

UNODC in South Eastern Europe

NEWSLETTER | Vol. 39

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

North Macedonia and UNODC discuss results of anti-corruption and border control cooperation

15 September 2021, Vienna, Austria: The UNODC Executive Director met the delegation of North Macedonia led by the



Deputy Prime Minister for Fight against Corruption, Sustainable Development and Human Resources to discuss cooperation within the UNODC Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe (RP SEE) with special focus on border control and anti-corruption. The Deputy Prime Minister presented the country's vision and efforts in the fight against corruption and related areas, including the recently adopted National Strategy for Strengthening of the Capacities of Financial Investigations and Confiscation

of Illegally Acquired Assets 2021-2023, investments in the digital reform and updated legislative tools. The Executive Director pledged UNODC's support to North Macedonia in the framework of the UNODC RP SEE, which has further intensified in recent years and highlighted the importance of the rule of law and security in the region. Accordingly, the parties discussed the *Regional Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance Roadmap* for the Western Balkans adopted at the Ministerial level in Ohrid, North Macedonia in June 2021 by the six Western Balkans jurisdictions and is aimed to fast-track the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), GRECO evaluations, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations and EU Directives on Anti-money laundering and public procurement. The counterparts underlined the importance of furthering the existing excellent cooperation in a number of fields, particularly strengthening border security, fight against organized crime as well as countering illicit financial flows and firearms control. The UNODC Executive Director further welcomed North Macedonia's recent membership of the UNODC Blue Heart campaign and referred to

the UNODC's engagement with the Governments of the region on the topic of



criminal justice response to trafficking in persons. The parties have further discussed the progress and planned steps under the joint EU-UNODC action on promoting rule of law and good governance through targeted border control measures at ports and airports, including the signed in January 2021 Letter of Agreement and the upcoming establishment of the airport inter-agency group at the Skopje International Airport composed of Air Cargo Control Unit (ACCU) and a Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAITF). The joint action supports more effective and coordinated responses to illicit trafficking and represents a step forward in the fight against cross-border movement of illicit goods and organized crime.

UNODC supports Bosnia and Herzegovina in addressing violence against children

3, 6 and 10 September 2021, Bosnia and Herzegovina / online: UNODC organized a series of three webinars on “Ensuring *Child-Sensitive Communication and Appropriate Approaches for Child Victims*”, targeting professionals and practitioners across Bosnia and Herzegovina who are in contact with child victims in order to strengthen their capacity to deal with cases involving sexual violence against children more effectively, focusing in particular on approaches, effective practices and concrete steps to protect better these children. Over 30 participants attended the webinars which tackled the topic of prevention and response to sexual violence against children and provided participants with approaches and practical guidance to support government efforts already underway to treat child victims better in line with international law. The webinars also presented how practitioners can contribute to protecting children from re-traumatization and secondary victimization while in contact with child victims. The participants were able to increase their understanding of child development, children’s

rights, and the negative impact of violence on children as well as on how to engage children as active participants in their own protection process and rehabilitation experience. In addition, participants gained knowledge on the relevant international legal framework applicable to child victims and on how to engage with children and build trust through child-, gender- and victim-sensitive communication; and how to improve professional-child relationships by establishing positive communication. This series of webinars were conducted by the UNODC Global Programme to End Violence against Children in cooperation with the UNODC RP SEE.



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UNODC presents the World Drug Report 2021 to partners and stakeholders in South Eastern Europe

6 and 8 July 2021, online: The Paris Pact

Initiative (PPI) organized formal presentations of the World Drug Report 2021 (WDR) for partners and stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The audience included over 70 representatives of Ministries of Health, Offices for Combatting Drugs, the Police officers, Customs Administrations, as well as Members of the Steering Committee of the UNODC RP SEE international and civil society organizations. The presentations focused on special points of interest in the WDR and drug trafficking, in particular along the Balkan route of heroin and the Western Balkans. For a wider outreach, the Executive Summary of the WDR (Booklet 1) and an



extract on Opiate trafficking routes from the Booklet 3 were translated in the local languages and shared with the participants along with the relevant information on the statistical annexes of the report and other materials. “Share Facts On Drugs, Save Lives”, the theme of the 2021 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was also highlighted in the context of one of the main findings of the WDR 2021: “Cannabis is more potent but fewer young people see it as harmful”. In addition, during the presentation of the report in North Macedonia, the Head of the UNODC Programme Office opened the session with the key message for this year’s International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and emphasized the importance of the greater investments in health, science, and data (including the awareness of the risks and access to evidence-based treatment and care) in the global fight against drug abuse.

