CYBER SECURITY NEWS BULLETIN

Jun 2023

Cyber security in the banking sector

"Social Security, bank account and credit card numbers aren't just data. In the wrong hands they can wipe out someone's life savings, destroy their credit and cause financial ruin."

Melissa Bean

Albania, the first in the regional cyber security exercise organized as a friendly competition format!

The 4-day cyber training, organized by the Estonian eGovernance Academy, CybExer Technologies, the National Information Society Agency (AKSHI), the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security (AKCESK) and other competent security authorities , with the support of the European Union, was held in Tirana where cyber security experts from Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia participated. The Albanian team, led by representatives of AKSHI and AKCESK, with participants from other security institutions and critical information infrastructures, showed excellent skills in responding to a cyber attack simulation, ranking first.

The activity was attended by the President of the Republic of Albania H.E.S. Bajram Begaj together with the President of the Republic of Estonia, H.E.S. Alar Karis and the Ambassador of the European Union H.S. Mrs. Christiane Hohmann.

General Director of AKCESK, Mr. Igli Tafa, in his speech, thanked the European Union, the Estonian President, and the Academy of Electronic Government of Estonia for their continued support, underlining that by working together we can protect our countries and our citizens from cyber threats and create a future where our infrastructures are safe and sustainable.

The General Director of AKSHI, Mrs. Mirlinda Karçanaj, during this activity, first thanked the EU ambassador in Tirana, who made it possible to organize this activity, the European and American partners who are supporting Albania, and praised the work of AKCESK for setting standards and raising awareness in the field of cyber security, with the help of the eGovernance Academy, which has provided support in the drafting of the legal framework as well as consulting on the management of cyber security in the private sector. Ms. Karcanaj underlined that after the sophisticated attack on Albania last year sponsored by a state not friendly to our country, these simulations are important for increasing the skills of our experts.

At a time when cyber security challenges are global, Albania has increased its focus on increasing technical capacities for responsible cyber security staff. AKCESK continues working intensively to strengthen cooperation and increase the level of cyber security by implementing the best international practices and expertise.

With the ever-increasing of banking services, cyber security awareness of this sector is a critical process.

Around the world, banks and financial institutions are frequent targets of cyber attacks; such as hacking customer data, identity theft, financial fraud and exploiting weaknesses in their information infrastructure.

Precisely, the banking sector has been in an increased attention of AKCESK this week, to intensify cooperation in terms of awareness and increased vigilance, in function of cyber protection of information infrastructures.

The prioritization of capacity building and the exchange of information in real time have been part of the daily discussions and meetings that AKCESK has held this week with this sector.

"We are there, together with you, to answer you 24/7 and to address all your issues related to cyber security" - said the General Director of the authority, in the meetings directed by him.

"Our mission is clear; together to build a safe cyber ecosystem for everyone, in Albania"

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Content:

- AKCESK participates in the OSCE activity on Confidence Building Measures

- AKCESK participates in the Cyber Week activity in Tel Aviv

Albania

AKCESK participates in the OSCE activity on Confidence Building Measures

Confidence-building measures (CBM) are an integral part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, which promote dialogue and emphasize cooperative solutions to common challenges. CBMs aim to reduce tensions, prevent conflicts and promote stability and security among OSCE member states.

In this context, as an active part of the OSCE, an invitation was sent to Albania for participation on June 13-15, where participants were representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the technical point of contact for the OSCE from the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cybersecurity, in meetings such as below:

-Informal Working Group created by PC Decision no. 1039 (IWG) on 13 June.

During the first day, the agenda consisted of preliminary discussions on the implementation of CBM 12. Participating states, on a voluntary basis, shared information and facilitated interstate exchanges in various formats, including round tables, at the regional and/or sub-regional level. To the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cybersecurity, report all achievements made under each CBM. All achievements made by the Authority in accordance with CBM 12 were also reflected.
- Consultations on the OSCE Program of Action to advance the responsible behavior of states in the use of information and communication technologies in the context of international security (PoA) on 14 June.

During the second day, the purpose of the consultation was to provide an opportunity for participating states to share their views on the scope, content and modalities of the OSCE program with a view to further consideration of this proposal by the General Assembly. The consultations aimed to enrich the General Assembly's consideration of a future United Nations program of action by fostering a deeper understanding of regional and sub-regional perspectives. Albania gave its contribution, in accordance with the previous PoA meeting, reflecting the statement prepared by the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security, on the contribution of the Directorate of Cyber Security Governance, Control and Strategic Development and the Directorate of Cyber Security Analysis as well as in cooperation with the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.
- The annual meeting of national contact points appointed in accordance with the OSCE Confidence-Building Measure (CBM) No. 8, on June 15, 2023, where our country's goals for the future related to activities and cooperation at the national, regional and international level were reflected.

The OSCE Secretariat, as one of the organizations active and involved in cyber security issues, also emphasized the importance of Albania's participation in the OEWG (Open-Ended Working Group on Security) and the United Nations in order to properly address all the achievements and progress of Albania in matters of cyber security, which is a priority on the agendas of all UN countries, in these important international organizations.

AKCESK participates in the Cyber Week activity in Tel Aviv

Within the framework of the cooperation agreement with Israel, AKCESK actively participated in the "Cyber week" activity, which is a large annual international cyber security event, organized every year at Tel Aviv University. Over the past eight years, Cyber Week has been internationally recognized as one of the world's leading cyber security events.

In one of the panels of this activity, the Crystal Ball Platform was presented, a platform involving countries and partnerships that enables the analysis and sharing of information in an interactive, fast, secure and easy way between countries on cyber defense issues. What was evident both in terms of technology and interoperability in the field of cyber security was that common cyber security challenges are overcome by working together, sharing knowledge, experiences and technologies for better and faster protection.

During this week, the Deputy General Director of AKCESK held a series of meetings with representatives of counterpart institutions from other participating countries, as well as with industry, in terms of increasing cooperation between countries and implementing new technological solutions.