

# UNODC in South Eastern Europe

NEWSLETTER | Vol. 41

*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. Starting with 2022, UNODC RP SEE has introduced the SDG marker to its activities to track progress towards the 2030 Agenda and advocate for the SDGs. The activities reflected below on anti-corruption, asset recovery, organized crime and illicit trafficking contribute towards SDG 16. Activities on drug demand reduction contribute towards SDG 3 while all activities contribute to SDG 5. For feedback, queries or comments regarding this newsletter, please contact Ms. Ekaterina Kolykhalova (e-mail: [ekaterina.kolykhalova@un.org](mailto:ekaterina.kolykhalova@un.org)), Ms. Lejla Karahasanovic ([lejla.karahasanovic@un.org](mailto:lejla.karahasanovic@un.org)) and Mr. Petr Fena (e-mail: [petr.fena@un.org](mailto:petr.fena@un.org)).*



## 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 met with the Secretariat of the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative

**15 March 2022, Vienna, Austria:** In line with its existing partnership under the *ACIF Roadmap*, UNODC carried out a meeting with the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) Secretariat in order to discuss both the ongoing and planned activities. UNODC and RAI exchanged views on the planned work under the three goals of the *ACIF Roadmap*, including the timelines for the implementation of the inception phase and the establishment of the ACIF Roadmap Secretariat. Specifically, UNODC and RAI informed about the preparatory work for carrying out the inception phase of the *ACIF*

*Roadmap* and mapping of the anti-corruption priorities of the Western Balkan jurisdictions.

### UNODC held a presentation on GlobE Network to the anti-corruption authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**18 February 2022, Bosnia and Herzegovina / online:** UNODC facilitated a meeting between the Secretariat of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (the GlobE Network) and the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of Fight Against Corruption of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH APIK). The meeting



**UK Government**

particularly informed the practitioners of Bosnia and Herzegovina about the mandate of the GlobE Network, its membership modalities, and the available tools and possibilities. As a quick, agile, and efficient tool for facilitating transnational cooperation in combating corruption, strengthening communication exchange and peer learning between independent anti-

corruption law enforcement authorities, the GlobE Network presents an extremely useful opportunity for authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to utilize it as a resource but also add value to it, by exchanging on their unique experiences in tackling corruption challenges. The BiH APIK, which is yet to join the GlobE Network, expressed appreciation in learning more about the procedures for enrollment as well as its readiness to initiate actions on potential nominations. The GlobE Network is a platform for secure peer-to-peer information exchange and informal cooperation to better track and prosecute



international cooperation. The discussion was held around the application of the provisions of the Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, and the Law on seizure of material benefits deriving from criminal activity in correlation to the Law on International cooperation in criminal matters. The guide will serve a double purpose: nationally and internationally. At the national level, the guide will enable law enforcement authorities and prosecutors to have one publication that will support the process of mutual legal assistance in asset recovery cases, while at the international level it will enable practitioners to obtain assistance from other jurisdictions in asset recovery related cases on how to obtain evidence abroad or seize proceeds and instrumentalities of crime.

implementation of the National Strategy and deliver measurable results in financial investigations and confiscations of proceeds of crime. UNODC presented the Asset Recovery Roadmap draft to strengthen the institutional capacities to conduct financial investigations and confiscation of assets while assessing the existing capabilities and identifying gaps in the processes and resources allocated to successfully implement the National Strategy.

## UNODC and North Macedonia cooperate in countering corruption in sport

**31 January 2022 Skopje, North Macedonia:**

Following the commitments of the Government of North Macedonia to tackle corruption in sport, reaffirmed with the adoption of the ACIF Roadmap, UNODC in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Good Governance and the Agency on Youth and Sport organized a presentation of the Guide "Reporting mechanisms in sport". The event was attended by participants from 15 different national sports federations operating in North Macedonia, the Ambassador of Romania, Deputy Prime Minister of North Macedonia, and Director of the Agency for Youth and Sport. The primary goal of the Guide, prepared jointly by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and UNODC, is to support the national sports federations and a broader range of stakeholders, such as athletes' unions, sports clubs, sponsors, government officials, and regulatory agencies, in developing reporting mechanisms to support the integrity of and to fight corruption in sport. The Guide stems from the efforts to fight competition manipulation with a wider perspective in providing guidance for operating effective reporting mechanisms of wrongdoing in sport. The translation of the publication into the local languages and the organization of the event, were made possible with the contribution of Romania in support of the ACIF Roadmap implementation in North Macedonia. On **9 March, in Skopje, North Macedonia**, following the presentation of the Guide "Reporting mechanisms in sport", UNODC met with the Deputy Prime Minister for Good Governance of North Macedonia to update the Deputy Prime Minister on continuing and planned UNODC activity in North Macedonia, particularly in the fields of anti-corruption through the Regional ACIF Roadmap, asset recovery, countering trafficking in persons and the financing of

