National Platform for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Leads to Terrorism
National Platform for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Leads to Terrorism (P/C VERLT)

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Different forms of violent extremism and radicalisation that leads to terrorism (VERLT) are global phenomena that each society should actively and determinedly oppose at the local, national, regional and international level.

The region of the Western Balkans is one of the most sensitive areas, bearing in mind the negative legacy of the wars that took place at the end of the 20th Century, overlapping of various interests and influences, but also often wrong understanding of national and religious diversities of the population inhabiting the region.

As one of the countries from within the Western Balkans, Montenegro belongs to the group of potentially less vulnerable countries. Incidences of various forms of violent extremism and radicalisation to violence are not the norm in Montenegro society thus requiring special attention by focusing on the Constitutional definition of Montenegro as a civic state and a society where incitement of hate, discrimination or stigmatization on any grounds is prohibited.

Suppression of Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Leads to Terrorism (VERLT) requires dedicated involvement and professional cooperation of all segments of the society, primarily of all the national authorities and institutions of local self-government, but also other relevant societal actors from the non-governmental, private, scientific and civil society.
The initiation of this Platform is a reflection of the need to create and support an environment that spreads understanding and promotes the principles of the civic state. Annual meetings are envisaged, with its actors contributing to the suppression of these phenomena in various ways between the meetings.

Under the slogan “Together against Violent Extremism”, this Platform should bring together the representatives of relevant national institutions, local authorities, media, political parties, NGOs, religious communities, academic community and individuals who can contribute to P/CVERLT.

The Platform also aims to enable better understanding of the significance of this process and to clarify and specify the ways they can contribute to the fight against violent radicalisation and violent extremism through open dialogue.

The government is ultimately responsible for the security and coordination of responsibility within this field, through the implementation of the strategic documents and related action plans with efforts focusing on early warning, while avoiding the risk to prematurely criminalize individuals, overextend the role of Law Enforcement, and/or stigmatize certain ethnic/religious groups.

Local authorities have a specific and responsible role of being the first in line to potentially face this phenomenon. In that sense, local communities and municipalities are valuable allies for early detection and prevention and must build the required capacities for efficient and timely response to tackle this issue.

The role of parliamentary parties must focus on increasing knowledge and capacity of parliamentarians to understand P/CVERLT. Building political consensus around P/CVERLT should be supported.

The role of the media is just as important in this field through its specific features. The media are equally important
in education campaigns, mobilization of citizens, prevention of stigmatization as well as capacity building on responsible reporting and media literacy among the youth.

**Non-government organisations and civil society at large play an important role in research, expert analyses or education campaigns** due to their knowledge of and access to local communities.

**Religious communities** also have a very important role through education regarding tolerance by the prevention of the misuse of the message “in the name of their faith”, by the condemning the damaging acts that are committed by violent extremists.

**Academic community** should analyse this phenomenon in Montenegro and propose relevant actions to tackle and reduce any ongoing identified threat through scientific meetings and papers.

The Platform especially recognizes **the importance of creating alternatives and facing the challenges** experienced by those vulnerable to VERLT, including the creation of alternative narratives aimed at diminishing the effects of extremist propaganda.

Great emphasis will be placed on frontline or grassroots practitioners from all around Montenegro who work daily with people who have already been radicalised or who are vulnerable to radicalisation to violence. Practitioners will include police and prison authorities, but also those who are not traditionally involved in counter-terrorism activities such youth workers, civil society representatives and healthcare professionals. Montenegro will consult with the EU RAN and the OSCE* to inform these programs and processes.

We wish this Platform to become a valuable **national resource centre** for countering these and similar phenomena that might affect the stability of our society in the future.

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* OSCE: The Role of Civil Society in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Focus on South-Eastern Europe (2018); OSCE: Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach (2014); Remarks by OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism – The Way Forward (2016); OSCE: ‘Leaders Against Intolerance and Violent Extremism’.
Taking the EU RAN as a model, the Platform represents the initiation of a national RAN network, which will be founded and coordinated by the state authorities. Its work should be divided into specific, thematic RAN working groups; in addition to the national authorities, these which would address specific themes and be open for other social segments.

The Platform supports initiated activities of the state authorities on establishing firm regional and wider international cooperation in this field. Along with that, international exchange of knowledge, experience and cooperation should be developed among all other important actors in this process.

The Platform is based on national, regional and international documents and initiatives**, which set up the framework for Suppressing Violent Extremism and Radicalization and That Leads to Terrorism.

The principles and foundations set out in this Platform shall be specified through adoption of the strategic documents, accompanying action plans, the work of the National Operational Team for Suppressing Violent Extremism (NOT), the OSCE and the activities of the RAN work groups.

The text of this Platform may be changed or amended, as required, between the annual meetings.

All societal players that share these values, and are ready to respect the principles and foundations stated in this document and wish to participate in further activities in this field may join the Platform by sending their consent to the following e-mail address zajednoprivotekstremizma@cdtnm.org

Podgorica, November 2018. godine
Ministerial Declaration on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism (MC.DOC/4/15);
The Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674);
The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy A/RES/70/291;
EU Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism 9572/17;
The Berlin Declaration AS (18) D E – Resolution on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead To Terrorism;
Sofia Declaration (2018); EU Strategy for the Western Balkans (2018);
Joint Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism for the Western Balkans (2018);
The Plan of Action to Prevent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead To Terrorism;
Together against Violent Extremism