

Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism Initiative (WBCTi)

Integrative Plan of Action 2015-2017

Final Report



Ljubljana, March 2018

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the time of the endorsement of the WBCTi (Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism Initiative) in December 2015, more than 50 partners (UN, EU institutions and Member States, regional initiatives, project leaders, state donors) had recognized the multi-faceted benefits of the WBCTi and its Integrative Plan of Action (iPA), aiming for efficient and aligned action based upon regional needs and priorities for the period 2015-2017. On 8th September 2017 (Brdo Process Ministerial Meeting – IISG Kick-Off Conference), the WBCTi became formally embedded into the IISG (Integrative Internal Security Governance) in the Western Balkans. It now operates side-by-side with two other IISG pillars addressing serious crime and border security. The IISG Support Group aims to enhance the benefit of a horizontal view on threats to the regional (and European) security and integrity, putting emphasis on the complexity of the contemporary nature of internal security threats.

One of the most significant and sustainable achievements remains the consolidation and functioning of the regional WBCTi policy coordination platform, where three regional platforms play a major role, involving police operatives, law enforcement policy-makers and the politico-strategic level with an external dimension, thus providing a model for coordination of regional policy – and the donors' preparedness to achieve long-term sustainability of solutions offered.

The WBCTi has achieved high visibility, support and recognition – not only in the region but in the EU and other international fora. In March 2017, the WB6 meeting at the level of prime ministers welcomed the IISG after it was endorsed by the Council of the EU at ministerial level in December 2016. On 12th July of the same year, the Western Balkan heads of government welcomed further support to the WBCTi as well as the IISG, which would enable effective cooperation and a comprehensive approach to challenges across the EU and Southeast Europe.

The WBCTi achieved a new overall image, web presence and have received extensive EU financial support (Internal Security Fund and IPA II co-funding). The WBCTi partnership has continued to grow as both governmental and other institutions join the partnership. This enables us to widen the exchange of information, enriching the process with some jointly agreed concepts to guide future coordinated undertakings. The results depicted below clearly show that the WBCTi partners' activities are successfully directed toward the jointly set objectives and contribute to the optimization of outcomes and creating synergies. It is here that I would like to reiterate with the strongest possible emphasis that the IISG has been consolidated as a *policy process* in the Western Balkans – one which differs significantly from efforts that we characterize as projects, as it will in fact, bring projects and relevant instruments together and direct them toward unified priorities of the Beneficiaries, striving toward long-term sustainability and added value of our joint activities.

In late 2017, the WBCTi Lead Partners (DCAF Ljubljana together with Slovenia and Austria) proceeded to draft the next multi-annual iPA for 2018-2020, based on a joint set of priorities

received from the Beneficiaries and with the input from WBCTi partners. It will replace the expired iPA upon entering into force by ministerial endorsement at the next meeting of the IISG Board in early 2018. This document introduces the achievements of WBCTi iPA 2015-2017 implementation and also clearly outlines those instances where, according to our methodology, a priority from 2015-2017 will continue to be addressed in the WBCTi iPA 2018-2020.

It is the assessment of the Lead Partners that so far, the implementation of the WBCTi objectives have demonstrated important opportunities in better alignment and thus a more efficient investment on behalf of WBCTi partners. Additional opportunities will be addressed in the upcoming implementation of the iPA 2018-2020.

2 CONCRETE DELIVERABLES AND RESULTS

- WB REGIONAL LIST OF FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS (2017), SHARED VIA EUROPOL ON THE HIT/NO-HIT BASIS (*PROJECT FIRST LINE*)
- OPERATIONAL CASE ANALYSES, BI(MULTI)LATERAL OPERATIONAL COOPERATION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE CONDUCTED WITHIN THE COUNTER-TERRORISM INITIATIVE (CTI) NETWORK (*PROJECT FIRST LINE*)
- START OF THE PROJECT “AQUILA” – REGIONAL P/CVE SOFT CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE PROCESSING AND BETTER USE OF THOSE WITH LOW CERTAINTY - WITHIN THE PCC SEE COUNTER-TERRORISM AND CTI NETWORK (*EU IPA II 2017 WB P/CVE ACTION*)
- REGIONAL Te-Sit REPORT (2015) DEVELOPED WITH THE SUPPORT OF EUROPOL (*PROJECT FIRST LINE*)
- LIST OF COMMON RISK INDICATORS (CRI) FOR EARLY DETECTION OF FTFs, ADAPTED FOR THE WESTERN BALKAN PRACTITIONERS, DISSEMINATED AND APPLIED BY BORDER POLICE IN ALL WB COUNTRIES (*PROJECT FIRST LINE*)
- “P-R-A” / REFERRAL MECHANISM CONCEPT AGREED BETWEEN RELEVANT DONORS AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS TO SUPPORT THE ALIGNMENT OF FUTURE EFFORTS AT LOCAL AND A STATE LEVELS BASED ON TAILOR-MADE NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION (*PROJECT FIRST LINE AND EU IPA II 2017 WB P/CVE ACTION, SUPPORTED BY THE RAN CoE*)
- SUPPORT DELIVERED IN THE PROCESS OF RAISING AWARENESS AMONG ALL RELEVANT PARTNERS AT LOCAL LEVEL (FIRST LINE RESPONDERS) AND IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PILOT P-R-A / REFERRAL MECHANISMS AT LOCAL LEVEL (*PROJECT FIRST LINE, UNDP, IOM, OSCE, USAID, NO*)
- RAISED AWARENESS ON CONTEMPORARY P/CVE WITH EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE, SPORT GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS, ACADEMIA, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES AT LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL (*PROJECT FIRST LINE, UNDP, IOM, OSCE, RCC, DCAF, RACVIAC, USAID, NO, IT, UK*)
- REGIONALLY ADDRESSED GAPS IN IMPLEMENTING P-CVE POLICIES AND APPROACHES (*EU IPA II 2017 WB P/CVE ACTION*)