Country	Number of Authorities
<b>A</b>	
Albania	2 authorities
Argentina	1 authority
Austria	1 authority
Azerbaijan	1 authority
<b>B</b>	
Belarus	1 authority
Brazil	2 authorities
Bulgaria	2 authorities
<b>E</b>	
Ecuador	
Egypt	
El Salvador	
<b>F</b>	
Fiji	
<b>I</b>	
Indonesia	
Iraq	1 authority

cross-border corruption offences and recover stolen assets. Founded in 2021, the GlobE Network is open to anti-corruption law enforcement authorities in all UN Member States and UNCAC States parties.

## UNODC supports Montenegro and Serbia in the development of tools on international cooperation for asset recovery

On **4 February 2022** in **Podgorica, Montenegro**, and on **28 February** in **Belgrade, Serbia**, UNODC organized workshops to support the practitioners in Montenegro and Serbia in addressing the challenges related to the mutual legal assistance by developing a Guide on International cooperation for asset recovery, as a tool to support the process of obtaining evidence abroad or seize proceeds and instrumentalities of crime internationally. The workshop gathered representatives from relevant institutions such as the Special State Prosecutor's Office, Supreme court, Ministry of Justice, Financial Intelligence Unit, Police and Centre for Training in Judiciary and State Prosecution Service in Montenegro, and the Public Prosecutor's Office, Supreme court of Cassation, Organized Crime Prosecutor's Office, the Financial Investigation Unit of the Ministry of Interior and the Judicial Academy in Serbia. Both events in Montenegro and Serbia provided an opportunity to identify the challenges in the application of the legal framework on asset recovery, present the draft structure of the guide, as well as discuss the outstanding contested legal questions regarding the process of

## UNODC supports North Macedonia in the implementation of the Strategy for Financial Investigations and Confiscation of Assets

**21 March, Skopje, North Macedonia:** UNODC participated in the first official meeting of the National Commission for monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy for Financial Investigations and Confiscation of Assets, attended by members of the National Commission from the relevant institutions of North Macedonia, with the presence of the



Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Good Governance Policies. The meeting assessed the current state of implementation of the National Strategy and defined the next steps and activities in implementing this strategic document. The entire process requires strong involvement and mobilization from all competent institutions to ensure efficient

## ANTI-CORRUPTION/ASSET RECOVERY

terrorism and took this opportunity to thank the Government for the support to the UNODC RP SEE. The Deputy Prime Minister and UNODC explored the possibility to develop action plans for the Sporting Federations of North Macedonia regarding improved reporting mechanisms in their respective federations. The action plans would guide activity to eradicate corrupt practice in the game and facilitate a monitoring and evaluation tool for central government. In addition, the counterparts discussed cooperation in jointly addressing the topics of organized crime and corruption with high school students to ascertain youth perceptions on these topics and see how a coordinated response could serve as a means to address any of their concerns while also planting a seed of integrity and ethics for future generations.

### UNODC continues dialogue on Asset Recovery Roadmap for Kosovo (1)

**26 January 2022, Pristina, Kosovo(1):** UNODC organized a working meeting with local authorities to develop a roadmap of programmatic interventions toward enhancing asset recovery capabilities. Representatives from the Special Prosecutor's Office, Coordinator for Economic Crime Enforcement, Kosovo Police, Ministry of Justice, Financial Intelligence Unit, and Kosovo Asset Management Agency (AMSCA) were convened the meeting to discuss the government priorities in this area, including accessing and developing databases relevant to illicit finance investigations, challenges in implementing legal frameworks, the need for