North Macedonia joins UNODC's Blue Heart Campaign against Human Trafficking

9 July 2021, Skopje, North Macedonia: Joining 33 other countries across the globe, North Macedonia has become the latest state to adopt the Blue Heart Campaign in its efforts to tackle human traffick-

ing. Announced this week during a session of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, the Blue Heart Campaign is now a central element of North Macedonia’s awareness raising drive to end this crime and protect those most impacted. Speaking at the



session – which was also attended by the Commission’s National Coordinator, Magdalena Nestorovska – the Minister of Interior, Oliver Spasovski, flagged what this means for North Macedonia. “*The Blue Heart Campaign aims to raise awareness of the problems and sufferings of victims of human trafficking and reminds us of the cold-bloodedness of those involved in these criminal acts,*” he commented. “*By joining this campaign, we express our commitment to the fight against this crime that undermines human dignity. Joining this global campaign for our country will represent another opportunity to get involved in global trends of prevention, awareness-raising, networking, exchange of experiences, joint activities with other countries, for all of us to oppose trade together with people.*” As a global awareness raising initiative to fight human trafficking and its impact on society, the Blue Heart Campaign seeks to encourage Governments, civil society, the private sector and individuals alike to act and help prevent this heinous crime. It also supports the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, which was established in 2010 within the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The Trust Fund itself raises and disburses funds to strengthen civil society organizations dedicated to human trafficking victims suffering from a variety of forms of exploitation, especially women and girls exploited by sex-related crime. Over the past decade, the Trust Fund has supported more than 100 grassroot NGOs in over 50 countries by providing tangible assistance to more than 5,000 victims of human trafficking every year. (For more info on all above: Ekaterina Kolykhalova and Bill Wood)

PROMOTING BORDER CONTROL MEASURES/CCP/AIRCOP

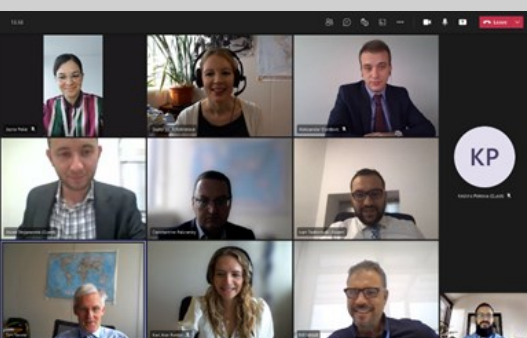
UNODC continues its partnership with the EU through the initiative within the UNODC Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe (RP SEE) entitled "EU-UNODC joint action promoting rule of law and good governance through targeted border control measures at ports and airports in SEE". The action involves 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)

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

ANTI-CORRUPTION/ASSET RECOVERY

UNODC and North Macedonia discuss implementation of the Regional Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance Roadmap

30 September 2021, online: Following up on the meeting with the UNODC Executive Director in Vienna in September, UNODC organized an online consultation with the



Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Fight against Corruption, Sustainable Development and Human Resources of North Macedonia. The follow-up consultation focused on the newly adopted **Regional Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance Roadmap** for the Western Balkans and its implementation in North Macedonia in order to support long-term and sustainable anti-corruption framework development, which will help in achieving a continuous improvement in citizens' quality of life. During the consultation, North Macedonia's national priorities in Anti-Corruption and Asset Recovery areas were reviewed with an aim to strengthen and support the national efforts of preventing and combating corruption, in line with UNCAC as well as mapping the implementing counterparts. During the meeting both parties identified the outstanding priorities in the fight against corruption and agreed on the next steps and the continuation of the dialogue along with the three shared priority goals of the Roadmap, which will result in the deliv-

ery of tangible anti-corruption/anti-illicit finance measures in line with the international standards. As part of the framework of the RP SEE, UNODC in partnership with the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) carried out consultations with the six Western Balkans jurisdictions to identify the most salient common priorities in the area of anti-corruption and illicit finance and the Governments of the region have formally adopted the Roadmap in June 2021.

