REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY AUTHORITY
DIRECTORATE OF CYBER SECURITY ANALYSIS

Technical Analysis of the Malicious File

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This report has limitations and should be interpreted with caution!

Some of these limitations include:

Phase One:

*Information Sources:*This report relies on the data that was accessible at the time it was compiled. As a result, some elements might no longer reflect the current situation or may have changed since then.

Phase Two:

*Analysis Details:*Due to limited resources, certain aspects of the malicious file may not have been examined in depth. Any additional unknown information could lead to revisions or changes in the report.

Phase Three:

*Information Security:*To protect sources and confidential data, certain details may have been omitted or intentionally limited in this report. This decision was made to preserve the integrity and security of the information used.

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The findings are based on information available at the time of investigation and analysis. There is no guarantee regarding possible changes or updates to the reported information in the future. The authors of this report do not take responsibility for any misuse or consequences resulting from decisions made based on this report.

Technical Information

A phishing campaign has been identified targeting critical and key infrastructures of the Republic of Albania. The phishing emails contain an attachment named **" The document contains content that violates copyright.zip "**. This malicious file is designed to enable remote control by threat actors over the victims computers or systems, posing a serious cybersecurity risk.

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Analysis of this file begins with extraction from the .zip (archived) format. The first highlighted file is "The document contains content that violates copyright.exe," which is a ***PE (Portable Executable)*** type file, an executable file. Additionally, if the "View hidden items" option is enabled in Windows, several other hidden files are also detected

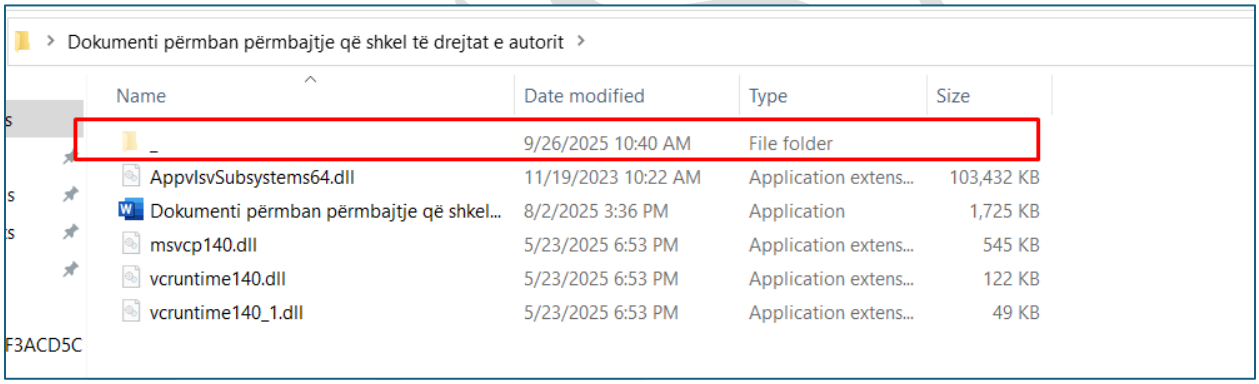


Figure 1. Hidden files

The most important file in the infection chain is also identified the dynamic link library **"AppvIsvSubsystems64.dll",** which has a size of approximately 103 MB, an unusually large element. During static analysis, functions responsible for directory checks are identified, indicating that this **dll** file begins to search for the locations of various files. However, to determine exactly which function is being called, ***the debugging process*** is carried out.