the development of relevant technical assistance tools, and potentially establishing an asset recovery office. On **8 March 2022, in Pristina, Kosovo(1):** UNODC hosted a follow-up working meeting with the relevant authorities to finalize the development of a roadmap of programmatic interventions concerning enhancing the asset recovery capabilities in Kosovo(1). The meeting hosted representatives of the Special Prosecutor's Office, Coordinator for Economic Crime Enforcement, Kosovo Police, Ministry of Justice, and Kosovo Asset Management Agency (AMSCA). The discussion focused on the government priorities in this area, specialized training and capacity building needs, information management, challenges and opportunities of the legislative framework and the potential need to further establish a Confiscation Fund and an Asset Recovery Office. Accordingly, UNODC briefed the counterparts on the aims and goals of the project "From Illicit Financial Flows to Asset Recovery", focusing on the development of a roadmap – a plan of activities for Kosovo(1) which would define actions on how to tackle and overcome the identified existing challenges towards an effective implementation of the asset recovery process in this jurisdiction. The development of this document would include contributions from the relevant authorities, ensuring that their needs and priorities are recognized and buy-in guaranteed. Further donor coordination and risk assessments were also a part of the joint discussion.

(1) All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of the United

Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

### UNODC and Bosnia and Herzegovina join efforts in promoting relevant UNODC anti-corruption knowledge products

**11 March 2022, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Building on a study visit by the delegation of APIK of Bosnia and Herzegovina to UNODC Headquarters in November 2021, UNODC supported the national authorities by providing a translation into the official languages of the relevant UNODC knowledge products: a Practical Guide on Anti-Corruption Ethics and Compliance Programme for Business; a Guide on Conducting Corruption Risk Assessment in Public Organizations; Building Public Support for Anti-Corruption Efforts: Why- Anti-Corruption Agencies need to communicate and how; and A Resource Guide on Good Practices in the Investigation of Match Fixing. As these UNODC-produced guidelines are becoming accessible in official languages in Bosnia and Herzegovina, APIK made significant efforts to ensure that they are widely known and used. Accordingly, the Practical Guide on Anti-Corruption Ethics for Businesses has been officially shared and distributed to the country's chambers of commerce, relevant government institutions, and business associations. In addition, APIK has formed a team of practitioners that will analyze and prepare recommendations for all relevant bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina to act in accordance with the UNODC guidelines. *(For info on all of the above: Aleksandar Dordevic and Jasna Pekic)*

## 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

[EU-UNODC joint action newsletter here](#)

## ORGANIZED CRIME

### UNODC supports development of the next Strategy against Organized Crime in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**16-17 March 2022, Bjelasnica, Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Upon the request of the country's authorities, UNODC participated in the second meeting of the Working Group for the Development of the new Strategy for the Fight against Organized Crime in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a key counterpart. UNODC kicked off the substantive country-level engagement with the Working Group, which gathers representatives of 14 relevant



institutions. This cooperation results from the productive dialogue between UNODC and authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated in the framework of the UNODC Global Programme for the Implementation of the Organized Crime Convention with the support of UNODC RP SEE. It follows the participation of representatives of Bosnia

and Herzegovina in the Regional Multi-stakeholder Event on Strategies to Prevent and Combat Organized Crime, held in Skopje in December 2021. The event was the first step in the regional dissemination of the *Organized Crime Strategy Toolkit for Developing High-Impact Strategies*, the main vehicle for delivering technical assistance in this ambit. UNODC shared the key principles and approaches highlighted in the Toolkit, including the "4Ps" (Prevent, Protect, Pursue, Promote) framework, which was subsequently accepted by the members of the Working Group as the guiding structure for the new Strategy. The meeting offered an opportunity to identify the most pressing threats and challenges the country faces in preventing and combatting organized crime. Participants also discussed the key recommended areas of action to address these, which will be reflected in the Strategy, together with the key outcomes of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA).

### UNODC attended the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) Support Group Meeting

On **19-20 March 2022**, UNODC attended the IISG Support Group meeting in **Vlora**,

**Albania**, alongside international colleagues, including Austria, Slovenia, the UK, Italian Guardia Di Finanza, German GIZ, Frontex, European Commission DG NEAR, and



regional partners, to discuss topics for presentation to the 6<sup>th</sup> IISG Board planned for May 2022, including the summary of the needs mapping report, collecting and analyzing information for the response mapping report and the IISG database, preparation of the IISG annual report and the 2022 annual work plan. UNODC expressed support for the IISG mandate across all three pillars: Organized Crime, Border Security, and Counter Terrorism, stressing the importance of coordinated contribution to the process by both regional partners and international community. (For info on the above: Bill Wood)

## FIREARMS CONTROL

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 a second Expert Group Meeting on development of Guidelines on investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking cases and Global Digest on Firearms Cases

