions in France, the French Gendarmerie Criminal Investigations Directorate; French Financial Intelligence Unit (TRACFIN); Central Office for the Fight against Serious Financial Crime (OCRGDF); and the Central Office for the Fight against Corruption and Financial and Tax Offences (OCLCFF). The visit allowed for the delegation to learn the best practices in financial investigations in France, and to study various money laundering, financial crimes, organized crime and tax fraud schemes and terrorist financing matters.

On **20 March 2019** in **Vienna, Austria**, UNODC in cooperation with CEPOL, organized the fourth meeting of the national project focal points to discuss the implementation of project activities. The meeting aimed at taking stock of the project achievements in the first quarter of 2019, including the third series of national financial investigations trainings in all Western Balkans jurisdictions, the first study, and the results of the conducted evaluation of the project.

UNODC supports Albania in addressing threats related to cryptocurrencies

5-6 March 2019, Tirana, Albania: UNODC organized a workshop on cryptocurrencies investigations and supervision aimed at building capacity of the Albania Financial Intelligence Unit, law enforcers and financial supervisors in countering money laundering and terrorism financing risks linked to cryptocurrencies.

The training (for 24 participants) alternated theory sessions with practical exercises and introduced a variety of topics, including the main concepts in cryptocurrencies; blockchain explorer tools and darknet; mixing services of cryptocurrencies; typical patterns in cryptocurrency transactions; and Initial Coin Offerings, frauds and scams with crypto-assets. The practical exercises allowed to get hands-on experience related to the creation of crypto-wallets and real-life transfers, the size of the market, money laundering, finding cryptocurrency service providers, basic information on bitcoin addresses and the Darknet marketplace, risk assessment and tracing bitcoins, as well as checking the plausibility of a crypto-asset declaration. The discussions focused on the international cooperation, the principles of cryptocurrency regulation and supervision, and the keys to successful cryptocurrency investigations. This work is funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

OSCE and UNODC build capacity of Albania on countering terrorist financing

27 February – 1 March 2019, Vienna, Austria: A train-the-trainer course for Albanian participants on countering terrorist financing was organized by OSCE and UNODC. The course covered topics such as national, regional and transnational threats, sources of information, money flows, tackling financial intelligence, and strategic analysis as well as practical exercises, often based on localized scenarios. The aim of the course was to assist Albania in countering terrorist financing, in line with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, standards of the Financial Action Task Force and OSCE commitments. The participants will continue to deliver training courses for local government officials in Albania, together with the OSCE and UNODC international experts. *(For info on all above: Yulia Minaeva)*

GLOBAL CONTAINER CONTROL PROGRAMME (CCP)

Air Cargo Control Unit under establishment in Albania

27 February - 8 March 2019, Tirana, Albania: Tirana International Airport hosted the first basic training on Air Cargo Control for 13 customs and border control officers and civil aviation representatives with the aim of supporting the establishment of a specialized Air Cargo Control Unit (ACCU) at this Airport. The training introduced different topics mainly focusing on interdiction techniques and risk indicators that can be used at airports to identify and intercept illicit shipments including narcotics. The training was welcomed by the representatives of the Government who emphasized the importance of the Air Cargo Programme for Albania. The theoretical part of the training was followed by practical work at the cargo terminal and the apron. Many practical issues were analyzed in the context of further strengthening of the inter-agency cooperation in processing the goods in the supply chain faster, safer and more efficiently. Currently, Tirana Air Cargo Unit is the only one established in SEE and is funded by France.



GLOBAL CONTAINER CONTROL PROGRAMME (CCP)**Heroin seized by the Port Control Unit (PCU) in Albania**

28 March 2019, Durres, Albania: The PCU officers seized 2kg160gr of pure heroin at the ferry terminal. The heroin was taped around the body of the driver of a truck headed to Italy. The seizure took place during a random search. During the interrogation of the driver, the officers noticed uneasiness, anxiety and contradictory statements. The driver is a citizen of Albania and is in custody. The investigation has been initiated.

Afghan customs officials visit the Port of Durres in Albania

25-27 March 2019, Durres, Albania: The PCU received a study visit from the Customs Administration of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The delegation included members of the PCUs and the Director of the Law Enforcement Department of the Afghanistan Customs. The purpose of the visit was for the Afghan officials to become acquainted with the implementation of the CCP in the Balkans and to share experiences and challenges faced by the PCUs in both countries in their day-to-day work. The delegation visited the container and ferry terminals, closely observing an example of container examination during which techniques introduced by the CCP were demonstrated. Furthermore, the delegation visited the Anti-Trafficking Department of Customs and the Monitoring Center during which the high demand for relevant and timely risk information to help Customs' achieve their objectives was emphasized. This visit contributed to enhancing and stimulating working relationships, exchange of information and cooperation between PCUs participating in the UNODC-WCO CCP.

