



**UNODC**  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



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**AIRCOP**



## EU AND UNODC JOINT ACTION PROMOTING RULE OF LAW AND GOOD GOVERNANCE THROUGH TARGETED BORDER CONTROL MEASURES AT PORTS AND AIRPORTS

**NEWSLETTER January—March 2022**

UNODC continues its partnership with the EU through the launch of a **new initiative** aimed at fighting organized crime, by supporting more effective and coordinated responses to illicit trafficking at seaports, land border crossings and international airports in the Western Balkans.

In January 2020, under the framework of the **Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe (RP SEE) 2020-2023**, UNODC successfully initiated this EU-UNODC joint action promoting rule of law and good governance through targeted border control measures at ports and airports in South Eastern Europe. The action is implemented by the **UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme (CCP)** and the **UNODC-WCO-INTERPOL Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP)** in cooperation with the **RP SEE**

and is carried out in:

- ◆ **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (land border crossings Bijača and Gradiška and Sarajevo International Airport)
- ◆ **Montenegro** (port of Bar)
- ◆ **North Macedonia** (Skopje International Airport)
- ◆ **Serbia** (Belgrade International Airport)
- ◆ **Kosovo**<sup>1\*</sup> (boundary crossing Vermicë/Vrbnica).

The UNODC-WCO CCP's mission is to build capacity in countries/jurisdictions seeking to improve risk management, supply chain security and trade facilitation in seaports, airports and land border crossings in order to prevent the cross-border movement of illicit goods. CCP has been operating in South Eastern Europe since 2013 with Port Control Units (PCUs) established in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo.

AIRCOP initiated its activities in the region in early 2020 along with the action. It applies passenger controls to supporting airports in tackling multiple threats, including all types of illicit drugs, illicit goods (such as wildlife, counterfeit medicines, weapons and others), as well as terrorism and trafficking in persons among others.

With these two complementary components, the action's **objectives** are:

- (i) to support more effective national and international responses to illicit trafficking through strengthening the current PCUs in the region and establishing new units, and;
- (ii) to strengthen the capacities of law enforcement agencies active at the mentioned international airports to detect and intercept high risk passengers in an effort to counter transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking and prevent terrorism.

<sup>1</sup> All references to Kosovo should be understood in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

\* For the EU, this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

The action supports the implementation of **synergies** between law enforcement actors **the UN Conventions** on drugs and crime at the national, regional and international levels and builds **bridges between various thematic areas, as well as between the Western Balkans and other regions**, improving the security situation in **the Western Balkans and Europe as a whole**. While the action is not directly assisting the Albanian authorities, the **work in Albania** in this field is ongoing and is supported by other sources.

The activities presented below contribute to **SDG 16, particularly SDG 16.a** on strengthening relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime. **Starting with this quarter, UNODC RP SEE has introduced the SDG marker to its activities.**

## UNODC MEETS WITH THE AUTHORITIES IN SERBIA TO ADVANCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTER-AGENCY GROUP AT THE BELGRADE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

**25-27 January 2022, Belgrade, Serbia:** UNODC held a series of meetings with senior officials from the Ministry of Interior/Border Police Directorate, Customs Administration of Serbia, as well as international stakeholders to further discuss the ongoing establishment of the AIRCOP/CCP inter-agency group at Belgrade International Airport.

The meetings with the national counterparts allowed to assess progress towards the establishment of the inter-agency group and the

outstanding actions needed for the operationalization of the group. The discussions focused on the appointments of the joint inter-agency unit officers, finalization of construction work on the premises designated for the group at the Belgrade International Airport and the appointment of a national focal point.

The Ministry of Interior representative for the Border Police Directorate briefed UNODC on significant progress in the appointment of the officers and the same dis-

cussion was held with the Customs Administration where this process is ongoing.

The construction works for the premises and further work by the police and customs to prepare the office for the inter-agency group was also discussed and are expected to materialize in March 2022.

On the occasion, UNODC met with the international partners, including OSCE, to exchange on the ongoing activities to ensure coordination of activities and possible synergies.

## UNODC HOLDS A REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON RISK-BASED APPROACH AND MINDSET AT AIRPORTS

**31 January-4 February 2022, Podgorica, Montenegro / online:** UNODC organized a regional workshop "Law Enforcement at the Airports: Risk-Based Approach and Mindset" aimed to

provide an in-depth understanding of the risk management process attended by 41 delegates representing law enforcement agencies from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. After the

COVID-19 related restrictions drastically reduced the airport traffic flows in the last two years, operations are gradually being fully resumed. To cope with the increasing number of passengers and goods

departing/transiting/arriving at the airports, UNODC is supporting the region in raising the awareness on the necessary changes in operational methodologies.