**11-14 January 2022, Vienna, Austria:** The UNODC Global Firearms Programme (GFP) held a second Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the development of Guidelines on investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking cases (*Guidelines*). The second EGM was held in a hybrid format and gathered more than 50 criminal justice practitioners from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Western Balkans, as

well as members of the international community from Canada, France, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, and the UK, as well as representatives of FRONTEX and INTERPOL. Pursuant to the first EGM, UNODC GFP developed a draft text of the Guidelines along with the structure of the Global Digest of Firearms Cases (Digest) that has been simultaneously developed while considering the adjudication stage as an integral part of the criminal proceedings. UNODC had an opportunity to present and discuss these two complementary documents with the criminal justice practitioners during the EGM. The main outcomes of the event were the valuable inputs obtained from the



meeting participants, alongside the written inputs and case examples related to investigation, prosecution and adjudication of illicit firearms trafficking and firearms-related offences on the global level.

## UNODC hosted a debriefing meeting on operation Tara 2021

**8-9 February 2022, Budva, Montenegro:** UNODC GFP, in cooperation with the UNODC -WCO Container Control Programme (CCP), supported the organization of a debriefing meeting between the Customs authorities of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina on the implementation of operation Tara 2021, focused on the detection of illicit firearms and other prohibited goods at land border crossings between Bosnia and Herzegovina



and Montenegro. As a result of an exchange of information, a large number of drugs (150 packages – with ca. 150 kg of marijuana-like substance) was seized in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with three rifles, various ammunition, and explosives. The primary goal of the debriefing was to discuss the lessons learned and plan future joint operations based on the experience gathered so far. Officials from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro presented and analyzed the results of the operation and reviewed the existing coordination mechanism. Additionally, they discussed the need to further develop bilateral cooperation by organizing joint activities and establishing closer communication between the institutions.

## UNODC supports Bosnia and Herzegovina in the harmonization of criminal law with the UN Firearms Protocol and UNTOC Review Mechanism

**25 January 2022, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina:** UNODC GFP held a workshop on the Criminal Code harmonization with UN Firearms Protocol and the participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the UNODC's Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the Protocols thereto. The event brought together representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Security, Prosecutor's Office, and the judiciary. UNODC GFP presented the gap analysis on the implementation of the UN Firearms Protocol in the domestic criminal

legislation. The analysis included the relevant provisions of firearms offenses in four Criminal Codes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The subsequent discussions focused on the recommendations for harmonizing the Criminal Code at the state level with the criminalization provisions of the UN Firearms Protocol. As a result, the Ministry of Justice has agreed to forward UNODC's recommendations to the working group for review and amendment of the Criminal Code at the state level. Furthermore, UNODC presented the multi-year workplan, the rules of the Review Mechanism, and the functioning of the dedicated online module (REVMOD), which is used for online collaboration between reviewers and reviewed countries. Accordingly, UNODC organized a mock review of UNTOC and its Protocols for Bosnia and Herzegovina and provided the country's Focal Point with updated information about the procedures of the Review Mechanism and the next steps in the process.

## UNODC supports Montenegro and North Macedonia in the collection of electronic evidence in firearms investigations

**22-24 March 2022, Podgorica, Montenegro; 29-31 March 2022, Skopje, North Macedonia:** UNODC GFP initiated a series of training events in SEE to support prosecutors, law enforcement, and customs officials with investigative powers in collecting relevant and admissible electronic evidence to support firearms related investigations. The training was based on UNODC's Practical Guide on Collecting Electronic Evidence Across Borders, which



has been translated and shared with the criminal justice practitioners from the region. The events included practical exercises, a case study, and drafting requests to Internet Service Providers (ISP) for obtaining electronic evidence from social networks, communication applications, and electronic mail. Officials from relevant law enforcement units and prosecutors' offices

acquired knowledge on characteristics of e-evidence, digital forensics, cybercrime, new trends, and challenges in handling e-evidence. The practical part of the training focused on using the UNODC's Guide for Requesting E-evidence Across Borders. In the exercises, experts also used existing legal procedures and received information about the contact points that can assist practitioners in requesting and producing the e-evidence needed for trial. The issues related to data protection laws, mutual legal assistance (MLA) procedures, and admissibility of e-evidence were elaborated on and considered through the prism of international human rights standards. The experts were further familiarized with UNODC's Model Forms for interaction with internet service providers, various communication apps and social networks. Model Forms were highlighted to file an emergency disclosure request, preservation request, and MLA request, and practical advice for successful and timely drafting was provided. The criminal justice practitioners have practiced their skills by using the UNODC GFP case study involving sub-regional illicit firearms trafficking and its resolution through a gathering of admissible e-evidence from social networks. They had an opportunity to effectively apply newly acquired knowledge on the subject matter.

