

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON COUNTERING TERRORISM

OFFICIAL VISIT TO MONTENEGRO

NOTE-TO-THE-FILE



Podgorica and Cetinje

22-25 March 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
II. PODGORICA	4
Montenegro’s Terrorism Background	4
Terrorism-related Trends	4
Terrorism in the Context of Organized Crime	5
Artificial Intelligence as a Key Concern	6
III. CETINJE	7
School Dialogue	7
IV. ANNEX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	9
V. ANNEX 2: PRESS RELEASES	10

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From 22 to 25 March, 2026, the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) conducted an official visit to Montenegro. The visit provided an opportunity for members to engage in high-level discussions with Montenegro's Parliament, Government, and law enforcement agencies on small-state counterterrorism capabilities. Additionally, members engaged in the second School Dialogue initiative, focusing on the prevention of online youth radicalization and violent extremism.

In Podgorica, the delegation met with the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, Vice-President of the Parliament, Deputy Prime Minister for Security, Defense, and the Fight Against Crime and Internal Policy, the Minister of Internal Affairs and Police Director, the Minister of Education, Science, and Innovation, representatives from the National Security Agency, and members of the Parliamentary Committee on Security and Defense.

Discussions in Podgorica reflected Montenegro's regional security perspective, with interlocutors consistently flagging organized crime and the misuse of artificial intelligence as key drivers of evolving terrorist threats. CCT members echoed these concerns, reaffirming the Committee's commitment to preventing youth radicalization as enshrined in the 2025 Resolution on *Preventing Youth Radicalization and Violent Extremism and Terrorism Through Education and Media and Information Literacy*

In Cetinje, CCT members engaged high-school students at Cetinje Gymnasium in a frank exchange on online extremism and radicalization. Students offered concrete recommendations across a range of thematic areas to strengthen resilience and prevention efforts in digital spaces. On the margins, the delegation met with the Secretary General of the Parliament to explore opportunities for expanding the School Dialogue initiative.

The visit reaffirmed the indispensable role of parliamentary-government coordination in shaping and overseeing effective counterterrorism strategies. It further underscored the importance of meaningful youth participation in designing preventative policies, as well as the need to strike the right balance between protecting individual freedoms and ensuring the rule of law.



II. PODGORICA

Montenegro's Terrorism Background

Montenegro's legal framework on terrorism is anchored in Articles 447 and 449 of the Criminal Code, which establish the basis for prosecuting terrorist financing, cooperation, and direct involvement in terrorist acts. Beyond the Criminal Code, the country's counter-terrorism architecture is further shaped by efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) and combat terrorist financing.

EU alignment was a recurring theme throughout the visit, reflecting Montenegro's active candidacy for EU membership. Montenegro's current P/CVE strategy is undergoing revision following an EU-led review, with recommendations guiding the country toward closer alignment with the bloc's broader counter-terrorism policy framework. The Deputy



Prime Minister emphasized this process as a strategic priority, noting the ongoing modifications and the centrality of EU alignment to Montenegro's security agenda.

Montenegro's counter-terrorism strategy is further reinforced through regional cooperation. Key tools include information exchange, foreign terrorist fighter (FTF) tracking via joint watchlists, and collaboration on emerging technologies. Montenegro also deepens its regional partnerships through membership in bodies such as the Western Balkans Counter-Terrorism Initiative and the Joint Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism for the Western Balkans.

Terrorism-related Trends

Montenegro's overall terrorism risk remains low. The Deputy Prime Minister characterised the threat as "small," attributing this to strengthened regional interoperability and the territorial defeat of ISIS/ISIL, which significantly reduced the mobilisation of foreign terrorist fighters from the Western Balkans. The Minister of Internal Affairs reinforced this assessment, describing Montenegro as having "one of the lowest risk levels of terrorism in Europe" - consistent with the country's persistent score of 0 in the Global Terrorism Index. The Deputy Prime Minister nonetheless flagged transnational threats as a precautionary concern, particularly given renewed instability across the broader Middle East region.

Despite the favourable threat environment, CCT discussions identified several areas of ongoing vigilance. Countering terrorist financing emerged as a primary operational priority. The Police Director outlined the role of the National Operational Team, a multi-agency body tasked with monitoring financial flows and facilitating inter-agency intelligence sharing. Cross-border coordination of terrorist financing networks, however, increasingly strains unilateral response capacity, making regional interoperability - including data sharing with neighbouring states and weekly updates to shared watchlists - an essential countermeasure.



Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) remain a monitored concern, though direct threats have subsided since the territorial defeat of ISIS/ISIL and the conclusion of the Syrian Civil War. The Police Director underscored the continued relevance of regional watchlists, particularly in relation to active conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.

