

**High Level Regional Conference: Cyber Resilience and Cybersecurity
Capacity Building in the Western Balkans**

**PANEL 2 Summary: Cybersecurity Capacity Building in
the Public Sector in the Western Balkans**

March 4th 2021, Online

Moderator: Gorazd Bozic, SI-CERT, Slovenia

Introductory remarks: Dražen Maravić, Portfolio Manager

Number of participants: 45

Panellists:

Vilma Tomco, National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security, Albania

Mladen Mrkaja, Ministry of Security, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Shpend Lutfiu, Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications, Kosovo*

Aleksandar Acev, National Centre for Computer Incident Response MKD-CIRT, North Macedonia

Jovan Milosavljević, Head of Cyber Security Division, National CERT SRBCERT, Serbia

In this panel, public sector cybersecurity experts, representatives and members of national Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) from the Western Balkan region discussed the importance of capacity building of cybersecurity experts in the public sector. Lessons learnt regarding international and regional CERT cooperation and the developments of CERT teams, as well as the challenges and plans for the future work of their institutions, were shared during this panel.

Key takeaways from the Panel

- All national CERTs from the region are becoming increasingly active within their constituencies and within the international community. As panellists noted, activities within their constituencies come in different forms and are contextualized to the needs of their constituencies. All panellists reported that the number of activities, reach and effectiveness has increased significantly in recent years. Additionally, full membership in main international cooperation

forums such as Trusted Introducer and FIRST remain top priorities to all Western Balkan CERTs in the region, as well as close cooperation with their international partners through such platforms.

- Cooperation with the private sector is a priority to CERTs in the Western Balkan region. Although there are often legal challenges, all Western Balkan CERTs are trying to find practical ways on how to enable and develop closer cooperation with the private sector. Panellists reported numerous positive examples of their cooperation with the private sector through public private partnerships (such as the Petnica group in Serbia, now *Cybersecurity Network Foundation*), joint awareness raising activities, as well as knowledge exchange and support that private companies offered in their everyday work.
- All panellists noted the lack of human resources and expertise as a key issue which needs to be addressed in the future. A primary goal of each CERT is having a sustainable human capacity development plan as there is currently a huge gap between the actual human resources needs and technical expertise in the field. It was nonetheless concluded that, despite a lack of staff in Western Balkan CERT teams, their efficiency and cost effectiveness in the public administration is very high.
- When it comes to future support, panellists noted that it is important that support should remain contextualized to match concrete needs of all beneficiaries. Moreover, it should come in several avenues: technical support, human capacity building and human capacity development, as well as support for further policy framework development in the alignment with the EU policy environment, new strategic frameworks and new directives.