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

**18 February 2022, Skopje, North Macedonia:** UNODC GFP held a training on the identification and tracing of firearms for 22 prosecutors representing Prosecutor's Offices from four appellate areas in North Macedonia, which provided hands-on experience on various types of firearms and their components, including pistols,



# FIREARMS CONTROL

carabines, shotguns, sub-machine guns, and assault rifles. The training focused on using this information in the investigations of illicit firearms trafficking and possible links to organized crime. As a result of the workshop, the participants enhanced their knowledge of conducting investigations and prosecuting firearms trafficking cases by understanding how firearms identification and tracing contribute to solving cases with international elements.

## **UNODC supports Bosnia and Herzegovina in countering illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts, and ammunition through analysis of X-ray images**

UNODC hosted workshops on risk indicators for firearms detection for Customs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the three public postal service providers in the country. On **8 February in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNODC organized the training on analysis of x-ray images to detect illicit trafficking and illicit manufacturing of firearms, their parts, components, and ammunition. The objective was to develop knowledge on the interpretation of x-ray images to identify illicit objects in fast and postal parcels. UNODC GFP also used a specialized computer-based module on the identification of threats in postal and fast parcels in the training. The module allows operators in the course of one year to train regularly and improve their skills in identifying illicit threats. The innovative part of the training was the inclusion of the topic on countering of illicit manufacturing of ammunition. UNODC GFP taught the trainees about the modus operandi for trafficking of machines for ammunition production and the tools required for the production of ammunition. Due to the similarity of the objects used in ammunition manufacture, detecting this illicit activity is challenging. Their identification requires specific training on their shape and functions. UNODC's collection of images on this topic and its inclusion in the training course has improved the operators' skills to prevent this crime. A substantial part of the training was devoted to the identification of

weapon parts such as barrels, slides, magazines, scopes, and firearms frames. These objects are very difficult to identify without specific training on recognizing their shape, composition, and analysis of x-ray images under different angles.



On **24-25 March in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNODC hosted a workshop for officials from Hrvatska Posta Mostar, BH Posta, Srpske Poste and Customs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The training comprised theoretical modules and practical exercises and focused on the existing legal framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the international regulations related to the security of postal traffic, and the standards for postal security. A detailed analysis of prohibited goods' regulations and their classifications in the country was also provided. Additionally, the training included a module on the identification of firearms, their parts, components, and ammunition, their marking and applicable laws in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The training also included practical exercises on developing risk-profiles against sets of data.

## **UNODC supports Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia on the Illicit Arms Flows Monitoring Initiative**

On **26 January in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**, and on **15 February in Skopje, North Macedonia**, UNODC organized workshops to support the participation of local institutions in the UNODC's Illicit Arms Flows Monitoring Initiative through regular collection and sharing of consolidated criminal justice data on firearms. The events provided an opportunity to assess Bosnia and Herzegovina's and North Macedonia's institutions' capacity to develop comparable data sets on firearms that foster data sharing among countries for more effective investigations and operational use. The participants reviewed the UNODC's illicit arms flows questionnaire and identified the data that can be collected and shared annually. The workshops also allowed to review the practices in collecting criminal justice data and contributed towards identifying gaps and formulation of recommendations on how to improve them to ensure regular participation of both

jurisdictions in UNODC's Illicit Arms Flows Monitoring Initiative through the submission of high quality of data. This activity supports Goal 2 of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap: "By 2024, ensure that arms control policies and practices in the Western Balkans are evidence based and intelligence led", and specifically the Target "Institutionalize systematic collection of criminal justice data across the Criminal



Justice Sector (at the level of Police and Customs, Prosecutor's office, Court Service, Correctional and Penitentiary Services)". It also supports the Target "Ensure full implementation and monitoring of legal, policy and procedural framework on trafficking of FAE" under Goal 3 "By 2024, significantly reduce illicit flows of firearms, ammunition and explosives (FAE) into, within and beyond the Western Balkans".

