

UNODC in South Eastern Europe

NEWSLETTER | Vol. 34

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 in the times of COVID-19

UNODC supports South Eastern Europe in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

In **Albania**, UNODC provided two rounds of deliveries of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, funded by Germany and France. Specifically, in early **April**, UNODC equipped frontline



law enforcement officers of the Port Control Unit (PCU) at the **Durres** Port and the Air Cargo Control Unit (ACCU) at the **Tirana** International Airport with the specified equipment. In late **May**, UNODC provided the second PPE delivery in Durres and Tirana for border and migration police officers. The deliveries included gloves, multi-use protec-



tive FFP2 face masks, protective goggles and hand sanitizers, with the senior Police officials commending UNODC's donation.

May-June 2020, Skopje, North Macedonia; Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bar, Montenegro: UNODC donated PPE to the Border Police and Customs officers of North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and to the PCU officers in Montenegro as part of the COVID-19 related support to the national authorities. The donation included masks, gloves, safety goggles and hand sanitizing gels and was handed over in formal ceremonies with the presence of senior officials rep-



resenting Airports' Authorities, Border Police and Customs of North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the handovers, UNODC had the opportunity to reiterate their support to the national authorities, who expressed appreciation and welcomed the effort, stressing their willingness to resume cooperation with UNODC in the coming

months. With this donation, funded by the EU, UNODC is directing its resources to assist the law enforcement authorities of the region in maintaining business continuity and



safeguarding communities from illicit trade, while keeping the frontline officers safe from the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in their daily work.

Apart from the provision of PPE, UNODC delivered substantive support to the Governments, which included granting free access to the law enforcement agencies in the region to the UN e-Learning modules for operational staff in the area of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Due to the increased internet use of the 'digital office', online shopping, forums and webinars, UNODC sought to support the governments through offering assistance in addressing cybercrime as the significantly increased risk of cyber criminality becomes well documented with the related risk becoming evident.



countries across the globe, including South Eastern Europe (SEE). Relying on this experience, and in partnership with other UN agencies including WHO, UNICEF and the Partnership to End Violence Against Children, UNODC presented these materials and tools, hosted on its flagship media platform *ListenFirst*, to help caregivers navigate during this period. For better outreach, the materials were translated in the local languages of SEE. Link: https://www.unodc.org/listenfirst/en/covid_parents.html

Similarly, UNODC distributed to its counterparts and partners various technical

WORKING FROM HOME WHILE CARING FOR YOUR CHILDREN



guidance documents on how to ensure the continuity and sustainability of health services addressing the needs of people who use drugs during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure an adequate response to substance abuse during COVID-19 outbreak. Links: https://www.unodc.org/documents/drug-prevention-and-treatment/Drug_treatment_and_care_services_and_COVID19.pdf

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/hiv-aids/new/covid-19-and-hiv.html>



As the situation unfolds, UNODC continues to monitor the situation on the ground in cooperation and coordination with its counterparts to provide the necessary assistance to the Governments of SEE in various areas of the mandates of the Office.. (For info on all above: Ekaterina Kolykhalova)

ORGANIZED CRIME / FIREARMS CONTROL

UNODC is part of the regional dialogue on small arms and light weapons

17 June 2020, Tirana, Albania; 24 June 2020, Pristina, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244; 26 June 2020, Skopje, North Macedonia: UNODC participated in the third series of the Local Coordination Meetings on 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* developed as part of the Franco-German initiative. The meetings were hosted by the national SALW commissions and held online with the presence of representatives from France, Germany, United Kingdom and the European Union as well as from the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), the OSCE and the national counterparts representing the relevant ministries. The main objective of the meetings was to review the status of implementation of the *Roadmap* by various partners involved in this process, including

in the challenging times of COVID-19, whereby remote working protocols were put in place. The partners confirmed that the overall implementation has moved forward successfully, and the remote cooperation has demonstrated not only challenges but also the high level of coordination, opportunities and lessons learnt for the future. The multi-agency coordination triggered by the *Roadmap* and the relevant national counterparts contributes to addressing firearms related offenses and mirrors the aims and objectives of UNODC efforts in the region. The participants provided a strategic overview of the advancement of the *Roadmap* and discussed technical aspects of its implementation. UNODC provided an update to the national commissions on the status of its activities and the way forward.

