

# NEWSLETTER

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WOMEN4CYBER MONTENEGRO



## TOP NEWS

- A NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR A SAFER AND MORE INCLUSIVE DIGITAL FUTURE: WOMEN4CYBER MONTENEGRO AND ICT CORTEX
- #WOMENINTECH: A CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ICT SECTOR IN MONTENEGRO
- HOW TO PREVENT ONLINE THEFT OF MONEY AND PERSONAL DATA? MONTENEGRO NEEDS EU AND NATO CERTIFICATES IN THE IT SECTOR



# A NEW ALLIANCE FOR A SAFER CYBERSPACE



**Dear Members, Partners, and Friends of Women4Cyber Montenegro,**

**With great excitement and a deep sense of pride, I warmly welcome you to the first edition of our 2024 Newsletter. As we reflect on our foundational year—a year filled with both challenges and triumphs—I am delighted to share with you the remarkable accomplishments of Women4Cyber Montenegro. Our mission has been more than just laying the groundwork; it has been about creating a significant and lasting impact in the realm of cybersecurity.**

## **Key Achievements in Our Founding Year:**

**Educational Empowerment:** We have initiated a series of educational programs and workshops, significantly contributing to the skill development in cybersecurity, with a special focus on the empowerment and upliftment of women in this vital sector.

**Cyber Resilience:** Our efforts in strengthening national initiatives on cyber resilience, aligned with EU and NATO standards, have begun to yield substantial results, enhancing our country's cyber defense capabilities.

**Global Partnerships:** Establishing vital partnerships with prestigious organizations such as the University of Montenegro, ICT Cortex, and the Association of Security Managers of Montenegro, and participating in prestigious events like ITU Her CyberTrack, have been instrumental in our growth and outreach. Our presence at significant events like the 2BS Forum, Cyber Drill, and the Annual Conference in Madrid has further solidified our position in the cybersecurity community.

**Inclusivity and Equality:** Our advocacy for inclusive policies and gender equality in technology and cybersecurity, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, has been a beacon for transformative change.

**Research and Innovation:** The increased visibility and participation of women in cybersecurity research and innovation under our banner has challenged traditional norms, inspiring a new wave of female cyber experts and innovators.

## Our Vision for 2024 and Beyond:

**Educational Expansion:** We aim to widen our educational outreach, ensuring that more women have access to high-quality cybersecurity training and resources.

**Visibility and Networking:** We will enhance the visibility of women in cybersecurity through conferences, media engagement, and digital platforms, creating a robust and supportive community network.

**Data-Driven Insights:** Conducting comprehensive surveys and research will enable us to base our strategies on solid data, advocating effectively for policy changes that empower women in cybersecurity.

**Sustainable Development:** We are committed to developing a dynamic, enduring structure for Women4Cyber Montenegro, ensuring its lasting impact and relevance.

**Partnership Growth:** We will continue to forge and fortify our alliances, both nationally and internationally, leveraging these collaborations for amplified impact.

**Project Implementation:** We plan to execute projects focused on enhancing cybersecurity capacities in the region and launching innovative initiatives such as the formation of the Women4Cyber Junior Club. This club will give special attention to the cyber education of our youngest members, nurturing their interest and skills from an early age.

As we embark on this thrilling and challenging journey, I am filled with optimism. With the commitment and expertise of our members, coupled with the unwavering support of our partners, I am confident that we will continue to make significant strides in shaping a more inclusive and secure digital future.

Together, we are not just building a community; we are spearheading a movement. Here's to a year of growth, impact, and unwavering dedication to our mission.

With warm regards,

*dr Andreja Mihailović*

President of Women4Cyber Montenegro

# A NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR A SAFER AND MORE INCLUSIVE DIGITAL FUTURE



Women4Cyber Montenegro and ICT Cortex have formed a strategic partnership to transform the IT and cybersecurity landscape in Montenegro. ICT Cortex is the leading national ICT cluster that connects established IT companies and start-ups, who share our vision for the digital development of Montenegro.

This partnership combines the unique strengths of these two influential organizations, working together to improve the cybersecurity landscape. With a strong focus on promoting inclusive access and fostering public-private partnerships, this collaboration aims to create a resilient cybersecurity framework. One of the key aspects of this collaboration is a deep commitment to strengthening PPPs in cybersecurity and encouraging women's participation in cybersecurity.

