



Consolidating the Democratization Process in the Security Sector in Serbia

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Belgrade, 2024.

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Consolidating the Democratization Process in the Security Sector in Serbia

The project is implemented by the OSCE Mission to Serbia with the financial support of the Government of Sweden

Since 2010, the OSCE Mission to Serbia, with the financial support of the Government of Sweden, has been implementing the project Consolidating the Democratization Process in the Security Sector in Serbia. The main goal of the project is to support the strengthening of good governance in the security sector. A number of different actors participate in the implementation of the project – public authorities, civil society organizations and the academic community.

The project *Consolidating the Democratization Process in the Security Sector in Serbia* consists of several components. Project activities include cooperation with the Commissioner



Photo: Milan Obradović / OSCE

Annual review meeting on the implementation of the project *Consolidating the Democratization Process in the Security Sector in Serbia* at the OSCE Mission to Serbia, May 2024

for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection and other public authorities in implementing the Law on Personal Data Protection, and support for the Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia for responding to emergencies. It also encompasses support for the activities of the civil sector aimed at strengthening the safety of women, young people, and persons with disabilities. One of the components of the project is related to security studies at the University of Belgrade. Every year, a public call for proposals is announced for annual scholarships for master's and doctoral security studies at the Faculty of Political Science (FPN) and the Faculty of Security Studies. Part of the project activities is focused on developing analyses and recommendations for public policies in the area of security at the local and national levels.



Photo: Milan Obradović / OSCE

Anne-Charlotte Malm, Head of Development Co-operation at the Swedish Embassy in Serbia and Miroslav Kragić, Project Manager at the OSCE Mission to Serbia at the annual review meeting on the implementation of the project Consolidating the Democratization Process in the Security Sector in Serbia, May 2024



“The OSCE Mission to Serbia continuously works to strengthen democratic institutions, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. In this way, we contribute to a more stable and safer society. Through our project Consolidating the Democratization Process in the Security Sector in Serbia, we additionally highlight the importance of an efficient, transparent and responsible security policy”, says Ambassador Jan Braathu, Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

Improving personal data protection

Mission strongly supports protection of personal data

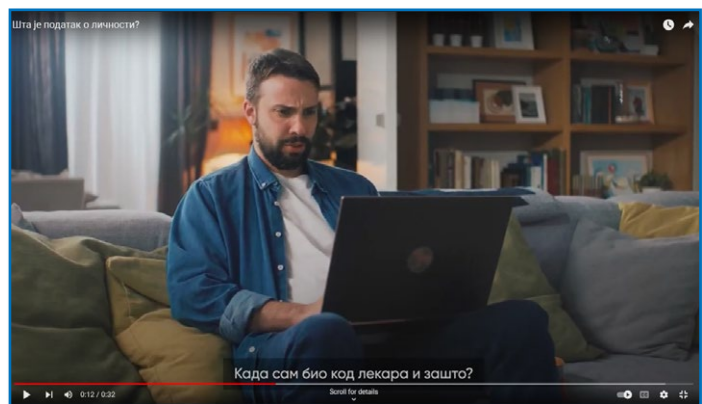
With the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, two public opinion surveys on citizens' perceptions of personal data protection were conducted (2020 and 2023), and the public campaign "Keep it Personal" was implemented.

The first public opinion survey showed that the available information on personal data protection is not clear enough and that it is necessary to educate citizens. That is why the OSCE Mission, in partnership with the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, in 2022, conducted the public campaign "Keep it Personal". It was the first campaign in Serbia dedicated to personal data protection. During the campaign, short video clips were broadcast on national and local TV stations, while digital ads were published on the daily and weekly newspaper portals.

The main message of the campaign was that personal data such as name, social security number, e-mail address, bank account number, health data, etc., should not be disclosed to others but should be treated as valuable personal property.



Keep it Personal – the motto of the public campaign dedicated to personal data protection



A frame from the video clip of the „Keep it personal” campaign

The second public opinion survey, conducted after the public awareness campaign, showed that citizens who followed the “Keep it Personal” campaign knew more about how to protect personal data. They were also more familiar with the work of the Commissioner’s Office, which can help them in that regard.



Photo: Milan Obradović / OSCE

Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia Jan Braathu and Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection Milan Marinović at the launch event of the public campaign, “Keep it personal”

In addition to public opinion surveys and the campaign, in 2020 and 2024, the OSCE

Mission to Serbia has supported development of two analyses of security sector regulations from the perspective of personal data protection. The studies contain an analysis of more than a hundred regulations and laws in the field of security, i.e. their provisions concerning personal data protection, as well as recommendations for improvement of the regulatory framework for personal data protection.