International stakeholders in the Western Balkans build synergies in the field of asset recovery

27 September, online: UNODC participated in a coordination meeting organized by the AIRE Centre and RAI, as part of the project "Strengthening anti-corruption work in the Western Balkans through improving assets seizure measures" implemented by RAI and AIRE Centre. The meeting aimed to map current asset recovery technical assistance and ensure further coordination and synergy of efforts among the international stakeholders. In addition, the meeting provided an opportunity for international organizations and implementing partners to share information on the planned activities in the region related to asset recovery. Representatives of GIZ, Council of Europe, OSCE and the UK among others, shared information on the current work and future activities in the area of asset recovery, whilst UNODC presented its work on implementation of the initiative "From Illicit Financial Flows to Asset Recovery" conducted in the framework of the UNODC RP SEE and funded by the Government of the UK. The participants agreed to continue this type of joint discussion to improve coordination of efforts in the Western Balkans, en-



UK Government

hance synergy and avoid duplications in implementation of asset recovery activities.

UNODC supports South Eastern Europe in UNCAC implementation

20-22 September 2021, Belgrade, Serbia: UNODC in cooperation with RAI organized a multi-stakeholder workshop on the UNCAC and its Review Mechanism. The workshop brought together 28 civil society, private sector and government representatives from the Western Balkans and Moldova, as well as experts from the UNCAC Coalition and RAI for sessions and practical exercises aimed to build-up the participants' ca-



pacities and knowledge on anti-corruption, specifically the UNCAC provisions, required to undergo and perform reviews as well as to address the observations emanating from the reviews. The workshop focused on Chapter II (Preventive measures) and Chapter V (Asset recovery) of the Convention that are being reviewed during the second review cycle (2016-24) and included a mock review exercise to provide the participants with

ANTI-CORRUPTION/ASSET RECOVERY

practical experience of the review of selected articles, country visit and observations. The participants discussed how CSOs can be better involved in the implementation of the UNCAC, the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument that promotes the active participation of civil society in the prevention and fight against corruption. Non

-governmental actors can be involved in the UNCAC review process if invited by their government. Workshops such as this one is instrumental in encouraging this participation by building knowledge on UNCAC and creating a platform where participants can engage in a constructive dialogue on its implementation in their respective jurisdic-

tions, share good practices and lessons learned. The workshop was organized under the UNODC-RAI joint programme “Southeast Europe - Together Against Corruption (SEETAC)” (2020-2023) in cooperation with the UNODC RP SEE and funded by the Austrian Development Agency. *(For info on the above: Aleksandar Dordevic and Jasna Pekic)*

ORGANIZED CRIME

UNODC contributes to regional cooperation in the context of the Integrative Internal Security Governance initiative

23-24 and 28-29 September 2021, Budva, Montenegro/online: UNODC participated in the regional Pillar Support Group Meetings for Pillars 2 and 3 of the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) on Border Security and Countering Serious Crime respectively organized by the IISG Secretariat. The meetings were convened following the development of the needs mapping analysis per each IISG Pillar by the IISG Secretariat and brought together stakeholders operating in SEE, including GIZ, IOM, Centre for Security Cooperation in South Eastern Europe (RACVIAC), Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance -Ljubljana (DCAF), UNODC as well as the relevant authorities from the six Western Balkans jurisdictions, Italy, UK and Greece. The meetings reviewed the legislative, institutional and operational needs of the six Western Balkan jurisdictions identified through the mapping exercise and agree on the next steps for its finalization, including the operationalization of a secure database and the development of a response mapping. The purpose of the needs mapping is to identify the legislative, institutional and operational needs of the Western Balkans to effectively prevent and respond to security threats in SEE across the 3 pillars of IISG while adopting a coordinated approach among all stakeholders for strategic planning and effective programme delivery. UNODC provided an overview of work in the framework of the UNODC RP SEE and reiterated readiness to continue to support the region in the areas of border security and countering organized crime.