New and emerging technologies represent a growing area of concern, especially regarding terrorist recruitment targeting youth. Officials identified rapid advances in artificial intelligence as a key risk vector, with the Ministers for Internal Affairs and Education drawing particular attention to AI's influence on youth platforms - including gaming and social media - and how digital bullying and hate speech may serve as entry points for radicalisation.

Despite the low threat level, operational preparedness continues. The Police Director noted ongoing joint special operations training with US forces, designed to ensure readiness against novel actors and organisations that may emerge from evolving dynamics in the Middle East.

Terrorism in the Context of Organized Crime

Throughout the visit, officials consistently framed terrorism as an extension of Montenegro's more immediate challenge: organized crime. The OSCE Mission in Podgorica highlighted the high volume of ongoing organized crime litigation, the majority of which the Mission categorises as "high-profile." The Deputy Prime Minister reinforced this framing, describing the fight against terrorism as a "key task within the fight against organised crime." Both the OSCE Mission and the Deputy Prime Minister also drew attention to the vulnerability of young people to recruitment into organised crime networks, a pathway that carries longer-term implications for internal terrorist threats. In this context, the Deputy Prime Minister welcomed the School Dialogue initiative as a meaningful tool for early prevention, reducing youth exposure to organised crime and, by extension, limiting the conditions in

which domestic terrorism can take root. The emphasis on this issue compliments the Committee's priority to understand the growing convergence between organized crime and terrorism, and provides a stronger foundational knowledge of this major security threat to the OSCE region.

Artificial Intelligence as a Key Concern

Engagements in Montenegro reinforced one of the CCT's defining themes of the past two years: the growing role of artificial intelligence in both terrorist activity and counter-terrorism responses. AI emerged as the foremost technology-related concern among Montenegrin officials, with multiple agencies stressing the urgency of addressing its implications before long-term harms materialise. The Police Director was particularly emphatic, underscoring the government's commitment to countering AI-enabled terrorism, especially its use in recruiting young people.



Montenegro has responded with several concrete initiatives. The OSCE Mission is working with local authorities to advance media literacy and counter the spread of AI-generated misinformation among young people. The Minister of Education described the country's digitalisation strategy, which includes a multi-million investment in integrating AI responsibly into schools. The Ministry is also redesigning assessment procedures to reduce youth dependence on AI tools and prevent their misuse in educational settings.

Taken together, these efforts reflect a broader commitment to weakening terrorism's foothold in the digital sphere. Officials across engagements stressed the importance of continued investment in digital literacy and equipping young people with the critical skills needed to identify misinformation, resist radicalisation, and recognise online recruitment tactics.

III. CETINJE

School Dialogue

The second School Dialogue was held at Cetinje Gymnasium, bringing together local high school students aged 14–18 for a structured exchange on online radicalisation and violent extremism. Students heard opening remarks from CCT Chair Kamil Aydın and OSCE Mission Ambassador Jan Haukaas, joined by the Principal of Cetinje Gymnasium Sanja Jelić, the Secretary of the Secretariat for Education and Youth in Cetinje Dejana Dizdar,



and Cetinje Police Department representative Kristina Kotur. Delivered in both English and Montenegrin, the remarks oriented students to the goals of the initiative and the Committee's expectations for the day.

Three expert presentations followed. Mr. Nenad Vujadinović, a professor and media literacy specialist, opened with a discussion on online misinformation and its dangers, using an interactive paper airplane exercise to illustrate how easily individuals can fall victim to false narratives. Ms. Anđelija Lučić, representing the NGO Forum for Youth and Non-Formal Education, presented her research on *Social Values and Youth Resilience to Polarisation, Radical and Extremist Behaviour*. Ms. Ena Grbović and Mr. Dajan Zečević from the NGO Safer Internet Centre presented research titled *Digital Violence Is Not Invisible*.



Students were subsequently divided into six moderated groups, each assigned one of three themes: internet safety, media literacy and critical thinking, and the role of institutions. After approximately one hour of discussion, groups presented their policy recommendations to Committee members. Student recommendations were notably collaborative in orientation, consistently emphasising partnership with institutions, educators, and civil society over punitive or restrictive approaches.

Key recommendations by theme included:

- **Internet safety:** prioritising mental health through positive content engagement, adopting an empathetic online mindset, applying the "recognise then verify" method, and protecting personal data.
- **Media literacy and critical thinking:** verifying content before sharing, maintaining a responsible digital presence, implementing peer educator workshops, and understanding the permanence of one's digital footprint.
- **Role of institutions:** increased prevention activities and stronger data protection policies (Ministry of Interior/Police); continued youth consultation in legislative processes (Parliament); reduced promotion of crime-related content and improved teacher training on digital literacy (media and schools); equal and impartial enforcement of digital privacy violations (police/judiciary); greater youth inclusion in community decision-making (local communities).