## **UNODC held a meeting on firearms data collection in Serbia**

**22 February 2022, Belgrade, Serbia:** UNODC held a meeting on firearms data collection in Serbia to collect information on data collection practices in order to provide a baseline assessment and give recommendations to ensure regular submission of high-quality information to the UNODC's Illicit Arms Flow Initiative. Representatives from the Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecutor's Office engaged in data collection and reporting to UNODC's Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire (IAFQ) attended the meeting. The statistical capacities of the local institutions were assessed, in terms of qualitative and quantitative firearms-related data that is being collected, which was compared with the requirements needed to fill-in the IAFQ. In addition, a session was dedicated to joint consideration of the IAFQ and its chapters. In the upcoming period, UNODC GFP will draft a baseline assessment and provide recommendations to the local authorities, with an aim to improve the collection of firearms-related data in Serbia and the region. *(For more info on all of the above: Dimitirje Ristic, Kiro Cvetkov)*

# ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING/COUNTER-FINANCING OF TERRORISM

## UNODC trained Bosnia and Herzegovina officials on reducing the risks from the abuse of Money or Value Transfer Services (MVTS)

**January 2022, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The UNODC Global Programme against Money Laundering (GPML), jointly with the UNODC RP SEE, conducted a training course on building capacities of the competent authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in reducing the risks from the abuse of Money or Value Transfer Services (MVTS) as part of efforts in countering money laundering and the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT). The AML/CFT experts received training and discussed issues including the importance of MVTS as related to migrant remittances and fragile economies; the abuse of MVTS by transnational organized crime, terrorist

networks, and corrupt officials; sensitive investigation techniques; forensics strategies and evidence handling; and the challenges of prosecuting crimes across different legal systems. Tackling illicit financial flows and money laundering is a core element of the overall effort to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and more widely in SEE. Accordingly, UNODC works on building networks between countries and regions on investigations of financial crimes. This course was implemented with the financial support of the Government of Norway.

### Trainers from Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia learnt new techniques on investigating terrorist financing

**February-March 2022, Vienna, Austria:** UNODC, jointly with OSCE, organized two the train-the-trainer basic and enhanced investigation courses on countering CFT as part of the multi-annual training programme focused on strengthening Bosnia and Herzegovina's and North Macedonia's capacity in this field. The course was the third in the series of courses for both countries as part of sustained efforts by UNODC and OSCE to build the training

capability of the countries to better counter the financing of terrorism. A total of 16 seasoned trainers representing 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 along with representatives from North Macedonia's Ministries of Defense, Finance, Interior and, Justice, the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption, Customs, and the Intelligence Agency took part in the training course and enhanced their knowledge on the legislative aspects of financial crime and their respective mandates, powers, and authorities to investigate financial crimes. The participants also learned how to plan and conduct an AML/CFT investigation based on current good practices and methodologies. Additionally, the coursework focused on the importance of inter-agency coordination, as well as regional and international cooperation, when investigating AML/CFT cases. The trainers learned methods and practical skills which they take back into their workplaces to employ and share in their next courses. *(For info: Oliver Gadney)*



## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

### UNODC supports the region in financial investigations and asset recovery for trafficking in persons (TIP)

**2-3 March 2022, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina:** UNODC, in collaboration with the National Coordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration of Bosnia and Herzegovina and with support and funding from the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs in France organized a regional expert group meeting (REGM) on financial investigations and asset recovery for trafficking in persons, including compensation on victims in SEE. The

purpose of the REGM was to advance the discussion on trends and patterns of human trafficking in SEE and to identify and analyze challenges related to financial investigations, asset recovery, including compensation of victims, in human trafficking cases, particularly with a cross-border element. Additionally, the event served as a platform to discuss the international obligations, conceptual approaches, and policy responses to human trafficking and to exchange on good practices and challenges to address it. Over 50 of criminal justice practitioners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Kosovo (1) took part in the meeting along with representatives from regional and international organizations, CSOs, private sector, and academia. Accordingly, the role and perspectives of financial investigations, illicit financial flows, and asset recovery in cross-border combating of human trafficking and

organized crime were presented and illustrated with examples of good practices and challenges in these areas. The participating international organizations and CSOs shared their perspectives on these topics. As a result of the meeting, a set of concrete actions was provided for a future engagement at the regional/sub-regional or bilateral level, including with international organizations, to tackle the issue of human trafficking.