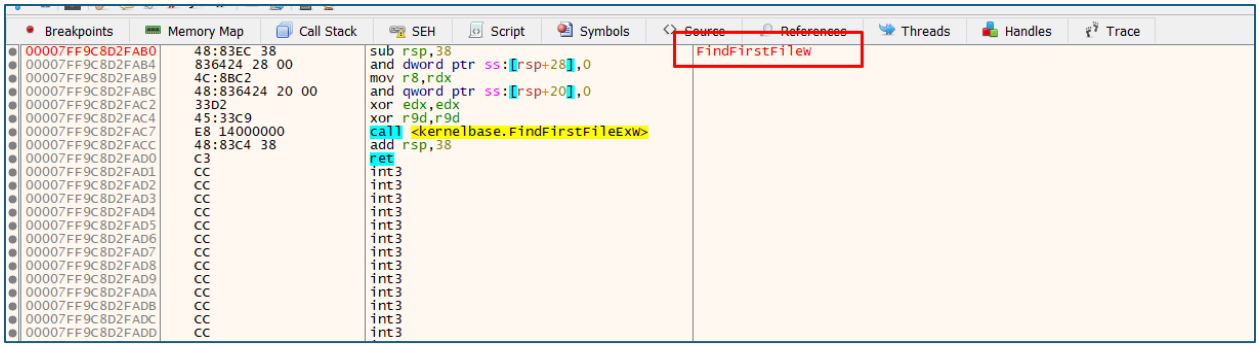


Figure 2. FindFirstFileW Function

During debugging of the **dll file**, a check of the "_" folder is observed in the **RDX** register in the memory dump, from which it is evident that this directory contains a **payload** to continue the main purpose of the file

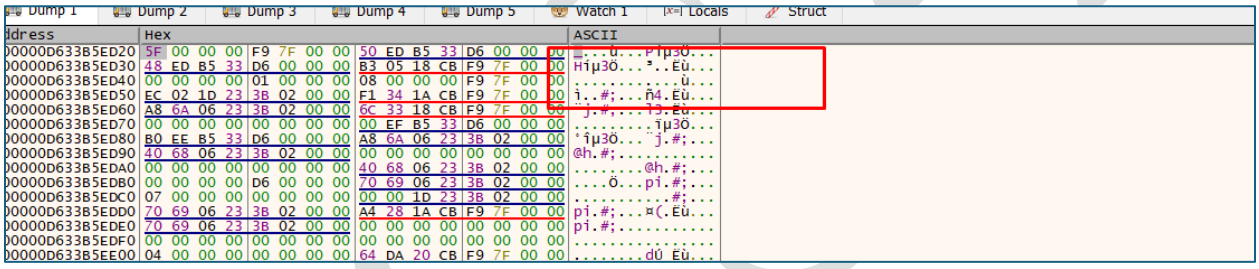


Figure 3. Inspection of the "_" directory

The "_" directory contains several files, some of which are legitimate PDFs, but there are other files that appear to be inaccessible yet may be decoded at a later stage and used for other purposes.

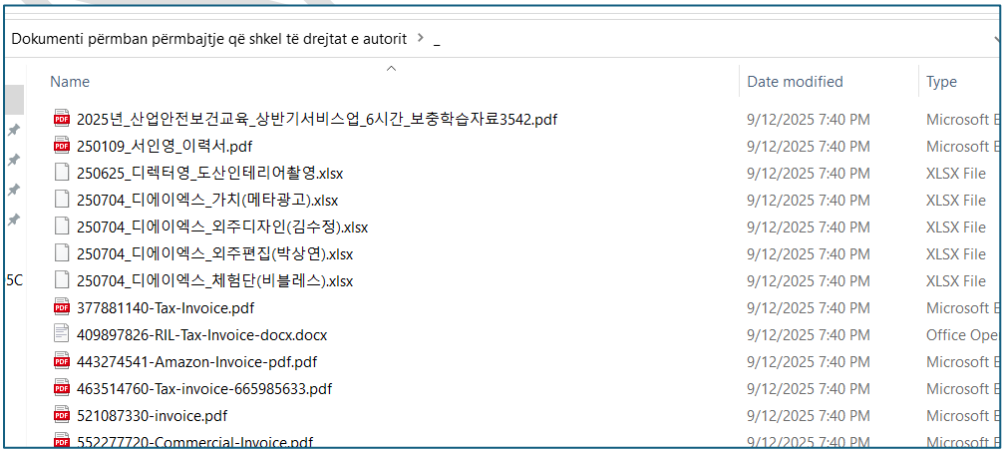


Figure 4.Contents of the "_" directory

The main file in this directory is the file **Images.png**, which, despite its extension, is not an image but rather a **WinRAR archive application**. It is accessed via the command line using the command:

images.png x -ibck -y -paFr25vHl9vULPjJoV8rUcLS6YCzbMQ8k Invoice.pdf C:\\Users\\Public

In this case, **WinRAR extracts** into the directory **C:\Users\Public** a folder which, in itself, contains the **Python library**.