UNODC and OSCE discuss cooperation with police attachés in Belgrade

17 September 2021, Belgrade, Ser-

bia: UNODC jointly with the OSCE-Mission to Serbia organized a coordination briefing for police attachés and liaison officers to discuss areas of common priorities. Over 20 participants from Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Sweden, Spain and Italy attended the meeting, which focused on an array of security issues, including regional cooperation, corruption and economic crime, trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, terrorism and violent extremism, cybercrime and cybersecurity, as well as SALW. UNODC provided an overview of projects and priorities in the area of organized crime, including the ongoing EU-UNODC joint action on enhanced border control in SEE, as well as UNODC work on firearms trafficking, asset recovery, anti-corruption, and others. UNODC also briefed the group on the UNODC ‘s cooperation with the IISG aimed to support the coordination of technical assistance provided to the region in the rule of law and security related areas.

UNODC and OSCE support North Macedonia and Albania in countering terrorist financing

September 2021, North Macedonia: UNODC in cooperation with OSCE held a training course aimed at further strengthening the capacity of North Macedonia to counter terrorist financing (CFT). The training represented the CFT Foundation Course of the UNODC/OSCE training programme. National trainers, trained by UNODC and the OSCE in summer 2021, delivered the course to experts from law enforcement, the Intelligence Agency, and the Financial Intelligence Office of North Macedonia. Based on the country and region-specific scenarios, the training course included sessions on transnational, regional and national terrorist threats, sources of information available to financial investigators, and types of illicit money flows.

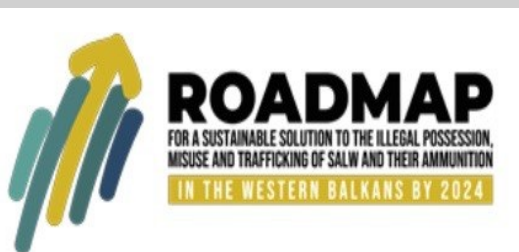
8-11 September 2021, Pogradec, Albania: UNODC and OSCE held a CFT course in Albania’s capacity, which was co-delivered by Albanian trainers and the UNODC/OSCE international experts for a group of participants from the Albanian State Police, the State Intelligence Service, and the General Directorate for the Prevention of Money Laundering. 21 participants took part in the course, which raised awareness on the different methods and practices to evaluate and disrupt terrorist activity. The course was devoted to practical work where inter-agency teams examined the ‘business model’ of terrorist networks and learned how to apply techniques, including auditing and vulnerabilities analysis, to disrupt the financing of terrorism.

The courses are part of the training programme designed to support Albania and North Macedonia to comply with international standards, in particular UN Security Council Resolutions, such as UNSCR 2462 (2019) calling upon UN Member States to combat and criminalize the financing of terrorists and their activities, and FATF standards. This work, funded by the United States Government, is part of a comprehensive multi-annual training programme on CFT, jointly implemented by OSCE and UNODC in the framework of the UNODC RP SEE and the UNODC Global Programme Against Money Laundering, Proceeds of Crime, and the Financing of Terrorism (GPML). *(For info on all of 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.*



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

On **27 July 2021** in **Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNODC conducted a workshop on information exchange on criminal procedural law applicable in firearms investigations. The workshop gathered ten criminal justice practitioners, including prosecutors, representatives from State Investigation and Protection Agency, Border Police, and judicial police officers. On **30 September 2021** in **Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNODC organize a second workshop on information exchange in criminal procedural law applicable in firearms investigations for criminal justice practitioners. The participants of both workshops discussed the review of adjudicated trafficking cases under Article 193 of the Criminal Code

of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which includes the facts of the case and arguments before the basic court, appeals court, and in the final verdict. The discussions led to the identification of several challenges in applying the criminal procedure law and substantive criminal law. Examples of such challenges include the lack of deadlines for prolonging



special investigative activities, which could lead to interruption of the criminal investigation. In applying Article 193 of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina, some courts have disagreed with the qualification of firearms trafficking activities at border crossing points to accomplish the trafficking offense. The current provision of Article 193 of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not envisage the movement across the border as a substantive component of the crime. Instead, these activities have been qualified as an attempt for firearms trafficking. Finally, the confiscation of tools used for committing the offense, such as vehicles, has been problematic in some cases. Courts requested the prosecution to prove ownership of the vehicle by the perpetrator. In cases of rented cars, this was not possible. As a result, the vehicle has been returned to its legal owner, which contradicts Article 193, paragraph 6 of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which provides for confiscation of the means for transportation of the firearms.