- DELIVERED GOOD PRACTICE ON PART OF EU RAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (*PROJECT FIRST LINE*)
- REGIONALLY ADDRESSED GAPS IN IMPLEMENTING COUNTER-TERRORISM LAW ENFORCEMENT METHODS/POLICIES (*PROJECT FIRST LINE*)
- NATIONAL WORKSHOPS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE PROJECT “FIRST LINE” PROVIDING NEEDS ANALYSIS AND RESULTING IN DRAFT CONCEPTS FOR A JOINTLY AGREED POLICY SOLUTION (*PROJECT FIRST LINE*)
- ONLINE WBCTi COORDINATION WITH MATRIX OF ACTIVITIES WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM WBCTi PARTNERS (EU IPA II 2017 WB P/CVE ACTION SUPPORTED BY THE RAN CoE)
- A JOINT DATABASE HOSTED ON THE RCC AND WBCTi/IISG WEBSITE DAILY UPDATED, ONGOING AND PLANNED PVE AND CT ACTIVITIES (EU IPA II 2017 WB P/CVE ACTION SUPPORTED BY THE RAN CoE)
- TRANSLATED RAN CoE EXPERTISE IN LOCAL LANGUAGES, PUBLISHED ON THE WBCTi / IISG WEBSITE (*PROJECT FIRST LINE*)
- CONTRIBUTIONS TO 12 INFORMAL MEETINGS ON WBCTi WITHIN THE COUNCIL OF THE EU (*EU IPA II 2017 WB P/CVE ACTION SUPPORTED BY THE RAN CoE*)
- DEVELOPED MUTUAL TRUST AND CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN ALL RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL AND EU PARTNERS IN THE P-CVE AND CT POLICY IN THE WESTERN BALKAN REGION (*EU FIRST LINE PROJECT, EU IPA II 2017 WB P/CVE ACTION, UNDP, DCAF, IOM, OSCE, USAID, UNODC, NO, UK, IT*)
- FUNCTIONING POLICY COORDINATION PLATFORM, CONTRIBUTED TO BY THREE EXISTING REGIONAL NETWORKS RANGING FROM POLICE OPERATIVES’ LEVEL TO POLITICAL LEVEL INCL. EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF SECURITY POLICY (*PROJECT FIRST LINE, RCC*)
- 2 ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE “JUMBO” FORMAT – THREE REGIONAL NETWORKS CONTRIBUTING TO THE POLICY COORDINATION PLATFORM (*PROJECT FIRST LINE, RCC*)

3 MAIN RESULTS

3.1 From regional networking to efficient policy management – addressed policy gaps”

This objective was achieved with the help of enhanced communication between regional instruments, donors and regional practitioners/policy-makers contributing to the WBCTi-supported policy cooperation platform. The platform has become a crucial part of the WBCTi and has received high visibility and recognition, also on part of observing partners. It involves three existing regional networks:

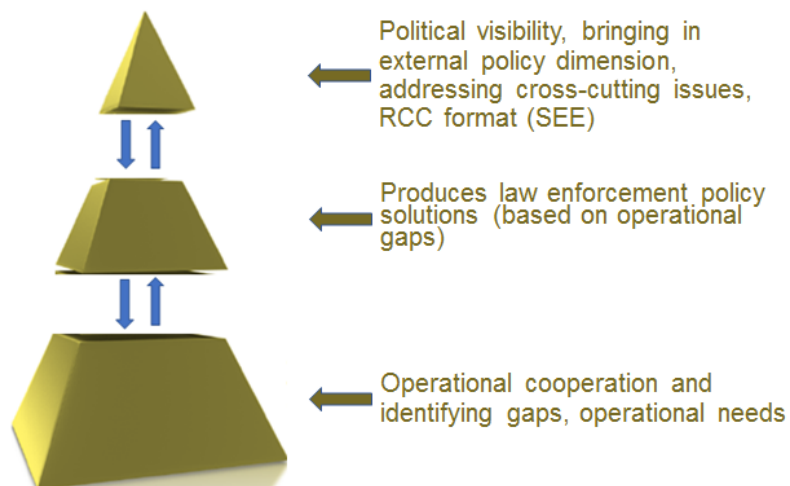
- (1) The CTI police operatives’ network, acting upon efficient cross-border arrangements, incl. exchange of information, that enable successful operational work in the investigation and prosecution of terrorism-related offences. The operational-level network of the Counter-Terrorism Initiative (“Initiative for International Police Cooperation in the Field of Anti-Terrorist Activity”) was established and consolidated already in 2011 with the signing of a mutual declaration;
- (2) The PCC SEE Counter-Terrorism Network (CTN), a policy-level network, mandated by the ministers of its 11 member countries to raise awareness and facilitate a policy environment for efficient law enforcement cooperation in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism leading to terrorism, addressing also concrete gaps identified by the police operatives’ network and offering solutions. The Police Cooperation Convention for Southeast Europe Counter-Terrorism Network (PCC SEE CTN) was formally established by a Decision of the PCC SEE Committee of Ministers in January 2015; it involves police officials, includes analytical dimension, inter-agency scope of work, and involves also intelligence services;
- (3) The Regional Platform for Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Recruitment of Foreign Terrorist Fighters, RCC-led (hereinafter: P/CVE-FTF Platform), was formally established in late 2015 and begun its work in 2016 aims at strengthening coordination and cooperation in the area of P/CVE at national as well as regional level; it is a forum representing senior officials that brings open issues to the attention of the political level in the first place, linking them also with the external security policy dimension; it devotes strategic discussions to the prevention and countering of violent extremism (P-CVE), the issue of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs), it familiarizes officials with relevant academic contributions and large-scale donor projects. As far as the regional coordination is concerned, central role is played by the South East Europe Group of National Focal Points for Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (NFP Group), which serves as a key mechanism for implementation of the Regional P/CVE-FTF Platform and meets twice annually. Four meetings were held up to now, two stand-alone, and two as parts of the Regional CT and P/CVE Coordination Conference, in the framework of WBCTi and in cooperation with PCC SEE and other partners. Special attention was attached to :

- a) Root causes and incentives to radicalization and violent extremism leading to terrorism;
- b) Prosecution, Detention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters;
- c) The role of education and civil society in prevention of violent extremism.

Along these lines, the RCC succeeded in engaging not only relevant authorities from the region, but also academic community and civil society organizations, as well as important out-of-region partners, such as the U.S. Government. The RCC was also involved in a meaningful, results-oriented practical cooperation with other international and regional organizations (in addition to the already mentioned: SEESAC, UNDP, UNODC etc.)

In addition, RCC mainstreamed its P/CVE efforts into the work of two specialized regional security cooperation formats, South East Europe National Security Authorities (SEENSA) and South East Europe Military Intelligence Chiefs (SEEMIC), as witnessed by the topic of the last SEEMIC Open-source intelligence (OSINT) Assessment: “Use of social media by violent extremists”.

The multi-level governance of regional policy via the WBCTi policy coordination platform can be visualized as follows:



The three networks met at joint meetings in 2016 (30 November, Tirana, Albania) and 2017 (30 November, Brdo, Slovenia). Their meetings generated high-level visibility of presented regional policy solutions and raised awareness on policy gaps (incl. on operational gaps on information exchange and intelligence picture), on the importance of external relationships with other WBCTi partners, and on the importance of embedding each network’s tasks into the strategic overview of regional cooperation and its external dimension (EU-Western Balkan cooperation). The cooperation between their members enabled practitioners to achieve high-level recognition of their needs and potential solutions – i.e. improved regional policy coordination within national structures.

Additional operational tasks were generated within this multi-level platform, based on gaps identified within either of the networks, incl. the PCC SEE regional project “Aquila” (see p.22).