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

### UNODC coordinated upcoming activities on countering trafficking in persons with mentor countries' focal points

**8 March 2022, online:** UNODC held a meeting with the designated focal points of Belgium and France as mentor countries to discuss future cooperation within the regional project UN.Locking Impunity of



# HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Southeastern Europe (2021-2024) aimed to foster victim-centered and trauma-informed investigations and prosecutions of TIP in SEE. UNODC provided an overview of the current state of play and plans for the upcoming activities in all five beneficiary jurisdictions. The regional component of the project was particularly discussed, with the focal points presenting the Belgian and French perspectives on the first steps toward further implementation. In partnership with the Belgian and French specialized anti-TIP judges, prosecutors, law enforcement, and magistrate liaisons based in SEE, UNODC will seek to identify, with precision, the gaps and weaknesses in the TIP response in the addressed jurisdictions (Albania, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia). The Belgian and French practitioners will also transmit their experience and good practices in successfully engaging in international cooperation to dismantle organized criminal groups that commit cross-border TIP, acquired through regular joint investigations or coordinating bodies. The approach of the project will be aligned with the objectives of the UNTOC and its Trafficking in Persons Protocol, in particular with regard to the prosecution of offenders and the protection of victims, but also promoting international cooperation against TIP. During the meeting, UNODC provided an overview of the current state of play and plans for the upcoming activities in all five beneficiary jurisdictions. The regional component of the project was particularly discussed, where the focal points presented the Belgian and French views on the preliminary steps forward in further implementation. Accordingly, the mentor countries confirmed their interest to participate and provided substantive support in the upcoming national expert

discussions with participants representing the relevant stakeholders (both from Government and civil society), which will serve as a platform to review the findings of the national reviews and analyses of TIP cases (to be developed by the engaged experts, under the substantive guidance of UNODC), as well as to adopt conclusions and develop recommendations for proactive solutions to remedy gaps and challenges. The project is implemented by the UNODC with the financial support of the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

## Securing Evidence: The Key to Convictions for Human Trafficking

**18-20 January 2022, Belgrade, Serbia:** UNODC, in cooperation with the Police Cooperation Convention for South Eastern Europe Secretariat (PCC SEE) and through funding from the Austrian Ministry of European and International Affairs, organized an event for police officers and criminal investigators from eleven European countries. They were trained on how to collect, manage, and analyze evidence from cases of human trafficking that could lead to convictions of the perpetrators. A further aim was to improve cooperation between countries during investigations and criminal proceedings of trafficking cases. Currently, the global trend within the criminal justice system is to rely heavily on verbal or written statements from the victims involved. A witness statement can be a powerful piece of evidence, but such a testimony can change over time or be inconsistent. This can weaken the evidence base for a case. People who have been trafficked are victims of serious trauma. They have been through a painful experience, and being interviewed repeatedly to provide a statement could actually lead to secondary victimization.

Investigators and police officers should be looking for other forms of evidence too, and this is one of the main messages of this workshop. We are focusing on how to ensure that physical evidence is legally obtained and handled in a way that makes it admissible in court. Physical evidence includes fingerprints that can be analyzed for DNA and items such as money and mobile phones found in possession of the suspects or at a crime scene. During the event, the participants also learned about the importance of digital evidence in financial investigations that could lead to the ringleaders of a criminal network, as well as evidence that can be obtained from social media networks and private companies. The countries of SEE, predominantly Romania, Bulgaria, and Serbia, are among the main origins for victims of human trafficking in Austria, where they are exploited in the construction, agriculture, and catering sectors, or forced into prostitution or begging. This can be explained by a number of vulnerabilities faced by the region, which are exploited by the human trafficking groups. Manfred Buchner from the Austrian organization MEN-VIA that supports men who have been affected by human trafficking also attended the event and acknowledged the need for such activities to make male victims more visible and build networks with other countries. He also shared an example of a successful conviction in a case of labour exploitation against the owner of a construction company in the west of Austria where the victims were able to receive compensation. The three-day event was organized by UNODC in cooperation with the PCC SEE and through funding from the Austrian Ministry of European and International Affairs. *(For info on all of the above: Davor Raus)*

# DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION

## UNODC successfully implemented the Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence programme in Croatia

**21-26 February, Dubrovnik-Neretva County, Croatia:** UNODC, in partnership with the Lions Quest International Foundation (LCIF), the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education, and with the technical support of the Croatian Agency for Education and Training, finalized the first phase of the implementation of the Lions

Quest Skills for Adolescence Programme (LQSFA) in Croatia. During this phase, a total of 92 professionals from 41 middle schools surrounding the cities of Osijek, Zagreb, Rijeka, Zadar and Split were trained in 2019 while the programme was fully implemented and finalized in December 2021 in 35 primary schools with 64 classrooms reaching a total of 1,201 students. The LQSFA programme is an evidence-based youth intervention based on the



# DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION

methodological approach of developing social and emotional competences with students as a foundation to establish relevant practices that prevent and delay the onset of drug use. Based on the positive feedback in implementing LQSFA in Croatia, the Public Health Institute of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County recognized the value of the programme and expressed interest in implementing the programme in the primary schools of the county. Following this request, UNODC and LCIF continued the implementation of the programme in Croatia by initiating phase two of the LQSFA programme with the organization of trainings for 130 teachers in the cities of Dubrovnik and Metkovic in Dubrovnik-Neretva County, in February 2022. The teachers were trained on the programme material and effective facilitation skills for the implementation of LQSFA Programme. The implementation of the programme started in March 2022 and will last for two school years. The LQSFA programme was initially launched in SEE in 2014 and gradually expanded to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Croatia reaching more than 7700 students in over 180 elementary schools

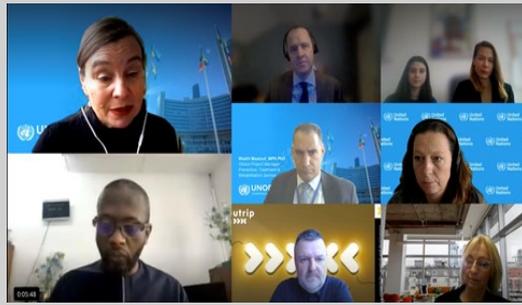


across the region. Following a strict evidence-based implementation modality, the programme proved to be effective, and showed encouraging results in substance use reduction, the intention to use drugs and dissuasive effects on the engaged students on substance use in their local environment. Building on the gained experience in the region and the momentum, UNODC is looking forward to line up a new pilot of the LQSFA programme in Slovenia, starting in the second half of 2022.

## UNODC supports evidence-based approaches in drug use prevention

**15 March 2022, online:** On the occasion of

the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), UNODC co-organized two side events on drug use prevention. The



first event focused on social skills programmes in the context of COVID19, and lessons learned through the pandemic were organized in collaboration with LCIF. The meeting presented field experiences and lessons learned from piloting LQSFA programme in Croatia and Côte d'Ivoire with different experiences of implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the latest updates on efforts to early prevention in Slovenia. Special attention was paid to Croatia, which managed to implement the programme and generate data from students benefiting from the package. On this occasion, Margarita, a 14-year-old student from a school in Dubrovnik, Croatia, who benefitted from the programme shared her experience saying that *"LQSFA has definitely been a tremendous help (...) it helped me a lot in staying calm and dealing with stressful situations as part of our daily routine. It helped me a lot during the coronavirus outbreak when life changed so suddenly. I have found confidence and self-respect. I have learned how to stand up to others, to their prejudice and their standards. It's still isn't easy but it will never be, so I am glad that I have learned how to set my goals and adjust my own standards depending on the situation."* The LQSFA provides professional development training for teachers using social and emotional learning research-based strategies. The package is adapted to local conditions and engages parents, schools, and communities, resulting in positive outcomes such as bullying reduction, increased student connectedness to school, conflict resolution prioritization over aggression, and, last but not least, lower rates of substance use and truancy. This is even more valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic when the challenges for prevention have increased unprecedentedly. The UNODC-LCIF's collaboration on implementing the social and emotional

approach in the school curriculum has been already established across 9 countries in SEE, Central America, and West Africa. The joint activity is part of the UNODC's ongoing global initiative promoting evidence-based prevention programmes in line with the UNODC/WHO international standards on drug use prevention focusing on low and middle-income countries. The second side event on **15 March 2022**, UNODC supported together with Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Serbia, the Institute for Research and Development "Utrip" an online side event organized by the Government of Slovenia, aiming at shifting the paradigm in the prevention of negative health and social outcomes of drug use with a special focus on prevention in early stages of child's development. During the event, participants discussed new perspectives on prevention that have emerged with substantial developments in prevention science and after the publication of UNODC-WHO



"International Standards on Drug Use Prevention". Lessons learned and the most recent updates on programmes and actions aimed at reducing drug demand that have been implemented in collaboration with UNODC were shared by panelists. Speakers agreed that it is crucial to implement programmes that help children and youth to build their cognitive, emotional, social and behavioural competency skills at all stages of their development, including infancy or even the pre-natal period. Organizations and agencies working towards the well-being of children, youth and young adults have at their disposal tools for adequate primary prevention responses described in the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention jointly published by UNODC and WHO. Evidence-based prevention interventions may contribute to child's and youth's positive development and save health, social and crime costs in the future. (For info on all of the above: Zana Glaven-dekic)