

SECURITY PROGRAM

In 2021, the Security Program's efforts were focused on the following areas:

- **Conventional crime and policing.** CSD continued to analyse trends in conventional crime in Bulgaria, focusing on the regional dimensions of crime and the levels of trust in police and citizens' activity in reporting crime. Two innovative assessment tools were developed – the Conventional Crime Index and the Index of Reporting, and were applied to examine difference among various regions in the country. Improving the interaction between police and local communities and streamlining the process of reporting crimes by taking full advantage of the 112 system were highlighted as important steps for increasing trust in the police and countering conventional crime.
- **Risks of organised crime.** CSD contributed to a ground-breaking report on the risks of serious and organised crime infiltration in legitimate businesses in the EU. The Security Program studied the legislative, regulatory and non-regulatory measures to combat online identity theft and identity-related crime across the EU Member States. It also joined a EU initiative of civil society organisations to promote social inclusion strategies through the public and social re-use of assets confiscated from organised crime.
- **Countering radicalisation and right-wing extremism:** CSD continued to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the drivers of radicalisation, in particular among younger generations. In 2021, the focus was on the use of strategic communication in countering and prevention of social polarisation driven by disinformation in the online environment. The campaign *Find Another Way*, the first tailored strategic communication campaign in Bulgaria, aimed at building resilience among youth to extremist influences through alternative narratives. CSD developed an Indicators Toolkit for assessing state–religion relations, governance of religious diversity and violent radicalisation.
- **Evaluation of EU home affairs policies and programs.** CSD teams contributed to an evaluation of the EU Terrorism Directive, commissioned by DG HOME, a study of right-wing extremism commissioned by the European Parliament, and took part in an initiative of the Council of Europe on countering trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation. CSD carried out a risk and needs assessment study of EU customs within a EU-wide initiative to improve non-intrusion inspection of goods crossing EU external borders.

I. Conventional crime

Crime registration in Bulgaria

The process of crime registration is dependent on a variety of factors, such as the specifics of the applicable legal framework and the attitudes of citizens towards reporting to police authorities, as well as on certain peculiarities of procedural and practical nature. The exertion of political and managerial pressure regarding the lowering the officially reported crime rates is identified as a major prerequisite for the emergence of police filtering in Bulgaria.

The report *Registration of Crime in Bulgaria* (in Bulgarian only) presents an overview of the current legislative framework that regulates the system for reporting criminal incidents and their subsequent registration by the police. The report also analyses the procedural aspects related to receiving, registering and processing of such signals reported by citizens. In addition, a set of recommendations are made based on the opportunities identified for increasing the interaction between the regional structures of the Ministry of Interior, municipal authorities and civil society organisations, with the aim of improving the regime for registration and processing of crime reports by citizens.

Regional dimensions of crime in Bulgaria: conventional crime and crime reporting

The publication *Regional Dimensions of Crime in Bulgaria* (in Bulgarian only) presents two innovative assessment tools – the **Conventional Crime Index**, which measures the levels of conventional crime, and the **Index of Civic Activity in the Reporting of Crimes (Index of Reporting)**, which reflects the rate of activity of citizens with regard to reporting criminal incidents. Both indi-



ces allow for the analysis of variances at the regional and municipal level alike in terms of population victimisation and reporting rate in the 28 regions of Bulgaria. In addition, the indices give ground to further analysis of various demographic, social, economic and institutional factors that may play a significant role in the process of crime registration.

Conventional crime and trust in police: towards improved accountability and transparency of law-enforcement authorities.

The low levels of citizens' trust in police authorities have a direct impact on crime reporting rates in the country. Low levels of crime reporting negatively impact investigation and prosecution of offenders, which leads to increased risk of crime proliferation. A policy brief on trust in police and levels of citizens' reporting of crime outlined the main factors behind the established negative tendencies and provided practical recommendations for facilitation of crime

reporting by citizens and ultimately restoring trust in police.

