

# European pulse

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Montenegro opens Chapter 14:  
Transport Policy

## Interview

Marijana Laković Drašković,  
Head of the Working Group  
for Negotiations on Chapter 23

## Challenges in the EU

Strenuous 2015 and 2016



## Foreword: NATO



Vladan Žugjić

According to American director **Michael Moore**, there are two kinds of countries: those where governments fear the people and those where people fear the government.

With the decision of the NATO Council of Ministers to extend a membership invitation to Montenegro, Montenegro is definitely looking to join the first group. Even though this may seem unlikely for a country in which, as the European Commission (EC) noted in its latest Progress report, the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) had been buying votes in the elections, while the media mounted slander campaigns against civil sector activists and progressive politicians.

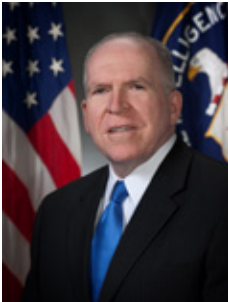
One should only take a look at the list of NATO member states and those within the orbit of the alliance and be optimistic that, alongside the process of integration into the European Union (EU), it would not take too long for the process of democratic transformation and establishment of the rule of law to take place in Montenegro.

The problem now is that DPS and Democratic front (DF), instead of a civilized dialogue on advantages and disadvantages of NATO membership, have engaged in a propaganda war that will only further polarize the country, preventing it from tackling the rule of law and the more serious socio-economic problems.

## Calendar

- 1 December **Dialogue on the way out of political crisis** / Leaders of political parties held their first meeting to discuss the way out of political crisis in Montenegro. **Mitja Drobnič**, Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro, was present at the meeting. Drobnič's presence was previously agreed by the Speaker of the Parliament **Ranko Krivokapić** and the EU Commissionaire for enlargement and neighbourhood policy **Johannes Hahn**.
- 4 December **NATO invitation will propel EU integration** / Spokesperson for the European Commission **Maja Kocijančič** said that "the NATO invitation to Montenegro will unquestionably propel the country's European integration, since both the EU and the Alliance promote the same values". "In order to advance with the reforms, Montenegro needs to invest more effort, especially on the rule of law", Kocijančič said, commenting on the 2 December decision by the NATO Council of Ministers to extend a membership invitation to Montenegro.
- 9 December **Sanctions for corruption below the minimum** / **Mitja Drobnič**, Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro, warned that the current track record of prosecuting high level corruption has been limited, and that there have also been no final convictions for corruption on the lower levels. He added that sentences imposed are below the legal minimum and that the EU expects the Agency for prevention of corruption to work effectively.
- 16/17 December **SAPC stresses the importance of trust in the elections** / Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (SAPC) called on the Government to fully implement the new electoral legislation, encourage NGOs to take an active role and monitor the entire process of elections, and to improve all other aspects of the election process. SAPC insisted that every party should be provided with equal access to the public media in order to establish full trust in the elections.
- 22 December **Two more chapters opened, 22 in total** / At a convention in Brussels, Montenegro opened two new chapters in negotiations with the EU: 14 – Transport policy and 15 – Energy sector. So far, Montenegro opened 22 chapters.

## Western Balkans – tinderbox



By: John O'Brennan

The author is a Jean Monnet Professor European integration at the University of Maynooth, Ireland.

2016 may well prove a watershed year for the European Union. While the euro zone crisis threw into doubt the very survival of the euro and preoccupied EU leaders for many years before apparently abating in recent months, in 2015 the refugee crisis convulsed Europe and produced such fissures in the European Council that some commentators thought it would be a breaking point for European integration. The sense of pessimism is pervasive and now applies even to hitherto successful policy domains like enlargement.

The EU's role as the anchor power in the region evolved partly out of the Dayton Agreement, which ended the bloody war in Bosnia in 1995. But it gained significant traction via the landmark EU-Western Balkans summit at Thessaloniki in June 2003, where the European Council proclaimed "its unequivocal support" to the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries. "The future of the Balkans is within the European Union" was how the summit communique emphatically put it.

That promise of membership to the Western Balkans now sits very uneasily beside recent developments. The EU's preoccupation with the refugee crisis, along with a distinct mood of enlargement fatigue, has meant that the Western Balkans have disappeared under the radar of EU policy-making. **Jean-Claude Juncker**, the President of the European Commission, began his term in office last year by stating firmly that "no further enlargement will take place in the next five years". The message to Western Balkans states could not have been clearer: "You are not a priority for the European Union". In delivering this stark dispatch, Juncker managed, at one and the same time, to deplete the Commission's negotiating authority and destroy the EU's credibility as a trusted partner across the region.

Enlargement fatigue is a current that manifests itself at both the national level (in the fading appetite of member states to accept further enlargement) and on the EU level, where it now plays a determining role in enlargement politics, as Juncker's declaration so clearly demonstrated. This perspective holds that the EU needed time to absorb the addition of 13 new member states over the past decade and should not take in any new members until real and demonstrable consolidation has been achieved inside the EU.

It is hardly surprising that the EU's negative signalling has had a pronouncedly detrimental impact on the progress of enlargement-related reform in the Western Balkans. An excess of enlargement fatigue in the EU has led to an excess of accession fatigue in the Western Balkans: the

transposition and implementation of EU laws in the region has slowed to a standstill.

The recent history of enlargement demonstrates conclusively the importance of EU credibility and of setting dates for accession. The costs of approximating to EU legislation (amounting to 170,000 pages of EU laws) are very significant and almost the entire burden of adjustment falls on candidate states. Local elites can more assertively and confidently argue for difficult policy changes if the accession train they are on has a definite destination and timeframe for arrival.

The evidence from candidate states overwhelmingly suggests that the enlargement process is now on 'life support' and 'flat lining' along a trajectory of 'frozen negotiating chapters' and mutual distrust towards an increasingly uncertain destination.

Twenty years ago, the Dayton Agreement was meant to definitively settle the 'Balkan Question', but today the region remains politically explosive, an economic basket-case and a substantial security risk for the European Union. In short the 'Balkan Question' remains categorically a 'European Question'.

Endemic corruption and organised crime blight Bosnia and much of the Western Balkans, eroding confidence in the economy, discouraging much-needed inward investment and encouraging mass outward migration of its citizens. This is a world in which powerful oligarchic networks have succeeded in 'capturing the state'. They suborn political parties, and ruthlessly pursue their own interests, remaining hidden from any kind of public scrutiny.

The widespread protests of 2014 provided evidence of deep social discontent, enduring poverty, and dramatic levels of inequality. Of the 200,000 people who had filed an initial application for asylum in Germany by August 2015, 42% were from the Western Balkans.

Back in 1991, as violence in the Balkans escalated, **Jacques Poos**, the Luxembourg foreign minister, famously declared "This is the hour of Europe." In the end, however, the EU experienced a dismal collective failure, one that culminated in the massacre of 8,000 men and boys at Srebrenica in July 1995.

Twenty years on, the European Union urgently needs to renew its commitment to the Western Balkans' European future. A failure to do so may well see 2016 throw up a new Balkan crisis which could become the final nail in the coffin of the European integration project.

Source: *EurActiv.com*

Montenegro opened Chapter 14 - Transport policy

## From dirt roads to highways



By: Svetlana Pešić

In order to close Chapter 14 - Transport policy, Montenegro has to align itself with the EU acquis on road tolls, social legislation in road transport, new rules on weight and dimensions of vehicles for transport of heavy goods and vehicles for passenger transport.

Furthermore, Montenegro ought to transpose the common rules for certification of road transport operators, access to the market for international goods transport by road and the international market for transportation services by regular and tour buses.