Moreover, this partnership actively engages the private sector in formulating and implementing cybersecurity policies. Prioritizing inclusive access and nurturing public-private partnerships, this joint effort is dedicated to establishing a robust and resilient cybersecurity infrastructure. This strategic move creates a dynamic platform for the growth of the ICT ecosystem, the empowerment of women in cybersecurity, gender equality in the labor market, and the formulation of proactive cybersecurity policies in collaboration with the private sector. Together, we're strengthening national cyber resilience, developing the ICT ecosystem, and advancing gender equality in the labor market.



# BAKIĆ: SECCLO PROVIDES A MORE EFFICIENT PATH FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TO ACQUIRE SKILLS IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATION AND CYBERSECURITY



Bojana Bakić, an experienced cybersecurity consultant with three years of professional experience and ISO 27001 certification as an audit leader, currently works as a consultant in the cybersecurity team at Knightec. Bojana holds a master's degree in Cloud Security and Computing obtained through the SECCLO program. She is also a member of Women4Cyber Montenegro.

In this interview, Bojana shares her experiences with the SECCLO program and explains how it has contributed to her professional development.

**What is your experience with the Erasmus Mundus Master's program in Information Security and Cloud Computing? What would you highlight as particularly useful or learned during the program?**

**Bojana:** My experience with the SECCLO program has been very positive, and it has indeed prepared me well for professional life after studies. The program successfully brings together academic experts from Nordic regions who practically present the latest information in the fields of information and cybersecurity, as well as cloud computing. The professors emphasize practical learning methods, avoiding heavy memorization materials and rarely using tests as a measure of knowledge. They are also proactive in regularly updating the curriculum with the latest information and technologies in the field. The combination of these approaches produces highly sought-after professionals due to the countless vulnerabilities in the cyber space that emerge daily.

**What is the significance of this program and the areas it covers, especially considering the world we live in and the perspectives of the digital future and cybersecurity?**

**Bojana:** The significance of the SECCLLO program and the studied areas becomes evident in today's digital environment and perspectives on cybersecurity. We are unprepared for the extent and damage that cyberattacks will cause in the coming decades. Unfortunately, if Western countries lack skilled personnel, the Balkans are even more unprepared for such threats. Due to the lack of academic programs, various online courses and programs can be beneficial to professionals already familiar with computer science and information technology. However, investing a significant amount of time and effort is necessary to excel and obtain certification in such materials.

Programs like SECCLLO provide a more efficient path for young professionals to acquire skills in information and cybersecurity. However, it's important to constantly improve and certify in line with relevant standards in this dynamic industry.

**From your perspective, how do you evaluate the participation of women in these programs? How to motivate more women to join this industry? What advice would you give to women?**

**Bojana:** The assessment of women's participation in these programs shows that women are still a minority, not only in this environment but also in other engineering positions. Organizations and initiatives like Women4Cyber Montenegro are a great way to encourage unity, even though we are currently few in number, women can stick together and exchange knowledge and experiences.

During my studies, I attended various workshops held by women who openly discussed the challenges in the industry and sacrifices they made to balance private life with this career choice. Personally, these experiences motivate me to continue doing what I love and bring me even closer to such a small group of women. As women, we are essential in every engineering field, primarily in the workplace. Our qualities such as attention to detail, empathy, and the tendency to connect people and build community are crucial in teams made up only of men, and this is reflected in the final product or service a company provides. I encourage women to unite, support each other, and continue with dedication toward their goals in the information security industry.

**What would you convey to future participants in the program, and why should they apply?**

**Bojana:** Erasmus Mundus programs are a fantastic opportunity for young people who want to gain specialized knowledge and recognized degrees without sacrificing much. This is especially the case because of the scholarships awarded, allowing students to focus on learning without worrying about financial resources. Once the issue of financing is resolved, I also want to emphasize how diverse this program is. Information and cybersecurity are broad fields, allowing specialization in areas that are more or less technically demanding. And if someone is not particularly interested in security but in computer science, the focus on cloud computing supports knowledge in these currently highly sought-after technical and programming skills.