Main outputs 2015-2017 within Objective 1:

- Delivered first draft list of Common Risk Indicators for the early detection of FTFs, adapted for the Western Balkan region;
- Delivered List of FTFs for the Western Balkans within the CTI Network, accessible via Europol on a hit/no-hit basis;
- Delivered First Terrorism Situation Report for the WB region (“WB Te-Sit 2015”) prepared within the CTI Network in cooperation with Europol;
- Exchanged information on trends, *modi operandi* of FTFs;
- Facilitated sharing of EU expertise in all three WBCTi frameworks;
- Functioning regional web-based WBCTi platform to support the three networks, serving to exchange strategic information, expertise (*RAN CoE selected expertise translated into local languages*);
- Employed Europol’s capacities in supporting investigations and identification of trends, *modi operandi*;
- Strong promotion of the WBCTi concept and iPA 2015-2017 objectives within the three frameworks and their decision-making structures;
- 1 regional overview of national practices in CTI Member States in the area of exchange of information on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (incl. the use of available tools) with pending recommendations;
- Contribution of the 2016 data to the EU Te-Sat 2017 on part of the CTI Network;
- Operational case analyses executed in cooperation with national prosecutors, investigative judges, financial and money laundering investigators;
- 7 meetings of the CTI Network; 5 meetings of the PCC SEE CT Network;
- 3 meetings of the RCC-led network (“P/CVE-FTF Network”);
- 2 “Jumbo” Meetings of all three networks contributing to WBCTi coordination

The following activities from the iPA 2015-2017 will be to a relevant extent continued through the period 2018-2020:

Activity 1.3 Regular PCC SEE Counter-Terrorism Network (CTN) meetings ▶▶

Activity 1.4 Joint meetings in “jumbo” format, joining the P/CVE-FTF Network and the PCC SEE CT Network, and the CTI network when necessary ▶▶

Activity 1.5 The Counter-Terrorism Initiative (CTI) Network – regular meetings ▶▶

Activity 1.6 To provide content for the regional CT and CVE web-based platform ▶▶

Activity 1.8 Secure Counter-Terrorism Initiative (CTI) Network – secure web page ▶▶

Activity 5.1 Counter-Terrorism Initiative (CTI) Network – Case Analyses in cooperation with prosecutors, identification of gaps in exercising of operational measures ▶▶

“The scope and level of the threat may be lower in Montenegro than in some other nearby countries, which is possibly also influenced by territory size and population numbers, making the situation easier to control and communication at all levels faster. Regardless, our security and intelligence services are aware that the situation could deteriorate quickly, so they undertake measures of prevention and countering radicalisation leading to violent extremism or terrorism. Assistance of WBCTi in the process of reforming the work of the security and intelligence agencies in CT and P-CVE in accordance with EU and international standards, has been observable in both. It is a long-awaited instrument aligning numerous initiatives of international actors offering much-needed assistance to Montenegro and other countries, incl. in producing legislation and regulatory pieces, workshops, trainings, etc., where duplication had been occurring, causing implementation to be slower than expected. Despite formally reaching a series of indicators (e.g. number of trainings received), such measuring did not prove/disprove any real influence on policy. The WBCTi iPA 2015-2017 has successfully provided a common direction merging our efforts as we cooperate closely with the international donor community. It is measurable and concrete; it requires more joint planning and the objectives are set realistically. As for operational policy reform, the CTI network, now linked with the WBCTi objectives, produces concrete results, such as also the terrorism situation report (WB-TeSit), list of FTFs, risk indicators for early identification of FTFs. The CTI had brought together operatives in the Western Balkan region, and today their cooperation remains permanent, timely, and the regulatory impediments to cross-border communication are overcome. Our WB Te-Sit effort has adopted an EU-pre-approved model of cooperation, where we provide Europol with data and they help us deliver. To follow-up, the report was provided to the security and intelligence services and bears a high added value for our national threat assessment. Also, the List of FTFs for the Western Balkans is crucial in that it is not only made available to EU colleagues through Europol, but it also enables Europol’s Partners (non-EU countries) as data owners to acquire from Europol new information on the established linkages with the FTFs in our region. “

Mladen Marković, Ministry of Internal Affairs – Police Directorate, Montenegro, January 2018

“Bosnia and Herzegovina has been the recipient of numerous projects and programmes in the field of preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism, financed and/or implemented by international organisations, regional initiatives and partner countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina highly appreciates all the assistance and support to the building of capacities it requires in order to execute its policies in this demanding field. We are convinced to have achieved significant progress in this direction, and that we will continue to do so in a comprehensive manner.

To be sure, we ascribe high importance to the role of the WBCTi, providing us the ability to steer projects and programmes in an aligned and coordinated manner. WBCTi holds an additional important meaning in that it creates the possibility for us and our international partners to possess an insight into all activities in the field of preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism – one that is thorough and up-to-date. This approach allows needs and priorities to be identified to serve all parties in the process, the enhancement of mutual trust as well as the overall relationship between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the International Community. WBCTi ensures the advancement of our participation in regional cooperation, which is irreplaceable when creating a joint approach to combatting shared security threats.

In addition to an enhanced exchange of ideas and information among all stakeholders of the process, a particular added value that the WBCTi has also held for us lays in offering us the possibility to engage in efficient coordination of various actions of policy reform. This has resulted in high complementarity of respective projects, and enabled us to avoid of duplication of activities and wasting limited resources – both on part of us as Beneficiary as well as on part of the International Community partners engaged in reform.

From the very beginning Bosnia and Herzegovina has been strongly supporting the IISG and its three pillars. Through WBCTi activities so far implemented, we can establish that our support has been devoted to the right cause. The cooperation with the WBCTi Lead Partners is based on highest mutual trust and understanding. We hope that this cooperation will provide significant results after the adoption of the next three-year work plan that will provide the framework for our joint actions in the WBCTi fields of activity and ensure an even better coordination among all actors.”

Samir Rizvo, Assistant Minister for Security, Bosnia and Herzegovina, January 2018

3.2 P-CVE efforts and a joint development of the P-R-A / Referral Mechanism (Toward a coordinated P-CVE policy solution for the WB countries)

The EU-supported project “FIRST LINE Practitioners Dealing with Radicalization Issues - Awareness Raising and Encouraging Capacity Building in the Western Balkan Region” (ISF Police HOME/2014/ISFP/AG/RADX; hereinafter “Project FIRST LINE”), implemented by the Slovenian Police (leader), Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic and Croatia, contributed important achievements between 2015-2017 as to raising awareness and equipping first-line practitioners with knowledge, experiences and good practices to the six WB Beneficiaries, incl. those offered by the EU RAN CoE, and as to creating appropriate conditions to address one of the most direct challenges in the Western Balkans – need to advance cooperation and involvement of all relevant national stakeholders in P-CVE.

The project started in early 2015 with the development of questionnaires, continued by an analysis of replies. This provided thorough preparation for the expert team to engage them in two-day preliminary visits to all 6 countries where they got an in-depth view into the needs and the state-of-play in each country, and identified potential partners and their representatives. In 2017, the WBCTi contributed to FIRST LINE National Workshops in Albania (7-8 November 2017), BiH (6-7 December 2017), and Kosovo* (4-5 July 2017) organized by the Slovenian Police. The workshops convened up to 40 participants each, representing relevant state agencies, incl. national coordinators in charge of P-CVE, the civil society, religious communities, academia, schools, ministries of labor, justice, education, social welfare and the police. They were executed by experts from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, with contributions also from the EU RAN CoE. The workshops aimed to transfer good EU practices, incl. those gathered by the EU RAN subgroups, such as RAN Health and RAN Exit, and provide new knowledge on identifying indicators of radicalization leading to VE or terrorism, trends, roots and triggers of VE and their complex factor combinations, and especially the role of relevant sectors and parts of society in intervention, community policing and the overall role of social media. Participants also worked on a series of practically oriented scenarios and prepared a set of recommendations on further establishing of national capacities to prevent and address radicalization leading to violent extremism or terrorism. Concrete conclusions with foreseen follow-up were taken aboard within the WBCTi framework.