UNODC held a second inter-institutional exchange of information meeting on firearms trafficking cases in Serbia

21 September 2021, Novi Sad, Serbia: With the aim to foster the inter-institutional exchange of information in firearms trafficking cases, UNODC held a meeting with representatives of the prosecution offices, border and criminal police, and customs officers, competent for the border crossing points between Serbia and Hungary / Croatia. The meeting allowed to review the implementation of the Criminal Proce-

dure Code by the relevant practitioners. The adjudicated cases on firearms seizures at respective border crossings were presented, good practices and challenges were identified, as well as remedial solutions to address firearms trafficking and to improve information sharing. The main outcomes of the event were consensus to strive towards the compliance of domestic criminal legislation with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and *UN Firearms Protocol*, profiling the needs of the first-line responders during pre-investigation, investigation and indicting stages of firearms-related cases, utilizing tracing procedures and international cooperation tools to address firearms trafficking.

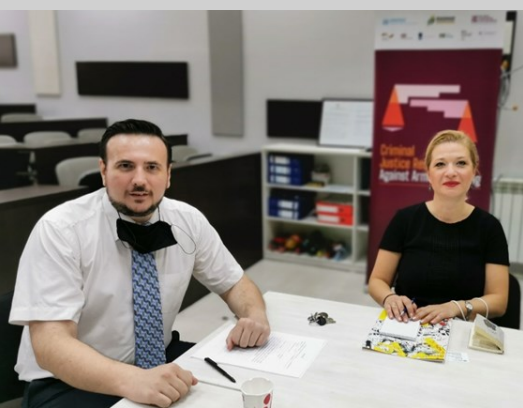
UNODC supports Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia in detection of firearms in postal shipments

On **26-29 July 2021** in **Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNODC held training-of-trainers for the ITA on detecting firearms, their parts and ammunition in postal shipments, with the focus on increasing efficiency and effectiveness in combating firearms trafficking. The training focused on developing training skills of future trainers in understanding threats, identification of firearms, risk assessment and risk indicators. Twenty participants from ITA Headquarters, ITA Regional Centers in Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Mostar, as well as the Customs at Sarajevo Airport learned about the role of the trainer, the systematic approach to training and how to perform an effective training. The participants took part in the practical exercise on the preparation and delivery of training sessions with an x-ray scanner providing the opportunity to combine practical skills and the knowledge gained through the lectures. On **17 September** in **Skopje, North Macedonia**, UNODC met with the heads of various departments within the Customs Administration to finalize process of needs assessment and situation analysis on the ground. The Customs Administration of North Macedonia and UNODC undertook a needs assessment to increase the capacity of the Customs Administration to detect firearms, their parts, components, and ammunition in postal and courier shipments. The assessment was requested by the National Commission on SALW and resulted in the identification of required technical assistance (equipment, software), mapping of the risk assessment

procedures, identification of training needs, and development of proposals for standard operating procedures. The information from the gap and needs analysis will be used for the development of a project proposal for the implementation of the recommendations agreed by the Customs Administration of North Macedonia. In addition, a gap and needs analysis (GNA) was carried out focusing on the review and identification of gaps in the processing of incoming and outgoing postal/courier shipments by public and private sector companies. The GNA also covered the knowledge and skills of staff to apply risk assessment, identify and detect postal/courier shipments containing firearms, their parts, components, and ammunition as well as a review of the existing equipment and its use, and formulation of recommendations for procurement of equipment. UNODC also included stakeholders involved in the control of international mail and express courier traffic such as the national postal operator - "Macedonian post", and private courier companies in the GNA and plans to involve them in future activities.