Montenegro should also secure an independent, effective regulatory body as well as a safety regulator for railway transport, and align with the acquis the passenger rules in every form of transport, as well as in the management of air transport.

All of this was communicated to the *European pulse* from the Ministry of Transport, in response to our query: What should Montenegro do in order to successfully close Chapter 14, on which it had made "moderate progress" so far, according to latest Progress Report by the European Commission.

During the Intergovernmental conference in Brussels on December 21 Montenegro opened two new chapters - 14 (Transport) and 15 (Energy). This brings the total number of opened chapters to 22 out of 35.

Chapter 14 refers to every type of transport - road, railway, inland waterways, combined, air and maritime transport, and the

*Chapter 14 refers to every type of transport - road, railway, inland waterways, combined, air and maritime transport, and the European Union emphasises integration of different transport sectors.*

European Union emphasises the integration of different transport sectors.

Objective of European transport policy is to enable a rational transport of goods and passengers within the Union and on international level, through better functioning of internal market and promotion of safe, efficient, sustainable and consumer-oriented transport services.

The EU legislation in this field facilitates development of an effective transport system with an emphasis on sustainable mobility throughout the EU, and protects the environment as well as the safety of citizens.

Much of the acquis in this field consists of regulations and decisions, which means that the country must ensure their direct implementation from the moment of accession. The rest is composed of directives that will have to be transposed into the state's legal system within a reasonable timeframe.

The legal provisions relate to technical and security standards, control of state aid and liberalization of the internal transport market.

In its last Progress Report on Montenegro for 2015, the European Commission reminded that EU has common rules for technical and safety standards, security, social standards, state aid and market liberalisation in road transport, railway, inland waterways transport, intermodal transport, civil aviation and maritime transport. "Montenegro is moderately prepared on transport policy. There has been some progress in this area", noted the European Commission.

According to the Report, more work is needed to implement the rail and maritime safety acquis effectively and to strengthen the financial and technical capacity of the national accident investigation body for air, maritime and rail transport.

Regarding road transport, in March 2015 Montenegro adopted an action plan to implement its 2015 road safety strategy and programme for the reconstruction and maintenance of state roads, for which EUR 45.20 million were allocated for 2015. The Report noted that Montenegro has to continue aligning with the social and safety acquis in this area and develop enforcement capacity, in particular for roadworthiness

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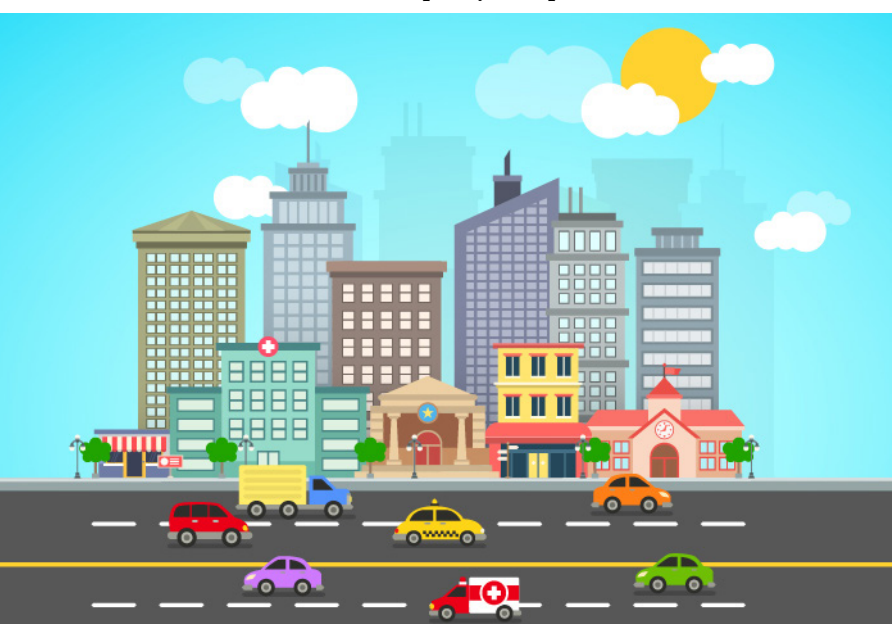
tests and roadside checks of commercial vehicles. Montenegro also adopted rulebooks on transport of hazardous substances.

On rail transport, new rulebooks were adopted on the certification and licensing of train drivers, on safety certificates management systems, railway infrastructure managers and carriers, and on assessing the interoperability of components and vehicles. The Commission called for more work to implement and enforce newly-adopted legislation on railway safety and interoperability.

On air transport, the Report noted further alignment with the acquis over the rights of disabled and reduced mobility persons and the rules on compensation and assistance to passengers in case of delays or cancellation. Montenegro adopted several rulebooks further aligning with acquis on traffic and airport management.

However, no progress was found on inland waterways and intermodal transport.

European pulse also asked the Ministry of Transport about the plans to address the Commission's recommendation to do more in order to "implement the rail and maritime safety acquis effectively and to strengthen





the financial and technical capacity of the national accident investigation body for air, maritime and rail transport".

"Directorate for railway transport, as part of the organisational structure of Ministry of Transport and Maritime Affairs, continuously works to align national legislation that is under its jurisdiction with the *acquis communautaire*. Montenegro has already established an independent regulator for safety in railway transport. In early 2014, it passed the Law on safety, organisation and efficiency of railway transport, which is for the most part aligned with EU regulations on safety and interoperability of railway systems. In the past two years we focused on familiarising employees in the national safety authority as well as the railway companies with the new requests and obligations ensuing from this Law. Also, a set of national rules that further elaborate and define obligations of the national safety regulator was published, and in the upcoming months we plan to strengthen the administrative capacities of this body. Specifically, for the 2016, the plan envisages a thorough analysis of SMS (Safety Management System) of railway companies and development of safety certification for transport and management of infrastructure. Moreover, the Ministry of Transport and Maritime Affairs hired another inspector for railway transport in 2015, to ensure a more effective oversight of transport organisation, all with the aim of raising the level of safety and more effective implementation of the new rules", the Ministry said.

As regards maritime transport, Directorate for maritime transport will continue with intensive activities during the upcoming period to harmonise Montenegrin maritime legislation with the EU *acquis*.

"The plan of these activities is contained

within the Proposal for the Accession Programme of Montenegro to the EU, from 2016 to 2018, and it envisages a series of bylaws, a new Law on the safety of maritime navigation and a new Law on the safety of ships and ports. In the upcoming period, we will tackle the problem of capacity-building and the adoption of necessary laws and bylaws in the area of inland waters, which was also planned for the period 2017/2018. Regarding independent investigation of maritime incidents, on 11 September 2015 the Government of Montenegro adopted the Regulation on the procedure for conducting investigations into maritime accidents and incidents", explained the Ministry of Transport.

Our correspondents also noted that the Government had passed a Decision to establish the National Commission for investigation of incidents and serious accidents in aviation, extraordinary events that jeopardise the safety of railway transport and maritime incidents and accidents.

"For 2016, we are planning to adopt a regulation that will determine more closely the obligations, scope for action and working methods of this commission, in part related to railways. The National Commission is fully independent, both organisationally and functionally, from all subjects that could undermine the impartiality of its work. The Commission is recognised in the system as a special budget unit, which means that it has full financial independence and predefined resources that allow it to work independently from outside factors. Members of the Commission will also have recourse to regular trainings in order to keep up with the new knowledge and trends in the field", the Ministry of Transport announced.