European Strategic Communications Network (ESCN) also contributed to the workshop in Tirana. As the ESCN currently is not yet working in the region, it was agreed that it will continue to deliver support through the IISG Support Group.

UNDP Mission in Kosovo* has established a Referral Mechanism in the Gjilan municipality in 2017 as part of institutional engagement in early identification and prevention of violent extremism. The referral mechanism, as a passive body, is designed to engage with identified individuals at risk and provide them with a personalized support package. The referral mechanism consists of representatives of institutions at local level: local government, Ministry of social welfare and

* This designation is without prejudice to the position on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

labour, Ministry of education, Ministry of health, community police officers, religious leaders, psychologist, youth representatives and NGOs and increases communication and coordination at municipal level. The Mechanism also reaches out in prevention initiatives to village leaders, youth and women in particular. Afterwards, UNDP carried out a 'lessons learned' exercise and its recommendations will be used for the establishment of other referral mechanisms. It has been confirmed by this exercise that this is an effective mechanism in preventing and addressing identified cases. The Referral Mechanism Model piloted by UNDP has been fully considered in the context of the WBCTi.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) – the UN Migration Agency - has been engaged in the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) in the Western Balkans (WB) since 2015. Operations started in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and were later expanded to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Kosovo* and Albania. IOM's PVE effort is supported by the USAID, and the governments of the United Kingdom, Norway and Italy. In 2017, IOM established cooperation with the BiH Ministry of Security to strengthen the institutional coordination on identification and management of cases of radicalization that may lead to violent extremism. A review of international best practices and experiences of PVE referral mechanisms was conducted, coupled with a mapping of relevant national government and non-government actors, and their capacities and resources to implement a such a referral mechanism. The conclusions of these reviews led to the identification of a number of referral mechanism models appropriate for the BiH context. These are currently being presented to a wide range of government counterparts at all administrative levels throughout the country.

IOM also piloted a community-based approach in BiH in 2015, engaging an initial 6 targeted communities and later expanded to an additional 9 BiH communities, 2 in FYROM and 3 in Kosovo*. Currently, there are plans to extend interventions to Albania and to new locations in BiH, Kosovo* and FYROM. The approach comprises of (1) Inception phase assessment on prevalence of radicalization and drivers of violent extremism; (2) Integrative Complexity Thinking workshops based on the MoviEQ methodology; (3) Media literacy courses and counter-narrative social media campaigns; (4) Youth community engagement and activism through youth-led community initiatives; (5) PVE trainings for parents and community figures to notice early signs of radicalization; (6) Theatre-based peer education (Forum Theater); and (7) Extra-curricular activities available to youth in Kosovo*.

In Kosovo*, Albania and BiH, IOM has been requested by the governments to support in the assistance and reintegration of families of returning foreign fighters as well as left-behind-families of foreign fighters who still reside in conflict zones in Syria and Iraq. At the moment, this intervention is at the early stages and implementation has been initiated only in Kosovo*. There, IOM conducted an assessment of the profile and needs of foreign fighters' family members and provided them with immediate assistance upon their return. A similar approach is currently under review of the Albanian Coordinator for Countering Violent Extremism, within the Prime Minister's Office, while in BiH the intervention is still being negotiated with the relevant counterparts.

One of the most significant recommendations resulted in further WBCTi coordination on a possible joint concept for further policy reform and capacity-building in the above presented field and concepts offered, which would sufficiently involve the community level. Based on the discussions, the WBCTi experts contributing to the FIRST LINE workshops continued to develop a possible way forward in achieving a coordinated approach to achieve the required level of inter-agency cooperation at the national and local level. The WBCTi coordinator proceeded to consult with WBCTi partners on the so-called “P-R-A” (“Prevent-Refer-Address”) concept, which in late 2017 resulted in a *P-R-A Concept Paper* agreed among the IPAlI2016 partners. The P-R-A mechanism is intended to enable the WBCTi beneficiary authorities to prevent, refer and address individuals vulnerable to radicalization with potential to lead to violent extremism. In each beneficiary country, it involves the setting-up of an efficient and sustainable inter-agency solution, involving multiple levels – at least the state level and the local community (municipality) level, both consisting of relevant governmental and non-governmental civil society partners and experts needed in specific cases. An additional international dimension to the P-R-A is foreseen. Namely, once the P-R-A mechanisms in the Western Balkan Countries are set up and operational, they will be connected into a ‘WB Radicalization Awareness Network (WB RAN)’, intended to strengthen cooperation, share expertise and good practice acquired by local-level P-R-A platforms in the Western Balkan Region, and also with the EU RAN Centre of Excellence (CoE) or other relevant knowledge institutions.

The *P-R-A Concept Paper* will serve as guidance to the WBCTi partners who are recommended to refer to it in order to strive for coordinated (as opposed to partial or uncoordinated) solutions and investments. It aims towards full synergy between all WBCTi partners and the optimal development of any existing efforts that had already started in respective WB countries. Any efforts on the part of WBCTi in its further coordination will fully consider the valuable contributions on part of the Referral Mechanism concept modeled by WBCTi partners in the WB region. The Paper is not to be interpreted as prescriptive or binding. However, it aims to provide direction as well as clear and sufficient guidance to all WBCTi partners and Beneficiaries’ authorities, so that they are able proceed towards the same standard and strive for the achievement of equal performance of all Beneficiaries in this particular area of policy, while at the same time allowing for adjustments if/when required by a Beneficiary’s specific circumstances (i.e. national action plans).

An additional important issue should be noted here, established from the Project FIRST LINE workshops and WBCTi coordination, i.e. a lack of common agreement on policy terms/concepts and their proper application, which impedes understanding of the roles of the stake-holders (e.g. police vs. other sectors) and the phases of intervening to a case of indicated radicalization, not only among local authorities but also among WBCTi partners/donors who contribute to legislative reform and capacity-building. A need for a sufficiently clear and well communicated conceptualization (e.g. radicalism vs. activism, phases of the radicalization process if/when leading to VE or terrorism) will be addressed in the further development and implementation of the “P-R-A” concept (see *WBCTi iPA 2018-2020*).

In addition, during 2015-2017, international partners with cross-dimensional expertise and extensive field presence continued their awareness-raising efforts and understanding for the need

of multi-stakeholder and multi-dimensional efforts on P-CVE, supporting the external assistance efforts with relevant studies:

Under the auspices of the UNDP Kosovo* Public Pulse, a citizen perception survey on PVE was conducted to generate information of how the public views the threat from radicalization. This research was augmented with a more in-depth research on radicalization at municipal level – Kosovo* Wide Assessment of Radicalization at the Community Level 2017, the second in the series. Follow up community level recommendations for PVE were developed to support evidence based policy on the subject matter.