UNODC held a meeting with Members of Parliament in North Macedonia to promote legislative changes in line with the UN Firearms Protocol

13 September, Skopje, North Macedonia: UNODC hosted a hybrid meeting with Members of Parliament raising awareness on the latest amendments to the Criminal Code of North Macedonia drafted in line with the



UN Firearms Protocol. The primary goal of the event was to familiarize the Members of Parliament with the implementation of North Macedonia's obligations as a result of the ratification of the *UN Firearms Protocol* and harmonization of the country's Criminal Code with the criminalization provisions of the *UN Firearms Protocol*. UNODC presented

its contribution to the Working Group on the Criminal Code under the Ministry of Justice resulting in the formulation of provisions for amending the Criminal Code in relation to firearms offences in line with the UN Firearms Protocol. The adoption of the amended Criminal Code was also discussed. The counterparts expressed appreciation for UNODC support and explored the possibility of holding awareness raising events on firearms and organized crime after the country's local elections in October 2021. In addition, the parties discussed the upcoming process of the Review of the implementation of the UNTOC and its Protocols, including the *Firearms Protocol*. North Macedonia ratified the Convention and all the Protocols and is part of the Review Mechanism.

UNODC held a workshop for Serbian judges on the firearms-related case law document

9-11 August 2021, Vrdnik, Serbia: UNODC held a three-day workshop for the Serbian judges on the firearms-related case law document. Prior to the workshop, a review group of four judges was formed to be engaged on the final review and systematization of the firearms-related case law document and drafting of additional chapters for its content. During the first day of the workshop, a new chapter on criminal offence of Unlawful Production, Trading and Possession of Forbidden Weapons was drafted, discussed and included in the document. Subsequently, the chapter of the document containing 30 firearms-related adjudicated court cases was reviewed and supplemented with comments. During the next two days, around 20 excerpts – sentences – alongside the reasoning from selected judgements, related to contentious legal questions in firearms-related cases, were added to the document. The excerpts will form an additional chapter of the document, containing the official standpoints on contentious legal questions of the second instance courts in Serbia. Additionally, the narrative on domestic and international legislation was reviewed and discussed, resulting in a precise definition of the respective chapters. The workshop resulted with the final version of the case law document, which will be formatted and printed prior to its distribution to the Basic and Higher Courts on the State level, with an aim to contribute to the harmonization of

court practice and sentencing policy in firearms-related cases.

UNODC continues to support the private sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina in addressing firearms trafficking in fast parcels

23-24 July and 6-7 August 2021, Banja Luka/Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNODC conducted two trainings for private courier companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina on detection of firearms in fast parcels. The training focused on the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the detection of firearms, their parts and ammunition by the private companies, including topics such as risk assessment, evidence handling, identification of firearms, health and safety. The participants learned about the threat of firearms trafficking, expanded their knowledge on applicable legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the requirements to counter firearms trafficking during the process of import and export of fast parcels. These trainings were the 3rd and 4th events respectively organized by UNODC for fast courier companies. The engagement with private courier companies on detection of firearms in fast parcels contributes towards the efficiency of the Customs in Bosnia and Herzegovina as detections made by the private companies decreases the workload of the Customs contributing thereby to the overall efforts to counter illicit firearms trafficking.

UNODC holds a workshop on cooperation between the private and public sectors on detecting firearms in fast parcels in Bosnia and Herzegovina

30 July 2021, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNODC conducted a workshop on cooperation between the private and public sectors on detecting firearms in fast parcels gathering representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Agency for Postal Traffic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Border Police and the Indirect Taxation Authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina and private sector representatives. The workshop aimed to identify areas where governmental institutions and private courier companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina can increase and

improve cooperation in the detection of firearms in fast parcels and promote the information-sharing culture. UNODC presented a gap analysis on the cooperation framework between the Customs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and commercial sector entities, which identified thirteen areas where cooperation could be further improved, including acknowledging the inputs of the private courier companies for the development of a regulatory framework, simplification of procedures when traders fulfil certain conditions, reduction of the documentation burden, and establishment of cooperation forums among other. The event resulted in the endorsement of the proposed areas for increased cooperation between the private and public sectors, and in the identification of several solutions that could improve cooperation such as identification of opportunities for increased consultations between the courier companies and the Customs in the process of developing new sector regulations; the identification of relevant legislative framework that will provide preferential treatment by the Customs for companies that comply with specific conditions, and the possibility of signing a Memorandum of Understanding between private courier companies and Customs for exchange of information, based on risk indicators.