Head of the working group for chapter 23 – Marijana Laković Drašković

## Financial investigations have become easier since November



Marijana Laković Drašković

The Law on the confiscation of criminal assets, which came into force in November 2015, will facilitate progress on financial investigations, head of the working group for chapter 23 and director general of the Directorate for Judiciary, **Marijana Laković Drašković**, told *European pulse*.

» *How would you comment on the fact that there was not a single final conviction for high-level corruption that led to confiscation of assets? The EC warned that "Seizure and confiscation of criminal assets should be systematically ordered to detect and cut financial flows of criminal networks". Meanwhile, the Special prosecutor is trying reach an agreement with some of the persons indicted in the Budva corruption case. What is your reaction to this, in the light of the EC's conclusion that "the range of penalties laid down does not seem to be enough of a deterrent" for corruption?*

I would not comment the ongoing procedures, but I would like to point out that continuous, intensive activities are being undertaken to implement significant legislative amendments that concern both the organisation of judiciary and procedures for trials and investigations. The key role in the implementation of the legislation related to the organisation of judiciary lies with the Judicial and Prosecutors' Councils, while in the case of procedural legislation, the responsibility is with the courts and prosecutors.

The EU also acknowledged more intensive activity of the previous months in investigating high level corruption cases. A number of criminal proceedings were launched in the previous period against persons suspected of high level corruption, and we are currently conducting financial investigations in these cases, all with the aim of confiscating criminally acquired assets and increasing the rate of confiscations of the property whose legal origin could not be proven.

It is important to underline that the Law on the confiscation of criminal assets came into force in November 2015, and will be of great help for the future financial investigations.

However, in order to effectively prevent and eradicate organised crime and corruption, we must continue the work on the improvement of institutional capacities to make the system for the confiscation of criminal assets more effective.

During the visit of the German State secretary, the Minister of Justice agreed on a framework for future cooperation in this matter. The TAIEX map for chapters 23 and 24 also envisages several expert missions and seminars on the ways to conduct investigations and financial investigations, the role of the investigator in the inquest and investigation, importance of investigative teams, gathering and securing relevant evidence, etc. Finally, several trainings for all those involved in the criminal proceedings of this kind will be organised as part of the project EUROL (2015-2016).

» *One of the recommendations of the 2015 Progress report was to increase independence, accountability and effectiveness of the judiciary. What steps will the Government and the Ministry of Justice take in this regard?*

A set of laws on the organisation and functioning of judiciary was adopted in line with the Strategy on the reform of judiciary, following the Action plan for Chapter 23.

The Law on State Prosecution thus puts the Supreme state prosecutor is in charge of all activities of the State prosecution, which also entails obligation to undertake all necessary measures to ensure effective performance of the State prosecution, in line with the law. This responsibility and constitutional position authorises the State Prosecutor to call to account all state prosecutors and managers of state prosecutor's offices, as well as to directly exercise all legal powers accorded to the managers of Special Prosecutor's Office, Higher State Prosecutor and Basic State Prosecutor.

The new Special Prosecutor's Office was established in accordance with the Law on Special State Prosecutor, the resources to make this office operational were arranged in record time along with the majority of legally required conditions for the office to commence its work.

The Law on the Training Centre for judiciary and state prosecution was adopted in October 2015. It envisaged the establishment of a Training Centre for judiciary and state prosecution as an independent body,



Marijana Laković Drašković

that will conduct the basic and continuous training of judiciary and state prosecution, as well as the joint training programme for judges, state prosecutors, the police and other related professions, in order to ensure more effective performance of the judiciary. The Centre is instrumental for the success

of the new system of appointment of first-time elected judges and state prosecutors.

We therefore expect the new system of appointments of the first-time elected judges and state prosecutors to become operational at the national level from the beginning of 2016, together with the system of evaluation and promotion that will be based entirely on objective appraisal of judges and public prosecutors.

Moreover, I expect that the amendments to the procedural legislation will ensure greater efficiency of the procedure, as well as full implementation and provision of quality trainings to the judges and state prosecutors on legislative amendments.

I would also like to mention the Government's proposal for the Law on Interns in courts and State prosecution and on bar examinations, adopted in December 2015, which regulates employment and professional training of interns in courts and State prosecution as well as the new concept of taking the bar examination. Considering, primarily, the new Law on Judicial Council and judges as well as the Law on State prosecution which posits the results of bar examination as one of the criteria for the election of judges, it was necessary to introduce amendments that would revise the conditions of the exam, organisation of the exam and its

content, and introduce bar examination grades.

» *What is your opinion of the role of NGO sector in the work of the Working group for Chapter 23?*

Working group for Chapter 23 also consists of representatives of credible civil society organisations, and those persons provide major contribution to the quality of work of Working group.

I think that it is important for all Montenegrin institutions to understand the importance of developing and improving cooperation with non-governmental organisations present in the Montenegrin society, as well as to create mechanisms for consultation within their institutional activities, because such cooperation - founded upon active participation of all stakeholders - constitutes the foundation of a democratic society.

» *The importance of establishing an information system within judiciary was highlighted on numerous occasions, and this is one of the obligations laid in the AP for Chapter 23. How far have you come with these activities?*

Development of an information system for judiciary and preparation of a new strategic approach to the development of information technologies in judiciary, state prosecution, Ministry of Justice and IECS - which is of special importance for the reporting and monitoring of progress of cases that are of special importance to the European Commission - is arguably one of the key challenges for the upcoming period. Ministry of Justice oversees these activities, and so far they created a draft ICT Strategy that should be adopted in the first quarter of 2016. Once the Strategy and the accompanying Action plan are in place, adequate implementation by the relevant institutions should follow.

V. Žugić

### *Disciplinary procedures followed breakout from prison in Bijelo Polje*

» *One of the areas covered by Chapter 23 is also the prison system. How do you comment the recent escape of two convicts from the prison in Bijelo Polje?*

The Ministry of Justice launched four disciplinary procedures in response to this case, against the director and three employees of the prison in Bijelo Polje, and passed resolutions on the provisional suspension of those employees. The Ministry also launched three disciplinary procedures in the second case.

The EC has on several occasions stressed the lack of administrative capacities in Montenegrin institutions, and the Ministry, as well as the Government, have identified the necessary actions to be undertaken when such or similar events occur: in a word, we should take all actions within our legal powers to determine responsibility of employees in each individual case.

The Ministry of Justice continually works on the improvement of rights of prisoners and detainees in the IECS. Trainings of prison personnel are conducted in cooperation with the Police academy, and by the Training Centre within IECS. Additionally, in cooperation with TAIEX, the Ministry of Justice signed a framework agreement on trainings with the Ministry of Justice of the Free State of Bavaria.



## How Belgium and the Netherlands swapped territories



Netherlands and Belgium agreed to exchange parts of their territories around the border that only had only spelled trouble for both countries.

Throughout history, borders have caused unfathomable bloodshed and decades-old legal disputes, which makes these plans for a friendly exchange of land all the more remarkable.

While Belgium will give up a small piece of land along the Meuse River dividing the two nations, and will obtain in exchange a portion of the Dutch territory. It will also unburden itself of a jurisdictional nightmare that developed over time as the river meandered to turn the portion of land belonging to Belgium into a peninsula linked only to the Netherlands.

Over time, the area was rumored to be increasingly lawless, a haven for drug dealers and illicit sexual escapades. Then, some three years ago, passersby stumbled onto a headless body. They alerted Dutch authorities, who told them it was Belgian territory, but Belgian police and judicial authorities found it extremely tough to get there. They are not allowed to cross into the Netherlands without special permission and the peninsula had no proper landing zone for boats or equipment coming in by water.