In 2021, the Security Program held a series of four public events on conventional crime and public trust in the work of police with the participation of experts from the Ministry of Interior, local governments in different regions of the country and civil society organisations working in the field of protection of the rights of victims of crime. The discussions focused on the cities of Sofia and Bourgas, as well as the towns of Troyan and Peshtera.

On 15 December 2021, the national roundtable “Countering Conventional Crime through Increasing Citizens’ Engagement in Crime Reporting” was held, which focused on the problems with crime reporting and registration in the country and the recommendations for improving existing regulations to raise active citizen engagement in prevention and countering conventional crime. CSD presented a report with recommendations on conventional crime and trust in police. The event was attended by the Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior, Chief Commissioner Stoyan Temelakiev, the Director of the General Directorate of the National Police, Chief Commissioner Stanimir Stanev, and the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Bulgaria Mr. Ivan Geshev.

Experts from the Center outlined the main challenges for institutions regarding the registration of crimes: the lack of feedback on the investigation, the lack of accountability and transparency of local structures of the Ministry of Interior and the insufficient measures to encourage citizens to report crimes. The discussions focused on the Center’s proposals related to improving the security environment and inter-institutional cooperation, installing



БИТОВА ПРЕСТЪПНОСТ И ДОВЕРИЕ В ПОЛИЦИЈАТА

Policy Brief No. 107, декември 2021 г.

Престъпността е една от най-дискутираните теми в българското общество през последните 30 години. Хронологичен преглед към декември в началото на 30-те години е балансиран от редица наративи на битовата престъпност, както и от възникването на такъв „дикомо гурутирания“. Темата „престъпност“ е неизменно сред първите три, оповестени като най-важни в България до влизането на страната в ЕС през 2007 г., като на този фон значително спада и доверие на гражданите в полицията.¹ Във връзка с организираната престъпност и корупцията, България беше поставена под специален мониторинг от ЕС, който все още не е приключил, а страната остава извън общата зона за външна сигурност, или т. нар. Шенгенско пространство. Въпреки това през последното десетилетие престъпността устойчиво намалява и към настоящия момент е най-малкото най-важната проблема на българските граждани.² Доверие на обществото в полицията за пръв път изпреварва недоверие в периода 2019 – 2021 г., но продължава да бъде по-ниско от средното за ЕС.³

Ниското доверие на българските граждани в полицията има право отражение върху нивото на събиране на инциденти от мрежата на престъпности. Ефективното провадване на битовата престъпност и изключително без прецеденти на това провадване. Ниските нива на събиране създават системни проблеми, тъй като възпрепятстват ефективното разследване и правосъдие, което повишава риска от повторение на конвенционалните престъпления. Настоящият анализ разглежда основните фактори зад тези тенденции.

¹ България: *Standard Eurobarometer 62* (Июни 2006 – Мей 2006), *67 Spring 2002*, *July 2005*, *67 Spring 2006*, *67 Spring 2007*, *June 2008* (България Commission).

² България: *Standard Eurobarometer 78* – Spring 2019, *България Commission*, September 2021.

³ Ibid.

ОСНОВНИ ИЗВОДИ

- Националното изследване на престъпността на Център за изследване на демокрацията и статистиката на МВР отчетят траен спад в битовата престъпност за периода 2010 – 2021 г.
- В периода 2019 – 2021 г. доверие на българските граждани в полицията за пръв път изпреварва недоверие, но въпреки това остава по-ниско от средното за ЕС.
- Несъобразаването на престъпления от страна на гражданите е маркерано до 60% сред по-възрастните граждани през 2019 г.
- Продължава финансирането на подадени сигнали на граждани от страна на полицията.
- МВР следва да предприеме стъпки за подобряване на обратната връзка за лица на разследването и като едно за повишаване на прозрачността и отчетността на местно ниво.
- Повишаването на доверие и провадването на полицейското финансиране може да се постигне с мерки в две посоки:
 - подобряване ефективността на гражданите за тежките твърдения;
 - електронизация на регистрацията.

mechanisms for crime prevention, and achieving a positive change in citizens’ attitudes.