During 2017, UNDP through its Istanbul Regional Hub and supported by the Oslo Governance Centre, initiated a global study reviewing emerging practice by national governments in designing and implementing National Plans of Action (or strategies) on PVE – such as are called for by the (former) UN Secretary General in his 2015 Plan of Action on Violent Extremism. The study reviews the state-of-play globally with such plans, and includes an inventory by country and region including the Western Balkans. Further, it analyses different country's experiences, identifying a number of dilemmas and challenges inherent to the processes. During 2018 this study will be expanded to include in-depth case studies (to include one from the Western Balkans region), and in partnership with the UN Office for Counter-Terrorism, and will be published mid-2018.

In Albania, together with the Institute for Democracy and Mediation, UNDP conducted an in-depth study into the issue of religious tolerance. The research had a deliberate emphasis on social cohesion, seeking to identify and understand the factors in society that foster cohesion, and which can be nurtured and supported. As such it provides an interesting assessment of resilience and inter-religious tolerance in Albanian society which can provide useful insights for other contexts. The report will also serve as input to the action plan of the implementation of the National PVE Strategy, and will launch in early 2018. The study is thus intended to inform analytical capacities in responding to violent extremism, among other objectives. Meanwhile, in Kosovo*, UNDP is supporting local institutions to generate and develop comparable data on PVE through its research activities and knowledge products, as well as through direct contribution to the CVE strategy and action plan. The data is used by institutions to develop and update interventions at both national and municipal level as is the case with the OPM as coordinator of the CVE strategy and action plan, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Ministry of Internal Affairs.

As part of its engagement with civil society, the RCC gave grant to an NGO in Montenegro (Centre for Democratic Transition – CDT) to implement the project "Preventing and reacting – Role of Local Communities in Prevention of Violent Extremism" in 2017. In 2016 and 2017, the RCC commissioned and published two major research studies on P/CVE topics, which have enticed great interest among the expert public. The first one, "Initiatives to Prevent/Counter Violent Extremism in South East Europe: A Survey of Regional Issues, Initiatives and Opportunities" by Dr Valery Perry, was the first comprehensive survey (mapping exercise) of ongoing P/CVE efforts in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The second one, "A Waiting Game: Assessing and Responding to the Threat from Returning Foreign Fighters in the Western Balkans" gave deep insights and practical recommendations for the new stage of facing the challenges of radicalization, violent extremism and radicalization in the Western Balkans.

“Community involvement and inter-institutional cooperation are a precondition for a successful prevention of violent extremism and radicalization which lead to terrorism, one of the greatest security threats in Kosovo*.

My organization has been devoting strong efforts to contribute to the strengthening of inter-institutional cooperation in this area. Admittedly, inter-institutional cooperation still poses one of the biggest challenges in the implementation of the National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalism Leading to Terrorism (2015-2020). I believe an efficient – and also balanced – response can only be based on a sustainable solution involving communities. As to external assistance, it will continue to be vital in reaching solutions in Kosovo* that become sustainable and produce the right results. Here, I believe it is in our interest as well as the interest of the EU and wider International Community to reach any objectives we set for our cooperation in an efficient manner, aligning the efforts of the external projects from the very start as this will also prevent wasting of donors’ resources (human and financial).

The assistance of WBCTi and its representatives has proved to be most beneficial so far, including its contribution to the first national workshop executed via the First Line project supported by the EU in mid-2017 held in Pristina. The all-inclusive format of participation enabled an open and fruitful debate among relevant national partners, resulting in a welcome new approach and a comprehensive policy proposal for aligning the approaches of external assistance efforts to national institutional P-CVE solutions. In addition, according to my assessment, the annual joint meetings of the three regional platforms on CT and PVE held with the support of the WBCTi and the EU, have contributed to a beneficial exchange of information and good EU practices, enhanced the awareness of our colleagues from the rest of the region and the EU on challenges dealt with in Kosovo*, and changed the perspective of our national experts and officials at different levels on their relevant roles in externally supported endeavours and processes. We have found the comprehensive overview offered by the WBCTi plans of action as beneficial and reliable, and our cooperation with the IISG has been based on mutual trust and transparency.”

Kujtim Bytyqi, Kosovo Security Council Secretariat, national representative in the RCC NFP CVE FTF Network, January 2018*

RACVIAC, together with the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, organized a regional Conference titled “Foreign Terrorist Fighters – Challenges for South East Europe”, which was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The event aimed to provide a platform for a first regional exchange of views and experiences with regard to the threat of FTF in SEE and implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) in compliance with all obligations under international law, including international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

Based on the conclusions of the above-mentioned conference, as well as within the framework of overall CT program, RACVIAC, in cooperation with the RCC and the OSCE Mission to BiH, organized a follow up event titled “Foreign Terrorist Fighters – Challenges for SEE: An Integrative and Complementary Approach to Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism” hosted by RACVIAC. The conference gathered participants and lecturers from RACVIAC Members, Associate Members and other RACVIAC participants, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, RCC, and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

In February 2015, the OSCE Secretary General committed the OSCE to a multi-year programme ‘Leaders against Intolerance and Violent Extremism’ (LIVE) at the launch of the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Summit process. Using a multi-dimensional and cross-sectoral approach, LIVE promotes context-specific efforts against violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT) developed and led by civil society actors, across the OSCE area for grassroots awareness-raising to build resilience, and promoting alternative narratives and opportunities for positive change. LIVE aims to generate and strengthen efforts that are organic to civil society and to ensure a level of quality in their planning that will enhance chances of sustainability and impact. In 2016, the OSCE Transnational Threats Department (TNTD) started the development and piloting of three LIVE training curricula tailored to youth leaders, women leaders, and community leaders. The training curriculum for youth leaders was finalized in December 2017. By the end of 2018, the curricula for women and community leaders will be finalized. Following the successful completion of the development of the training courses, TNTD will aim to establish a cadre of LIVE facilitators through a series of regionally tailored train-the trainer seminars to support and scale up delivery of LIVE training by the OSCE field operations and LIVE partner organizations.

OSCE Presence in Albania conducted the following activities under the project “Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism in prisons and within probation services” – Phase 1:

- On 13 November 2017, the OSCE Presence in Albania, the Albanian Ministry of Justice and the National Coordinator on CVE jointly signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the project "Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT) in prisons and within probation services (Phase I)". The Memorandum aims to facilitate cooperation and support the mutual understanding between institutions in the framework of project implementation.
- The OSCE Presence in Albania established and chaired a Working Group on P/VERLT in prisons and probation. The aim of the WG was to discuss the current situation on VERLT in prisons and probation, the needs of the Albanian authorities on P/CVERLT.

- A Baseline Report on the management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization in Prisons and Probation in Albania was drafted. The Baseline Report is an assessment of the current situation on CVE in prisons and probation and based on this report a Needs Assessment is currently being prepared. The Needs Assessment will provide the evidence basis for strategic planning, as well as the baseline information upon which situation and response monitoring systems will rely. It will help inform future policy, capacity building and management related decisions in this area.
- A Basic Training Module on P/CVERLT related issues in the prison and probation context was developed. The OSCE Presence in Albania, in co-operation with the National Coordinator on CVE, assisted the Albanian authorities on developing a basic training module for prison and probation staff on the phenomenon of VERLT in prisons and probation, and human rights issues arising in countering and preventing VERLT in that context.