## Greece legalises same-sex unions



In the night between 22 and 23 December, the Greek Parliament approved a bill allowing citizens in a same-sex relationship to enter into a civil union. Meanwhile, on 20 December, the proposal

to legalize same-sex marriage in Slovenia was rejected in a referendum.

This brings the number of EU countries with a legal form of same-sex union to 20, and some of them also recognise same-sex marriages.

These are: Denmark (since 1989), Sweden, Spain, Netherlands, France, Belgium, Germany, Portugal, Finland, United Kingdom, Hungary, Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Ireland, Austria, Malta, Croatia, Estonia, and the list has now also been joined by Greece, despite of the vocal opposition from the orthodox church.

Norway and Iceland also recognise same-sex unions.

Eight EU member states do not recognise any form of same-sex union – Italy, Cyprus, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria and Poland.

## No expansion of Eurozone in foreseeable future



**Valdis Dombrovskis**, deputy president of the European Commission, said that there will be no expansions of the Eurozone in foreseeable future.

To join the eurozone, a country must first undergo an accession procedure that could last several years, and thus far none of the member states had made sufficient progress to join the monetary union. Out of the 28 member states, 19 are already eurozone members, Lithuania being the last to join in 2015.

Dombrovskis reminded that the exchange rate has to be fixed prior to the adoption of the euro, whereby the domestic currency enters the so-called “waiting room” where it remains for two years before it can be switched to the euro. The Commissioner said that “at this point of time, it (waiting room) is empty, except for Denmark, which is a special case”. Denmark has been part of the mechanism since 1999, but the terms of its Accession Treaty allow it to remain outside of eurozone even if it meets the membership criteria.

According to Dombrovskis, Bulgaria and Romania expressed the intention to enter the “waiting room”, while the new conservative government in Poland will more likely be “reserved” on this matter.

Declaration and recommendations of the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (SAPC)

## The stress is on free elections

The European Union - Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (SAPC) urged the Montenegrin government to fully implement the new electoral legislation and emphasised that all future elections need to take place in accordance with the new law.

In the Declaration and Recommendations from the 11th EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee meeting in Strasbourg on 16-17 December 2015, SAPC called authorities to encourage civil society organisations to actively participate in overview of whole electoral process, having observers in all bodies responsible for conducting elections.

In the document, SAPC called for "improvement of all other aspects of electoral process, in particular to ensure all political parties fair access to public media, in order to build full confidence in elections".

The committee, which consists of European and Montenegrin MPs, expressed an expectation that the judicial follow up into the "Audio Recordings Affair" will conclude prior to the next parliamentary elections, and welcomed the meeting of the presidents of political parties which have taken upon themselves the responsibility for restoring the parliamentary dialogue.

SAPC "considers it essential for a well-functioning democracy that any form of protest is conducted peacefully and in line with the relevant laws; expresses its concern regarding incidents of excessive use of force by the police during October protests in Podgorica and calls for independent and thorough investigations to bring offenders to justice and stressed a need for a better cooperation between the Prosecutor's Office and the police in this regard", states the document.

SAPC noted positive legislative changes targeting corruption. "However, it also called for better protection of whistleblowers and to systematically use the power to seize and confiscate criminally acquired assets; stated that corruption continues to be of critical concern weakening citizens' trust in key state institutions; reiterated its concern regarding the low level of public confidence in the judicial system resulting from the sense of impunity for high level officials".

SAPC further called for increasing the resources and political support for the recently established Special Prosecutor's Office for the fight against organised

*SAPC reiterated its concern regarding the low level of public confidence in the judicial system resulting from the sense of impunity for high level officials*

crime and corruption to allow it to effectively fulfil its mandate. It invited the prosecution to investigate meticulously the Telekom affair and cooperate with the US authorities in dealing with the alleged corruption. SAPC also expressed its concern about the lack of a just judicial follow-up concerning war crimes. "It indicated to the need to consider the possibility of these cases being re-opened by the prosecutor's office, as well as to improve the administrative capacities of this institution".

"SAPC remained concerned about the freedom of the media in Montenegro; called for an urgent follow-up on the recommendations by the commission monitoring the authorities' investigations and prosecutions of cases of violence against the media; reiterated full support for the commission's work; stated that smear campaigns, by some tabloid newspapers, targeting prominent civil society activists and politicians, showed that the authorities are not properly implementing the media law and that self-regulation is not working adequately; stressed the importance of continuing the work on strengthening media self-regulation; stated that Montenegro needs to prioritise the editorial independence of the RTCG, since a well-functioning and truly independent public service media represents a key aspect of media pluralism and democracy; welcomed the adoption of the Media Code of Ethics, which was prepared in cooperation with the OSCE and regretted that in general it is not respected by the media; emphasised that dialogue on improving ethical standards in reporting should continue; considered it essential for Montenegro to create an environment in which journalists and NGO activists could work without fear of reprisal", states further the Declaration.

SAPC welcomed that first important steps towards the preservation of the Ulcinj Salina have been taken, and urged the Government to continue and enhance efforts to guarantee the national and international protection of the area.

V.Žugić

Honorary citizenships: who gets them and how?

## By the power of law or privilege?



By: Mira Popović

The procedures and conditions for acquisition of citizenship make the Montenegrin legal framework extremely restrictive in this regard. Unfortunately, this does not mean that the system is not conducive to manipulation. This is especially true of the procedures for award of the so-called *honorary citizenships*, awarded to individuals in recognition of their special importance for the state, scientific, economic, cultural, sports and other interest of Montenegro. Those procedures are opaque, and as practice has showed, insufficiently regulated and suitable for manipulation. Centre for Civic Education (CCE) examined this issue in depth within its sub-programme Equal opportunities, and published some of the conclusion in the study "[Honorary citizenships – who gets them and how?](#)".

The publication summarizes the information gathered from the coming into force of the Law on Montenegrin citizenship on 5 May 2008 to 22 July 2015. It also provides the complete list of 203 persons who obtained Montenegrin citizenship during that period of time. Despite its obligation under the law, the Ministry of Interior (MI) failed to publish this list on its internet page, and CCE gathered the information via the Law on free access to information, rendering them publically available in line with its mission. The decisions to the award the citizenships are formulaic,

they cite the general legal norm and do not list the concrete reasons for the award of citizenship in the given case, as should be the standard procedure if the Montenegrin was to understand why the person in question was awarded Montenegrin citizenship in a privileged procedure. This rightly begs the question: How can we know the reasons for someone's reception into Montenegrin citizenship, and whether this person is of real importance for the interests of the country, unless we were previously thoroughly informed? Is this really a way to conceal those who do not in fact deserve such a privilege?

The Law is very strict on the procedures for recommending a person for honorary citizenship - only the *President of Montenegro*, *Speaker of the Parliament of Montenegro* and *the Prime Minister of Montenegro* have the legal power to make this recommendation.

According to the information received by the CCE, the President recommended 4 persons, 2 out of whom were awarded citizenships. The Speaker of the Parliament of Montenegro proposed 9 persons, 6 of whom were awarded citizenships, while 3 are still in the procedure. As for the Prime Minister of Montenegro, the CCE was unable to obtain information on the number of recommendations from the General Secretariat of Government of Montenegro, which forces us to assume that all of the remaining 169 persons who received honorary citizenships between 2008 and 2015 were recommended by the two Prime Ministers who held the office in this period.