UNODC to support Bosnia and Herzegovina in detection of firearms in postal and courier shipments

9 June 2020, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNODC and the Indirect

Taxation Authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ITA) held a meeting to launch the needs assessment in the area of detection of firearms, their parts, components and ammunition in postal and courier shipments. UNODC provided detailed explanations on the various stages and steps of the training and equipment provision, the development of Standard Operating Procedures and conducting joint operations. The meeting resulted in the approval of the scope of the Terms of Reference for the needs assessment and of the questionnaire to identify gaps and needs, as well as the agreement to complete and share with UNODC the questionnaire in addition to conducting assessment visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina in July – August 2020, subject to the travel possibilities. This activity is part of the joint UNODC – UNDP project on countering arms trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The financial support is provided under the SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund by Germany, UK, Netherlands, France, Sweden and Norway. (For info on all above: Diman Dimov)

PROMOTING ENHANCED BORDER CONTROL MEASURES/CCP/AIRCOP

UNODC continues its partnership with the EU through the initiative within the UNODC Regional Programme for 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 in [the UNODC-SEE webpage](#). (For info on the below: Alen Gagula and Bill Wood)

CCP continues to support stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro during the COVID-19 pandemic

29 April-8 May 2020, Bijača, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bar, Montenegro: CCP continues to implement activities through online sessions and other e-learning tools in SEE aimed at enhancing technical and opera-



tional capacities of the customs and police officers engaged in the PCUs established under the programme. The online mentoring sessions provided to the PCUs of the Port of Bar and the land-border crossing Bijača represent CCP's continued support to the law enforcement agencies of the Member States



aimed at strengthening the law enforcement capabilities, in particular in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. During this period, a number of container shipments, both in Bos-

nia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, were profiled. For those identified as high-risk consignments, full physical searches were carried out by the PCU officials, and further appropriate actions were implemented. Online mentoring support was provided by



experienced WCO trainers through online platforms and tools in real time.

Furthermore, in **April 2020**, CCP facilitated access to more than 30 e-learning courses from the UNODC's Global learning platform goLEARN and the WCO Customs Learning and Knowledge Community (CLiKC) platform, for customs officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro as part of the COVID-19 response provided through the CCP framework to the beneficiary administrations in SEE.

PCU in Montenegro achieves new notable results during the COVID-19 outbreak

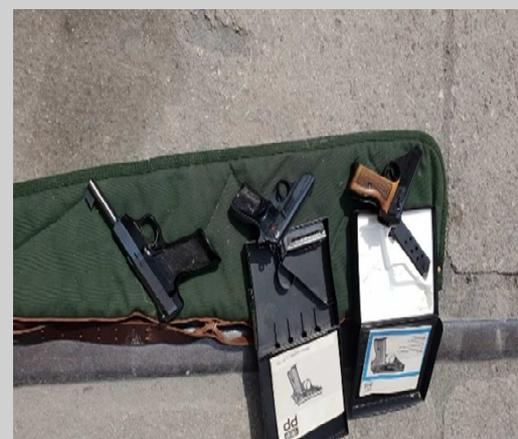
12 May 2020, Bar, Montenegro: The mentioned CCP online mentorship provided an immediate and concrete result. The PCU in Bar successfully profiled and interdicted a



container shipment with 3 hand pistols and 2,480 pieces of ammunition of various cali-

bers, which were detected during detailed physical search, following PCU officers' risk analyses and profiling.

In cooperation with the national stakeholders of Montenegro, CCP successfully uses technical platforms to provide continuous capacity-building programming and support to its counterparts. The COVID-19 pandemic poses a serious threat to the economies across the globe, affecting economic activity through both demand and supply channels. CCP customized its activities to better support the governments through COVID-19 with tailor-made interventions for capacity building and other support.



AIRCOP supports Bosnia and Herzegovina with e-learning

14 May/25 June 2020, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: AIRCOP hosted a preparatory online meeting with the Border Police (BP), the ITA and the Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina aimed at advancing the project activities by integrating complementary e-learning training support during the COVID-19 pandemic. With this, the officers of the law enforcement agencies of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to access the online training modules on risk management, risk assessment, criminal intelligence and analysis. The national counterparts were briefed on the AIRCOP e-learning programme, which has been tailored for Bosnia and Herzegovina and structured around three consecutive phases to fit the needs of the national law enforcement agencies. The programme is designed with a blend of e-learning modules and thematic webinars, which allow discussions with experts from over 15 countries in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean through live sessions, serving as an effective support to the

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learning programme. The first phase of the programme took the form of a national workshop entitled *“The risk assessment as a holistic approach for law enforcement agencies”* organized on 25 June 2020 and serving as a milestone in the implementation of analysis processes as a response against emerging threats in the airports. The training, conducted by an expert of the Bulgarian Customs, brought together officers from BP, ITA and the Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The main objective of the workshop was to enhance the awareness of law enforcement agencies on the benefits of a risk-based approach at all levels, including in terms of support to the decision-making process, operational effectiveness and resource management. Several key topics were presented, including the fundamentals of risk assessment, the rational procedures to assess threats and countermeasures through the risk-based approach, the indicators and rules of risk analysis, information management and the intelligence cycle to assess threats at airports. The proactivity of the participants enabled fruitful discussions and demonstrated the determination of the law enforcement agencies to engage actively with AIRCOP.