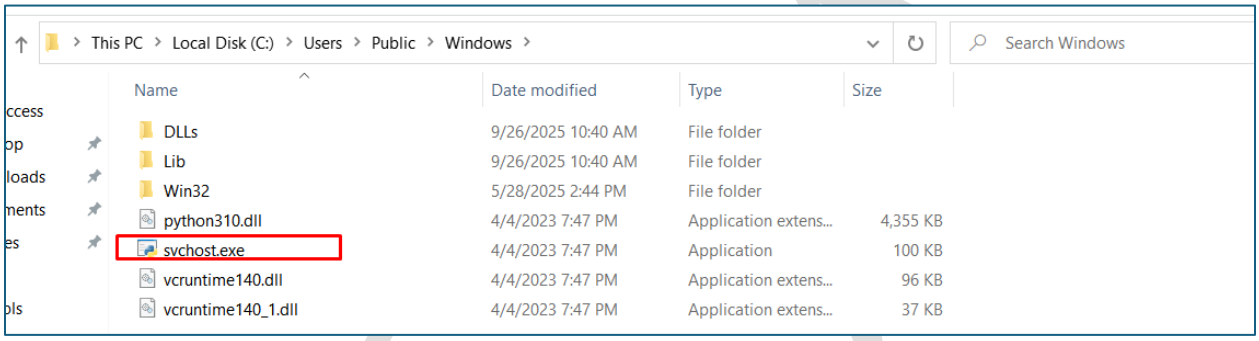


Figure 5. Python.exe spoofed as svchost.exe

Svchost.exe or python.exe in this case is not malicious but considering the logic of how this malicious file has operated so far, python must be receiving some parameter in order to proceed to its final stage. During the investigation in ***C:\Users\Public\Windows\Lib,*** another suspicious file was identified named **images.png**, which appears to be repeated as in the previous case.

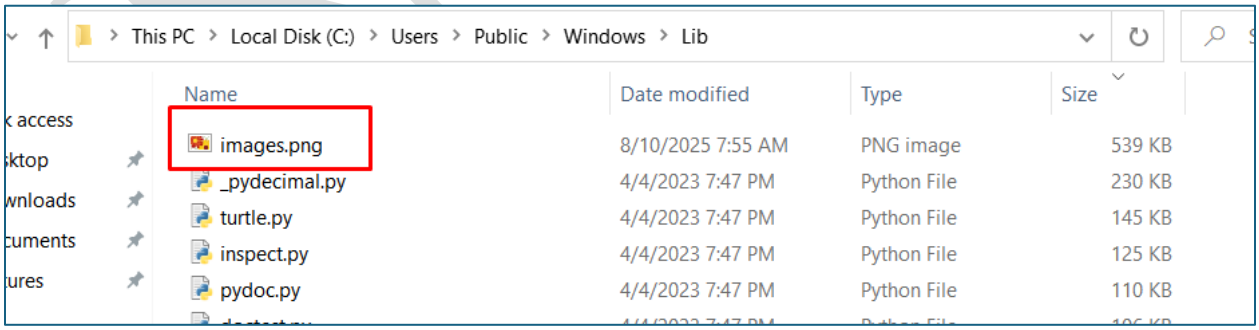


Figure 6. images.png phase 2.

This file is of type ***.py*** despite its extension. From the analysis in a regular text editor, its code is extracted as follows:

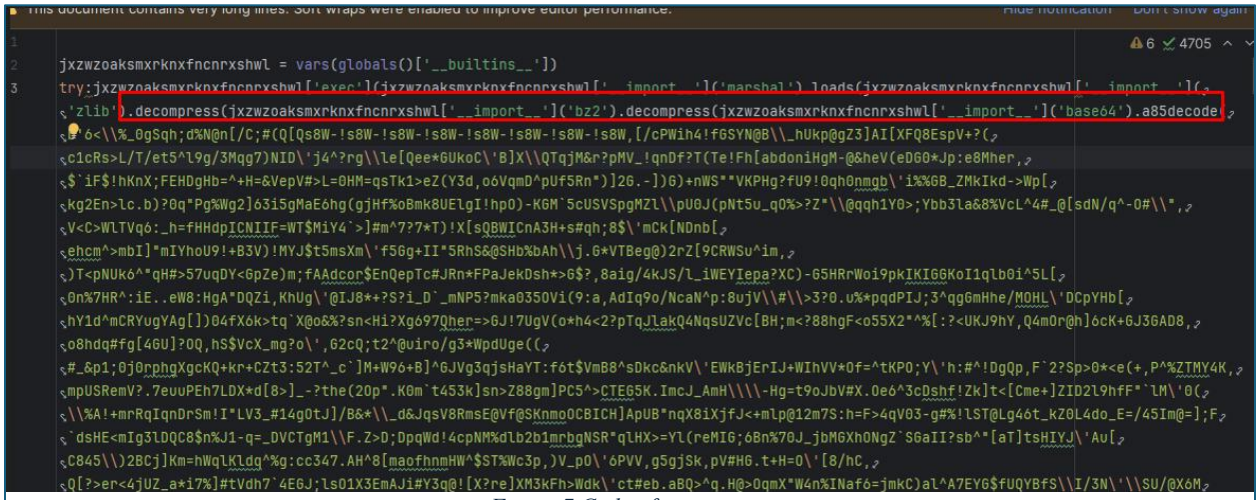


Figure 7.Code of images.png

This portion of the code is hidden and used to perform the real purpose of the file. Next, a variable named xzwzoaksmxrknxfncnrxshwl is created and used to call Python's core functions.
Inside **the try** block the following main functions are observed:

__import__('base64').a85decode(...) where:

- It imports the base64 library and uses the a85decode function.
- a85decode is used to decode text encoded in Ascii85/Base85 format.

The result of this decoding is passed to **__import__('bz2').decompress(...):**

- So the decoded data is then processed through **BZ2** decompression **(Bzip2 algorithm).**
- Then the result is passed to **__import__('zlib').decompress(...):**

  Here it is decompressed again using the zlib algorithm.
- **marshal.loads(...):**

marshal is used to deserialize Python objects. Here the result of the decompressions is expected to be a serialized code object (for example a .pyc-like object).

- **exec(...):**

Finally, exec runs the created object (or the marshaled content). Thus the hidden code will execute in the current environment.

If we modify the code step by step we can understand its behavior for each specific function

Figure 8. Decoding the first phase of the script

What makes it interesting is the ***if*** logical condition which indicates that the version required for this file to run is **3.10**.

In the ***else*** branch the same logic continues as before, and again if the code is modified once it reaches the final phase it disassembles **the .pyc object and accesses the real code**.

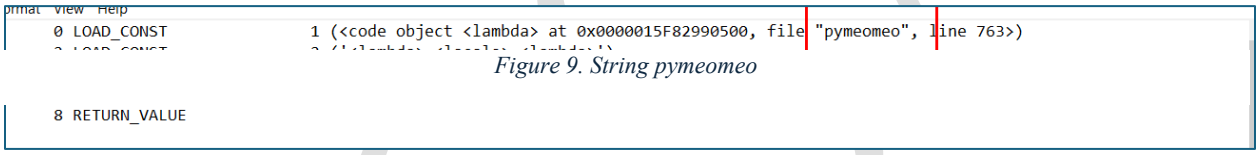


Figure 9. String pymeomeo

During the disassembly of the .pyc objects, the character string **pymeomeo** is detected, which, if global information about it is searched, is understood to be used for hiding the code: **https://github.com/zrsx/PYMEOMEO**

"**Advanced Python Obfuscation and Protection Suite".**This is also confirmed by the files found on GitHub, where the code obfuscation depends on the installed Python version—something that was previously observed during the analysis. If a simple Python file is created with the text **'Hello World'** and is obfuscated using this project, the resulting code will be identical to the Python code found in **images.png.**