There are, of course, some cases that were revealed to the public while the procedure was under way, and were not disputed, such as the case of the football player **Saveljić** or the **Kapičić** family, or the awards of citizenship for economic reasons to the investors **Peter Munk**, **Nathaniel Rothschild** and **Petros Statis**, who brought significant finances to Montenegro through various investment projects. At the same time, reasons behind the award of honorary citizenships to controversial figures such as **Thaksin Shinawatra** or **Mohammed Dahlan** remain unknown to this day, as these are also persons well known to the international public and suspected for committing serious felonies in their home countries.





After CCE published its findings, the MI reacted to say that the Prime Ministers' offices had only recommended 26 persons for honorary citizenship. This brings the total of acknowledged recommendations by the three legally empowered institutions to 36, which begs the question of who proposed all the others. CCE's continued research revealed that the remaining persons were recommended by other sources, i.e. those without a legal right to make these recommendations. In other words, the MI failed to adequately apply the Law on Montenegrin citizenships following its amendments in 2010 which limited the authority to recommend individual for honorary citizenships to only three sources.

Having identified that violations of the law have occurred, resulting in 82 unlawful awards of honorary citizenship, the CCE filed a request to the MI and the Supreme State Prosecutor to annul those 82 decisions on honorary citizenships. In addition, CCE filed a criminal complaint to the Special State Prosecutor against unknown persons from MI for abuse of office.

It remains to be seen whether public authorities in charge of these matters will take the necessary steps to protect the legality and public interest, and whether those responsible for breaching the law will be sanctioned for it. In other words, this is a serious test for the public institutions and their willingness to

correct and sanction mistakes committed by those in their own ranks - an even still unprecedented in the Montenegrin context.



Everything that EU faced in 2015 and everything that comes in 2016

## Arduous years



By: Vera Šćepanović PhD

The year 2015 has without doubt been one of the worst in the history of the EU. The year began with the attack on the headquarters of the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris that horrified the whole of Europe. Two million people, among whom 40 world leaders, flocked to Paris to pay their respect to the victims and express solidarity with the people of France. Between that and the second attack in Paris in November this year in which 130 people died so many troubles had piled up in the EU that few people still remember *Charlie Hebdo*, and the solidarity has worn thin.

Many of these problems have come as a result of external factors over which the EU has very little influence. The most prominent is certainly the war in Syria that resulted in waves of refugees, over a million of whom has reached the European soil in 2015 alone. Such an influx of people would have shaken even the best organised political community, let alone a loose union of member states all jealous of their sovereignty and reluctant to allow a supranational body to decide who can settle on their territory. Nevertheless, the way the EU and its member states responded to the challenges accumulated in the course of 2015 does not bring much hope that the next one will be any better.

Perhaps the worst sign is the sense that any attempt at a major common policy is likely to run into a wall. The Union has been experiencing an "integration fatigue" for a while now, which is hardly surprising given that the EU has hardly had enough time to "digest" major changes that had been introduced in the previous ten to fifteen years, such as the introduction of the common currency and the inclusion of 13 new member states. But the world economic crisis of 2008 seemed to open up a new window of opportunity, as the EU member states quickly realised that they needed each other to salvage their economies. Despite a lot of grumbling and mutual accusations, but the years 2010-2013 brought about major advances in the establishment of a common European Stability Mechanism to help countries afflicted by the sovereign debt crisis, the initiation of the European Semester and greater economic coordination among

*Immense part of the problem is a result of external events on which the Union has very little impact, whereby the war in Syria is the most significant one*

the member states, and the first steps towards the establishment of a Banking Union.

In 2015, however, such integration efforts came to a halt. Part of the reason is that even with the major financial injections from the European Central Bank and the falling energy prices in world markets investment and overall economic activity in the EU continued to disappoint: this year, the EU's economy is again set to grow at a sluggish pace of barely over 1%. Political backlash has been felt across the EU, where large parties of both right and left have been losing popularity and are forced into difficult coalitions to forge any kind of government at all. Conflicts between the countries of the "centre" such as Germany, and those on the periphery - especially Greece, but also Portugal, Spain and lately Italy - have made any economic agreement more difficult.

Other reforms have been similarly threatened by opposition from individual member states whose internal political turmoil is forcing them to take a tough stance against "Europe". Disagreements over refugees have caused much conflict, both with the member states whose geographical position has made them the primary entry points for the migrants, and who demand a more decisive response from the EU - such as Greece, Italy and Hungary - and those whose relatively sheltered situation makes them more resistant to demands to institute a common border policy or redistribute the burden of housing refugees - such as Poland or Denmark. After months of negotiations, an agreement was reached in September to resettle 160 000 refugees stranded in the collection centres in Greece and Italy, but only around 200 have been moved to other countries so far. A proposal by the European Commission to establish a new joint border and coastguard force that intervene when the member states are either overwhelmed or deemed to be failing to secure their frontiers was immediately

denounced by Sweden and Denmark, who insisted that the EU shouldn't tell member states how to protect their borders. The most the other member states could agree on at the December summit was to give themselves another six months to consider the Commission's idea. Meanwhile, Frontex has announced that it expects the number of immigrants to reach 3 million next year, and it is a big question whether the recently agreed increase in the EU's humanitarian budget for next year will be enough to cover even a fraction of the rising costs.

The knee-jerk reaction of individual member states to protect their interests by obstructing or reversing European integration projects is particularly well illustrated by de facto suspensions of the Schengen regime in the wake of the latest Paris attacks. While the European Commission has sworn to protect open internal borders, many member states have

*Fact that member states instinctively reject joint European solutions is best illustrated by the de facto suspension of Schengen regime after the last terrorist attacks in Paris*

reintroduced screenings at certain border crossings or random document checks at airports. Unfortunately, the good news - that major changes are unlikely to happen - is also the bad news. A multitude of small obstructions and small concessions to individual member states can add up to a complete standstill in a moment when decisive action is needed. Even without any new challenges, 2016 is likely to be no better than 2015 - a year of unhappy compromises and frozen conflicts that continue to simmer under surface.

### *Europeans are not prone to political adventure*

No country exemplifies better the divergence of interests of individual member states and the way this can undermine European integration than the UK, which has opted out of most steps towards further integration for over a decade, and is now planning a vote on exit from EU. The Prime Minister **David Cameron** says he will lead the campaign to remain in the EU, but only if the terms of UK's membership can be renegotiated.

One of his demands includes the right to deny residence of citizens of other EU countries in the UK unless they can find a job there, something that the other member states consider unacceptable and contrary to the fundamental right to free movement guaranteed by all EU Treaties. But the UK's strategy has already inspired but other attempts to pull out of the integration arrangements. Finland's parliament thus recently announced that in response to a citizens' petition it will consider the country's exit from the Eurozone in early 2016.

The good news is that all these demands for opt-outs and special treatments are unlikely to lead to major shake-ups of the EU integration project. Suspensions of the Schengen agreement in moments of panic are one thing, but nobody wants to face the enormous inconvenience that would arise out of a full reversal of open internal borders. The UK referendum increasingly seems to have been a paper tiger hoisted by Cameron to boost his outlook in the face of last year's elections. He has significantly toned down his demands since, and the true champions of UK's exit - the United Kingdom Independence Party - has since practically disappeared from the national politics. The same happened to Marie Le Pen's Front National, which seemed to be taking the French politics by storm, only to be completely sidelined in the regional elections. It appears that while they have been disillusioned by the centrist parties, the Europeans do not really wish to entrust the future of their countries to the radicals. Even Syriza gave up on all rhetoric of leaving the Euro and the EU and, after the big showdown with the Troika in June, quietly took on a more moderate tone, settling for minor concessions in the bailout policy.

