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**Current situation with respect to regional and
subregional cooperation****Current situation with respect to regional and subregional
cooperation in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe****Report of the Secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. The present report provides an analysis of the situation concerning drugs, crime and terrorism in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from 2020 until early 2022, and includes a description of the activities conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in those regions.
2. The work carried out by UNODC in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16, on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, as well as Goals 3, 5 and 17. The work of UNODC is also in line with the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem (General Assembly resolution S-30/1, annex).
3. UNODC carries out its work in the region within the framework of its regional programme for South-Eastern Europe, the objective of which is to meet specific national needs while ensuring that national activities and outputs form part of a coordinated and harmonized regional and interregional approach. In 2019, a new regional programme for South-Eastern Europe was developed for the period 2020–2023. The new regional programme was developed through an inclusive and participatory consultation process that included three expert working group meetings and other consultations in the spring of 2019 and saw the direct involvement of more than 90 government officials and experts from across the region, as well as technical experts from UNODC global programmes. The process provided Member States with an opportunity to shape the regional programme and to take ownership of the initiative.

* Available only in English, French, Russian and Spanish, which are the working languages of the subsidiary body.

** [UNODC/HONEURO/14/1](#).



II. South-Eastern Europe

A. Introduction

4. The world's single largest heroin trafficking route continues to be the Balkan route, along which opiates are smuggled from Afghanistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Türkiye, the Balkan countries and various destinations in Western and Central Europe. Countries along the Balkan route accounted for 50 per cent of the total global quantities of heroin and morphine seized outside of Afghanistan in 2019, with a further 7 per cent reported by countries in Western and Central Europe, of which a significant proportion was trafficked along the Balkan route.¹

5. Heroin is mainly trafficked to Western and Central Europe overland along the Balkan route and partly by sea along the southern route, with the subsequent redistribution of heroin from trafficking hubs, such as the ports of Rotterdam in the Netherlands and Antwerp in Belgium, to major consumer markets in Western and Central Europe.²

6. The largest quantities of heroin and morphine seized in Europe were reported in South-Eastern Europe by Türkiye (62 per cent of the European total), followed by Bulgaria, reflecting the ongoing use of the Balkan route. The largest quantities seized in Western and Central Europe were reported by Belgium, followed by the Netherlands, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Slovenia and Italy, and the largest quantities seized in Eastern Europe were reported by Ukraine, followed by Belarus and the Russian Federation. In all the subregions of Europe, more countries reported increases than decreases in the quantities of heroin and morphine seized in 2019.³

7. The cocaine trafficking route between South America and Europe is the second largest in the world, and it is evolving. Supply chains once dominated by a few organized criminal groups are changing, with many more groups becoming involved. Much of the cocaine in Europe used to be imported through well-established channels, notably by organized criminal groups in Italy and through alliances between groups in Colombia and Spain. Now, however, organizations originating in the Balkans are increasingly involved in trafficking and supply, and some are now cutting out intermediaries and sourcing cocaine directly from production areas in the Andean region. The increased competition and efficiency of supply mean that cocaine is becoming more available, and the quality is rising. The purity of cocaine available in Europe has increased by 40 per cent in the past decade, meaning that high-quality cocaine has, in effect, become cheaper per pure unit.⁴

8. Preventing the threat of a further increase in the cocaine supply to Europe requires the boosting of international cooperation between the Americas and Europe and the transfer of best law enforcement practices in terms of targeting loose criminal networks and new communication tools. Such cooperation needs to include not only law enforcement agencies but also prosecutors, and should also involve the promotion of joint investigation teams through the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust) and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol).⁵

¹ *World Drug Report 2021*, booklet 3, *Drug Market Trends: Cannabis, Opioids* (United Nations publication, 2021).

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *World Drug Report 2021*, booklet 1, *Executive Summary* (United Nations publication, 2021).

⁵ Ibid.

B. Organized crime and illicit drug trafficking

Organized crime

9. In Albania, organized criminal groups generally comprise 10 to 15 members and are well organized.⁶ In terms of networks, Albanian criminal groups have begun to cooperate with criminal groups in other countries, such as North Macedonia, Türkiye and Latin American countries, as well as with Albanian-speaking criminal groups in Kosovo.⁷ The most common crimes are those of cultivation of and trafficking in cannabis, trafficking in and distribution of cocaine and heroin, and money-laundering.

10. In October 2021, UNODC launched the “Organized crime strategy toolkit for developing high-impact strategies” at a high-level side event held on the margins of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, which included an address by the Executive Director of UNODC and featured the Assistant Minister for Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina as one of the speakers. In her remarks, the Assistant Minister for Security welcomed the expansion of UNODC technical assistance to include the process of developing national strategies to prevent and combat organized crime and stressed that Bosnia and Herzegovina was currently developing its new national strategy against organized crime for the period 2021–2024.