# CYBERSECURITY: A NECESSITY FOR MONTENEGRO'S FUTURE



Cybersecurity is not just a goal, but a vital necessity in the digital age. This was the main message of the recent presentation of cybersecurity IT solutions in Podgorica, organized by the Association of Security Managers and the company Diverto, with the support of Women4Cyber Montenegro.

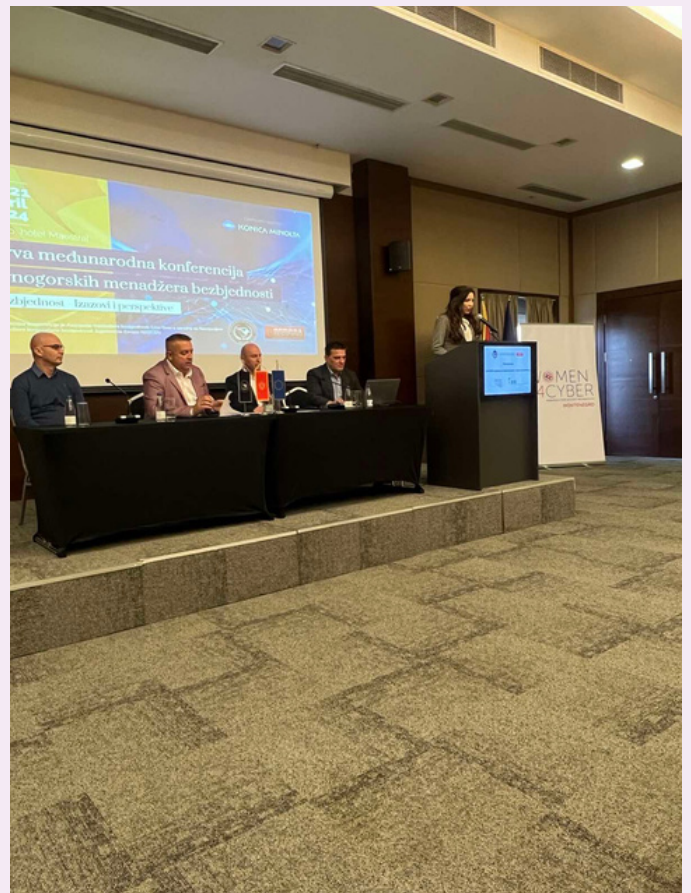
The event aimed to raise awareness of the need to obtain EU and NATO certificates in the IT sector, as well as to showcase the latest IT solutions to state institutions and business entities in Montenegro. The presentation, held at "Ramada", featured speakers from different sectors and backgrounds, who highlighted the importance of information security for various aspects of society.

Dragan Radulović, president of the Association of Security Managers of Montenegro, stressed the key role of information security in critical infrastructure, such as energy, transport, health, and finance.

Dr. Andreja Mihailović, president of W4C Montenegro, emphasized the strong commitment of the organization to the development of strategic private-public partnerships in the field of cyber security. She explained that the mission of Women4Cyber Montenegro is to foster synergistic connections between the private sector, which offers innovative technological solutions, and the public sector, which provides regulatory and political frameworks to ensure compliance with national and international standards.

Bože Šarić, director of Diverto, emphasized the importance of understanding and managing vulnerabilities in today's digital world.

The presentation also highlighted the importance of cyber security for Montenegro's integration into the EU. As Montenegro progresses on its path to EU membership, it needs to not only adopt the standards, but also develop cooperation and a proactive approach to cyber security.



# Building a Resilient Digital Society: The Role of Media Literacy



In the dynamic landscape of the digital era, our daily lives are inundated with a torrent of information, and the ever-present threat of misinformation looms large. This formidable challenge is not merely an abstract concern but a tangible danger that can be weaponized by nefarious actors. These actors strategically manipulate narratives to influence and deceive individuals, all for their own vested interests.

To mount a robust defense against this peril, our collective cybersecurity efforts must evolve and fortify across all strata of society. This involves not only embracing technological advancements but, crucially, fostering societal resilience through the widespread promotion of media literacy. Media literacy, far from being just a set of skills, is an encompassing mindset and a civic duty that demands constant cultivation and application.