“With the assistance provided by the WBCTi and the IISG approach, we have reached progress and increased our capacities in the field of legislation adoption; we have gained new knowledge on the area of prevention and on the approach to P-CVE, incl. on the development of closer cooperation between governmental agencies and the civil society; on relevant UN instruments that we had committed to implement, such as the UN Global Strategy on Terrorism. In 2016, we also adopted the Albanian National Strategy for Combatting Extremist Violence and its Action Plan for the period 2016-2020. The WBCTi has helped to put into context our national efforts in dealing with violent extremism leading to terrorism and for monitoring the (returning) Foreign Terrorism Fighters from Albania, incl. the initiation of procedures for setting up a NATO centre of excellence in Albania, which will deal with the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters. We support the future WBCTi Integrated Plan of Action to assist us in further efficient reform, including our participation in the concrete efforts against Violent Extremisms and the threat of Terrorism, which are no longer isolated or intended each for its own sake, but have been brought into line.”

Elson MALAJ and Enrik QENAMI, Counter Terrorism Directorate, Albanian State Police, February 2018

- Training of prison staff on P/CVERLT - Based on the Basic Training Module, some 100 first-line prison staff was trained on the VERLT phenomenon in prisons. The aim of these training sessions was to equip prison staff from both sectors, social and security, with basic knowledge and key challenges in addressing risks of VERLT in the prison context, what human rights are particularly at stake when doing so and the importance of upholding human rights to enable effective prevention of terrorism and VERLT in the prison context.
- The OSCE Presence provided support in strengthening regional co-operation on P/CVERLT between the Albanian authorities and their counterparts in the region, such as in FYROM and Kosovo*.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo* has been engaged since 2015 on CVE issues at the central level upon a request (by the Kosovo* Prime Minister who asked to support his office) to provide support in drafting the *2015-2020 Kosovo* Strategy and Action Plan on Preventing VERLT*.

In addition, the Mission has had a permanent representative at the government working group on CVE and also a permanent representative at the Ministry of Internal Affairs sub working group for countering VERLT. Apart from this, the Mission is fully engaged, including with its field offices on implementing activities in line with the *2015-2020 Kosovo* Action Plan on Preventing VERLT*. Since 2015, the Mission has implemented numerous CVE specific activities, and dedicated an increasing amount of its resources toward CVE. Three areas have emerged as the main focus:

- 1) Strengthening civil society, women, youth and religious leaders;
- 2) Promoting co-operation among experts from government, civil society, academia, media and the private sector; and
- 3) Promoting community policing approaches, including strengthening existing mechanisms such as the Local Public Safety Committees (LPSCs) and Municipal Community Safety Councils (MCSCs)

In addition, from 2015 to 2017 The Mission implemented 85 activities in the above-mentioned three areas in addition to encouraging educational initiatives, intended for university representatives and students, religious community representatives, specifically women representing religious communities, the Kosovo* Police, youth organizations, education sector, media, community administration, and children and parents from different communities.

Support to municipal safety councils was provided by OSCE Mission in Serbia. A partnership between the police, local self-government and civil society was strengthened in promoting the community-policing concept, as well as close co-operation between police, municipalities and civil society to enhance the safety in neighbourhoods and prevent violent extremism and radicalization lead to terrorism (VERLT). The Mission will continue to work closely with the Municipal Safety Councils, 40 municipalities covered so far and support CSO's initiatives targeting youth and school (P/CVERLT). The Mission will continue to promote the Municipal Safety Council (MSC) model, developed in co-operation with the Serbian MoI and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) to enable citizens to forge closer partnership with the police. The Mission will continue to enhance capacities of MSCs in action and strategic planning, and foster sharing of good practices among different municipalities.

The long-term success of prevention depends on the preparedness of local governments to pursue effective integration of a “community-oriented government” at the local level. Elected and appointed administrators on local level must understand the VERLT strategy and participate in its development and implementation.

The OSCE Mission to Serbia increased its scope of activities aimed to prevent and counter violent extremism in all of its forms in Serbia. A number of activities are focused on youth, to prevent young people from the temptations of anti-social behaviour including radicalization and engagement in violent acts. A number of community-based partners are implementing a variety of projects in support of intercultural education, civic education and community and youth engagement in local safety and security discussions and actions. The Mission supported the development of a pilot teacher training module on preventing violent extremism, and is testing the approach in 5 schools throughout the country, engaging over 120 education professionals. A workshop was organized in autumn 2017 to introduce policy makers, prison officials and experts prison staff about the threats of prison radicalization, and ways to identify and prevent such phenomena. More than ten research projects on various elements of extremism and violent extremism in Serbia are in process, on topics ranging from the use of online tools in radicalization; the role of educators and schools in prevention; the inclusion of minorities in public life as an inoculating factor; the potential for reciprocal radicalization in communities affected by the refugee crisis; and more.”

The Mission promoted a multi-stakeholder collaboration to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism. In cooperation with the Serbian Ministry of Interior the following activities were conducted:

- Two workshops on preventing violent extremism in Serbia with the overall goal to initiate a country-wide discussion on how to prevent violent extremism in Serbia and developing a process of engagement and co-operation between the police with all layers of society, at the national and community level;
- Capacity building seminars and Training of Trainers aimed at increasing the capacity of Serbian police to prevent and counter VERLT. As a result MoI has developed a training curricula o preventing VERLT through community policing.
- A series of operational meetings to develop safety strategies for addressing local safety concerns and to reinforce mutual trust between Municipal Safety Councils (MSCs), other public authorities (police, educational institutions, social services) and civil society stakeholders (religious communities, civil society organizations). As a result, the MSC of Novi Pazar adopted The Safety Strategy and Action Plan which reflects measures on countering violent extremism. The Nis City Council appointed a working group to develop the Safety Strategy and Communication Strategy
- On 19 October 2017, the Serbian Government adopted the Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Terrorism for the period of 2017-2021. The Mission provided technical expertise and supported the Ministry of Interior in organizing the sessions of the inter-ministerial group for the development of the Strategy Action Plan.

OSCE Mission in Serbia launched dedicated prevention efforts in Serbia, including grassroots activities in five parts of the country on topic including intercultural education, civic education and local safety and security; development of training curricula for frontline police officer on prevention of VERLT; development of pilot teacher training module on preventing violent extremism; and support for more than ten research projects on extremism and violent extremism in Serbia.

The OSCE Mission to Serbia is also supporting a range of pilot media and digital literacy programs aimed at equipping young people with the skills they need to be critical consumers of information and resist the lure of extremist rhetoric.”