11. Since 2021, UNODC has been supporting the work of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards the development of a comprehensive strategy against organized crime. That cooperation in developing the new strategy is an outcome of the dialogue between UNODC and the authorities in the country. In this context, and relying on the above-mentioned strategy toolkit, UNODC is currently providing technical assistance to the working group for the drafting of the new country-wide strategy against organized crime.

Drug trafficking

12. The drug seizures made in South-Eastern Europe by the port control units established under the UNODC-World Customs Organization (WCO) Container Control Programme demonstrate the region’s role as a transit route for different types of drugs, including cocaine, several recent seizures of which totalled approximately 1.9 tons. In addition to drug trafficking, seizures made by the port control units show that the smuggling of revenue goods, the violation of intellectual property rights and trafficking in arms and stolen cars also take place in the region.

13. The seizures reported by the port control units in South-Eastern Europe in 2021 included 1,962 kg of cocaine, 45.5 kg of heroin, 1,637,220 cigarettes, 376 items of goods violating intellectual property rights, and 46,800 euros, 89,620 British pounds and 78,000 United States dollars in undeclared cash.

14. Other seizures in the region included 219.7 kg of heroin seized by the Croatian authorities on 11 October 2021 on a ship from South America at the port of Ploče on the Adriatic Sea. The heroin was hidden in metal packages found in the ship’s cargo hold. The ship had reportedly arrived by way of Türkiye and Italy, and the heroin was found using risk profiling. According to the Croatian police, that was the largest individual seizure of heroin ever made in the country. On 3 November 2021, also in the port of Ploče, divers found 61.6 kg of cocaine in 54 packages in a metal container attached with magnets to the bottom of another ship from South America. According to reports, the seized drugs were meant for distribution in Western Europe, and their total estimated value was 17 million euros. On 26 August 2021, the police of Montenegro found 1,400 kg of cocaine in a warehouse belonging to a business company in the town of Zeta. Two persons, namely, the warehouse owner and his daughter, were detained. In May 2022, the police of Türkiye reported the country’s largest-ever methamphetamine seizure in Istanbul, following a lengthy surveillance

⁶ Source: Albanian State Police, National Service for Combating Narcotics.

⁷ All references to Kosovo in the present document shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

operation. A total of 1,117 kg of methamphetamine in liquid and crystal form was seized, and the operation led to the arrest of the members of a criminal group, including its leader. On 7 June 2022, the Italian authorities reported that they had confiscated 4.3 tons of cocaine with a street value of more than 200 million euros. The Guardia di Finanza reported the seizure as one of the largest ever in Europe and that it had dealt a blow to the feared criminal organization known as the “Gulf Clan” of Colombia. The cocaine was seized in the port city of Trieste in north-eastern Italy, following a year-long investigation that also involved United States Department of Homeland Security and the Spanish National Police. Authorities also issued 38 arrest warrants for alleged international drug traffickers in Bulgaria, Colombia, Croatia, Italy, the Netherlands and Slovenia.

15. Albanian-speaking and Serbian- and Croatian-speaking groups have become increasingly active in procuring large amounts of cocaine at the source.⁸ Law enforcement agencies from the jurisdictions in South-Eastern Europe are cooperating with their international counterparts in countering that trend. One example is the international law enforcement operation led by Europol against a Balkan cocaine cartel in September 2021.⁹

16. Organized crime and drug trafficking continue to pose major challenges for the Government of Albania. The country continues to be a source, transit and destination country for trafficking in narcotic drugs. Drug trafficking and other smuggling activities are a major threat to national economic development and to the safety and security of the international supply chain. The port of Durrës in Albania, the largest in the Western Balkans and among countries in the region that are not members of the European Union, is particularly vulnerable and remains a constant target for the trans-shipment of relatively large quantities of drugs, often hidden in legitimate cargo. It is generally agreed that drug trafficking is the most important source of income for organized criminal groups in Albania. Large volumes of cocaine originating from Latin America have reached the port of Durrës in transit or as a final destination.

17. Trends observed between January 2020 and June 2022 show numerous cocaine shipments bound for the port of Durrës as the final destination, with somewhat uncharacteristic routings, while airport cargo inspections illustrated that this type of crime, particularly in inbound shipments, is becoming increasingly diversified, introducing new smuggling risks for carriers serving Albania.

18. For the implementation of the Container Control Programme in Albania, it is fundamental to ensure coordination between various agencies and to enhance international cooperation among relevant countries. Effective international cooperation has sought to identify the modus operandi of the criminal groups and their production and distribution chains in order to ensure that illicit drugs and criminals can be tracked down.

19. Continued and sustainable communication between the port control unit officers at the port of Durrës and their colleagues at the port of Gioia Tauro, Italy, and some ports in Latin America shows that international cooperation networks established under the Container Control Programme have been increasingly active.

