

THE WESTERN BALKANS TRIAL MONITORING REPORT

Regional Factsheet



From Paper to Practice 2.0

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Judicial Responses to
Serious Organized Crime and Corruption
Review Period July 2024 - September 2026

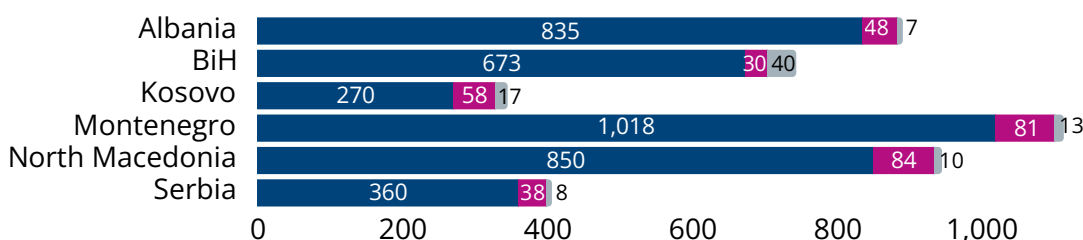
HOW WE KNOW IF REFORM IS REACHING PRACTICE

The Report combines practice-based evidence from serious organized crime and corruption cases with reform tracking to assess whether change is reaching day-to-day justice practice.



Evidence Base

● No. hearings ● No. legal acts ● Recommendations tracked



Analytical Frame



Cases monitored



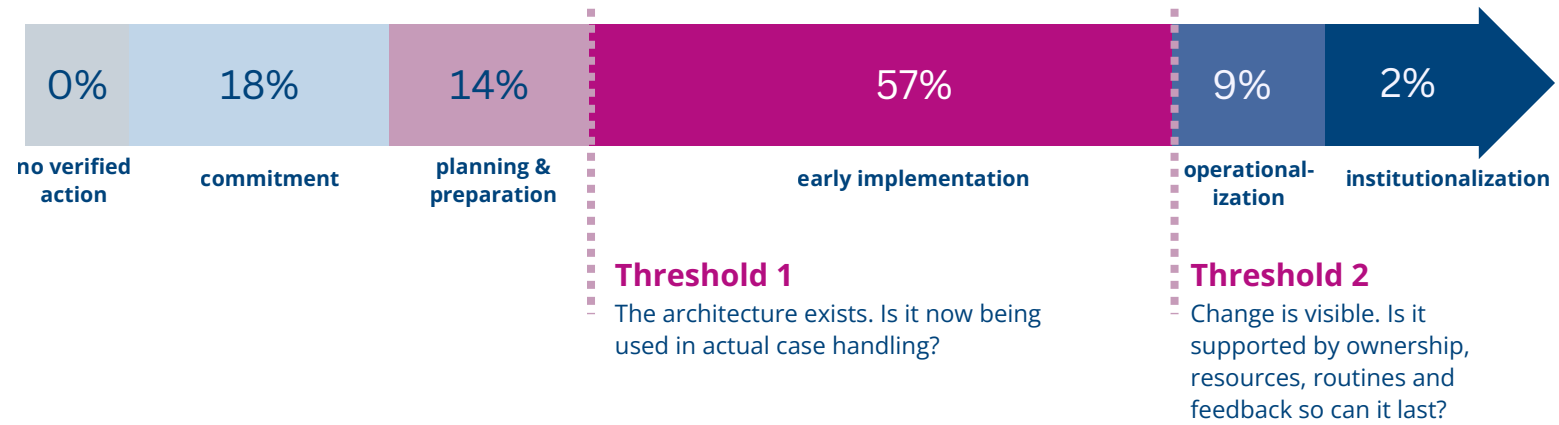
In total:
376
cases

REFORM IS A PATHWAY, NOT A YES/NO STORY

Across the region, most tracked recommendations have entered the reform process, and more than half have reached early implementation. The next challenge is absorption: turning new rules, tools and institutional arrangements into consistent professional routines, and then supporting those routines until they become durable.