UNODC continues to support the private sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina in addressing firearms trafficking in fast parcels

16-17 July 2021, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNODC delivered a training for a private courier company on raising awareness of firearms trafficking in fast parcels focusing on trafficking in firearms, risk indicators, and inspection and detection of firearms as well as handling evidence and cooperation with the Customs. The participants have enhanced their knowledge of firearms trafficking threats and the requirements to counter firearms trafficking through fast parcels. The engagement with private courier companies on firearms trafficking in fast parcels contributes to an increased awareness in the private sector. Increased detection rate leads towards an improved efficiency of the Customs of Bosnia and Herzegovina contributing thereby to the overall efforts in countering illicit firearms trafficking.

UNODC held a workshop for judges on firearms-related case law in North Macedonia

15 July 2021, Skopje, North Macedonia: UNODC hosted a workshop to present the case law of North Macedonia and discuss harmonization of the court practice on firearms related cases with the judges and presidents of courts from across country as well as representatives from the Basic and Appellate courts from Skopje, Bitola, Gostivar, and Stip. The event aimed to present the findings



of the “*Analysis of Verdicts for the Criminal Offenses of Illicit Manufacturing, Possession and Trade in Firearms*”, prepared by UNODC, followed by discussions on challenges during court proceedings such as the division of cases, the use of expert testimonies or the way the sentence is determined and the penal policy towards firearms related cases in general. The event opened the possibilities to further supplement the Case Law collection and include the views of the judges and the court presidents in the updated version of the document. The participants noted the fact that the Case Law collection of the selected final verdicts for firearms-related offences is the first of its kind in the country, which covers the period 2014-2019.

Prosecutors of Bosnia and Herzegovina supported in investigating firearms trafficking

13 July 2021, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNODC held a training on identification and tracing of firearms aimed to strengthen the capacity of prosecutors to investigate firearms trafficking cases and address possible links to organized crime. The training was conducted using the UNODC training video material containing four modules on (1) pistols and revolvers, (2) carabines and shotguns, (3) sub-machine guns and assault rifles and (4) firearms tracing to familiarize the participants with differ-

ent firearms’ types, their parts and components, and illustrate how firearms markings can be used in the tracing procedure and how this information can support investigation against firearms trafficking. Prosecutors from four Prosecutor’s offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina attended the training and enhanced their understanding on how firearm identification and tracing can contribute towards solving firearms related cases of transnational nature, contributing thereby to a more effective criminal justice response to firearms trafficking and organized crime and facilitating the implementation of the UN Firearms Protocol. The participants identified the challenges in the existing criminal justice legislation and practice by sharing their experiences in the detection, investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking and/or organized crime cases.

UNODC held a workshop on Inter-institutional exchange of experience in North Macedonia

12 July 2021, Skopje, North Macedonia: UNODC hosted a workshop to foster inter-institutional exchange of information in firearms related cases. The event gathered participants from three institutions competent for processing firearms related cases, namely the Prosecution, Ministry of Interior, and Customs Administration. The workshop objective was to provide a platform for experience exchange and an opportunity to review the implementation of the Criminal Procedure Code. The participants shared their perspectives and challenges faced and held a discussion on the tools that the criminal procedure allows the practitioners to use, and also, what strategies and actions are available for the law enforcement and prosecutors. Good practices were identified, along with the remedial solutions to address firearms trafficking and improve the information sharing on a national level. The need for a standardized format of information exchange between the institutions was emphasized as well as the potential support of UNODC. (For more info on all of the above: Dimitirje Ristic, Dubravka Piotrovski, Kiro Cvetkov)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