20. Drug trafficking, among other crimes, provides local organized criminal groups with large profits, which are subsequently laundered into the licit economy. This is evident, for example, in the large seizure of undeclared cash at Tirana International Airport by the air cargo control unit established in February 2020 in the course of implementing the Container Control Programme in Albania.

21. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic revealed that air cargo carriers play an important role in the supply chain, in particular in ensuring that essential

⁸ UNODC and European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), “The illicit trade of cocaine from Latin America to Europe: from oligopolies to free for-all?”, Cocaine Insights, No. 1 (Vienna, September 2021).

⁹ Europol, “Over 60 charged in crackdown on Balkan cartel behind cocaine pipeline to Europe”, 27 September 2021.

equipment and supplies reach their destination. The situation also reinforced the role of the air cargo control unit at the only international airport in Albania. Current trends indicate that growth in the volume of air cargo will require more streamlined risk analysis to improve control techniques and related paperwork.

22. Seizures at the port of Durrës during the period from January 2020 to June 2022 included 82.5 kg of heroin, 25.5 kg of cannabis herb, 1,050,000 packets of cigarettes (i.e. 21 million cigarettes), 730 kg of cocaine and two stolen vehicles. At Tirana International Airport, seizures included the equivalent of 500,000 euros in undeclared cash, as well as smuggled goods, including pharmaceutical products, guns and ammunition (including 4 kg of shotgun cartridges), falsified documents, 9 kg of smuggled gold, counterfeit euro banknotes in the amount of 1.2 million euros and 4,267 unauthorized and unvalidated SIM cards.

23. The Albanian State Police targeted the cannabis production chain, which involved various production methods, including both indoor and outdoor cultivation. Eradication was the first step in disrupting the cannabis supply chain. In the past two years, Albania has been working to eradicate cannabis crops in the north-western, south-western and central parts of the country. The authorities have carried out operations to eradicate cannabis crops with operational support from the Guardia di Finanza of Italy and from the European Commission-funded programme on air surveillance of cannabis plantations in Albania. The results in terms of the destruction of crops were significant, as the operations disrupted criminal chains of distribution and sale. That was also reflected in the reduced number of seizures of outbound cannabis at the port of Durrës.

24. With regard to the Balkan route for heroin trafficking, various factors have pushed the route farther north of Albania, and fewer seizures of heroin trafficked through and out of Albania have been observed.

25. Since January 2020, the region has been supported in enhancing border control through a joint European Union-UNODC initiative. As a result of that initiative, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a new port control unit was created at the Gradiška land border crossing in 2020, as was a new air cargo control unit at Sarajevo International Airport. In addition, a joint airport inter-agency group was established at Skopje International Airport in North Macedonia in 2022, and preparations are ongoing to establish such an inter-agency group at Belgrade International Airport in Serbia. Each of those groups has two components: an air cargo control unit focusing on threats involving cargo, and a joint airport interdiction task force focusing on threats involving passengers, including foreign terrorist fighters. In 2021, UNODC signed letters of agreement with North Macedonia and Serbia in this regard.

26. In 2021, the Container Control Programme supported the implementation of bilateral operational activities conducted by the Indirect Taxation Authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the customs administrations of Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. Specific and targeted operational activities were conducted from September to November 2021. The operational phase featured interactive cooperation and information-sharing among the participating administrations, resulting in the exchange of more than 140 information requests, notifications and alerts.

27. Based on the post-operational reports provided by the Indirect Taxation Authority, those collaborative exercises resulted in the seizure by the Customs Administration of Croatia of 431 boxes of cigarettes and 23 pallets of shisha tobacco. Likewise, following a communication received from its Croatian counterparts, the Indirect Taxation Authority conducted related activities and seized 26.5 tons of tobacco molasses (non-excite goods) with a value of approximately 105,000 euros, and undeclared goods with a total value of 25,000 euros. Most significantly, the Authority presented criminal cases before the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina, providing evidence on the damage incurred to the country's budget in the amount of 13.8 million marka (approximately 7 million euros).

28. Targeted activities carried out in cooperation with the Revenue and Customs Administration of Montenegro resulted in the seizure of 170 kg of cannabis in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, many activities conducted in the course of 2021 had a preventive impact, featuring elements of targeted prevention of the cross-border smuggling of firearms and ammunition and of tobacco and related products. Joint operational activities between the Indirect Taxation Authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Customs Administration of Serbia resulted in the seizure of two trucks containing a total of 40 tons of shisha tobacco by the Serbian authorities.

Corruption and asset recovery

29. UNODC continues to support the countries of the region in addressing corruption and developing capacity for effective asset recovery through its regional programme for South-Eastern Europe and its Global Programme to Prevent and Combat Corruption through Effective Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in Support of Sustainable Development Goal 16.