2015 and its aftermath in the region

## Europe is turning to the Balkans

Not long ago, Brussels and the major European capitals felt the way to deal with the Balkans was to "freeze" them until the EU had time, political scientist **Ivan Krastev** says. But now things are quite different. The Greek financial crisis, Russia's aggressive policies, the tensions surrounding Moscow's energy supplies through the Balkans, the waves of migrants from the Middle East arriving via the so-called "Balkan route," the hundreds of thousands of asylum-seekers from the Western Balkans and the migrants from Bulgaria and Romania escaping poverty - all of these have once again placed this peripheral region at the center of European politics.

One in 10 Europeans (if Turkey is not included) lives on the Balkan peninsula. The region is highly heterogeneous, but by European standards it has many features in common: poverty, economic and social backwardness, the lack of rule of law, political instability.

Every tenth European (not counting Turkey) lives on the Balkan Peninsula. Region is heterogeneous, however, compared to other regions, its countries still share specific characteristics: poverty, economic and social stagnancy, lack of rule of law, political instability. These already serious problems further worsened in 2015. The EU urgently needs new solutions, new strategies and new instruments for the Balkans, says **Johanna Deimel** of the Southeast Europe Association, who describes the region as "a core component of Europe."

### *Escaping poverty*

These analysts agree that the "Balkan problem child" needs more attention - for the sake of the whole of Europe. In particular, the migration flows to western Europe from the region, or that pass through it, make a new policy imperative. "You have to talk to these countries. No longer just talk about them, but with them," said **Dušan Reljić**, a Balkans specialist with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. He pointed out that a significant proportion of the migrants who came to Germany in the first

*The Greek financial crisis, Russia's aggressive policies, the tensions surrounding Moscow's energy supplies through the Balkans, the waves of migrants from the Middle East arriving via the so-called "Balkan route," the hundreds of thousands of asylum-seekers from the Western Balkans and the migrants from Bulgaria and Romania escaping poverty - all of these have once again placed this peripheral region at the center of European politics.*

half of the year came from the countries of the Western Balkans. Germany is the EU country that receives most of the economic migrants from Romania and Bulgaria, with more than 200,000 arriving in the past two years. Among them are many Roma, but also simply poor people fleeing the lack of prospects in their countries.

According to Johanna Deim, "the entire region, regardless of whether EU members or aspirants, is marked by a comparatively low standard of living. Young people in particular have no jobs. The income and wealth gap between north and south in the EU is increasing. Protests in Bosnia in 2014, in Macedonia in the spring of 2015 and currently in Montenegro are calling for a new political culture - an economic, democratic and constitutional perspective." And, she added, the countries from the region and the EU must work equally hard to create this perspective, because there will otherwise be no relief from the pressure of migration.

### *Balkan refugee route*

In the second half of the year, the Balkan countries caused more headlines when it comes to migration. Hundreds of thousands of migrants from the Middle East made their way to the West through Greece, Macedonia and Serbia, as well as Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovenia. For Macedonia and Serbia in particular, it was not an easy task to allow these people a smooth and orderly passage, but there were no major



incidents or violence. The refugees were not welcome guests in the Balkans, and they were simply waved through in the direction of Austria and Germany. Reljić says non-EU members Serbia and Macedonia behaved more humanely and in a more civilized manner towards the refugees than some EU countries: "Curiously, the EU members from the region tended to revive the negative sentiments towards the Balkans, while the non-EU members made a positive contribution."

To some extent, governments along the Balkan route recognized the problem too late and were unprepared for the influx. Traffickers earned good money from the plight of migrants until the migrants began to be dealt with in a reasonably organized manner. The EU quota system also caused resentment in the region. The governments in Sofia, Bucharest and Zagreb are supposed to share part of the burden, but their peoples' attitude towards the refugees has been anything but positive. Particularly visible were the populist and xenophobic sentiments in Bulgaria - a country that most refugees thus avoided. There was a new, refugee-related division in Europe, and the Balkans tended to find themselves in a group with Hungary, Poland and the Baltic countries, rather than with the countries of western and northern Europe.

#### *Borders and safety*

The massive movements of migrants through and from the Balkans have forcefully shifted the issue of EU external borders into focus. "The EU has tried to avoid this topic for 10 or 15 years. Today, the problem must be resolved if the EU wants to get the waves of refugees under control," Krastev said.

Not only the EU, but NATO also needs to protect its borders in the Balkans. In 2015, NATO members Romania and Bulgaria repeatedly warned that the Ukraine conflict had put them in a potentially very dangerous situation. Both countries joined the sanctions against Russia, while Bucharest and Moscow also have tensions over Moldova. The geopolitical and energy-policy aspirations of the Kremlin in the region must be taken very seriously, Deimel said. "On the one hand we have a country like Serbia, which is in a strategic partnership with Russia, and on the other Montenegro, which has just received an invitation to join NATO." "Ultimately, the refugee and migration movements have a security aspect inasmuch as religious radicalization in the Muslim societies of the region poses a potential risk for the affected countries and for the whole of Europe," she said. "In all these questions, the Balkans play an important role for the whole of Europe. And now, even more so."

*Source: dw.com*



Global leaders adopted Agreement on climate change in Paris

## Victory for the EU and the planet Earth



By: Vladimir Vučković

The Climate change agreement, adopted at the UN Conference of Ministers in Paris with support of all 195 UN members was undoubtedly the decision that marked the year 2015. It outlines a legally binding normative frameworks whose aim is to reduce the use of fossil fuels.

The climate change agreement is a step forward in the development of global environmental policy, especially in light of the previous failures to achieve coordinated reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The importance of this Agreement cannot be overstated. First of all, all member states committed themselves to reducing the global warming to 1.5°C. This provision is of particular importance for the small island countries which often suffer the consequences of climate change in the shape of enormous ecological disasters. Moreover, “the problem of small island countries”, was acknowledged by major advanced industrial countries and large developing countries, which put aside their

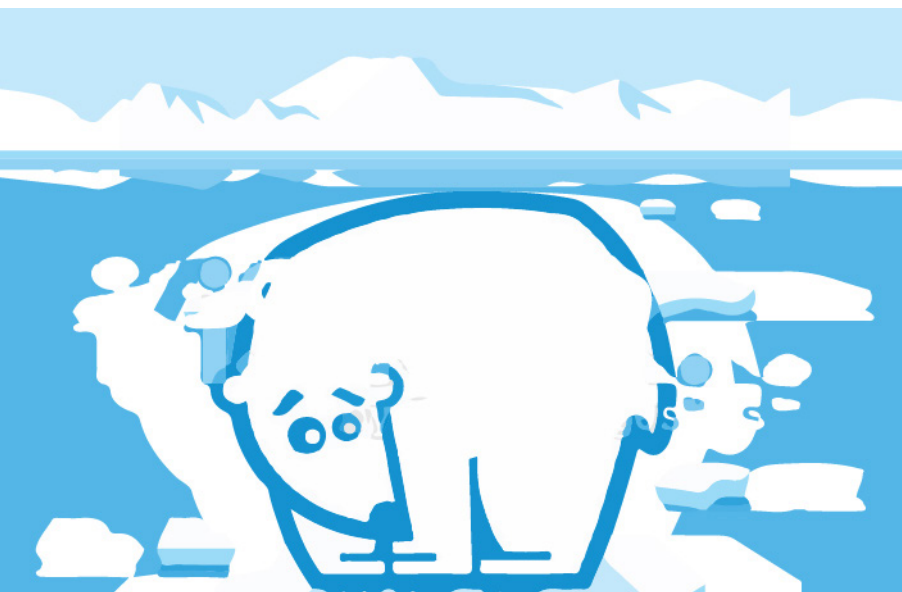
economic interests to devote more resources to the preservation of environment.