The OSCE Mission in Skopje has concluded the following activities in FYROM:

- Training on financial intelligence gathering and financial investigative techniques
- Inter-institutional co-operation among Mol and Financial Intelligence Office in combating financing terrorism
- Training seminars on countering the use of internet for terrorist purposes
- An organization-wide campaign – OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism (#UnitedCVE) was launched and is currently ongoing
- Advisory workshop on Countering Violent Extremism
- Training of border police officers: detection of forged travel documents
- National workshops to support the establishment of Advance Passenger Information (API) system
- A series of Tabletop Exercises on Developing Effective Responses to the Threat of Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT) and the Phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF)

Additionally, in 2015, the OSCE Mission to Skopje focused on building capacities of the first line police officers as cornerstones of community policing philosophy by initiating and facilitating a project targeting the detection and Prevention from Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism by using the community policing approach as a tool (the “Prevention from Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism (PERT)” project). The OSCE Mission to Skopje supported the activity on *Countering Violent Extremism by Community Policing* by hiring a Belgium expert to implement this tailor made activity. The particular objectives was to strengthen the capacity of first line police officers in countering violent extremism and raise the awareness of police officers on the utility of utilizing community policing techniques as a mean of countering the challenges of violent extremism. Furthermore, this activity created a practical, user-friendly tool to support first line police officers in detecting at an early stage the signs and indicators of radicalisation, enhance the exchange of information among police officers involved in countering violent extremism through the use of community policing techniques and develop tools and training programmes to enhance the capacity of frontline police officers to detect and prevent violent extremism at an early stage.

Additionally, the OSCE Mission in Skopje implemented the following relevant activities:

- Training on Operative Shadowing and Scouting
- Course on Combating Internet and Social Media Used by Terrorist Organizations
- Training on First Response Negotiations in Crisis Situations caused by Violent Extremist groups
- Training on Tactics and Methods Used in the Field for Countering Terrorism
- Training on Suicide Attacks and Preventive Strategies
- Training sessions on Hate Speech, Cyber Violence and Active Youth Participation for 150 teachers
- Training on Agent Recruitment Cycle in Countering Terrorism
- Open Source Intelligence and Applications for Countering Terrorism Training
- Table top Exercise on Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Promoting Prevention and Resilience
- The Mission supported an international conference on “Violent extremism in the Western Balkans, External Influence and Local Drivers”, organized by the South East European University in Tetovo.
- The Mission supported the participation of two municipal representatives from Arachinovo and Gostivar (members of the Strong Cities Network) to participate at the ICMA Regional Conference for “Countering Violent Extremism for Western Balkans” in Durrës. These events contribute to enhance capacities by promoting the spread and exchange of knowledge and information and fomenting the creation of CVE networks/communities.
- In February 2017, the Mission together with the British Embassy Skopje supported the National Coordinator and Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Counter-terrorism in conducting two roundtable discussions on the draft National Strategies and Action Plans for Countering Violent Extremism and Counter-terrorism in Skopje and Tetovo.
- Developed modules on ‘Sensitising Teachers and School Staff to CVE’ to help secondary school teachers build capacities on the threat of radicalisation and the role that schools and teachers play in preventing violent extremism. The modules will be piloted in 2018.

3.3 Developed operational cooperation: Better identification of risks at borders, foreign terrorist fighters, addressing gaps in exercising operational measures and information exchange

In early 2016, in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Initiative Network (CTI) at operational level, the PCC SEE Counter-Terrorism Network (PCC SEE CTN) defined an opportunity to close the gap in regional criminal intelligence focused on the threat of terrorism and radicalisation leading to violent extremism or terrorism. In March 2016 at their 2nd Meeting, the CTN Members concluded to proceed, assisted by the PCC SEE Secretariat, with the preparation of a “PCC SEE regional intelligence project” that would eventually result in a “regional intelligence picture” offering useful data input for regional law enforcement cooperation and to intelligence-led police work. The goal of the project “Aquila” is to produce additional criminal intelligence value with a focus on the threat of terrorism and radicalisation leading to violent extremism or terrorism, through the application of an organizational and technical solution for one-time-only person-related data matching among the respective authorities of the PCC SEE Contracting Parties. The aim is to come up with an accurate regional/PCC SEE criminal intelligence picture also by efficient processing of soft criminal intelligence of low certainty in different relevant data basis of PCC SEE Contracting Parties.

The project represents an important practical implementation of the PCC SEE Convention. It will thus focus on the existing soft criminal intelligence of low certainty in order to detect radicalised individuals “of the radar” involved in violent extremism or terrorism by consulting different data basis of PCC SEE Contracting Parties and in case of hits, and raised certainty of criminal intelligence, indicate connection between stored soft criminal intelligence, without exchange of information which presents a follow-up in accordance with existing legal basis. The PCC SEE Secretariat will provide a software solution that will automatize the process of data matching.

The project “Aquila”, resulting from enhanced cooperation under the WBCTi umbrella on part of the regional CTI network of operatives and the PCC SEE Counter-Terrorism Network will provide a missing regional intelligence picture and will thus close the gap that exists for those PCC SEE Contracting Parties who are not EU Member States and thus cannot consult large EU database systems directly. If successful, the principles of the project Aquila could be applied in other areas of cooperation and coordination as well (e.g. in the area of countering serious and organised crime).

Since 2015, the annual terrorism situation report for the Western Balkans (WB Te-Sit Report) has been prepared by the CTI operational network with the assistance of the European Counter Terrorism Centre at Europol. It is based upon the quantitative and qualitative data (in line with the TE-SAT methodology) contributed by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo* (via EULEX), Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia. It provides an overview of the failed, foiled and completed terrorist attacks, arrests made in the Western Balkan region, and if available, convictions in related cases in each annual period. The qualitative contributions from the region enable to provide an insight into the terrorist activities

dealt with by the competent CT authorities in the region. The contributed data was also used for the preparation of Europol's Te-Sat Report in 2016 and 2017.

In early 2017, members of the regional Counter-Terrorism Initiative (CTI) network chaired by Slovenia successfully produced a *Common List of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) for the Western Balkans* with the support of Europol. It consists of data entries, which the CTI members have already shared with Europol, which assisted the CTI work by cleaning the duplicates and entering the data into the Europol Information System and the Focal Point Travellers, where the data will be used on a hit/no-hit basis. The data is accessible to EU Member States on a bilateral basis, in line with the principle of reciprocity.

Many other efforts focused on raising awareness and needs analyses in the Beneficiaries in the area of building capacities for rehabilitation and reintegration. Following the conclusions from the previous events organized by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation and taking into consideration the recommendations from the OSCE wide Counter-Terrorism Conference held in Vienna in May 2017 whose specific focus was the subject of rehabilitation and reintegration of returning foreign terrorist fighters and members of their families (especially children) who followed them to/from war zones, and given that RACVIAC is taking part in the 'EU Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism Initiative: Integrative Plan of Action Objective 7: To Raise Awareness and Best Practice Exchange on Reintegration and Rehabilitation', RACVIAC, in cooperation with OSCE Mission to BA and RCC organized a workshop titled "Prosecution, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters", focusing on identifying the challenges, priorities, lessons learned (best practices), and engagement of civil society organizations (CSOs) in this process.

In 2016, list of Common Risk Indicators (CRI) was acquired as a result of the Project FIRST LINE and distributed to border police services of the Beneficiaries, a concrete result to improve the performance of the border police services in the Western Balkan region achieved within the CTI Network. Border police services have introduced them into the work of the border control officers and into training modules.