30. UNODC provides technical assistance to address specific national needs articulated in an inclusive, participatory process and ensures that activities and outputs at the national level form part of a coordinated, harmonized regional and interregional approach, in line with the principles that underpin the Office's global activities.

31. Regional and national support is delivered through two interconnected UNODC regional projects, entitled "From illicit financial flows to asset recovery" and "Regional anti-corruption and illicit finance road map", focusing on the further enhancement of anti-corruption and asset recovery capabilities through international cooperation, mutual legal assistance and the development of targeted knowledge products to facilitate asset recovery processes.

32. In June 2021, with the support of UNODC, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, as well as Kosovo,⁷ adopted a regional anti-corruption and illicit finance road map for the Western Balkans jurisdictions. The representatives of those six jurisdictions concluded that corruption, money-laundering and financial crime were shared security threats, and they committed to deepening regional cooperation and strengthening their collective response in that regard. Building on the momentum generated in the context of the Berlin process, the initiative is aimed at fast-tracking the implementation of existing anti-corruption commitments, including those under the Convention against Corruption, the evaluation recommendations of the Group of States against Corruption of the Council of Europe, and the relevant European Union directives in support of the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 5, 16 and 17. The implementation of the road map will result in tangible improvements to the existing national frameworks for preventing and combating corruption and illicit finance and in better implementation of international standards and recommendations, including those stemming from the Implementation Review Mechanism of the Convention against Corruption.

Trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants

33. The Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section of UNODC delivered a number of tailor-made activities in South-Eastern Europe in 2021 and 2022, including on enhancing international cooperation among prosecutorial and central authorities, countering trafficking in persons in cooperation with judicial training institutions, organizing thematic regional conferences on countering trafficking in persons for the purpose of forced criminality, and supporting meetings of national anti-trafficking coordinators in South-Eastern Europe.

34. UNODC continues to strengthen the capacity of South-Eastern Europe to address trafficking in persons through the relevant multidisciplinary regional expert group. The Office organized a number of regional expert group meetings on different thematic issues related to trafficking in persons, as part of the regional initiative on

trafficking in persons in South-Eastern Europe implemented in 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, in mid-2022, UNODC produced and launched the report entitled *Exploitation and Abuse: The Scale and Scope of Human Trafficking in South-Eastern Europe*, which contains descriptions of the most common forms of trafficking in persons in South-Eastern Europe from a practical perspective and addresses the current challenges encountered by professionals involved in the various stages of the anti-trafficking response, from detection to prosecution, including prevention and the protection of victims. The key findings and the recommendations set out in the report were discussed during the regional expert group meetings and were further supported by country reports from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia.

35. In 2021, UNODC initiated a project on addressing trafficking in persons in South-Eastern Europe, in particular on ending the impunity of traffickers and supporting justice for victims of trafficking in persons, for the period 2021–2024. One aim of the project is to accurately identify gaps and weaknesses in the current response to trafficking in persons at the national and regional levels by facilitating partnerships and continuous interaction among Governments, the judiciary, civil society, academia, regional and international organizations and other relevant expert practitioners. Another aim of the project is to develop and provide sustainable and targeted capacity-building support to relevant stakeholders in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova and Serbia. To date, UNODC has drafted national reviews and analyses of selected trafficking in persons cases as a starting point for further intensive consultation with the stakeholders involved, with a view to understanding how to identify instances of trafficking in persons, distinguish them from other offences, apply victim-centred approaches, substantiate cases by collecting adequate evidence and consistently operationalize existing cooperation agreements and arrangements with other countries of the region and the European Union. Through expert discussions and validation workshops held in April 2022, the findings and recommendations emerging from national reviews and analyses were validated by the respective national stakeholders and recommendations for proactive solutions to remedy gaps and challenges were proposed in all project countries. Moreover, UNODC has started conducting national multidisciplinary workshops with learning objectives that directly correspond to the final recommendations based on the review and analysis findings and the conclusions of the above-mentioned expert discussions.

36. For the investigation of smuggling of migrants cases, UNODC fosters international cooperation in criminal matters pursuant to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and assists States in South-Eastern Europe in strengthening coordination among relevant stakeholders, both internally and internationally, while ensuring that due support and assistance are provided to affected migrants. For North Macedonia and Serbia, UNODC developed training curricula on the smuggling of migrants that were subsequently included in the programmes of the relevant national training institutions and that featured applications of blended learning through case-based simulation and e-learning. Those curricula served as the basis for the implementation of three 3-day bilateral simulation training courses on the smuggling of migrants, held for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro in November and December 2021 and planned for Serbia and North Macedonia in the fourth quarter of 2022. The training courses are aimed at strengthening the understanding, knowledge, expertise and skills of criminal justice practitioners to effectively investigate and prosecute migrant smuggling cases and to address smuggling along what is known as the Western Balkan route, one of the global hotspots for the smuggling of migrants.