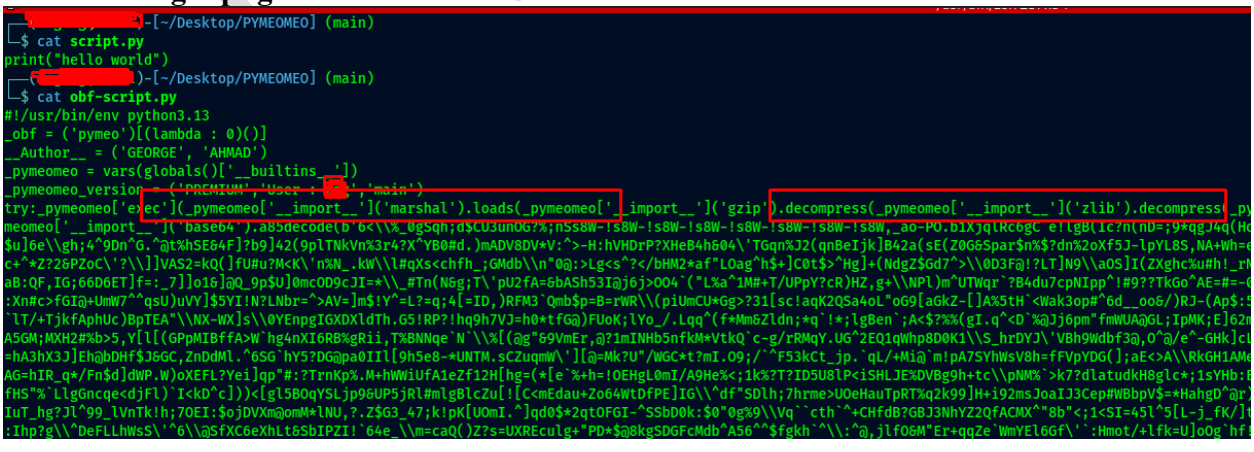


Figure 10. PYMEOMEO obfuscator

During the disassembly process, another layer of obfuscation is revealed, displaying characters in encoded strings.

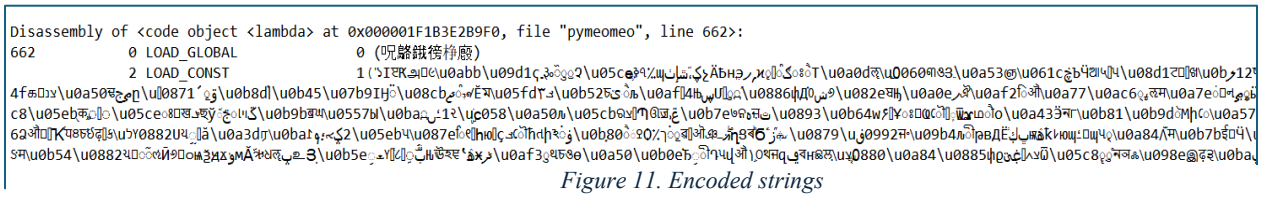
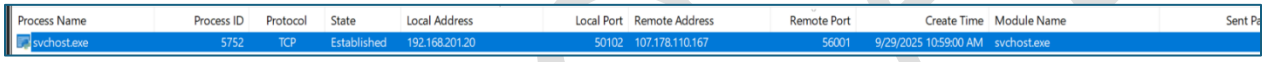


Figure 11. Encoded strings

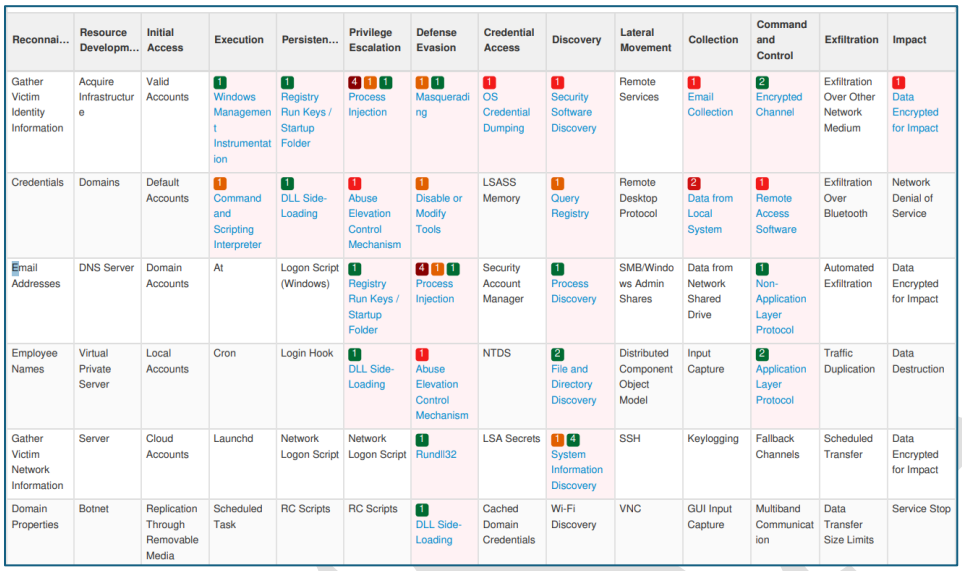
Given the very high level of obfuscation, an analysis is conducted to observe the dynamic activity performed by the malicious file when executed with the images.png parameter. This reveals that the malicious actors are able to perform remote command execution and, depending on their interests, carry out other illegitimate actions. At the end of the chain, this executable file establishes communication with a C2 server at IP: **107[.]178[.]110[.]167.**