This workshop is the first of a series of workshops that will support the implementation of AIRCOP activities in SEE and ensure their sustainability.



AIRCOP discusses the framework, collection and analysis of air passenger information in Bosnia and Herzegovina

4 June 2020, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: AIRCOP hosted an online meeting with the Ministry of Communication and Transport, Border Police and the Directorate for Coordination of Police bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina aimed at presenting the framework, collection and analysis of air

passenger information (API/PNR) along with the outlooks for Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the meeting, several key topics were discussed, including the importance of air passenger data to target and intercept known and unknown high-risk passengers; the general framework and regional perspective on the gathering and analysis of passenger information; the benefits of the proposed approach for the country; existing and required capabilities for related operational activities in the country; and the role of the future Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAITF) to be established by AIRCOP at the Sarajevo International Airport. The proactivity of the participants enabled fruitful discussions which builds a strong foundation for future collaboration in the implementation of the AIRCOP activities in SEE and their sustainability.

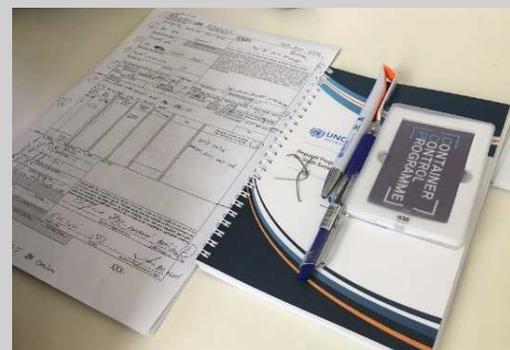
CCP launches training cycle for the Air Cargo Control Unit at Sarajevo International Airport

15-19 June 2020, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, CCP organized an Online Basic Theoretical Training for officers of the newly established ACCU at the Sarajevo International Airport. This training represents the start of the first phase of the tailored training cycle of the CCP, to be further complemented with intermediate and advanced training events during the course of Programme implementation. The training covered topics such as risk indicators, profiling and targeting, air cargo safety and other relevant matters concerning air cargo shipments. In addition to officers from BP and ITA of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the training was also at-



tended by the representatives of the Directorate for Civil Aviation, Sarajevo Airport Authority and representatives of the private sector entities active in air cargo operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The training was delivered by experienced international WCO

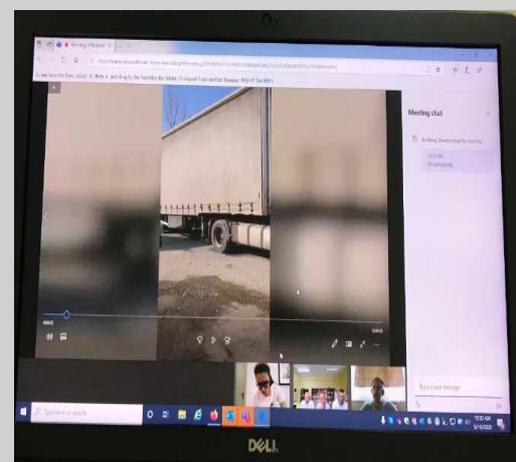
and UNODC experts. This activity is the stepping stone to the establishment of a joint CCP ACCU and an AIRCOP JAITF at the Sarajevo International Airport to support more effective responses of the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and also in North Macedonia and Serbia through the respective joint teams by means of a comprehensive and strategic approach to preventing and combating organized crime in cargo and passen-



ger traffic at air border crossings, including trafficking of drugs, firearms and persons, as well as smuggling of migrants, countering the financing of terrorism, money laundering and other economic crimes, and corruption.