37. In its interregional crime control approach, UNODC continues to play a unique connecting role in the enhancement of operational cooperation between South-Eastern Europe and West and Central Asia in order to support the efficient tackling of all forms of trafficking and transnational organized crime along the Balkan route, and also facilitates follow-up to specific cases and the establishment of joint investigation teams.

Illicit financial flows and countering the financing of terrorism

38. Since 2018, South-Eastern Europe has been supported in countering the financing of terrorism through a comprehensive multi-year training programme jointly implemented by UNODC and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The programme was first launched in Albania, after which it was expanded to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2020 and then to North Macedonia in 2021. The programme is designed to support countries in detecting, investigating and disrupting terrorism financing more effectively and in complying with international standards, in particular Security Council resolutions such as resolution [2462 \(2019\)](#), and Financial Action Task Force standards.

39. In March 2020, UNODC concluded its project on building capacity for conducting financial investigations in South-Eastern Europe. The purpose of the project was to provide the authorities of the targeted jurisdictions with a unified approach in conducting financial investigations at the outset of all investigations linked to serious and organized crime, drug trafficking, money-laundering and terrorist financing, as well as to reinforce regional and cross-border cooperation among law enforcement and judiciary institutions. UNODC certified 10 trainers in each jurisdiction, who developed, with the support of the Office and on the basis of practical case studies from law enforcement and judiciary institutions in South-Eastern Europe, six national curricula on financial investigations tailored to the specific national contexts and legal frameworks.

C. Drug prevention and treatment, HIV treatment and care

40. The Balkan route is a key route for trafficking not only in heroin, but also in cocaine and cannabis. As a result, drugs and associated criminal activities are prevalent throughout the region, a situation that is further exacerbated by structural factors that have existed for decades. The economic and social upheaval experienced across South-Eastern Europe in the 1990s and early 2000s created a high-risk environment for drug abuse and the health and social consequences of such abuse. Regarding responses to drug abuse, alignment with the European Union has brought new challenges related to the transposition of the European Union *acquis* into national legislation, especially in the area of justice and domestic affairs. However, it has also created new opportunities for cooperation and discussion on approaches to addressing drug abuse and the associated health and social issues and responses. The jurisdictions of South-Eastern Europe supported the statements of the European Union with regard to the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, on the world drug problem, and with regard to the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem of 2019, and they are in broad alignment with the approach taken by the European Union to preventing drug abuse.¹⁰

41. Treatment services for substance use disorders tend to be provided by a combination of government programmes and community service organizations and generally require improvement across the region.¹¹ Drug treatment services are mostly provided by psychiatric hospitals; few or no services are offered by general practice clinics, except in Serbia.

42. The prevention work of UNODC is focused on improving and supporting national comprehensive systems to prevent drug use and is based on the integration of evidence-based strategies that are consistent with international standards on drug

¹⁰ Council of the European Union, “EU-Western Balkans dialogue on drugs (18 April 2018): outcome of the meeting”, document 8930/18.

¹¹ See European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), *Drug Treatment Systems in the Western Balkans: Outcomes of a Joint EMCDDA-UNODC Survey of Drug Treatment Facilities* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2019).

use prevention, the collection of drug use prevention data, related research and evaluations, and the development of evidence-based tools and guidelines to prevent drug use, in particular among young people, young adolescents and high-risk groups.

43. The activities carried out during the reporting period supported the region's efforts in the area of drug use prevention. Governments received assistance in implementing and expanding evidence-based prevention strategies, and notable progress was made in two Member States, namely, Croatia and Serbia, with regard to the delivery of preventive interventions based on international standards.

44. One of the key UNODC initiatives in the area of prevention in South-Eastern Europe is the Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence programme, which was launched in Serbia in 2014 and gradually expanded to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Croatia, reaching more than 7,700 students in over 180 schools across the region. In the expansion strategy, the countries initially involved in the programme pilot (Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) continued with the additional, longer programmatic cycle, with 10 additional schools per country. The expansion of the programme is under way in Slovenia, and a new grant was received to continue the work in Croatia. On the basis of a strict evidence-based implementation modality, the programme proved to be effective and showed encouraging results in terms of substance use reduction, the reduction of the intention to use drugs and dissuasive effects on participating students with regard to substance use in their local environment.

45. In addition, UNODC is supporting Serbian practitioners in implementing family skills tools and programmes, in particular the evidence-based "Strong families" programme, which is backed by scientific evidence on its effectiveness in terms of developing family skills to support the healthy and safe development of children, regardless of their gender, and preventing drug use, violence (including against children), mental health problems and other negative social and health outcomes. The programme can be easily adapted to serve families in challenged and stressful settings in different contexts.