Consequently, all signatory states agreed to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal) and invest more resources to increase the use of renewable energy, such as solar, wind, and hydro energy.

Furthermore, as part of the plan to increase the reliance on renewable energy, the developed countries undertook to provide financial assistance to less developed countries of about 100 billion per year to reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere. Other benefits of this Agreement are reflected in the concession of USA and China to reduce their use of fossil fuels. As the largest greenhouse gas emitters, USA and China will greatly contribute to alleviating the greenhouse effects, thus creating conditions for the reduction of global warming.

Last but not least, the adoption of the Climate change agreement at the Conference of Ministers in Paris is an important victory for the EU, especially for France and its foreign affairs minister **Laurent Fabius**, who was successfully employed a well crafted diplomatic strategy to persuade USA and China to reduce their CO2 emissions, by allowing these and other industrial countries to set their own targets and abide by them.

The Climate Change Agreement is also important for the Western Balkan states. Through joint support to the reduction of global warming, the West Balkan countries created a framework for the improvement of good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation, thus adding a positive impulse to this global issue.



In the framework of the educational programme  
**"Contemporary tendencies of critical thought"**

and in response to popular demand  
 CCE presents, for the sixth time in Montenegro, the world-renowned

## PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAMME (PEP)



This programme of weekly, hour-and-a-half long workshops, lasts for 10 consecutive weeks. It is created by The Prem Rawat Foundation (TPRF), with the purpose of helping participants to discover inner resources, recognize their innate value, develop positive life skills and explore the possibility of personal peace.

The programme will be facilitated by PEP Manager in Montenegro, **Mrs Caroline Jovičević**, and the workshops will be held in the CCE premises, every Thursday at 5:30 p.m, from 4 February 2016 to 7 April 2016. The programme is conducted in Montenegrin and English and is offered free of charge.

In order to apply, send your short biography (name, phone number, e-mail, date of birth, current occupation, etc.) to the e-mail address [info@cgo-cc.org](mailto:info@cgo-cc.org), with the subject "For Peace Education Programme."

The capacity for this course is 50 persons. We recommend that you apply early for this very popular course, as we expect places to fill fast.

For more information on the [Peace Education Programme \(PEP\)](#) please visit:

[www.tprf.org/en/programs/peace-education-program](http://www.tprf.org/en/programs/peace-education-program) and [www.porukamira.org.rs/program-edukacijom-do-mira/](http://www.porukamira.org.rs/program-edukacijom-do-mira/)

Note: PEP is a course that is accredited by the Bureau of Education. If you are an educator and wish to receive a certificate showing the number of hours attended, please apply through the Pedagogical Centre of Montenegro (PCCG) who will forward your application to CCE. Send your short biography (name, phone number, e-mail, date of birth, current occupation, etc.) to PCCG PEP coordinator, Danilo Lekovic [danilo.mne@gmail.com](mailto:danilo.mne@gmail.com).

Centre for Civic Education (CCE)  
 announces a CALL for participants of the XXII generation of the

## HUMAN RIGHTS SCHOOL

*- School for learning human rights from theory to practice -*

If you are a high school student, if you want to learn about human rights, to meet and socialize with your peers, to spread and exchange experiences with other young people motivated to become actively engaged in solving problems that concern society, if you think you don't have enough information and you are eager to attain knowledge and build skills of active participation in advocacy and promotion of human rights in your school and community in which you live, the Human Rights School is the right place and opportunity for you!

The objective of the Human Rights School is to, through intensive multi-day course – lectures, workshops, forum theatre, film screenings, visits to institutions – provide participants with knowledge on human rights concept, starting with the history of human rights idea, development of human rights through generations, culture of human rights, principles of democracy, tolerance, solidarity, non-violent communication, legislative framework and institutional mechanisms available to citizens as means of protecting human rights and protection against discrimination, minority rights (with special focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups).

The School, in addition to broad theoretical and practical knowledge on concept of human rights, also affirms the culture of human rights, inspiring and motivating people to stand for their rights, as well as for those who are not able to do that on their own and empowers them to have more direct influence within society in future. Upon completion of the School the participants shall receive a certificate and be eligible for further educational development. Furthermore, support will be provided to participants to transcribe their ideas into concrete actions aimed at improving human rights in their local communities.

### Who is eligible to apply for the Human Rights School?

Regular high-school students from the whole territory of Montenegro.

### How to apply for the Human Rights School?

Filling out the [application](#) and sending it by e-mail to [info@cgo-cc.org](mailto:info@cgo-cc.org), with a subject "For Human Rights School, XXII generation".

Deadline for sending application is **29 January 2016**.

The School is free of charge for selected participants, meaning that costs of travel, food, accommodation, organization of curriculum and other activities related to programme are covered by the CCE, with the support of the Embassy of Canada, through the project „Different but equal“. Detail information about the School programme shall be given to candidates who are invited to the School after selection process based on assessment of applications.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact us at [info@cgo-cc.org](mailto:info@cgo-cc.org) or via phone at 020 665 112.



FAST FORWARD Human Rights Film Festival

## FAST FORWARD FILM FESTIVAL 2015 ENDS WITH THE MONTENEGRIN PREMIER OF THE CANNES' TRIPLE AWARD WINNER



Centre for Civic Education (CCE) closed its sixth edition of the FAST FORWARD Human Rights Film Festival on 15 December 2015 in the Montenegrin national theatre (CNP) with a Montenegrin premiere of the triple award winner at the Cannes Film Festival - "Son of Saul", preceded by an award ceremony for best achievements in the promotion of human rights and civic activism.

At the closing ceremony of the Festival, **Daliborka Uljarević**, executive director of CCE, noted that *"in the last few days, the FAST FORWARD Human Rights Film Festival accorded us the opportunity to travel and witness and experience some deeply unsettling, yet inspiring fortunes of the films' heroes and heroines, to be together and believe that human rights are the foundations of every open and democratic society". She stressed that "the fight for human rights is universal, it has no boundaries, nor should it be prone to compromises. FAST FORWARD Human Rights Film Festival, even enlarged by its fans, supporters, activists, fighters for human rights, is not such a bit space, but it has an important mission in the Montenegrin society. We succeeded in making it present and visible, and shook the foundations of xenophobic stereotypes by using film as a tool for influence and education, always aware of the fact that without continuous education and various forms of exchange of experience there can be no progress,*

*education, maturity of individuals and society, nor a way to ensure humane values and an open heart", Uljarević added.*

Prior to the final screening, Uljarević gave out this year's awards for the promotion affirmation of human rights and civic activism. Among organisations, the award went to the weekly "Monitor", and was received in the name of the publication by its executive director **Milka Tadić Mijović** and editor in chief **Esad Kočan**. In the category of individuals, the awards went to the fathers of babies who were mortally infected in the maternity ward in Bijelo Polje. Their fathers - **Slaviša Knežević**, **Eldin Salemović** and **Predrag Karišik**, are still fighting for justice for their babies. These annual awards have become one of the distinguishing features of the Festival, with their aim to acknowledge and encourage those who selflessly work at making Montenegro a better society where the universality of human rights is never questioned.

The award ceremony continued with the premiere of the eleventh and last film of this year's Festival, *Son of Saul* by Hungarian director **László Nemes**.

The sixth edition of the FAST FORWARD Human Rights Film Festival was also enriched by the presence of distinguished guests - Croatian director **Zvonimir Jurić**, and conceptual artist from Sarajevo **Damir Nikšić**, as well as by abridged editions of the Festival in Kotor (Kino Boka) and Berane (Municipal Assembly Hall).