REGIONAL AGGREGATE OBSERVATIONS

Implementation of RTM Reform Recommendations



The reform trajectory is shifting — from creating reform architecture to testing whether it performs in practice.

That changes what needs to be observed. The key question is no longer simply whether another strategy, guideline, tool or training has been delivered, but whether existing reforms hold when institutions confront difficult cases, competing pressures and routine operational constraints.

WHY SERIOUS OCC CASES?

COMPLEX

They test co-ordination, evidence and legal reasoning.

HIGH STAKES

They place fairness, consistency and institutional credibility under pressure.

PUBLICLY VISIBLE

They are where reform performance and public confidence meet.

SYSTEM WIDE

Weakness at one stage can travel through the whole case: from case construction and evidence to trial management, reasoning, appeal, sanctioning and asset recovery.

When reform is consistently reflected in practice under these conditions, it provides stronger evidence that the new standards are becoming embedded in institutional practice rather than remaining isolated formal measures.

WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SIGNAL

There are five recurring enablers of reform uptake, running beneath both reform momentum and the stagnation across the region and at varying degrees in each jurisdiction. These are not separate reform areas. They reinforce one another: ownership creates direction; consistency defines the standard; capacity makes it repeatable; data shows whether it works; transparency makes learning and accountability possible.

01

Ownership and the Shared Direction of Reform

Reform moves further when objectives are translated into responsibility, procedures, timelines, feedback channels and decision points — not left dispersed across institutions.

02

Consistency, uniform application of the law and predictability

Reform becomes visible when similar legal and factual problems are handled in comparable, reasoned and explainable ways, supported by common reference points and institutional memory rather than isolated individual practice.

03

Capacity, expertise and the quality of legal practice

Training matters, but sustainable performance also depends on usable tools, workflows, quality control, staffing, specialist support, feedback and incentives that reward quality as well as output.

04

Diagnostic data and meaningful track record

Case counts, conviction rates and backlogs are useful entry points, but reform needs data that show how cases move, where they stall, whether outcomes survive review, and whether sanctioning and confiscation follow through.

05

Transparency, public trust and institutional memory

Publication of judicial acts, hearing information, case-law access and coherent communication support not only public trust, but also consistency, professional learning and institutional memory.



WAY FORWARD

FROM REFORM ON PAPER → TO USE → TO CONSOLIDATION

Look beyond delivery

A completed activity is evidence of movement, not yet of changed practice.

Look for consistency

Good practice matters more when it appears across cases, institutions and professional actors rather than as an isolated example.

Look over time

Reform becomes institutional when it survives beyond individual initiative and is reinforced by ownership, resources, routines and feedback.

THE DATA IS THE START OF THE STORY

The report follows reform from institutional response to courtroom practice — and then looks beneath aggregate outcomes to understand what is changing, what remains uneven and where the next reform questions lie.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND?

HOW WAS THE EVIDENCE BUILT?

Understand the monitoring scope, evidence sources, analytical approach and the boundaries within which findings should be read.

WHAT IS CHANGING IN THE REGION?

See the regional reform trajectory, recurring patterns in uptake and the conditions shaping movement from activity to practice.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN EACH JURISDICTION?

Follow change against each jurisdiction's own baseline: what has moved, what remains uneven and what could move reform further.

DIVE DEEPER

WHAT DO CASE OUTCOMES REALLY TELL?

Move beyond headline conviction and acquittal rates. Trace procedural route, appeal, retrial, sanction, confiscation and duration to see what aggregate figures conceal.

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DEEP DIVE : TRIAL-TO-OUTCOME
ANNEX 1



FOLLOW THE DATA FURTHER.

Read the full report and the six jurisdiction factsheets.

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the OSCE and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

For more on the Regional Trial Monitoring project go to

→ osce.org/westernbalkanstrialmonitoring

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