Turning our attention to the pervasive issue of disinformation, it becomes incumbent upon us to employ proactive strategies. Rigorously verifying sources before sharing information is paramount, as is nurturing critical thinking to discern the underlying motives behind the presented information. Ongoing education becomes a linchpin in boosting media literacy, empowering individuals not just to be consumers of information but adeptly identifying and counteracting misinformation.

In the realm of digital communication, responsible sharing takes center stage. Before clicking the "share" button, thoughtful consideration of the potential consequences is essential. Furthermore, advocating for reliable sources becomes a crucial component of our collective defense, championing the dissemination of accurate and trustworthy information.

Let's collectively embrace our responsibility in the online sphere, recognizing that our actions contribute to the construction of an informed, resilient, and secure society. Together, we champion media literacy, navigating the digital realm with knowledge, discernment, and a profound sense of responsibility.

*mr Jovana Vuković*

PR and Social Media Coordinator



# #WOMENINTECH: A CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ICT SECTOR IN MONTENEGRO



A significant event called #WomenInTech was held in the prestigious Hilton Hotel, in Podgorica. The event was organized by ICT Cortex and the Secretariat of the Council for Competitiveness. It was dedicated to the support and affirmation of women's participation in the IT sector.

The central part of the event was a panel discussion, where participants exchanged opinions and experiences on key challenges and opportunities for women in the ICT sector. Marija Risteska, moderator and consultant for women's economic empowerment at the Secretariat of the Competitiveness Council, led the discussion, focusing on women's economic empowerment. Jasna Pejović, executive director of the Digital Academy and founder of the FlourishApp startup, shared her experience in running a start-up and developing technological initiatives.

Vera Kovačević, Design Lead at Logate, emphasized the importance of design in technological innovation and its impact on gender equality.

Dr. Andreja Mihailović, president of Women4Cyber Montenegro, spoke about cybercrime as a first-class threat to economic development and innovation, the importance of education, support networks and mentoring for women in the field of information security.

Mirjana Ivanović, executive director of PR Consultancy Hub 2023, emphasized the importance of communication and PR strategies in the promotion of gender equality.

The discussion emphasized that the empowerment of women is not only a matter of equality, but also a significant potential for the development of the ICT sector. The inclusion of women contributes to the creation of a more diverse, innovative, and resilient digital environment.



## WE ARE PROUD OF OUR MEMBERS ALSO BECAUSE OF...



Our Vice President, Denisa Kurtagić, provided guidance to two women hailing from different European countries, while our Communications Coordinators, Vasilija Velfel and Milana Ranković, participated in the impactful #HerCyberTracks project. The project provided invaluable resources and insights into the various technical, legal, and ethical aspects of cyber security together with useful hints for considering a career in the field.

#HerCyberTracks 2023 involved a combination of online lectures, hands-on activities, and an on-site forum in our capital city, allowing participants to gain a deeper understanding of the technical elements of cyber security and the legal considerations that go along with them.

Focusing on diplomacy skills and cybersecurity for women, the project was an ideal opportunity to bring together several generations of likeminded individuals, such as ones exploring potential career paths in the field, as well as experts actively working in the field.

#HerCyberTracks is one of those initiatives that helps bridge gaps in knowledge, encourages collaboration, provides mentors and mentees with valuable feedback, and helps set realistic expectations. In addition to that, an evaluation of each individual has been done so far through numerous individual activities, group tasks, one on one meetings, and peer assessments.

It was beneficial for us to gain an insight into Cybersecurity trends and Regional Landscapes and identify target areas where improvements or further conversations are necessary.





**Our Vice President, Denisa Kurtagić, is not just a winner; she's an embodiment of excellence!**

**Securing a full scholarship for the 2023 Executive Master in Cybersecurity Management is a remarkable achievement. Denisa proudly serves as an ambassador for Sovay University's cybersecurity management program, ranked among the top 3 in Europe!**

**This program is dedicated to fostering a cyber threat-oriented learning approach, shaping the next wave of cybersecurity leaders. Brace yourselves for a transformative journey, as the new generation of the Executive Master in Cybersecurity Management program kicks off this January.**

**We're delighted to share that our dedicated member, Manja Ivanović, recently accomplished a comprehensive training program focused on soft skills, facilitated by the Center for Children's Rights in Podgorica. In the ever-evolving landscape of today's digital age, soft skills play a pivotal role in enhancing professional effectiveness.**