**Montenegro Port Control Unit seizes cocaine worth 2.5 million Euro**

15 March 2019, Bar, Montenegro: The officers of the PCU in Montenegro analyzed the risk indicators, scanned the suspected container by mobile scanner, identified a suspicious area and after a detailed examination, discovered the concealed cocaine. The cocaine was packed in 27 packages weighting 31.55 kg with market value of 2,500,000 Euro. This is the fourth case of cocaine seizure by the PCU at the Port of Bar established within the framework of the CCP in South Eastern Europe and currently supported by Luxembourg. *(For info on all of the above: Ela Banaj, Alen Gagula)*

DRUG PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND CARE**UNODC supports Serbian police officers in drug use prevention among students**

26-28 March 2019, Belgrade, Serbia: UNODC, the OSCE Mission in Serbia and the Ministry of Interior organized a training for the Serbian police on drug use and violence prevention among students and provided relevant information and techniques. 20 police officers were trained on the current substance use trends, relevant legislation and technical skills related to their day to day work. UNODC presented the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention and the results of the strategic interventions in the past 8 years in Serbia, particularly in school settings. With 373 police officers strategically located to cover 681 schools across the country, further capacity building will be undertaken for the local police officers, including through the provision of applicable knowledge and skills on the developmental characteristics of students, communication skills and the prevention of violence and substance use.

**UNODC and Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) organize a side event on Global Partnership for School Based Prevention at 62nd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)**

18 March 2019, Vienna, Austria: UNODC and LCIF implement the Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence Programme (LQSFA), a school based social emotional learning intervention targeted at young adolescents to prevent drug use, which produces encouraging results worldwide, including in South Eastern Europe, where the programme is implemented since 2010. The side event, which was co-sponsored by Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Montenegro and Serbia, presented an overview of the programme achievements to date in SEE, Central America and Western Africa and discuss the way forward. Two young students, Jana and Stefan, who benefitted from the programme in Montenegro and Serbia respectively, shared their stories with the audience on how the programme affected their lives, and the lives of those around them. Jana concluded her speech with the strong statement: "It's because of this programme that I started improving my self-esteem and became a stronger person." Stefan particularly emphasized the benefits of the LQSFA programme in strengthening social and communication skills with peers to understand and cope with the challenges faced during adolescence and stated "There are no strangers, just friends that we haven't met yet. This programme gives us wings to fly over adolescence." The LQSFA programme implementation is closely monitored and evaluated, and the available results show positive evaluation outcomes on the enhancement of the refusal skills among the students, as well as on the reduction of the reported substance use and intention to use substances among the groups of students. In SEE, the programme showed effectiveness with encouraging results in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, where 7,600 students benefitted from the programme in 144 schools in 25 cities in the 4 countries and 371 teachers were trained. The LCIF Global Coordinator highlighted in his remarks that the LQSFA programme "contributes to building a positive and safe school climate" for children. UNODC emphasized the impact of the programme on adult-children relations and its contribution to "contaminating adults with positive relationships with children".

UNODC presents results of work in South Eastern Europe at the Lions Quest Europa meeting

17-19 January 2019, Warsaw, Poland: LCIF organized an annual Lions Quest Europa meeting with Lions Club Country Directors, Lions Quest trainers from Europe and international partners to discuss the strategic expansion objectives and the results of the programme implementation. Considering the successes of the programme in the Balkans and the expansion to Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala and El Salvador, UNODC presented the results of the programme's evaluation related to the effectiveness of the delivered interventions on prevention of tobacco, alcohol and cannabis use. The presented positive findings of the evaluation portrayed statistically significant results in terms of substance use and intentions to use substances among the groups of students who participated in the programme during a one-year implementation cycle. The results were considered as very important and useful as a scientific argument for further dissemination of the programme globally and for additional understanding of the value of substance use prevention and of the social emotional learning interventions. *(For info: Milos Stojanovic)*

ORGANIZED CRIME, ANTI-CORRUPTION AND TERRORISM

UNODC Finalizes Surveys on Organized Crime in the Western Balkans

26 March 2019, Vienna, Austria: The UNODC regional research initiative "Measuring and Assessing Organized Crime in the Western Balkans" (MACRO) carried out targeted in-depth interviews with prisoners convicted of crimes most often related to organized crime, victims of trafficking in persons and smuggled migrants to obtain their personal and first-hand experience with organized crime as well as to find out more about the modus operandi and structures of organized crime groups. The interviews were held in the period September 2018 - March 2019 in the region. Interviews with expert practitioners from law enforcement, criminal justice system, academia and the civil society were carried out to get a deeper insight about organized crime groups and their functioning. The findings of these surveys will supplement the information provided by the statistical framework and by the review of legislation and court judgements and will be published in the final regional report of the MACRO project. Meetings of the National Technical Groups were held in all participating jurisdictions to discuss entry of statistical data related to organized crime into the MACRO online platform, in line with the statistical framework that was developed with participation of the national institutions. The partners discussed their experience and challenges with data entry and also made suggestions for improvement of the platform. One of the positive outcomes of this exercise is that some national partners have observed gaps in their internal data collection procedures and have initiated the streamlining of the procedures or enforcing the existing ones, as appropriate. The qualitative interviews and quantitative data collection in the region have been carried out with full commitment and ownership by the participating national institutions. *(For info: Tejal Jesrani Haslinger)*