The workshop was delivered by AIRCOP and CCP experts and offered a comprehensive overview of the risk-management related concept and its application within the law enforcement sector as a driver to support the decision-making process both at strategic

and operational levels. Accordingly, the participants were extensively familiarized with the risk management process, its phases, typologies and techniques reinforced with risk management exercises.

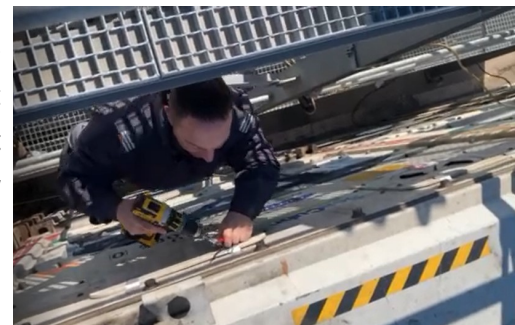


## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND MONTENEGRO SUPPORTED BY CCP WITH MONITORING AND MENTORING VISITS

**2-18 February 2022, Gradiška and Bijača, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bar, Montenegro:** CCP conducted regular monitoring visits to PCUs at the Port of Bar, Montenegro, and at the land-borders Gradiška and Bijača, Bosnia and Herzegovina to support the work of the units.

The monitoring visits and related activities provided the opportunity for the officers of the PCUs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro to discuss current state of affairs and propose particular actions for UNODC to

further support their work and challenges encountered. The monitoring visits are intended to support partner law enforcement agencies in identifying and disrupting the illicit exploration of the containerized trade supply chain.



occurring in the containerized trade supply chain.

The mentoring visit was conducted in-person by an experienced WCO technical expert and focused on aspects of detailed physical inspections and rip-off controls. Among the standard reflections of the mentoring visit, a report with proposed measures on improvement of effectiveness of the PCU will serve as a basis for future resources allocation and activities planning and implementation.



In addition, on **28 February-2 March 2022**, CCP conducted a mentoring visit to the PCU at the Port of Bar to support the PCU officers in further enhancing their personal and organizational capacities to face the challenges



## UNODC HOLDS THE 2ND STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING ON THE EU-UNODC JOINT ACTION ON ENHANCED BORDER CONTROL

**22-23 February 2022, Belgrade, Serbia / online:** UNODC held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Steering Committee meeting within the action to discuss the main developments to date and agree on the way forward.

The action's main stakeholders were convened to the event, including senior representatives from the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), EU delegations and the Government authorities in the region as well as UNODC along with WCO and INTERPOL.



UNODC opened the event and highlighted that “international commitment and cooperation is an investment in our shared vision of the future and if we have learnt anything from the pandemic it is from the numerous examples globally of how acting together we are stronger and can tackle the greatest of threats.” The UNODC Regional Representative for South Eastern Europe pursued with pointing out the challenges still faced by South Eastern Europe while underlining the

importance of national ownership in UNODC work in the region.



The Head of Sector Rule of Law, Security, Migration and Reconciliation at DG NEAR stressed in her statement that “regional cooperation is at the heart of what EU membership entails” and expressed appreciation on the strategic partnership with UNODC and the hope that the positive trend will continue and will be strengthened.

The event followed with interventions from UNODC representatives stating the importance of continuing efforts in addressing both cargo and passenger related threats while reminding on the objectives of the action. Subsequently, the Governments' authorities from the region provided a status update on activities within the action, progress and the next steps, particularly on the establishment of the joint inter-agency groups.

A special session was dedicated to gender mainstreaming, and the necessary efforts in this direction. CCP presented its Women's Network, its objectives, what is being done to

support the women working in CCP units, including raising awareness on the topic and creating tools for women to be able to exchange on the challenges they face and the need to have more gender mainstreaming activities. CCP also mentioned a study on representation of women in the Customs Administrations of the region currently conducted within the action, which is intended to collect qualitative and quantitative data on women's representation in the relevant agencies and provide tailored recommendations. Similarly, AIRCOP presented its initiatives to promote gender related policies and activities, including the “Series of Portraits” initiative which gives more visibility to women in law enforcement. The AIRCOP representative also mentioned the benefits of women being part of the inter-agency groups from an operational perspective, and an-



nounced the introduction of a mandatory training focusing on gender within the inter-agency groups to mitigate potential weaknesses caused by the lack of women in key posts.