46. The UNODC "Listen first" campaign was implemented in Serbia with the support of the country's national Office for Combating Drugs, which is responsible for implementing drug policies. The Office for Combating Drugs devised an ambitious plan involving various State administrative bodies and organizations that deal with drug use issues at both the central and local levels of government. The campaign reached people across Serbia with a consistent and engaging message on substance use prevention.

47. In May 2021, UNODC organized an online regional capacity development workshop entitled "Treatnet Family: elements of family-based treatment for youths with drug use disorders, including in contact with the criminal justice system – creating societies resilient to drugs and crime" for practitioners in South-Eastern Europe and Italy who work with adolescents with substance use problems. The workshop enabled participants to enhance their knowledge and skills with regard to addressing issues related to drug use disorders among youth and related problems associated with family settings. Treatnet Family is a science-informed training package on elements of family therapy, intended to support practitioners in the health, social and criminal justice sectors who work with young people and their families in settings characterized by limited resources.

48. In April 2022, UNODC supported policymakers in Albania with training on the nature, prevention and treatment of drug use disorders. The UNODC policymakers training package on the nature, prevention and treatment of drug use disorders was developed in 2016, as part of the Office's work in supporting Member States in their efforts to create humane, effective and evidence-based drug use prevention and drug dependence treatment and care services. The tool is designed to support Member States in developing appropriate policies, strategies, programmes and interventions aimed at preventing drug use and increasing the availability of and access to comprehensive systems of care for people affected by drug use and drug use disorders.

D. Recent UNODC regional initiatives for South-Eastern Europe

49. The Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime continues to be a key partner of UNODC in South-Eastern Europe and beyond. In cooperation with UNODC, the Academy has organized multiple training courses for Balkan law enforcement officers. Although the national system has been restructured, that partnership will continue. Following an operational pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Counter-Narcotics Training Academy now holds the mandate for all counter-narcotics training, while the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime retains the training mandate for all other law enforcement activities. UNODC has recently cooperated with the Counter-Narcotics Training Academy in the delivery of training courses on risk analysis and narcotics trends for border law enforcement staff from the Balkan region.

50. Under the auspices of its regional programme for South-Eastern Europe, UNODC continues to support regional and interregional law enforcement and multi-agency coordination and cooperation to tackle trafficking in drugs and other items and to combat transnational organized crime. In this regard, a Serious Organized Crime Adviser was deployed in 2019 to address the issue of organized crime in the region and to harmonize UNODC projects in this thematic area, while seeking to enhance the mandate of the Office's "networking the networks" initiative and build the reputation of UNODC in the region as a key partner to interlocutors and beneficiaries alike.

51. UNODC has been working with a number of countries in the region to develop comprehensive strategies against organized crime, following a regional multi-stakeholder event for South-Eastern Europe held in December 2021 under the auspices of the UNODC Global Programme on Implementing the Organized Crime Convention: from Theory to Practice, in close cooperation with the regional programme for South-Eastern Europe. That work is geared towards enhancing the law enforcement and criminal justice response to organized crime, while integrating prevention and the protection of the most vulnerable and relying on cooperation at all levels to fight organized crime more effectively.

52. In January 2020, UNODC initiated the European Union-UNODC joint action promoting the rule of law and good governance through targeted border control measures at ports and airports in South-Eastern Europe. The joint action is being carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bijača and Gradiška land border crossings and Sarajevo International Airport), Montenegro (port of Bar), North Macedonia (Skopje International Airport) and Serbia (Belgrade International Airport), as well as in Kosovo⁷ (Vrbnica/Vermice land border crossing). The action is aimed at enhancing the capacities of authorities in the Western Balkans to fight organized crime by supporting more effective and coordinated responses to illicit trafficking implemented by border law enforcement at land and port border crossing points and international airports in the region. It is funded by the European Union and implemented by the Container Control Programme and the Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP) of UNODC, WCO and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) in cooperation with the UNODC regional programme for South-Eastern Europe.

53. In conjunction with the above-mentioned initiative, AIRCOP initiated activities in South-Eastern Europe in early 2020. The project applies passenger controls to support airports in tackling multiple threats, including all types of illicit drugs, illicit goods (e.g. wildlife, falsified medical products and weapons) and terrorism and trafficking in persons.

54. UNODC and OSCE cooperate in a number of areas in South-Eastern Europe in the spirit of non-duplication of efforts and increased synergies and in line with the UNODC-OSCE Joint Action Plan for 2020–2022. Since 2018, OSCE and UNODC have been implementing a multi-year training programme on countering the financing of terrorism in Albania, and more recently in Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia. In September 2021, the two offices organized a coordination briefing for

police attachés and liaison officers in Belgrade to discuss common priority areas. In May 2022, UNODC and OSCE hosted a regional conference for directors of border police and customs agencies from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Montenegro and North Macedonia, as well as from Kosovo,⁷ to address current and future challenges and share best practices in border security and management. In addition, UNODC and OSCE cooperate in the area of drug use prevention. In that regard, a joint training session was held on the UNODC Strong Families programme in October 2021.

