

Civil Society Forum

of the Western Balkans Summit Series

CSF Vienna

Working Groups' Recommendations

Security Issues in the Western Balkans

Fostering talent in law enforcement

- In EU accession process, **the reform of police organisation should be a benchmark** for all Western Balkan (WB) countries. A professional, reliable and efficient police organisation is of paramount importance for effective fight against corruption, organised crime, terrorism and trust of citizens in state. Therefore, further support for **professionalization of police services and building organisational and individual integrity** of law enforcement needs to be supported through independent monitoring by the WB6 civil society and the European Commission and regional exchanges among police services. The outcome of strengthening professionalization and integrity in the law enforcement should be that police services are operationally independent from political interests and shielded from criminal influence.
- **Professionalization of law enforcement** should include establishment of functional human resources management procedures and practices that will allow for transparent and merit-based recruitment, selection, professional development, promotion and nurturing of talent. Within the reforms of human resources management in the WB6 law enforcement agencies, special attention should be paid to:
 - Introduction of checks and balances into police legislation and practice for limiting political interference in the HR management and career cycle;
 - The HR reforms should ensure also for retention and further professional development of investigators, analysts and other professional law enforcement staff that have been involved in most sensitive investigations of high-profile corruption and organised crime cases;
 - All reforms of the HR management need to pay special attention not to create additional hurdles for women in operational jobs to do their jobs and get equal opportunities for career development and promotion as their colleagues. The promotion of equal opportunities for women in law enforcement could be further strengthened through regional exchanges and networking.
- **Integrity of police services** should be significantly improved through strengthening of internal affairs and external oversight mechanisms resulting into inquiries looking at the infiltration of crime in the police or political interest meddling into operational investigations. Based on the lessons learned in security and integrity vetting of all employees in the State Police of Albania, similar practices could be tried in other countries of the region. **The safeguards must be in place not to allow for the misuse of anti-corruption measures, such as integrity and security vetting** of the police staff for selection of only party-loyalists.

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- In order to make professionalization and building integrity initiatives in WB6 law enforcement sustainable, **regional networks of competent civil society organisations and investigative journalists focussing on police reform should be supported to continue independent monitoring** of national police reforms and regional commitments within Berlin Process.

Countering violent extremism – civil society should be included in all these activities and their contribution recognized.

- We welcome the efforts invested by the WB6 Governments and international partners in confronting the threat of Islamic extremism but highlight the need for the Governments to also address forms of extremism other than Islamic extremism. This primarily refers to addressing right-wing and ethnic-political extremism that has created violent incidents in the country and is one of primary drivers of the Islamic extremism. Special attention should be paid to exploration of links between right-wing extremism and football hooliganism and hate speech.
- Violent extremism prevention efforts should be strengthened, especially in relation to the groups faced with social exclusion such as youth, ethnic and religious minorities. All prevention efforts should not treat these groups as potential risk, but as partners in preventing radicalisation of their peers. Therefore, support should be provided for provision of formal and informal educational programs, sports and other community-based activities in partnership with youth and minorities groups and local civil society.
- More resources and professional support should be given to the government agencies in charge of re-integration and rehabilitation of foreign fighters.
- Appropriate sentencing must be ensured for all foreign terrorist fighters irrespective of whether they fought in Syria, Iraq or Ukraine, as well as their subsequent social re-integration.
- The information exchange among law enforcement authorities within each of the WB6 countries and among them should be improved so as to facilitate timely identification of new groups or prevention of incidents and interruption of financial flows financing terrorism. Direct cooperation and information exchange should be established also with international partners, in particular with Europol and Eurojust.
- The prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing should not be used to limit activities of legitimate and law-abiding civil society organizations. The CSOs should monitor the effects of the new risk-based approach promoted by the FATF on recommendation application in their countries vis-à-vis international human rights law and the principles and standards which facilitate an enabling environment for civil society development (for example the recommendation for introduction of mandatory registration of the NPOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina might be limiting for the freedom of associations). Governments should be held accountable for any measure undertaken in response to the FATF evaluation processes. The identification of a subset of the NPOs that are at high risk of terrorist financing abuse (if any) should be based on the information coming from various relevant sources: regulators, security institutions (i.e. police and intelligence agencies), donors, tax authorities, the NPOs and beneficiaries.