The first day sessions concluded with the review of the workplan for 2022 and its endorsement and adoption by all the participants. This was followed by an overview of the communication and visibility activities within the action.

The second day focused on the practical elements of cooperation such as the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as well as inter-agency cooperation

illustrated with case studies presented by CCP and AIRCOP. The value of the Steering Committee meeting was also underlined through discussions among the authorities



present in the room. The action's Steering Committee is aimed at providing specific guidance and support to the action as it allows for all the stakeholders to meet and discuss key issues aimed at reviewing the progress of the action and deciding on future undertakings. In doing so, the national ownership of the governments in the region is ensured leading to greater coordination and coherence in the action implementation.

## UNODC PRESENTS THE EU-UNODC ACTION ON ENHANCED BORDER CONTROL AS BEST PRACTICES

**2-4 March 2022, Turkey / online:** UNODC took part in a regional conference on the Customs Detection Architecture for Airports (Passenger and Cargo) organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The conference aimed to discuss a variety of topics on addressing threats targeting airports and strengthening airport security. The participants discussed customs control technical devices, legislation and stan-

dards; the passenger and cargo control architecture as well as recommendations and best practices of customs detection equipment and architecture at airports.

The UNODC representatives who attended the conference presented the EU-UNODC action on enhanced border control implemented in South Eastern Europe aimed to establish inter-agency groups at airports to address threats related to passenger and

cargo and described the benefits of law enforcement cooperation in ensuring the full coverage of potential threats at the airports for a strengthened border security.

The conference continued with a presentation of practices in the airports of Zagreb and London followed by a general discussion on increasing the airport security through an enhanced cooperation among airport stakeholders.

## UNODC DELIVERED A JOINT AIRCOP-CCP REFRESHER PRACTICAL TRAINING/MENTORING FOR THE INTER-AGENCY UNIT AT SKOPJE AIRPORT

**7-11 March 2022, Skopje, North Macedonia:** CCP and AIRCOP organized a refresher practical training/mentoring for customs and police officers of the joint inter-agency group at the Skopje International Airport. The five-day refresher training/mentoring was facilitated by the experienced trainers/

experts from AIRCOP and CCP and delivered following a request from the members of the future Air Cargo Control Unit (ACCU) Skopje for more practical and hands-on training in the Air Cargo and in Air Passenger enforcement work for both customs and police officers within the inter-agency group.



Accordingly, the training focused on practical work in both Passenger and Air Freight traffic through an in-site inspection of an aircraft. As a part of the training, the customs and police officers jointly worked on a real consignment case to explore and research details related to importation, showing a great example of teamwork and collaborative data research.

where the participants undertook selection and examination of both inbound Air Freight and Fast Parcels consignments following scrutiny of the relevant airline documentation. In the process, the participants enhanced their practical knowledge of the modus operandi used by the traffickers in passenger



## UNODC DISCUSSES ENHANCED BORDER CONTROL IN ALBANIA

**9-11 March 2022, Tirana, Albania:** UNODC organized an exploratory mission to discuss the expansion of AIRCOP to the airports in Albania. Following the Albanian Government's expression of interest to participate in this initiative, UNODC organized a series of meetings with the national and international stakeholders in the country to discuss the expansion of AIRCOP activities to the airports in Albania and the necessary steps for such an expansion. The AIRCOP implementation would also play a significant role in creating potential synergies with the Passenger Information Unit (PIU), through enhancing the effectiveness of the operational response in the field and the creation of intelligence feeding into analysis and profiling processes assigned to the PIU itself. Accordingly, UNODC met with the Directors of Criminal Police, Customs and Border Police at the Tirana International Airport as well as the EU Delegation, Frontex and UK embassy to brief the counterparts on UNODC plans and ensure synergy of efforts and avoid duplication. During the mission, UNODC also visited the CCP ACCU at Tirana International Airport, which would form part of the inter-agency group with the AIRCOP Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAITF).

## UNODC AND OSCE ORGANIZED A REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON BORDER SECURITY CHALLENGES IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

**15-17 March, Ohrid, North Macedonia:** UNODC jointly with OSCE hosted a regional conference for Directors of Border Police and Customs agencies from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 as well as Greece. The conference aimed to



address current and future challenges as well

as share best practices for border security and management. Accordingly, the event helped key border security and management agencies in the region to identify effective joint responses to emerging and existing transnational threats posed by criminal networks.