UNODC completes data collection in Bosnia and Herzegovina on illicit financial flows, trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants (TIP & SOM)

8 July 2021, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina / online: UNODC finalized the data collection for the forthcoming UNODC research publication on Illicit Financial Flows, TIP and SOM. The publication is intended to address the significant gap in knowledge of the subject which will support capacity and operational efforts of criminal justice actors and equip them with tools to target the illicit financial flows, thereby ensuring that effective financial investigations are initiated in TIP and SOM cases. The data collection was conducted over April-June 2021 in partnership with the Government agencies of Bosnia and Herzegovina and involved preparation and conduct of interviews as well as processing of gathered information. With researchers based in the field, interviews have been conducted with national experts in specialized capacities. This involved interviews with representatives from the State Prosecutor's Office, the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), individual national experts, as well as with migrants on the move. The research has focused on the financial dimensions of TIP and SOM to analyze financial flows tied to the crimes. Data collection efforts focused specifically on networks

operating between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, to or through Bosnia and Herzegovina, and directed towards the European Union. The research was conducted in the framework of the Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants (GLO.ACT-Asia and Middle East), a joint initiative by the EU and UNODC implemented in partnership with the IOM. This project is funded by the European Union.

South Eastern Europe and UNODC address trafficking in children for the purpose of forced criminality

6-7 July 2021, online: UNODC in collaboration with the National Anti-trafficking Coordination Office within the Ministry of Interior of Albania and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, held the Regional Expert Group Meeting (REGM) on "Addressing Trafficking in Children, particularly for the purpose of forced criminality in South Eastern Europe". The purpose of the REGM was to advance the discussion on effective action to prevent and combat trafficking in children, particularly for the purpose of forced criminality, through comprehensive approach in the countries of origin, transit and destination as well as to understand a variety of international and regional instruments in combating this form of hu-

man trafficking. Moreover, the REGM served as a platform to exchange challenges and good practices in the field of bilateral, regional and international cooperation to provide a set of concrete actions for future engagement in order to tackle the issue of trafficking in children, particularly for the purpose of forced criminality in the most efficient manner. Over 115 practitioners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia, as well as Austria, France and the UK took part in the event and shared their experiences and best practices. The meeting was opened by the UN Resident Coordinator in Albania. This event concluded the series of five REGMs, which form part of the Regional Initiative on Trafficking in Persons in South Eastern Europe aimed at supporting the region in this area during the COVID-19 pandemic. As an outcome of the REGMs, a document with Key Conclusions and Recommendations will be drafted and shared with all the participants for comments and subsequent endorsement. This document will further serve for developing a single compiled report with the outcomes of the five REGMs and consolidate the challenges and priorities pertaining to the five topics as they relate to the addressed countries in SEE. The financial support was provided by the Governments of France and Sweden. (For info: Davor Raus)

DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION

UNODC supports OSCE in their training of Serbian Police officers in addressing substance in school settings

5-7 July 2021, Belgrade, Serbia: The OSCE Mission in Serbia together with the Ministry



of Interior's Criminalistics Investigation Directorate and its Service for Prevention of Drug Addiction and Suppression of Narcotics, organized the first training in 2021 for police officers who also operate in schools.

25 police officers from the Belgrade Police District attended the training and expanded their knowledge of risk factors for young people who develop drug dependence, correct application of police powers in a school environment and preventing drug use. During the training, the Ministry of Interior together with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and UNODC shared their knowledge (theoretical and practical) on such topics as: health risks from drugs, young people and drug-related offences, risk and protective factors for problematic drug use, responding to drugs incidents on or around school premises, the role of the police in reducing the harm from drugs and effective preventive practices. UNODC provided an overview of its prevention work, including the programmes implemented in Serbia and considered as best practices namely the Strengthening Families Programme 10-14 and the Lions Quest Skills



for Adolescence. In addition, the UNODC informed the audience on the UNODC "Listen First" initiative released in Serbia on 25 June 2021, and is aimed to increase support for prevention of drug use that is based on science and is thus an effective investment in the well-being of children and youth, their families and communities. (For info: Zana Glavendekic)