The Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia (ACE) oversees foreign assistance funds that boost efforts to deter organized crime, counter the malign influence of strategic competitors in Montenegro, and support host country initiatives to improve government performance. Foreign assistance spurs efforts to build the capacities of Montenegrin criminal justice and law enforcement institutions and bolster Montenegrin armed forces’ interoperability with NATO doctrine, strategy, and operations. Anti-corruption efforts, rule of law programming, and support for independent media advance the country along its EU accession path. U.S. funding also supports Montenegro’s fight against COVID-19, through assistance for a food security program and by countering the spread of related disinformation. The Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) of the U.S. Embassy in Podgorica uses assistance funds to support initiatives to combat disinformation and advance media freedom, investigative journalism, and media literacy. Embassy Podgorica will continue to utilize foreign assistance to support programming that advances U.S. national security imperatives in Montenegro and positions one of NATO’s newest Allies to contribute to a strong and free Europe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance Category</th>
<th>FY 2020 ACE-Coordinated State Department Assistance to Montenegro by Category* ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peace &amp; Security</td>
<td>$8.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy, Human Rights &amp; Governance</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Growth</td>
<td>$0.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not include centrally managed funds or $300,000 in FY 2020 COVID supplemental funds.

**COVID assistance includes reprogrammed, supplemental, and other USG funds.

NOTE: The assistance highlights below are examples of results achieved by funding in each category in the chart.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT & SECURITY ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHT**

Included in the more than $8 million Peace and Security funding for Montenegro in FY 2020, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and the Department of Justice’s International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) organized training to improve the regional and international cooperation capacities of the Montenegrin criminal justice and law enforcement institutions, a precondition for the country’s active engagement in global and regional challenges. ICITAP also played an essential role in establishing Montenegro’s Special Organized Crime Unit. The unit has been involved in several high-level corruption and organized crime investigations, which have led to high-level arrests and prosecutions.

As a new NATO Ally, Montenegro derives particular benefit from the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program to help the country create a modern military force that is proficient in, and interoperable with, NATO doctrine, strategy, and operations. Montenegrin officers attend the National War College, U.S. Command and General Staff Officers’ Course, the Army War College, the Naval Staff College, the Eisenhower School for National Security at the National Defense University, and the Air Command and Staff College. Historically, graduates of IMET programs are elevated to positions of leadership ahead of their peers, applying their newly acquired knowledge within the Ministry of Defense, General Staff, and military units, including the Navy and Air Force. IMET graduates are also selected for key leadership positions in international operations on a higher frequency. At the tactical level, Montenegrin personnel attend the Basic Officer Courses for Infantry, Signal, and Military Police, the Engineer Captains Career Course as well as the U.S. Army Sergeant Majors Academy. The Ministry of Defense is participating in a distance learning Human Capital Resources Management course and through the Regional Defense Fellowship Program, a Legal Aspects of Combating Terrorism course.

(In addition to the State Department-funded assistance described above, Montenegro also benefited from approximately $20.0 million in FY 2019 U.S. Defense Department section 333 assistance.)

**CIVIL SOCIETY & POLITICAL PROCESSES ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHT**

PDS oversees the U.S. Embassy’s Democracy Commission Small Grants Program, which provides small grants of up to $30,000 to local organizations to increase the capacity of civil society to tackle key priorities, including the empowerment and inclusion of young people in building a democratic society; the economic and political empowerment of women; the inclusion of marginalized communities; promoting environmental protection; developing the capacities of aspiring entrepreneurs; and bolstering rule of law and combating corruption and organized crime. With Democracy Commission support, Football Club Breznica worked with underprivileged children in the northern city of Pljevlja through soccer activities, English classes, and events designed to boost civic engagement. One event featured a regional girls’ soccer tournament which highlighted women’s empowerment in keeping with the Government of Montenegro’s strategy for gender equality and promoted tolerance among participants from different ethnic groups.
FY 2020 ACE-Coordinated State Department Assistance to Montenegro by Account* ($12.7m)

Source: ACE

*Does not include centrally managed funds or COVID supplemental funds.