In the upcoming period, a continuation of the public campaign is planned, with a special focus on the elderly and the population in rural areas who are insufficiently informed on issues



related to personal data protection. In addition to the digital, printed material will also be prepared, so that the campaign messages reach the widest audience. Also, in 2025, a public call for proposals for journalistic works on personal data protection will be launched, with the aim to contribute to a better public understanding of personal data protection.

Presentation of the publication, “Analysis of the Security Sector Related Legislation from the Perspective of Personal Data Protection”. Miroslav Kragić of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Gordana Mohorović of the Office of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, and the authors of the analysis Ana Toskić Cvetinović and Nevena Ružić. Belgrade, June 2024

Photo: Milan Obradović / OSCE

Responding to emergencies

Since 2012, the project has been providing support to the Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia and the civil sector in the field of emergency management and disaster risk reduction

In order to continuously improve the capacity of all actors in the emergency management system and disaster risk reduction, the Sector for Emergency Management, with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, organizes permanent training for members of republic and local emergency management headquarters. The trainings include emergency response simulation exercises in local communities throughout Serbia, as well as seminars for commanders of local emergency management headquarters. The seminars have been held since 2014 and are aimed at improving the management of the defence against accidents and disasters.

In the past twelve years, with the support of the OSCE Mission, 22 three-day emergency response simulation exercises were held. Over 1,200 members of local emergency response teams from 67 municipalities and cities in Serbia participated in these simulation exercises. All actors involved in the disaster risk reduction system, such as firefighters-rescuers, teams from emergency management



“To reduce the devastating impact of disasters, to prevent human casualties and material losses, it is important to constantly improve the capacities of services that act in emergencies, especially at the local level, since they are on the front line of defence”, says Project Manager at the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Miroslav Kragić.



District simulation exercise of the Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia, Vrdnik, March 2024

headquarters, communal services, and the Red Cross, participate in district simulation exercises. Participants go through a real-life scenario and work out each step in defending against natural disasters and accidents.

To educate citizens on how to protect themselves from natural disasters and accidents, the Mission, in cooperation with the Sector for Emergency Management, published the



Conference „Persons with disabilities in emergencies”, Belgrade, June 2024

Family Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Response. From 2012 to today, this manual has been printed in more than 160,000 copies in the Serbian language as well as in languages of several national minorities in Serbia. The manual is also printed in Braille, to make it accessible to visually impaired and blind persons. The National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia (NOOIS) has developed

an audio version of this family guide, as well as a brochure and a short video with instructions on how to help and protect people with different types of disabilities during disasters and emergencies.

In addition, the project enabled civil society organizations to become more actively involved in emergency management and disaster risk reduction. Numerous workshops and trainings for emergency response were held, the participants of which were representatives of vulnerable categories of the population such as women and youth. Hundreds of women and young people have gone through this type of training. The participants learned and practiced, among other things, how to provide first aid, how to protect themselves during an earthquake, flood, or fire, and how to use a fire extinguisher. The workshops were conducted by civil society organizations such as the Association Phenomena from Kraljevo, Women for Peace from Leskovac, the OPENS Youth Association from Novi Sad, and the Timok Youth Center from Zaječar.

The Mission also supported the organization of seminars



Fire drill, a segment of the workshop „Participation of women in disaster risk reduction”, organized by the Fenomena Association, Kraljevo, March 2019



First aid training for high school students from Kraljevo, organized by the Fenomena Association, 2021

aimed at better understanding the specific needs of women and the risks they face during emergencies. Thus, in 2023 and 2024, two seminars were held for representatives of the Sector for Emergency Management, where the role of women in disaster risk reduction was discussed.

Special attention is paid to improving the protection of persons with disabilities during natural disasters and accidents. In cooperation with NOOIS, several conferences were held addressing the issues of persons with disabilities and their protection during disasters. At the meeting held in June 2024 in Belgrade, representatives of numerous associations of persons with disabilities from the entire country drafted recommendations for improving the position of persons with disabilities during emergencies.