UNODC experts from the Human Trafficking Migrant Smuggling Section, the Global Programme on Money Laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing as well as AIRCOP and CCP joined the conference and highlighted current UNODC engagement and commitment in the region in the framework of the UNODC Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe. In its statement, UNODC underscored that, across its mandate, the Office

seeks to improve effectiveness and develop synergies between law enforcement actors at various levels and build bridges between various thematic areas as well as between the Western Balkans and other regions, improving the security situation in the Western Balkans and Europe as a whole, in line with the UNODC promoted Inter-Regional Drug Control Approach and its “Networking the Networks” initiative.



## UNODC ATTENDS THE INTEGRATIVE INTERNAL SECURITY GOVERNANCE (IISG) SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

**19-20 March 2022, Vlorë, Albania:** UNODC attended the IISG Support Group meeting alongside international colleagues, including UK, Austria, Slovenia, Italian Guardia Di Finanza, German GIZ, Frontex and European Com-

mission DG NEAR as well as regional partners, to discuss items for presentation to the 6th IISG Board meeting planned for May.

This included the summary of the needs mapping report, the collecting / analyzing the information for the response mapping report, the collecting / insertion of data / analyzing the information for the IISG database, preparation of the annual report for the IISG Board and preparation of the annual work plan for 2022. UNODC expressed support for the IISG mandate across all three pillars namely: Organised Crime, Border Security

and Counter Terrorism stressing the importance of coordinated contribution to the process by both regional partners and international community in order to best realise the advantages and benefits that the IISG database will ultimately present to all. The IISG support group members fully supported the work done from IISG and assured to be more active on the future IISG activities. The meeting served as an excellent basis for the regional and international partners to meet and have a joint discussion on all items on the agenda.



## UNODC FURTHER SUPPORTS STRATEGIC TRADE AND EXPORT CONTROL TRAINING IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND MONTENEGRO

**14-18 March 2022, Konjic, Bosnia and Herzegovina; 21-25 March 2022, Podgorica, Montenegro:** CCP continued the delivery of the Strategic Trade and Export Control Training (STECT) for frontline officers of the PCU at the land border

crossing Bijača in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ACCU at the Sarajevo International airport and the Port of Bar in Montenegro. STECT is an intense training that explores the risk of non-state actors exploiting the containerized supply chain, as is often seen with

drugs and other illicit commodities, to traffic or deliver weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or their component parts, comprising chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) materials.

As part of the integral CCP training cycle for PCUs participating in the programme, STECT contributes to exploring the relationship between effective profiling of containers and its implications for the economy, while building the capacity of PCUs to detect illicit trade within the containerized supply chain through



the detailed examination of pre-arrival information.

The training in Konjic aimed to enhance the skills and expertise of PCU and ACCU officers on strategic and dual-use export control policy, issues and challenges. Additionally, discussions and practical exercises further deepened the knowledge of the participants on export controls and non-proliferation for the application of their knowledge and skills in their daily work.

The training in Bar constituted the second phase of the STEC course for the PCU officers and focused on the cohesive mechanism to



prevent, combat and eradicate illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms, missile, chemical and biological weapons, their parts and components and ammunition (firearms). Furthermore, fraud patterns and risk indicators and behavior analysis techniques and observations were also explored.

## UNODC DELIVERED A BASIC PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR AIR CARGO CONTROL UNIT AT SARAJEVO AIRPORT

**31 March-1 April 2022, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina:** CCP organized a five-day Basic Practical Training for the customs and police officers of the ACCU unit at the Sarajevo International Airport.



The on-site interactive training covered areas of risk profiling and risk management, while

practical inspections of Air Freight and Fast Parcels enhanced the participants' knowledge on current modus operandi used by individuals and groups engaged in criminal and smuggling activities through air freight operations.

During the training, the ACCU officers conducted several inspections of the inbound air freight as well as parcels coming through the fast courier services that are operational in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The team of the WCO trainers/experts also discussed the topics of insider threats and airport safety and security, sharing updates on important information in these areas.

Throughout the training, ACCU officers assigned by the Indirect Taxation Authority and Border Police of Bosnia and Herzegovina took part in collaborative exercises and demonstrated a high level of cooperation and



engagement through joint work, information sharing and teamwork.