Training course for government spokespersons on issues of violent extremism and terrorism
Module contents:

- Introduction to radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism.
- Disinformation, fake news, hate speech, violent extremism & terrorism.
- Legal and political responsibility of institutions. Transparency of information to the media and the public.
- Ethical dilemmas of informing the public about VE and terrorism.
- Avoiding propaganda when interacting with the media.
- Preparation of press releases and other forms of communication with the media and the public.
- Increasing interaction between government spokespersons and the media in communication in cases of crises.
- Freedom of the media/of expression versus national security.
Introduction to radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism

- **Extremism**: When a person or group believes in views which are thought to be unreasonable and unacceptable to most other people.

- **Violent extremism**: When a person or group thinks that fear, terror and violence are justifiable means to achieve ideological, political or social changes and then acts on these beliefs.

- **Terrorism**: Refers to a specific strategy used to achieve a political objective by deliberately creating and exploiting fear.

- **Radicalization** is the process by which a person adopts extreme views or practices to the point of legitimizing the use of violence.
Disinformation, fake news, hate speech, violent extremism & terrorism

- Doctored videos/deep fake videos
- Images and videos out of context
- Fake translations and fabricated stories
- Networks of inauthentic blogs/media portals
- Fake social media pages
- Bots
- Fake likes and followers
- Trolling

https://medium.com/dfrlab/balticbrief-disinformation-through-mistranslation-18c0d600c00d
Legal and political responsibility of institutions. Transparency of information to the media and the public.

- 2014 Law on the Right to Information
- Coordinator for the Right to Information
- Transparency programs
- Commissioner for the Right to Information
- publeaks.al
Ethical dilemmas of informing the public about VE and terrorism

- Reporting on cases of violent extremism and terrorism needs to be balanced. To what extent should the media give space to the author and the ideology?
- In the first reports from the field, journalists will be guided by verified facts, while thoughts, perspectives and analysis of the event should be carried out at a later stage.
- Field reports should be separated from expert analysis.
- Journalists have a responsibility to use official and reliable sources, to check them and, if necessary, to protect their identity.
- The information should be conveyed as accurately and clearly as possible in order to minimize interpretation.
- Only the official information of the institutions involved in the investigation should be used in determining the crime.
Avoiding propaganda when interacting with the media

Why do we communicate with the media?

- To inform the public about the performance of the institution;
- To amplify messages/stances/appeals;
- To draw attention to synergies with other institutions and actors of society that have similarities in goals and objectives;
- To be transparent and credible to international donors, etc.

“TRANSPARENCY: THE WALLS OF THE INSTITUTION BECOME GLASS-LIKE”
Preparation of press releases and other forms of communication with the media and the public. When are they effective?

- Title as short as possible and noticeable.
- The first paragraph should contain the important information.
- Focuses only on one issue (for other issues you have another opportunity).
- Concise style and grammatical perfection.
- A little context/background on the organization/phenomenon, etc.
- Should be re-read to get rid of unnecessary information.
- Contact orientation, for those who want more info
- When disseminated at the right time and place
- Prepare several versions (for dissemination in various media formats)
- Make sure it is conceived and written as close to journalistic style as possible!
- If it is longer than a page, you have seriously endangered its publication!
- Think of the newsroom as a work environment where in 24 hours there is an extraordinary flow of news and information and only a part of it will be made public.
Increasing interaction between government spokespersons and the media in communication in cases of crises

- The crisis is local, regional, national...
- The affected “actors” are identified
- What others have done in similar situations

✓ The person who will communicate with the media is appointed
✓ Simple, clear, consistent messages
✓ Adapt the messages according to the “actors” that are affected
✓ Clarify how you can communicate with the specific person
✓ Stay open and honest in communication to the end.
✓ Do not use the “no comment” cliché
✓ Comfort and support
✓ Use facts to debunk rumors
✓ The person communicating with the TV is prepared to convey "security" and competence
Freedom of the media/of expression versus national security

- **Conflict typology**
  - non-professional causes
  - intentional causes

- **Review/impact**
  - evaluation of criticism and accusations;
  - Is it worth giving an answer in any case?

- **Reaction**
  - ignore and work
  - direct contacts
  - legal solutions
Summary

✓ Distinguish between "radicalization" as a process leading to "violent extremism" and "terrorism."

✓ Recognize and understand the forces/motives that drive violent extremism and terrorism and their manifestation in a global perspective.

✓ Awareness of the importance of transparency and the negative effects/consequences of its absence, on the part of public institutions, towards the media and citizens when it comes to violent extremism and terrorism.

✓ Avoid propaganda in relation to the media.