In 2017, a Seminar organised by RACVIAC focused on strengthening the capacity-building in the context of the EU Integration Processes in South East Europe, while the topics covered a wide array of expertise in the field of border security and management (information interchange, new technologies, terrorism, drug trafficking and arms smuggling, counterfeiting and identity management). The purpose of this joint event was to continue addressing the challenges in border security and management, to identify current and future challenges and to support the implementation of the Border Security and Management Concept of the OSCE Participating States in South East Europe, and other international and regional initiatives, i.e. to raise efficiency of the border management authorities in SEE and foster mutual cooperation in mitigating current and potential security treats.

UNODC commenced work in its Global Initiative on Strengthening the Legal Regime against FTFs in the Middle East, North Africa and South Eastern Europe (2015-2019), an initiative funded by Canada, the European Union, Japan and the United States of America. The Initiative aims at strengthening national legal frameworks against FTFs in compliance with UNSCR 2178 (2014), as well as to train the criminal justice officials to deal with specific legal aspects related to countering FTF at the national and regional level and to enhance international, regional and sub-regional cooperation in this respect. For South Eastern Europe, and under EU funding, the project has already completed a regional training on international and regional cooperation relevant to fighting FTFs and a series of national workshops on normative and administrative challenges when dealing with FTFs within the criminal justice realm. For the next three years additional tailor-made national workshops are envisaged as per the identified needs, as well as one regional workshop.

Within the WBCTi, with US funding, UNODC completed a project to develop the capacity of criminal justice training national institutions on the specific legal and technical aspects related to countering FTF through a tailor-made training module. The module includes an analysis of the applicable regional and international legal frameworks to FTF and practical guidelines on how to conduct investigations of FTF related cases. The module was developed in collaboration with a number of judicial national institutions of South Eastern Europe.

The IJ (International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law) in Malta, a WBCTi Partner, executed a three-day workshop in Pristina on *The Rule of Psychologists and Religious Leaders in Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Kosovo** in the period between 29th November–1 December 2017 in cooperation with U.S.ICITAP, intended for imams, social workers, psychologists as well as prison officers and police officers. The workshop was part of the IJ's RFTF Initiative. Two workshops, held in cooperation between IJ and CEELI in June 2016 and April 2017, focused on the West Balkans region, intended for local trial judges on adjudicating terrorism-related cases.

UNDP executed a research, based on interviews with returned foreign fighters, which identifies key pull and push factors which lead to radicalization. The report "Understanding Push and Pull Factors in Kosovo*: Primary Interviews with Returned Foreign Fighters and their Families" is an independent assessment of returned foreign fighters, currently serving their sentences either in prison or under house arrest, as well as their families which also identifies key policy recommendations not just on pull and push factors but also on possible approaches to reintegration.

Measures to address the reintegration and rehabilitation of returnees were identified in the above mentioned research by UNDP, including the following: Development of clear sentencing guidelines for judges and appropriate institutional standards; Develop a clear communication strategy; Investing in increasing employment opportunities and improving the employability of Kosovo*'s workforce; Targeted outreach of welfare services to the families of those imprisoned on terrorism charge; Develop programs that allow vetted religious leaders to visit prisons on a regular basis and provide specific psychological/psychosocial support program targeting foreign fighters and their families to improve resilience. Based on the lessons learned from the referral mechanism, it is possible that its function can be expanded to provide some of the interventions listed above as part of the reintegration and rehabilitation process.

Supporting timely and strategic communication with the population at large, UNDP in Kosovo* is developing a handbook for the referral mechanism which is based on the Terms of Reference of the current referral mechanism and will explain in-depth the structure, roles and responsibilities, risk assessment and management, case management, development of support package (in line with existing legal framework), services, outreach, communication and coordination, amongst others. The handbook is meant to serve as a practical guide and best practice for institutions when establishing similar mechanisms.

Focusing on youth, UNDP in cooperation with European Foundation for Democracy, in January 2018 will also roll-out a teacher training handbook which focuses on building teacher capacity for early identification of vulnerable students.

During the end of 2017 UNDP through its Istanbul Regional Hub designed a methodology for a study to be conducted by the UK-based Tony Blair Institute in the first half of 2018, which will use data-driven methods to map out violent extremist activity in the Western Balkans' online space. The study will focus on different types of violent extremism, not limited to Islamist-inspired, and will be shared widely upon completion to inform state and non-state actors' efforts to counter extremist narratives and advance more cohesive societies in the region.

3.4 Raised complementarity and visibility

Since the beginning of its implementation, the visibility of WBCTi has been raised in different frameworks and at different levels, including Council of the EU bodies:

- **2016-2017** – Meetings of the Informal Working Group on the Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism Initiative (WBCTi) in Brussels
- **2016-2017** – WBCTi regularly contributed to the meetings of the Terrorism Working Party (TWP) and the TWP/COTER format
- **18th May 2017** – Western Balkan P-CVE/CT experts in cooperation with international and regional partners developed a list of priorities to contribute to the draft WBCTi iPA 2018-2020 (Regional Conference on CT and P-CVE co-organised by the George C. Marshall Centre, the Slovenian Ministry of the Interior-Police and DCAF Ljubljana).
- **12th July 2017** – Western Balkan Heads of Government at their summit in Trieste welcomed the further support given to the WBCTi as well as to IISG in their formal meeting declaration.

IISG Kick-Off Conference – On 8th September 2017, the WBCTi became embedded in the formally launched Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) in the Western Balkans, after the ministers of interior/security of the Beneficiaries, accompanied by EU Member States, EU agencies and institutions, international and other IISG Partners stated their unequivocal support to the IISG WB implementation.

- **14th September 2017** – WBCTi contribution to the 1st CZ and P-CVE coordination meeting hosted by the EU Delegation to BiH; one of the main focuses was placed on the necessity for the coordination among all WBCTi partners in planning and implementing CT and P/CVE actions in the WB region from now on, where the coordination role of the EU regional CT adviser Mr Filip de Ceuninck and the role of the WBCTi Lead Partners (DCAF Ljubljana, Austria and Slovenia) was highly appreciated.
- **15th September 2017** – official launch of the WBCTi website <http://wbcti.wb-iisg.com/>
- **19th September** – WBCTi contributes to the first IPAIL2016 Partners' Workshop after the launch of the IPAIL2016 Regional Action "Support to Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (P-CVE) in the Western Balkans", implemented by DCAF (coordinator), UNDP, IOM and RCC (initiated 11th August 2017)
- **1st October 2017** – the P-R-A ("Prevent – Refer – Address") concept entered into open consultation among WBCTi Partners.
- **7th–8th November 2017** – WBCTi presented to the Terrorism Working Party (TWP/COTER) who discussed and reviewed the implementation of the WBCTi iPA 2015-2017 and the development of the iPA 2018-2020
- **14th November 2017** – the high-level DCAF Foundation Council, the supreme body of the foundation, comprising 63 member countries, the canton of Geneva and 6 observers, hosted at the DCAF Headquarters in Geneva, addressed the IISG, took stock of progress and supported its further implementation.