In January, the government instigated annual high-level inter-ministerial meetings on the protection of children from violence and exploitation, with the objective of fostering intersectoral cooperation, facilitating dialogue on the problem at the highest political level and directing government policy.

**Recent developments: National Action Plans, Laws, and Budget**

**2016**

The Family Law of Montenegro was amended, prohibiting all forms of VAC, including corporal punishment in all settings, as well as the home.

**2016**

In January, the government instigated annual high-level inter-ministerial meetings on the protection of children from violence and exploitation, with the objective of fostering intersectoral cooperation, facilitating dialogue on the problem at the highest political level and directing government policy.

**2016**

In July, a multi-year campaign, End Violence, was launched by the Prime Minister of Montenegro, reiterating the Government’s commitment to end VAC and to promote systematic efforts to prevent it. The first phase addressed online violence.

**2017**

In February, the second phase of the End Violence campaign was launched at a high-level conference, focusing on family violence and all forms of childhood adversity. This conference sparked a public debate on the protection of children from all forms of violence.

**2017**


Montenegro’s National Action Plan 2017–2021 to prevent and protect children from violence was developed through multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral consultations that included the Government, UNICEF, NGOs, academia, the media and youth networks. It sets out the vision, goal and strategic objectives with a multidisciplinary response, and covers key areas, such as schools, primary health care centers, social services and the judicial system. Community-based operational multidisciplinary teams for protection from family violence and VAC, now operating in 17 municipalities, have created a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach to the protection of children from all forms of neglect, abuse, violence and exploitation.

**Government focal points**

Kemal Purišić
Minister of Labour and Social Welfare

**Multi-stakeholder Collaboration and Consultation with Children**

**Investments from the End Violence Fund**

- Montenegro is one of the ten priority countries of the regional project supported by the Fund and led by the Council of Europe to strengthen legislative frameworks and national capacity to prevent and respond to online child sexual abuse and exploitation, including awareness-raising activities on child online safety.
Montenegro’s action plan aims to implement multiple INSPIRE strategies. The proposed interventions include initiatives to: (I) amend the Labour Code to incorporate provisions stipulating a record of no prior convictions for severe VAC, in particular for sexual exploitation or abuse, as a job requirement for people working with children; (S) eliminate the repeated victimization of child victims and witnesses by setting up separate child-friendly rooms in courts and prosecution offices, separating the child from the perpetrator, using video links to interview children in separate rooms and upgrading the equipment; (P) enhance the quality and frequency of home visits by nurses to families with newborn babies; and (R) set up child and adolescent psychiatric wards and develop quality services to work with the perpetrators of VAC. Following the 2017 action plan, the Ministry of Health started strengthening home care services and developing a protocol on the work of health care institutions in prevention and response to violence against children, while the Ministry of Interior issued Guidelines for the work of the relevant institutions in cases of identifying and prosecuting child marriages and domestic partnership. Within the WePROTECT global programme on fighting online child sexual exploitation, the Net Friend educative mobile app for children was launched to raise awareness of online safety among children, the general public and professionals. In 2012, the first helpline for child victims of violence was established. In 2017, a national parental helpline was launched, providing free counseling for parents in need of support. The Parenting for Lifelong Health program for parents of children two to nine years of age, aimed at enhancing parenting skills and reducing the risk of child abuse and neglect, has been piloted since early 2018 and implemented by health centers, kindergartens and NGOs.