CCP delivers online mentorship in the Albanian Port Control Unit

15-19 June 2020, Durrës, Albania: Despite the challenges related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the CCP resumed its activities in Albania and returned to a more regular schedule of implementation. Making the health and safety of the PCU officers, partners and trainers a priority, CCP introduced



a series of online training and mentorship sessions which can be accessed remotely. The PCU officers at Durrës Port attended a one-week online mentoring session, aimed at measuring the effectiveness of the PCU, solving practical challenges and identifying future training needs to assist the Unit. The mentorship session covered various topics

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including cigarettes smuggling, methods of concealment, rip-on/rip-off phenomenon, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), and risk analysis. Themes of particular interest to the officers were the illicit disposal of waste and the new innovative modus operandi used in cocaine smuggling. The Port of Durres is seriously affected by this crime and in recent

years several cocaine seizures were conducted by the PCU.

In addition, the ongoing WCO operation "Stop" aiming at detecting fake medicines and protective equipment related to the current COVID -19 situation was also raised. The operational plan was discussed, and the reference code list was provided with the tariff

codes and description of the commodities to be targeted as a priority. Such mentorship sessions are designed to offer a blend of international and local expertise ensuring that an efficient container control workforce is being developed. The CCP activities in Albania are funded by Germany and France. (For info: Ela Banaj)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING

UNODC holds online sessions on the impact of COVID-19 on the drug supply chain and migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons in South Eastern Europe

16 June 2020, Belgrade, Serbia; 26 June 2020, Skopje, North Macedonia: UNODC organized two online sessions to present the findings of UNODC reports on "COVID-19 and the drug supply chain: from production and trafficking to use" and "Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons to Europe and North America". Over 35 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia took part in the first session, representing the national institutions, including the Police, Customs, Ministry of Security, civil society organizations working on security issues, drug use prevention and smuggling of migrants (SoM) and trafficking in persons (TiP). The second session was attended by 20 participants from Albania, North Macedonia and Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 from the same institutions as well as the judiciary and the Ministry of Health. International organizations including the IOM, the Council of Europe and the OHCHR attended both sessions. UNODC presented detailed information prepared by the UNODC Research and Analysis Branch on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the drug supply chain and SoM/TiP in the region, including with a snapshot of heroin seizures along the Balkan Route and the most recent statistics on migrants' movements. The materials of the sessions were shared with the participants, who provided positive feedback on the sessions stating that they were interesting and useful. These informative sessions contributed towards an increased understanding and knowledge by the national authorities of the impact of COVID-19 on drug supply chain and SoM/TiP and the related emerging trends. (For info: Sinisa Durkolic)

UNODC takes part in discussion on countering trafficking in persons in the Western Balkans with Stanford University

3 June 2020, Stanford, USA: UNODC took part in a presentation called "An Action Plan for the International Community on Countering Human Trafficking in the Balkans", which was part of a larger virtual discussion on human trafficking entitled "300 Days of Sun, How Many More Days of Slaves?" organized by Women Forward International. The event revolved around a study entitled "Recommendations for The International Community: Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for Sexual Exploitation in the Western Balkans" produced by a group of students from Stanford University and aimed at examining the role of international organizations in combating trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation in the Western Balkan region, and presenting proposals for interventions for the international community to address the issue. The event was attended by a diverse audience representing both international organizations and the private sector, including the Secretary-General of the National Human Rights Committee of the State of Qatar, the NATO Special Representative for Women Peace and Security in addition to UNODC as well as representatives from academia and arts spheres. During the presentation, UNODC highlighted that the study presented valid points, particularly on the specifics of trafficking in persons in the Western Balkans and the need for concerted action. Moreover, it was highlighted that some current initiatives and efforts in countering trafficking in persons including a new approach to training with case-based simulations and blended adult learning as well as e-learning; support to the victims by promoting the non-punishment for acts they were forced to commit; and the importance of educating the youth to prevent trafficking in

persons, including by using the free of charge educational material on the rule of law developed by UNODC under the Education for Justice Initiative for this purpose. Finally, UNODC welcomed the opportunity to provide direct feedback to this study and thus contribute to the global efforts in this field. (For info: Morgane Nicot)

UNODC provides e-learning courses on trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants

22 May 2020, Podgorica, Montenegro; Skopje, North Macedonia; Pristina, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244: During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNODC offered to the regional law enforcement agencies free access to the UN e-learning modules on TiP and SoM for three months, i.e. three 60-minute modules on SoM in the languages of the region and additional modules on TiP in English. UNODC e-learning courses are developed by leading international experts, enabling law enforcement officers and other professionals to expand their knowledge and stay up to date with the international practices in the fight against illicit drugs, crime and terrorism in line with the UN standards and norms and other relevant international instruments. The relevant national authorities of Montenegro, North Macedonia and Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 welcomed the opportunity and 44 officers took part in the online trainings. (For info: Davor Raus)