II. Organised crime

Mapping the risk of serious and organised crime infiltrating legitimate businesses

The economic and social harms from serious and organised crime (SOC) are multifaceted and wide-reaching, and span the individual, community and societal level. Appropriate targeting of resources to tackle SOC relies upon accurate information about the extent and nature of the phenomenon. However, the hidden nature of SOC means that measuring its size and scale is inherently challenging.

The study *Mapping the risk of serious and organised crime infiltrating legitimate businesses* improves the evidence base in relation to SOC in the EU. The



research was conducted by RAND Europe in collaboration with CSD, the Government Transparency Institute (GTI), Ernst & Young (EY) and Optimity Advisors.

CSD's contributed to this ground-breaking report by compiling two chapters with a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the trafficking in human beings and organised property crimes, as well as a chapter assessing the risks from exploitation of new payment methods by organised crime groups (NPMs).

Study on online identity theft

The digital transformation of economy and society has raised European Union citizens' concerns about identity theft and misuse of their personal data. These concerns have been accompanied by a significant increase of data theft attacks in the EU. At the same time, legislative and non-regulatory initiatives in EU Member States are lagging behind cybercriminals' capacity to adapt social

engineering schemes and exploit technological advances.

CSD contributed to the study *Online identity theft and identity-related crime* which mapped the current legislative, regulatory and non-regulatory measures to combat online identity theft and identity-related crime across the EU Member States and assessed best practices and possible gaps in those measures.

European strategy for the public and social re-use of confiscated assets

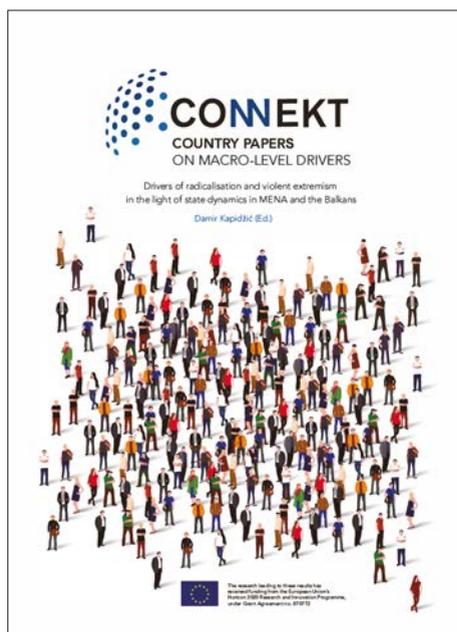
CSD is actively participating in an EU coalition of civil society organisations led by Libera. Associazioni, nomi e numeri contro le mafie (Italy) to promote European social inclusion strategies addressing the most disadvantaged layers of the population through the public and social re-use of assets confiscated from organised crime in Europe and the activation of bottom-up participatory processes.

CSD prepared a case study on Bulgaria identifying the confiscated assets from organised crime re-allocated for social re-use and assessing the impact of cohesion policies on the possibility of re-using confiscated assets in the country. This effort was part of the overall objective of mapping the implementation of Article 10.3 of Directive 2014/42/EU in EU Member States.

III. Radicalisation and violent extremism

Macro-drivers of radicalisation and violent extremism

Bulgaria's approach to countering and preventing radicalisation has been influenced by the European Union's evolving understanding of radicali-



sation as a home-grown problem that also requires soft measures. This understanding was adopted as the basis for the Bulgarian Strategy for Countering Radicalisation and Terrorism (2015–2020). However, the country was unprepared to ensure the Strategy's implementation. Prevention measures were insufficiently applied and the approach continues to be dominated by law enforcement.

CSD developed the chapter on Bulgaria as part of the report *Drivers of radicalisation and violent extremism in the light of state dynamics in MENA and the Balkans*. The drivers perceived as most relevant are religion, political grievances (far-right ideology), poverty, inequality and an additional factor appearing horizontally in most stakeholders' accounts: education. These macro perceptions can serve as a starting point for the subsequent analysis of the meso- (community-level) and micro- (individual-level) drivers of radicalisation and violent extremism in the country.