NOTE: Montenegro benefited from approximately $20 million in FY 2019 U.S. Defense Department section 333 assistance.

ANTI-CORRUPTION, RULE OF LAW & GOOD GOVERNANCE ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHT

INL implemented programming to improve the capability of the Government of Montenegro to deter and respond to serious crime; improve the efficiency, quality and transparency of criminal proceedings; develop the capacities of institutions responsible for fighting crime; improve the quality of training for Montenegrin professionals involved in criminal justice efforts; and increase civil society’s role in criminal justice system reforms to raise public trust in Montenegro’s criminal justice institutions. INL also conducted a series of English language courses for Montenegrin judges, prosecutors, and representatives of the Ministry of Justice. Improved English language skills contribute to better and more efficient work on international cases. INL facilitated drafting and adoption of the counter-trafficking in persons (TIP) training curricula at the specialized Center for Training in the Judiciary and Prosecution, followed by specialized training for judges and prosecutors, and technical support for a newly licensed TIP shelter. This, together with a previous INL program to support standing up the country’s first Counter-TIP Task Force, led to higher numbers of investigations and convictions as well as improvements in sentencing, resulting in Montenegro’s upgrade to Tier 2 in the State Department’s 2020 TIP report.

INDEPENDENT MEDIA & COUNTERING DISINFORMATION ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHT

PDS supports the Digital Forensic Center (DFC), which highlights and debunks specific cases of disinformation for the Montenegrin public, increasing awareness of Russian tactics and improving the public’s media literacy skills. The DFC uncovered multiple bot attacks perpetuated by outside agitators during the winter 2020 demonstrations, highlighted fake media narratives during fall 2020 elections, and brought to light false narratives being circulated about COVID-19 vaccines. DFC regularly appears on local news shows and publishes its findings on its website and social media channels, positioning itself as a reliable source of information in a contentious media landscape. From October 2019 – September 2020, DFC’s website was visited by more than 19,000 users; during the same period, DFC’s reports, analyses, statements, and media appearances were published 450 times by both Montenegrin and foreign media outlets.

COVID-19 ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHT

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the U.S. government has provided more than $1.3 million in COVID-19 mitigation assistance to Montenegro, including supplemental funds and existing resources reprogrammed for COVID-19 efforts. These initiatives include a food security program providing sustainable assistance and in turn reducing stress on the food supply chain and reliance on food imports; media efforts to debunk disinformation and conspiracy theories surrounding the COVID-19 crisis; and support for the National Coordinating Body on Infectious Diseases in their development of a quarantine tracking application, a donor coordination platform, and a risk reduction communication channel.

A portion of FY 2019 Democracy Commission grants was reprogrammed to support COVID-19-related initiatives, including critical work carried out by the Montenegrin NGO Sigurna zenska kuca (Women’s Safe House). Starting in September 2020, Sigurna zenska kuca launched a country-wide social media campaign, reaching over 102,750 Montenegrin women. The NGO also provided free online legal and social services as well as programs to build the psychological resilience of more than 100 survivors of domestic violence. As a direct result of their participation, 21 women reported their abusers to the authorities, 15 left abusive partners, and three women with minor children requested shelter accommodation. A lawyer has represented 20 women in divorce proceedings and 10 women in division of property proceedings and has filed seven criminal charges to enforce alimony payments and 15 proposals for execution of alimony.

Through the Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid Appropriation program, the Office of Defense Cooperation via United States European Command (USEUCOM) provided vital COVID-19 diagnosis and monitoring equipment including equipment monitors, electrocardiogram (ECG) diagnosis systems, and mobile ultrasounds to four regional hospital at a total value of $74,594. USEUCOM has approved another $80,000 worth of equipment donations to four additional General hospitals.

ICITAP responded to the ongoing pandemic by donating digital thermometers to the Montenegrin Border Police for use at border crossing points and worked with the Export and Related Border Security Program to deliver personal protective equipment to Montenegrin Border Police and Customs.