**Manja's commitment to honing these skills reflects not only her individual growth but also underscores our organization's collective dedication to cultivating well-rounded and adaptable professionals.**

**At Women4Cyber Montenegro, we take pride in fostering a culture where our members are not just enthusiasts of their respective fields but also avid learners, constantly seeking opportunities to enhance their skill sets.**



# JUNIOR CLUB: A NEW INITIATIVE BY WOMEN4CYBER MONTENEGRO



Our joy is immeasurable as our youngest cyber enthusiasts enjoyed an unforgettable gathering in Podgorica, where they were treated to sweet surprises as a prelude to the upcoming holidays!

Exciting news is on the horizon for 2024! Women4Cyber plans to establish a Junior Club, specifically designed for our future little warriors in creating a safer internet environment.

Through a variety of activities such as games, socializing, and creative workshops, our little ones will learn about the essence of the internet and how to stay safe in the online world.

## THE LATEST STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

As of 1st January 2024, Belgium gears up to lead the way as the next presidency of the EU Council.

Belgium will put cybersecurity and digitalization as the priority, focusing on: strengthening Europe's resilience to cybersecurity threats and addressing diverse challenges in telecommunications. Their slogan is: '#Protect, #Strengthen, #Prepare!'

**Cybersecurity Priorities:** promoting a joint approach to 'active cyber protection', to strengthen trust in the digital domain and enhance cyber resilience; finalizing the Cyber Resilience Act and the Cyber Solidarity Act; reviewing the EU cyber policy and the institutional landscape and ensuring the cyber resilience of space infrastructure. The Centre for Cybersecurity Belgium is supporting the government in implementing their robust cybersecurity program.

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# THE BEST IS YET TO COME...



As the new year approached, amidst our busy tasks, a special joy lit up our team – crafting Christmas presents for members, partners, and our young cyber enthusiasts. The collaborative effort brought a sense of camaraderie, making the workload lighter and tasks more enjoyable.

Looking ahead, our team is eager to make the coming year both spectacular and secure.

We're committed to fortifying our digital defenses, embracing innovative strategies, and fostering collaboration within our community. As we bid farewell to the old year, we carry the warmth of shared experiences and the anticipation of exciting challenges ahead. Together, we stand poised to make the upcoming year a testament to our collective strength and resilience.



Over the past month, we have been actively engaged in initiatives to increase awareness surrounding the myriad of challenges in the cyber realm. Our social media channels have served as platforms for disseminating information on topics ranging from the pervasive issue of misinformation to the complexities of digital violence, along with offering practical internet safety tips. Additionally, we've delved into the prevalent phishing campaigns that Montenegro is grappling with intensively throughout December.

In the days that lie ahead, our commitment to these awareness-raising endeavors remains unwavering. We firmly believe that only through continuous education and collaborative efforts can we deliver tangible results in establishing a cyber-secure and inclusive environment. By fostering a collective understanding and proactive engagement with these issues, we aim to contribute to the creation of a digital landscape that is both safe and accessible for all.



# WOMEN 4CYBER™

EUROPEAN CYBER SECURITY ORGANISATION

MONTENEGRO

# W4C Montenegro funding comes from donations

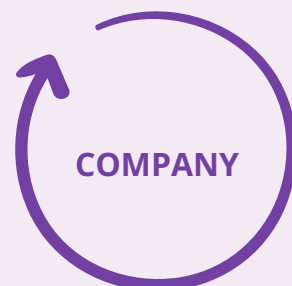
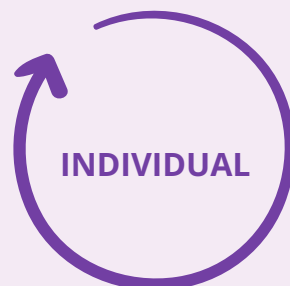
These are the different kinds of donations you can opt to give, check how you can help us raise awareness and funds towards a gender-inclusive cybersecurity community

## IN KIND



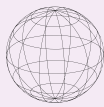
## FINANCIAL

Donations can be public or anonymous. Benefits include: logo on web, targeted actions, information, promotion and visibility in our community and more.



# WOMEN 4CYBER™

EUROPEAN CYBER SECURITY ORGANISATION  
MONTENEGRO



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