



PRESS RELEASE

NEW REPORT ANALYZES THE INTEGRITY OF POLICE AND PROSECUTORIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

A new report by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) explores the challenges facing police and prosecutorial institutions in the Western Balkans. Titled *Integrity and Independence of Criminal Justice Institutions in the Western Balkans: Police and Prosecution*, the report provides a comprehensive analysis of the political and external influences that undermine the independence and effectiveness of police and prosecution services in the region.

Building on GI-TOC's work in the Western Balkans, this third report in the [Organized Corruption](#) series delves into how political interference, lack of operational independence, lack of international, regional and bilateral cooperation, and systemic organized corruption create vulnerabilities within police and prosecution institutions. The study reveals the critical need for stronger governance mechanisms, enhanced individual and organizational resilience to political pressure, more anti-corruption education, and greater transparency in the appointment and promotion processes of law enforcement officials. Foundational education and continuous on-the-job training in ethical standards, which help build a professional belief system rooted in integrity and independence, are identified as one of the most effective mechanisms to bolster resilience.

A key finding of the report is that political pressure is most acutely felt in decisions related to high-profile investigations, appointments, and promotions, weakening the ability of institutions (particularly specialised bodies) to act independently. This undermines public trust and perpetuates a cycle of impunity for those involved in organized crime and corruption.

The report highlights specific challenges of each of the six Western Balkan countries.

The report highlights how female representation in police remains low in many Western Balkan countries, often below EU standards. Although there is greater gender equality in prosecutorial roles, the presence of women in leadership positions in both the police and prosecution services remains very limited. This disparity highlights the need for prioritizing gender equality at higher institutional levels to ensure a balanced and effective justice system capable of representing the populations of each respective country.

The report calls for strategic measures to strengthen the independence of criminal justice institutions, including reforms to appointment systems, enhanced oversight mechanisms, and increased engagement with civil society actors to monitor and support accountability.

The next report, scheduled for release in 2025, will continue this four-part study by focusing on the judiciary and anti-corruption authorities in the region.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE (GI-TOC)

The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime is a network of professionals working on the front lines of the fight against the illicit economy and criminal actors. Through a network of global civil society observatories on the illicit economy, we monitor evolving trends and work to build the evidence basis for policy action, disseminate the expertise of our Network, and catalyze multisectoral and holistic responses across a range of crime types. With the Global Initiative's Resilience Fund, we support community activists and local non-governmental organizations working in areas where crime governance critically undermines people's safety, security and life chances.

ABOUT THE OBSERVATORY OF ILLICIT ECONOMIES IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE (SEE-OBS)

The Observatory is a platform that connects and empowers civil-society actors in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The Observatory aims to enable civil society to identify, analyze and map criminal trends, and their impact on illicit flows, governance, development, interethnic relations, security and the rule of law, and supports them in their monitoring of national dynamics and wider regional and international organized-crime trends. The Observatory was launched as an outcome of the 2018 Western Balkans Summit in London, a part of the Berlin Process.

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