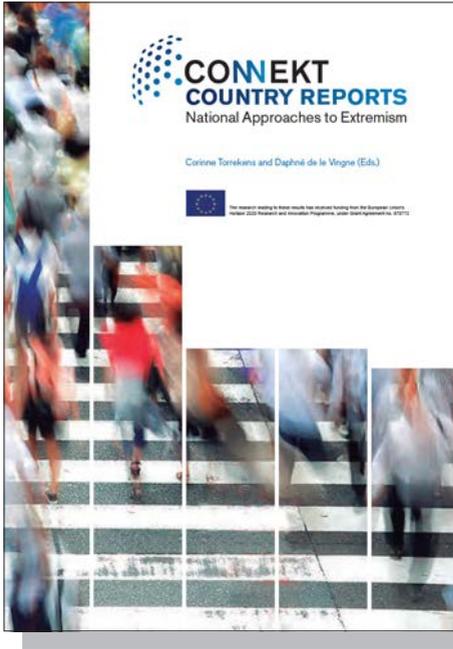
A separate report developed by the Security Program examined the socio-political drivers in Bulgaria's current approaches to radicalisation and violent extremism in the country, particularly towards young people.

Overcoming youth vulnerabilities to far-right narratives

The importance of fighting radicalisation and terrorism is highlighted by the 2015–2020 European Agenda on Security. Together with the establishment of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) in 2011, a number of actions have been taken to counter right-wing violent extremism and terrorism.

The policy brief *Overcoming Youth Vulnerabilities to Far-Right Narratives* discussed the opportunities that strategic communication brings as a tool to counteracting violent narratives and achieving resilience among youth and summarised the lessons learned during the *Find Another Way* communication campaign.





Polarisation and radicalisation among young people

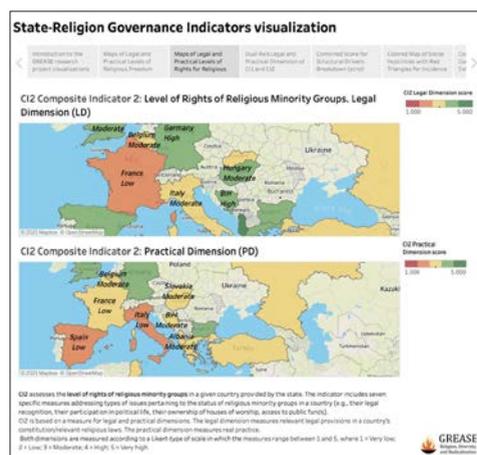
In May 2021, CSD organised a series of events devoted to the prevention and countering of polarisation and radicalisation among young people. The [webinar](#) “Countering Online Polarisation on Central and Eastern Europe through Strategic Communication” brought together policy-makers and practitioners from across the EU, who discussed new insights on the **use of strategic communication in countering and prevention of social polarisation** driven by disinformation and extremist narratives in the online environment. Among the panelists were CSD experts, a representative of the Cabinet Office in the United Kingdom, and the Safety Programs and Partnerships Manager at Facebook. CSD also co-organised the international youth summit *Shaping the Future of Europe* where representatives of youth organisations and young people from various countries debated on possible solutions to the most pressing issues

on the EU agenda. The team of CSD experts shared their experience with social media campaigns as a medium of the strategic communication approach to propose alternative narratives opposed to radical messages and ideas spread online. On 20 May 2021 at a [webinar](#) hosted by RAN, CSD presented the insights and results from the national communication [campaign](#) *Find Another Way* to a number of EU-wide organisations working in the field of radicalisation. In January and February 2021, CSD conducted a series of in-person meetings with over 40 key representatives of state institutions and civil society organisations as well as a focus group with front-line police officers, and took part in a public discussion with CSOs to communicate the results of the diagnostic study *How Far-Right Narratives Reach and Influence Young People Online* and the online campaign against the spread of far-right narratives online.