Process Name	Process ID	Protocol	State	Local Address	Local Port	Remote Address	Remote Port	Create Time	Module Name	Sent Pa
svchost.exe	5752	TCP	Established	192.168.201.20	50102	107.178.110.167	56001	9/29/2025 10:59:00 AM	svchost.exe	

Figure 12. IP Command And Control

MITRE ATT&CK



Reconnai...	Resource Developm...	Initial Access	Execution	Persisten...	Privilege Escalation	Defense Evasion	Credential Access	Discovery	Lateral Movement	Collection	Command and Control	Exfiltration	Impact
Gather Victim Identity Information	Acquire Infrastructure	Valid Accounts	Windows Management Instrumentation	Registry Run Keys / Startup Folder	Process Injection	Masquerading	OS Credential Dumping	Security Software Discovery	Remote Services	Email Collection	Encrypted Channel	Exfiltration Over Other Network Medium	Data Encrypted for Impact
Credentials	Domains	Default Accounts	Command and Scripting Interpreter	DLL Side-Loading	Abuse Elevation Control Mechanism	Disable or Modify Tools	LSASS Memory	Query Registry	Remote Desktop Protocol	Data from Local System	Remote Access Software	Exfiltration Over Bluetooth	Network Denial of Service
Email Addresses	DNS Server	Domain Accounts	At	Logon Script (Windows)	Registry Run Keys / Startup Folder	Process Injection	Security Account Manager	Process Discovery	SMB/Windows Admin Shares	Data from Network Shared Drive	Non-Application Layer Protocol	Automated Exfiltration	Data Encrypted for Impact
Employee Names	Virtual Private Server	Local Accounts	Cron	Login Hook	DLL Side-Loading	Abuse Elevation Control Mechanism	NTDS	File and Directory Discovery	Distributed Component Object Model	Input Capture	Application Layer Protocol	Traffic Duplication	Data Destruction
Gather Victim Network Information	Server	Cloud Accounts	Launchd	Network Logon Script	Network Logon Script	Rundll32	LSA Secrets	System Information Discovery	SSH	Keylogging	Fallback Channels	Scheduled Transfer	Data Encrypted for Impact
Domain Properties	Botnet	Replication Through Removable Media	Scheduled Task	RC Scripts	RC Scripts	DLL Side-Loading	Cached Domain Credentials	Wi-Fi Discovery	VNC	GUI Input Capture	Multiband Communication	Data Transfer Size Limits	Service Stop

Indicators of Compromise IoCs

Dokumenti përmban përmbajtje që shkel të drejtat e autorit.zip	**341BA8A556F4AC503AB23D9E5D2114261AFD24AED332F2E404705B522AFD5998**
AppvIsvSubsystems64.dll	**653F1B0F2B4C711B46016C268FB985D82528BB4240E202BE9640F31A0E6217B8**
Images.png	**A5B19195F61925EDE76254AAAD942E978464E93C7922ED6F064FAB5AAD901EFC**
C2	**107[.]178[.]110[.]167**

Recommendations

National Cyber Security Authority recommends:

- Immediate blocking of the Indicators of Compromise (IoCs) mentioned above on your protective devices.
- Continuous analysis of logs coming from the SIEM (Security Information and Event Management) system.
- Training of non-technical staff on phishing attacks and how to avoid infection from them.
- Installation of network perimeter devices that perform deep traffic analysis, relying not only on access control lists but also on traffic behavior (Next-Generation Firewalls).
- Segmentation of critical systems into different VLANs, applying access control lists across the entire network perimeter. Web services should be separated from their databases, and Active Directory should be placed in a separate VLAN.
- Implementation and use of LAPS (Local Administrator Password Solution) for Microsoft systems to manage local administrator passwords.
- Application of traffic filters in cases of remote access to hosts (employees/third parties/clients).
- Implementation of solutions that filter, monitor, and block malicious traffic between web applications and the internet, such as a Web Application Firewall (WAF).
- Behavior-based traffic analysis for endpoint devices, through the use of EDR/XDR solutions. This enables detection of malicious files not only by signature but also by behavior.
- Design and implementation of an Identity Access Management (IAM) solution to control user identities and privileges in real time, based on the “zero-trust” principle.