UNODC participates in the Regional Steering Group Meeting on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)

5 March 2019, Belgrade, Serbia: UNODC took part in the annual meeting of the Regional Steering Group on SALW, organized by the UNDP within its regional project "South-East European Clearinghouse for Small Arms Control (SEESAC)". The meeting was attended by 67 stakeholders, including representatives from the National Commissions on SALW as well as international organizations and NGOs, including OSCE, NATO, RACVIAC and HALO Trust. UNODC presented the results of its work in 2018 and the main priorities for 2019-2020, which will focus on supporting the region in meeting their objectives established under the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition in the Western Balkans. UNODC also highlighted its work practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina to increase the knowledge and skills of officials on detecting firearms at land border crossings, regional activities with prosecutors and the on-going review of the national criminal laws. *(For info: Diman Dimov)*

National capacities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in countering terrorism supported by UNODC

22-23 January 2019, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: According to the Europol's latest report on the terrorist threat in the EU TESAT 2018, one of the main threats to the jurisdictions of SEE is the return home of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs). To help counter this threat in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNODC organized the second national workshop on challenges related to the return and relocation of FTFs aimed to enhance the national capacities in detecting and intercepting returning FTFs, in particular at borders, as well as improve regional cooperation on this matter. The event was funded by the EU and brought together 26 representatives from the national authorities addressing terrorism as well as the EU Delegation and UNODC. During the event, upon the request of the Government, experts from Turkey and France provided an overview of their experiences, challenges and lessons learned related to the detection and interception of FTFs. Regional organizations, including SEE, RACVIAC, SELEC, and INTERPOL provided summaries of their respective engagements in the region and shared their views on improving international and regional cooperation in countering the FTF threat. Other topics addressed during the workshop included the international and national legal framework applicable to the FTF phenomenon, as well as the analysis of real-life cases of returning FTFs. *(For info: Marc Memier)*

UNODC facilitated a study visit from the Uzbekistan State Customs Committee to the Command Center under the Serbian Customs Administration



12-14 February 2019, Belgrade, Serbia: The UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia with support of the UNODC Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe organized a study visit of the representatives of the State Customs Committee of Uzbekistan to the Command Center under the Serbian Customs Administration. The visit helped the Uzbek counterparts to familiarize with the work of the Command Center in order to apply good practices in establishing a similar Center for Border Monitoring and Interagency Collaboration under the State Customs Committee of Uzbekistan. During the visit, the Serbian colleagues briefed the Uzbek counterparts on the liaison role of the Command Center to coordinate border security and management activities of all state agencies. The work of the Center also focuses on collection, analysis, maintenance and dissemination of information on detecting and preventing illegal activities. The Serbian experts expressed very positive views with regard to the preliminary terms of reference, which had been developed by the Uzbek colleagues for establishing a Center with similar functions in Uzbekistan. The study tour resulted in further determining the direction for the establishment of the Center for Monitoring and Interaction under the State Customs Committee of Uzbekistan. The visit was implemented with support of the UNODC Programme Office in Serbia and funded by the Government of Japan. *(For info: Ekaterina Kolykhalova)*

UNODC supports Civil Society in Preventing Corruption in South Eastern Europe

30 January-2 February 2019, Belgrade, Serbia: UNODC organized a follow-up meeting to the multi-stakeholder workshops on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and its Review Mechanism to work on an outcome document aimed at providing a shared vision for all stakeholders in effectively addressing corruption in South Eastern Europe. The meeting brought together 10 civil society representatives and six private sector actors from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 as well as other partners from the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI), the UNCAC Coalition and the Southeast Europe Leadership for Development and Integrity (SELDI) Network. The participants collaborated on the joint outcome statement, which spells out concrete and practical steps towards a strengthened cooperation in the areas of training and knowledge, implementation of UNCAC and its review mechanism and collective action, and which will be endorsed by all contributors. This event falls in the follow-up phase of two projects implemented by UNODC in the region in cooperation with RAI, funded by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), both of which place emphasis on multi-stakeholder initiatives in the fight against corruption. *(For info: Viktorija Nesterovaite)*