Cover of the publication „Family Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Response” printed in cooperation between the Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia and the OSCE Mission to Serbia



Detail of the brochure for support for people with disabilities during emergencies

Support for the activities of civil society organizations in the field of security

Since 2010, the Mission has supported over 100 activities of civil society organizations in the field of good governance in the security sector and human security through the project *Consolidating the Democratization Process in the Security Sector in Serbia*. More than 50 civil society organizations participated in the implementation of these activities.

Every year, the Mission announces a public call for proposals for civil society organizations' projects in the security field. Projects are implemented throughout Serbia and achieve concrete and important results, such as strengthening the security of vulnerable population groups, developing local policies addressing gender and security issues, improving regulations in the area of security, introducing new social services, establishing partnerships between local actors, and transferring good practices to other local communities. A large number of approved projects are aimed at the safety of young people, women, and people with disabilities.

Youth Safety

To strengthen the response of young people to various security challenges and help them acquire skills for adequate response in crises, in previous years, the OSCE Mission to Serbia supported the organization of numerous workshops in which hundreds of high school students and



Youth empowerment training for implementing the UN Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, organized by the National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS), Belgrade, October 2023

young people from dozens of cities in Serbia took part. At the workshops organized by civil society organizations such as Club for Youth Empowerment 018 (KOM018) from Niš, Association DUGA from Šabac, and Association Fenomena from Kraljevo, young people gained new knowledge - how to protect themselves from peer violence and other forms of violence, about safety in and outside of school, on health and economic security, as well as on security in the online world and social networks. They also acquired skills on how to protect themselves



Campaign dedicated to youth safety organized by Club for Youth Empowerment 018 (KOM018) from Niš, 2020

Agenda, as well as for the development of recommendations for the work of local communities with the aim that topics important for the improvement of youth security are included in Local Action Plans (LAPs).

Part of the activities carried out in cooperation with the Belgrade Center for Security Policy (BCBP) was dedicated to improving the theoretical and practical skills of young people for successful research and analysis of security issues and the development and implementation of public policies.

Attention is also devoted to youth volunteering, especially in emergencies. Thus, in cooperation with the OPENS Youth Association and the Timok Youth Center (TOC), trainings were organized to empower young people for volunteer work.

“We believe that it is of high importance to support the informal education of young people in order to improve their safety and readiness to respond adequately to security risks and emergencies”, says Project Manager at the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Miroslav Kragić.

Through the project, the Mission also supported numerous researches concerning the security risks to which young people are exposed. One of the more extensive researches was conducted in 2023, when the Association Rainbow from Šabac inquired into causes of peer violence in schools in Serbia on a sample of 1,400 high school students, parents, and teachers, based on which recommendations were offered to strengthen security in schools.



Training for young volunteers in emergencies organized by the OPENS Youth Association, Ečka, October 2022

from natural disasters and accidents and how to respond during emergencies and pandemics.

In cooperation with the National Youth Council of Serbia KOMS, the Mission supported youth empowerment training for the implementation of initiatives in the area of the UN Youth, Peace and Security

Safety of persons with disabilities

In addition to supporting the improvement of the protection of persons with disabilities during disasters and accidents, the OSCE Mission to Serbia also supported the development of an analysis of the position of these persons during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was developed by the National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia (NOOIS). The analysis contains concrete recommendations for improving the protection of the rights of this vulnerable group in epidemiological crises. The recommendations were published in the study *Towards an Inclusive Response to the Pandemic: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the position of persons with disabilities in Serbia and recommendations for exercising and protecting their rights in situations of epidemiological risk*. Based on this analysis, a film was made.

Women's safety

The OSCE Mission to Serbia assists in the development of the third National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is the most significant global document dedicated to the gender dimension of security and devoted to strengthening women's security in times of conflict and crisis. In the previous decade, the Mission helped develop both National Action



Working meeting of civil society organizations regarding development of recommendations for the third National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 „Women, Peace and Security”, Šabac, April 2023

Plans (NAP) for the implementation of this resolution, as well as the establishment of the 1325 Network, which consists of about twenty civil society organizations from different parts of Serbia, engaged in strengthening the role of women in the field of security. Implementing the first two NAPs in Serbia led to the improvement of gender equality in the security sector. From 2023, the Mission supports the work on preparing the third NAP for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security.

The Mission also supports numerous other activities of civil society organizations aimed at combating gender-based violence. For instance, in co-operation with the Association for Development of Creativity from Aleksinac, the Mission organized workshops to empower civil society and rural women to fight this type of violence. In addition, it supported activities within the global campaign “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence”.