III. Eastern Europe

A. Drug trafficking

55. UNODC continued to provide support to the Republic of Moldova in strengthening interdiction capacity and border control through the Container Control Programme by engaging law enforcement professionals in its regional training activities on strategic trade and export control. The training sessions were delivered in an online format. There are plans to hold in-person activities in Georgia in August 2022. UNODC had previously implemented the Container Control Programme in the Republic of Moldova through a port control unit in Giurgiulesti. Those activities are currently suspended owing to a lack of funding, but they could be restarted if funding became available, as national counterparts have signalled their continued interest.

56. In January 2018, Ukraine and UNODC signed a memorandum of understanding in which they confirmed the participation of Ukraine in the Container Control Programme and the establishment of a port control unit at the Odesa seaport and an air cargo control unit at Boryspil International Airport in March 2018. The participating national law enforcement agencies in Ukraine are the State Customs Service, the State Border Guard Service and the State Security Service. Prior to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, those units demonstrated good progress. The seizures made by the units since their inception include more than 326 kg of cocaine, more than 29 tons of precursors, over 7.5 million packets of cigarettes and various military and dual-use goods, including weapons and parts for armoured vehicles, helicopters and jets. Owing to the suspension of activities at the airport and the seaport, the activities of the units are currently very limited, but recent controls at “green borders” have led to the seizure of 40 kg of cocaine.

B. Terrorism

57. Under the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, a global initiative of the Office of Counter-Terrorism implemented in partnership with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, UNODC, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the Secretariat, INTERPOL and the International Organization for Migration, UNODC continues to support Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova in strengthening their legal frameworks and capacities to detect and counter the travel of terrorists and criminals by collecting, using, storing, sharing and protecting advance passenger information and passenger name records, in accordance with Security Council resolution [2396 \(2017\)](#), relevant international standards and human rights obligations. As part of those activities, legal technical assistance is provided in connection with the review and development of regulatory frameworks and the required training for the establishment of a passenger information unit.

C. Drug prevention and treatment, HIV treatment and care

58. Under its Global Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNODC continues to provide HIV and harm reduction initiatives, to support access to HIV prevention and treatment

services and opioid agonist therapy for people who use drugs (including women who use drugs) and people in prisons and other closed settings, and to provide capacity-building for and foster partnerships between law enforcement and civil society to improve access to services relating to HIV, hepatitis C virus and tuberculosis among vulnerable groups.

59. The restrictions introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the development of digitalized medical and social services for opioid substitution treatment patients. For example, video-guided medical and social services for opioid substitution therapy patients were developed to deliver psychosocial and medical services through a remote programme in the Republic of Moldova. A new model of web-based outreach service delivery was established in Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to offer HIV services to people who use new psychoactive substances and stimulant drugs.

60. In Belarus, in 2020 and 2021, instructions on opioid substitution therapy were developed on the basis of a joint order by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior. Under that order, buprenorphine has been made available in the country for opioid substitution treatment, along with methadone; take-home doses for up to three days are available for eligible patients, and the list of employment opportunities was expanded for opioid substitution therapy patients to ensure resocialization. In addition, UNODC supported the procurement of dispensers to equip three opioid substitution therapy clinics. In Belarus and Ukraine, the Office supported the continuation of treatment for opioid substitution therapy patients by providing transport to clinics for patients in need.

61. In the Republic of Moldova, to ensure the continuation of the justice process while minimizing the risk of COVID-19 infections, since April 2021, UNODC and the country's National Prison Administration have established four e-justice rooms in the country's most overcrowded detention centres. The rooms feature cabins fitted with videoconferencing equipment, enabling persons held in detention to remotely participate in their trials, to speak with lawyers or prosecutors and to communicate with family members, relatives and friends. Minors held in prison remand centres can also use the cabins to attend online classes and pursue their education.

62. In Ukraine, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, other relevant ministries and governmental bodies, and national and international non-governmental organizations, UNODC supported the finalization of the country's national strategy on drugs for 2021–2030. The strategy depicts proportional, comprehensive and integrated approaches based on evidence and covering a wide range of measures, including primary prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, rehabilitation, social reintegration and related support services aimed at promoting the health and social well-being of individuals, families and communities, as well as supply reduction measures to decrease the negative consequences of drug use for individuals and society as a whole.

63. In 2021, UNODC commissioned a review of the pilot police referral services for people who use drugs and people released from prisons in Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The report on the review highlighted the results of the existing pilot police referral schemes for people who use drugs and people released from prisons in those four countries and contained recommendations for future activities of the Office and partners in those countries and at the global level. In addition, best practices at the national level were documented in Poltava, Ukraine, which resulted in the development of two advocacy and educational tools.

