

Launch of the project EUlead: Presentation of the study “The Crime Terror Nexus in Croatia and Slovenia”

10 September 2018, 10:00 – 12:00, Novinarski dom (Croatian Journalists' Association), Zagreb

The Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) and Panta Rhei Research from London hosted the 10th presentation of the study “The Crime Terror Nexus in Croatia and Slovenia” in the halls of Novinarski Dom. This presentation was also the official launch of the one-year long Jean Monnet’s project "Learning by Doing: EU Standards in the Balkans" (EUlead), coordinated by Senada Šelo Šabić from the Institute’s Department for International Economic and Political Relations. The project is carried by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization (ICSR) founded at the Kings College, UK, and takes in the analysis of the ‘Linkage between crime and terrorism in Croatia and Slovenia’. Peter Neumann, German academic journalist, analyst, public speaker and Rajan Basra, research fellow at Kings College London, presented in an open panel their research results of the current security concerns in the EU and the links between terrorist and organized crime. Moreover, the potential terror the societies and governments in Croatia and Slovenia should be aware of, which are also presented in the study. The EU-wide project assesses the level of radicalization, threat, organized crime, human trafficking and the link between terrorism and crime in each of the 28 EU member states. The idea therefore was to discuss and get feedback on the study, which goes into the final report, being presented in the EU-institutions early next year. The targeted goal is a book, to be published in spring 2019, which gives an overview about the [Crime Terror Nexus](#) in all 28 (27) EU-member states.

The presentation of the study was focused on the concept and the idea behind the Crime Terror Nexus in particular and in relation to Jihadism, which also applies to Croatia. The method used at Kings College is foremost open source research and the main focus of the study on Crime Terror Nexus, are the stereotypes of a terrorist and the mechanisms of Jihadism. The panelists presented and explained the three different aspects of the Crime Terror Nexus: the process of radicalization, development of criminal skills and finally the financial aspect of terrorism. The main issue the society focuses today, is the social nexus, facing a very different population, demographically, economically and socially. The criminal past does matter in the process of radicalization, because Jihadism is constructed through redemption and legitimization of crime. The skills and criminal networks the recruits already bring in, are of advantage for terrorism. Lastly, the ordinary financial structures empower the work of terrorists; the financial costs are low and often taken



by the terrorist themselves. The concluding appeal of the presentation was to always reexamine the assumptions we, the civil society, might have in the first place.

Afterwards the panel was opened to questions and comments, which were predominantly about the future security threats and the Crime Terror Nexus in Croatia and Slovenia. The main message was that no overlap between crime and terrorism can be seen in these countries. However, two issues are of vital concern: the trafficking of humans and weapons, used in several terrorist attacks in recent years, and the overlap between right-wing and criminality. The potential of terror lies in the far-right end, but not in the jihadi end. The recommendation is, to be aware of the potential soccer hooligans, drug-gangs, who rapidly adopt the far-right attitude.

Following the first session, a closed round table discussion with a smaller group of delegates from embassies and institutes was held, in order to provide a better insight into the current security issues in Croatia. The complex connection of crime and terror with migration and corruption was one of the main issues argued about in the debate. Moreover, the participants discussed how to confront terrorism and crime, and have a successful publication, which depends on communication, exchange of experiences and bilateral relations between institutes and experts from the respective countries. The closing remarks at the round table were to raise the awareness of the issue and establishing new local cooperation partners.

Finally, the most important message for the future, specified by the chairwoman of the panel Senada Šelohabić, is, that “we need to deal with [the matter of Crime Terror Nexus], but in a different way as we did 30 years ago – [it] is a new challenge.”