Radicalisation, secularism and the governance of religion: bringing together European and Asian perspectives

The contradictory trends of increasing secularism and intensifying radicalisation should be studied in parallel with the challenges of religious diversity and radicalisation faced by countries and regions outside Europe.



In 2021, CSD worked on the development of an **Indicators Toolkit**, a practical instrument for assessing state-religion relations, governance of religious diversity and violent radicalisation.

On 2 June 2021, CSD held the online regional workshop **“Governance of Religion and Violent Radicalisation in Eastern Europe”** with the participation of academics and experts, which aimed at discussing the relation between religion and its management, the processes of radicalisation and violent extremism, as well as effective policies for countering violent extremism in the region.

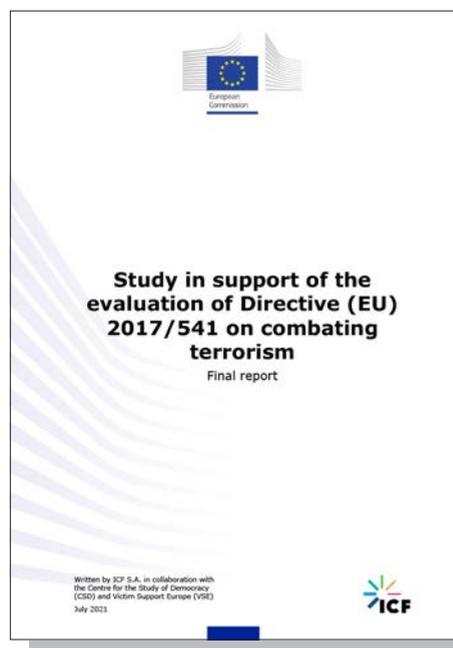
In 2021, CSD started work on the RAN Policy Support Initiative led by CIVI-POL France and launched in January 2021 by the European Commission as a new strand of the Radicalisation Aware-

ness Network (RAN). RAN Policy Support aims to inform policy-makers in the EU with evidence-based data and analysis in priority P-CVE areas as defined by the Member States. As part of the RAN 2 initiative, CSD carries out research and capacity building activities. In 2021, CSD produced two Consolidated Overview Papers and organised two workshops for policy-makers and experts from CSO and academia engaged in P-CVE.

IV. Evaluation of policies in the field of security and home affairs

In 2021, experts from CSD contributed to studies and evaluations of EU policies in the areas of anti-terrorism and right-wing extremism.

A team of the Security Program, in cooperation with the consulting company ICF, carried out an **evaluation of the Terrorism Directive** (Directive (EU) 2017/541), commissioned by DG HOME. In addition to evaluating the relevance,



effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value of the Directive, the impact of the Directive on fundamental rights and freedoms (including non-discrimination), the rule of law and the level of protection and assistance provided to victims of terrorism was also assessed. The evaluation covered 25 Member States and focused on the following areas: definition of criminal offences and related sanctions; investigation, prosecution and adjudication of terrorism-related offences; cooperation and exchanges of information among law-enforcement and judicial authorities; and victim protection and assistance.

CSD experts contributed to the report *Right-wing Extremism in the EU* commissioned by the European Parliament. The report outlined the distinctive features of right-wing extremism in the European Union as well as of violent

actions perpetrated by right-wing extremists, covering both offline and online extremism. Developments in Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Sweden were analysed, demonstrating the wide spectrum of right-wing extremist groups and trends currently co-existing in the EU.

The Security Program contributed to an initiative of the Council of Europe to assess the skills of labour inspectors in North Macedonia **to counter trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation**. It presented the European standards and the Bulgarian model to labour inspectors, civil servants, experts and NGO representatives and provided recommendations on how to improve detection, identification and referral of THB victims for labour exploitation by the State Labour Inspectorate in North Macedonia.