64. UNODC supported the participation of law enforcement officials from Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in the fifth European Harm Reduction Conference, held in Prague from 10 to 12 November 2021. The Office also facilitated a study visit to harm reduction centres in Czechia, a one-day Eastern Europe and Central Asia law enforcement consultation and a side event during the Conference, in order to ensure the meaningful involvement of, and collaboration within, the law

enforcement sector in discussing current trends and challenges related to drug use and harm reduction.

65. UNODC organized a workshop for Eastern European and Central Asian countries, targeting participants from Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan who work with people living in prisons and other closed settings, including those who manage prisons and health-care providers. The workshop aimed at facilitating the effective application of the updated comprehensive package of 15 key interventions for HIV prevention, testing, treatment, care and support for people in prisons and other closed settings. The topics discussed were focused on the HIV/AIDS epidemiological situation in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, partnerships with civil society organizations, with specific examples from countries in the region, the role of UNODC in the thematic area, women in prisons, and resources on, advocacy for and the extension of rights of persons in prisons and other closed settings.

66. For the global HIV and drug treatment programmes in Ukraine, the activities planned by UNODC for 2022 have been suspended; as agreed with the Government, funding is being reallocated for urgent necessities. UNODC developed and disseminated, using local networks in Ukraine and host countries (of refugee shelters), materials to support parents' and caregivers' needs in reducing the negative consequences for children during crises, with a view to sustaining strong families in humanitarian settings. With additional support from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in the amount of \$100,000, UNODC is coordinating communication between the prison authority and civil society organizations to address humanitarian needs in prison settings. Through the provision of financial grants, UNODC is supporting social workers in areas affected by the war in order to allow them to deliver medicine and food to people in prison settings.

67. In Belarus, in early 2022, owing to the blockage of bank operations associated with sanctions, the United Nations was not able to make any payments, and thus activities were suspended.

68. In the Republic of Moldova, as a result of the large number of refugees from Ukraine, funding was redirected towards current needs. The Government of the Republic of Moldova established assistance centres at the border crossings with Ukraine, including 100 temporary shelters for refugees. Upon agreement with the Government of Sweden (in its capacity as a donor in the Republic of Moldova), UNODC redirected \$70,000 to provide basic household needs for refugees, including 125 mattresses, blankets, 100 pillows, 300 sets of bed linen, towels, power generators, disinfection materials and other necessities as proposed by the State central coordination unit of the Republic of Moldova, to the assistance centres at the Palanca-Maiaki-Udobnoe, Tudora-Starokazacie, Basarabeasca-Serpniovo and Criva-Mamaliga customs offices.

IV. Paris Pact initiative

69. The Paris Pact initiative remains the only global cooperation mechanism dedicated to countering illicit opiates. It provides a global platform for focused, specific actions aimed at reducing trafficking in and the production and global consumption of opiates, including the cultivation of opium poppy. Multiple resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs recognized the importance of the initiative as one of the most important frameworks in the fight against opiates originating in Afghanistan, as part of a comprehensive approach to peace, stability and development in Afghanistan, the neighbouring region and beyond.

70. Through its consultative mechanism, the Paris Pact Coordination Unit of UNODC continued to facilitate strategic dialogue among its 58 partner States and 23 partner organizations, thereby linking policy and operations by widely involving national and regional partners situated in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans in

all events organized in the framework of the partnership, which, since 2020, have been attended by more than 800 policy- and expert-level participants from around the world.

71. Considering the continued high importance of the Balkan drug trafficking route, the Paris Pact initiative has two national liaison officers, one based in Serbia and one in North Macedonia. As the primary points of contact in the region for the initiative and its consultative mechanism, they further continued to support the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Paris Pact partnership. The core role of the liaison officers also often extended to facilitating other UNODC programmes covering a variety of inter-thematic issues in support of the Vienna Declaration adopted by the Paris Pact partners in 2012.

72. The liaison officers continued to improve the availability of data for the purpose of enabling partners to carry out evidence-based responses to the opiate threat. They contributed to studies conducted and reports disseminated by the Research and Trend Analysis Branch of UNODC, including the 2020, 2021 and 2022 editions of the *World Drug Report*. The liaison officers also supported the mandated annual data collection carried out by UNODC by assisting Member States in complying with their reporting responsibilities.

73. The liaison officers updated the Paris Pact country fact sheets for 2020, 2021 and 2022 with data on national- and regional-level drug and precursor indicators for countries in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. The updated fact sheets were also used for the *World Drug Report* and to support partners in evidence-based programme development and implementation in the field.

74. In the reporting period, the Paris Pact initiative further advanced operational synergies by adjusting its liaison officer network and rapidly started to address knowledge gaps and to support operational responses in the respective regional and country settings along the Balkan route. Subsequently, a new national liaison officer position was established in Ankara, in response to the strategic importance of Türkiye for counter-narcotic efforts on the Balkan route.