Panel discussion on participation of civil society in security sector reform, Niš, December 2023

Through the project, the greater involvement of women in decision-making on safety and security is encouraged at all levels, especially at the local level, through work in councils for gender equality and safety. In 2023, the organization “Women for Peace” from Leskovac conducted extensive research on the safety of women in the Jablanica district, based on which recommendations were formulated for improving the safety of women in this part of Serbia.

Support for security education

Scholarships for master's and doctoral studies

Through the project *Consolidating the Democratization Process in the Security Sector in Serbia*, financed by the Government of Sweden, the OSCE Mission awards up to fifteen scholarships each year for master's and doctoral studies in the field of security at the Faculty of Political Sciences (FPN) and the Faculty of Security Studies. Since 2010, 181 scholarships have been awarded.



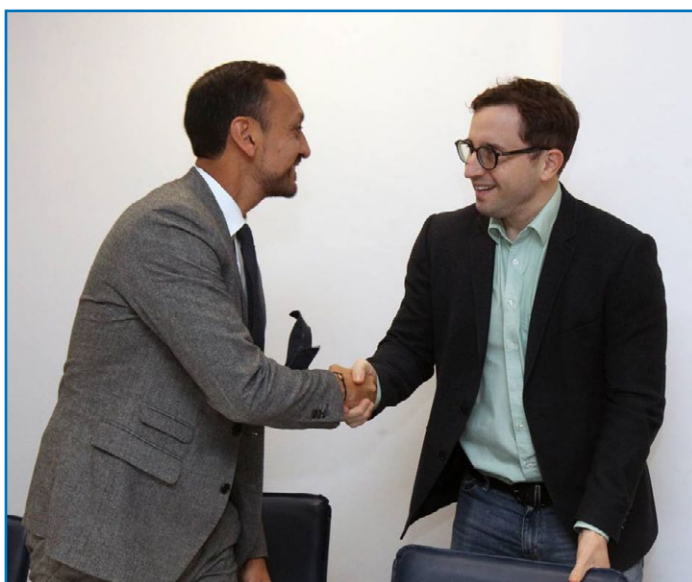
Seminar „Academic writing” for students of master's and doctoral studies in security, organized by the Faculty of Political Sciences, Zlatibor, May 2024

In addition to scholarships, the educational component of the project also includes the organization of a summer school dedicated to security issues, then support for scholarship holders to participate in international scientific conferences, as well as the hosting of renowned foreign lecturers from this field at domestic faculties. The Mission also supports the publication of the *Journal of Regional Security*, the leading journal of the Faculty of Political Sciences (FPN) on regional security, as well as the operation of an interactive portal integrated into the academic web domain of the FPN.



Participants of the Summer School dedicated to security topics held with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and the Government of Sweden, Kopaonik, August 2019

With the support of the Mission, an alumni network was formed in 2015, which today gathers more than one hundred and twenty young experts, former scholarship recipients, who are now in prominent positions in security sector institutions and state administration, as well as in civil society organizations, in businesses and academic institutions. The work of this network is of great importance not only for the professional careers of the alumni but also for the entire process of reforms and democratization of the security sector in Serbia.



Vladimir Valdes Garcia, Head of the Democratization Department of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Filip Ejdus, professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences at the reception for the awarding of scholarships for master's and doctoral studies, November 2023

The project *Consolidating the Democratization Process in the Security Sector in Serbia* is implemented by the OSCE Mission to Serbia with the financial support of the Government of Sweden.

Important numbers:

- The project Consolidating the Democratization Process in the Security Sector in Serbia has been implemented since 2010.
 - For the past twelve years, with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, and in cooperation with the Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia, 22 three-day simulation exercises for responding to emergencies have been held. Over 1,200 members of local emergency management headquarters from 67 municipalities and cities in Serbia participated in these exercises.
 - Since 2010, the Mission has supported over 100 civil society activities related to the improvement of good governance in the security sector and human security, which were carried out by more than 50 civil society organizations.
 - 181 scholarships were awarded to 126 master's and doctoral students in security studies at the Faculty of Political Sciences and the Faculty of Security Studies.
 - 18 study visits to EU countries were organized with visits to partner state institutions, academic institutions, and civil society organizations.
 - 110 analyses and publications were published.
 - The Family Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Response was printed in more than 160 thousand copies in the Serbian language and in languages of several national minorities in Serbia, as well as in Braille.
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