During the open Q&A, students demonstrated a strong and consistent resistance to platform restrictions, or age-based limitations on internet access, framing such measures as invasions of privacy. They favoured education and collaboration as preferred responses to online harms. Several students spoke independently on the value of the initiative, also citing a local “deepfake” incident, the veracity of which remains contested among residents.



Comparing the second School Dialogue to the first, held in Pordenone, Italy, a clear generational divergence in recommendations emerged. Younger, middle-school-aged students in Pordenone (roughly 12–14) tended to advocate for restrictions on internet access, while older students in Cetinje (14–18) favoured collaboration and education over prohibition. This shift likely reflects the deeper integration of digital life

among older students, for whom online platforms represent an established social environment rather than a new frontier. Collectively, the two School Dialogues have provided the Committee with a richer, age-differentiated understanding of youth priorities, valuable input for communicating with national parliaments on preventative policy design.

IV. ANNEX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

OSCE PA Members

Title	First name	Surname	Country	Job title
Mr.	Kamil	Aydin	Türkiye	Chair of the CCT
Mr.	Emanuele	Loperfido	Italy	Vice-Chair of the CCT
Mr.	Tsogtbaatar	Damdin	Mongolia	Member of the CCT
Ms.	Jevrosima	Pejović	Montenegro	Member of the CCT
Mr.	Artemi Vicent	Rallo	Spain	Member of the CCT
Mr.	Ricardo	Tarno	Spain	Member of the CCT
Ms.	Madeleine	Van Toorenburg	The Netherlands	Member of the CCT
Ms.	Federica	Onori	Italy	Special Representative on Artificial Intelligence

Parliamentary Staff

Title	First name	Surname	Country	Job title
Ms.	Ecem	Danik Gökçe	Türkiye	Staff of Delegation
Ms.	Andrea	Jovanović	Montenegro	Staff of Delegation
Ms.	Dijana	Mitrović	Montenegro	Staff of Delegation

International Secretariat

Title	First name	Surname	Job title
Mr.	Marco	Bonabello	Senior Advisor, OSCE PA
Mr.	Connor	Farrington	Research Assistant

V. ANNEX 2: PRESS RELEASES



PODGORICA, 23 March 2026 Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly have been in Montenegro today for an official visit focused on youth online radicalization, the misuse of technologies for terrorist purposes, and the links between terrorism, organized crime and conflict.



Led by Committee Chair Dr. Kamil Aydın (Türkiye), the delegation of CCT members meet with Parliament Deputy Speaker Nikolla Camaj, Podgorica, 23 March 2026 eight legislators held a series of high-level meetings with Montenegrin authorities and OSCE representatives to develop synergies on counter-terrorism strategies, including through regional security co-operation and inter-parliamentary dialogue.

“Our discussions have allowed us to gain valuable first-hand insight into Montenegro’s counter terrorism architecture and the strong co-operation between its institutions,” Dr. Aydın said. “Parliamentary engagement remains essential in addressing both traditional and emerging threats, including the rise on lone-actor attacks and youth online radicalization, which pose growing challenges to intelligence and law-enforcement agencies across the region. Only through holistic approaches involving all segments of society we can effectively prevent terrorism and violent extremism. Montenegro’s experience in this context can be very useful.

The programme featured a briefing by OSCE Head of Mission to Montenegro, Ambassador Jan Haukaas; meetings with Parliament Deputy Speaker Nikolla Camaj; Deputy Prime Minister for Security, Defence, Fight Against Crime and Internal Policy Aleksa Bečić; Minister of Internal Affairs Danilo Šaranović and Police Director Lazar Šćepanović; Minister of Education, Science and Innovation Andjela Jakšić Stojanović; Representatives of the National Security Agency; and a working lunch with the Parliamentary Committee on Security and Defence, hosted by Vice-Chair Nikola Zirojević.

Jevrosima Pejović, a CCT member from Montenegro, underlined the value of inter-parliamentary dialogue and sharing best practices.

“Hosting the CCT in Podgorica was an important opportunity to showcase Montenegro’s commitment to international security co-operation and robust parliamentary oversight,” Pejović said. “The exchanges we had will directly contribute to enhancing our national and regional responses to terrorism and violent extremism.”

The programme of the visit includes briefings at the Western Balkans Cyber Capacity Centre, a regional training and co-operation hub focused on building cybersecurity resilience across the Western Balkans. The Centre disseminates cybersecurity culture through education and awareness programmes, and promotes regional co-operation through sharing best practices and facilitating operational collaboration among Western Balkans countries.



The visit is part of the CCT's regular programme of official country visits aimed at deepening parliamentary understanding of counter-terrorism challenges and promoting practical co-operation among OSCE participating States.

Tomorrow, the CCT will continue its activities in Montenegro with its second School Dialogue. Following an event in Italy last November, the Montenegro School Dialogue is part of an ongoing effort to ensure that the experiences of students directly inform parliamentary work on preventing youth radicalization to violent extremism and strengthening students' digital resilience.

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CETINJE, 24 March 2026 – The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) held today the second event of its “School Dialogues” initiative, bringing together students, educators, policymakers, law enforcement and civil society at Cetinje Gymnasium in Montenegro.

Building on the successful launch of the initiative in Italy in November 2025, the programme aims to strengthen digital safety, media literacy, and the prevention of youth radicalization to violent extremism. The Cetinje dialogue provided a platform for direct engagement with students, enabling them to share their experiences and contribute concrete ideas to policymakers.



Speakers at the opening session included CCT Chair Kamil Aydin (Türkiye), OSCE PA CCT member Jevrosima Pejović (Montenegro), Principal of Cetinje Gymnasium Sanja Jelić, Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro Ambassador Jan Haukaas, Secretary for Education and Youth of Cetinje Dejana Dizdar, and Police representative Kristina Kotur.

“We want to strengthen your awareness of the risks you may encounter online, so that you can better recognize them and reject extremist narratives. We want to offer a platform for you – the students – to share your experiences, perspectives, and concrete ideas” said CCT Chair Kamil Aydin in his exchange with the students. “Finally, as parliamentarians we want to take your messages back to our own parliaments, so that your voices can help shape future national laws and international policies.”

Jevrosima Pejović highlighted the importance of creating a safe space for dialogue and empowering young people to speak openly about their digital experiences. “Security today is no longer only the responsibility of institutions — it begins with each individual,” she said. “That is why it is essential to equip young people with the knowledge and critical thinking needed to navigate the digital world safely.”

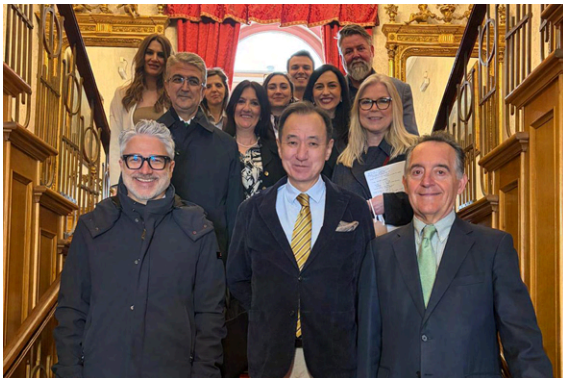
The event gathered approximately 80 students, who participated in a structured programme combining expert input and interactive group work. Expert presentations were delivered by

Nenad Vujadinović, media literacy specialist; Anđelija Lučić from the NGO Forum for Youth and Non-Formal Education; and Ena Grbović and Dajana Zečević from the NGO Safer Internet Centre, who presented research on digital violence and youth resilience. Students then worked in small groups focused on three key themes: online safety, media literacy and critical thinking, and the role of institutions.

Through peer exchange and scenario-based analysis, students developed concrete recommendations to address digital risks and strengthen cooperation between schools, families and authorities. These recommendations were presented in plenary and discussed with OSCE PA members and experts, resulting in a consolidated set of student-driven proposals.



Closing the event, OSCE PA Special Representative on Artificial Intelligence and Vice-Chair of the Network of Young Parliamentarians Federica Onori emphasized the importance of integrating youth perspectives into policymaking. “The real question is not whether we regulate artificial intelligence, but who shapes its rules.” she said. “This requires sustained and inclusive dialogue among governments, the private sector and civil society – including young people, as younger generations will both reap the benefits and bear the long-term implications of these technologies.”



Also addressing the participants were Deputy Secretary General of the Parliament of Montenegro Eliza Šećerović and OSCE PA Senior Advisor Marco Bonabello, who highlighted the importance of connecting schools and parliaments to translate youth input into concrete policy action.

The Cetinje event marks the continuation of a broader OSCE PA effort to engage students across the region. Insights from this and future School Dialogues will be consolidated into a set of youth-driven recommendations to inform parliamentary work on countering violent extremism, strengthening digital resilience, and promoting inclusive and participatory policymaking.

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