FAST FORWARD 2015 took place between 11 and 15 December 2015 in Podgorica in the Montenegrin National Theatre (CNP), while the short editions were held in Kotor in PI "Nikola Đurković" on 12 and 13 December, and in Berane in the hall of Municipal Assembly on 13 and 14 December.

The festival was organised with support of the US Embassy, Embassy of Canada, Commission for the allocation of part of revenue from the games of chance of the Government of Montenegro, as well as of the prestigious organisation Movie that matters - the first time this organisation supported this type of project in Montenegro. Partners of the Festival are the Montenegrin National Theatre (CNP), Beldocs, public broadcaster RTCG (TV and Portal), Vjesti (newspapers and portal), Cultural centre «Nikola Đurković» from Kotor, municipality of Berane, as well as the companies Montepano, Studio Mouse and Compania de Vinos Montenegro.

S.P





## Regional reconciliation from different points of view

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) organised a public debate titled "Regional reconciliation from different points of view" on 24 December 2015, in cooperation with the Humanitarian Law Center (HLC) on behalf of the Coalition for RECOM. The debate was opened by **Daliborka Uljarević**, executive director of CCE, **Veljko Rutović**, special prosecutor, on behalf of the Special Prosecutor's office of Montenegro, **Miloš Vukanović**, historian, **Boris Marić**, member of the Working group for the preparation of negotiations on Chapter 23 and senior legal advisor at CCE, and **Dragoljub Vuković**, journalist and public advocate of the Coalition for RECOM in Montenegro. The dynamic and substantive discussion that followed brought together 35 participants. Among the speakers were also representatives of public institutions, NGO sector, political parties and interested citizens. During the debate, the organisers presented an edited volume of articles collected for the Transnational Justice Forum, an annual event organised by the Initiative for RECOM. **Tamara Milaš**, CCE programme associate and spokesperson for the Initiative for REKOM in Montenegro, gave a thorough overview of the performance of the Coalition for REKOM and its current activities. Initiative for REKOM brings together numerous civil society organisations and individuals from the region to demand establishment of a Regional commission to determine the facts on war crimes and other severe violations of human rights committed on the territory of former SFRY between 1991 and 2002.

## Presentation of CCE's annual research on the media financing from public funds in Montenegro

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) organised a conference with support of the UK Embassy in Podgorica, titled "Media financing from public funds in Montenegro". H.E. **Ian Whitting**, UK ambassador in Montenegro, opened the conference and elaborated the motives of Embassy's participation in this project by pointing out: *"Everyone who lives in a democratic society is aware of the importance of media. Democracy can hardly develop and endure without free media that report on matters of public interest in a professional and ethical manner. In Montenegro, like in any other transitional society, importance of this role is even greater. It is up to the media to investigate cases, to report, and question ingrained opinions and customs."* **Daliborka Uljarević**, CCE Executive Director, stressed that "we can speak about media freedom, media pluralism and competitive market only in a normatively and institutionally regulated space. However, all these principles are nowadays undermined in Montenegro. There are no clearly defined criteria for the allocation of resources to the media from public funds, which easily converts discretionary authorisations into various forms of abuse. Then, we have protectionism, and further media polarisation which turns the media market into a rigged race, which again has a negative impact on the already worrying state of affairs in the media scene in Montenegro. In such circumstances, freedom is restricted, particularistic interests thrive at expense of professional ethics, and the Montenegrin society, together with its citizens, fall victim to the conflict between the government and the "rebellious" media, as well as to the internal media wars". **Mira Popović**, CCE programme associate, presented the research strategy and pointed out that, out of 342 public bodies, 226 or 60% responded to the requests for information, while 116 bodies, or 34%, refused to submit the requested data. The average waiting time for the response was 90 days. Among the Government and self-government bodies and other public institutions identified as major consumers of media services, the following bodies found themselves on the "black list" as the least responsive and transparent: Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Transport and Maritime Affairs, Capital City of Podgorica, Bar Municipality, Municipality of Ulcinj, Municipality of Plav, Agency for Environmental Protection, Agency for Foreign Investment Promotion, Public Health Institute, the National Parks of Montenegro, Airports Montenegro, Plantaže "13 July", and Railway Infrastructure. **Ana Nenezić**, programme coordinator at CCE, presented in detail the findings of the annual research on public spending on media services in Montenegro for 2014. At the end of her presentation, she highlighted the conclusions and recommendations. Presentations were followed by a discussion with representatives of various media and institutions. This conference concludes the project "Equal chances for all media in Montenegro", implemented by CCE with support of the British Embassy, within the framework of the CCE's sub-programme Media and democracy. The meeting gathered around 40 representatives of media, Government, NGOs, political parties and diplomatic corps.

## Civil society decides!

The aim of the conference "Civil society decides!", organised on 7 December 2015 by the Centre for development of non-governmental organisations (CDNGO) and Resources Centre for civil society organisations in Montenegro, was to familiarise representatives of public institutions and NGO sector, as well as the entire Montenegrin public, with the current context in which the civil society operates in Montenegro, the region and the EU. At the conference, the organisers presented the results of the research on citizens' opinion of NGOs, as well as on their trust in other institutions, their awareness of NGO activities, and their assessment of the NGO's influence on social changes. The research was conducted by CDNGO, and the conference provided the space for the prominent representatives of public institutions and the NGO sector to comment on the result on the research. Among the speakers were the president of the Parliament of Montenegro **Ranko Krivokapić**; deputy Prime Minister for political system, interior and foreign policy **Duško Marković**; Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro H.E **Mitja Drobnič**; State secretary and Chief negotiator with the EU **Aleksandar Andrija Pejović**; president of the board of directors of Institute Alternative **Stevo Muk**, **Marko Uljarević** from Ipsos Strategic Marketing and **Ana Novaković**, executive director of CDNGO. **Daliborka Uljarević**, executive director, and **Snežana Kaluderović**, programme coordinator, attended the conference on behalf of the Centre for Civic Education (CCE).



## Student Leadership Programme ends with a thematic session in the Parliamentary Committee for Education, Culture, Science and Sport

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) organised a visit to the Committee for Education, Culture, Science and Sport of the Montenegrin Parliament, as the final activity within its Student Leadership Programme. Here the students had the chance to familiarise themselves with the process of decision-making on higher education in the Parliament, as well as to meet the members of the Committee who take these decisions and exchange experiences and recommendations on issues of importance to the students. At the end of the 63rd thematic session, specially dedicated to the Student Leadership Programme, president of the Committee **Branka Tanasijević** awarded diplomas to participants for the successful completion of the Programme. She introduced the students to the work of the Committee and its competencies and encouraged them to address the Committee whenever they would like to attend its sessions and discuss matters of importance to them. "Students' input is essential for the improvement of the Committee's work, and for its success in resolving the students' concerns", Tanasijević said. She reminded that students make up one fifth of the managing bodies of universities and their faculties, but also urged them to make a greater use of the existing legislative and institutional framework to demand their rights. **Daliborka Uljarević**, CCE Executive Director, highlighted the following during her address: "Student leadership is precisely the driving force, the prerequisite necessary for student activism, and it is important to encourage it in Montenegro and to provide it with greater support. High quality leadership and activism make the foundations of citizens' values, they are part of the civic future that is shaped by each society for the benefit of its citizens and their public interest". She added that "student activism is the missing link in the articulation of civil initiatives, alternatives, even protests". Srđan Perić, a member of the Committee member, stressed that CCE's Student Leadership Programme demonstrated that institutions can benefit from the work of the NGO sector, and reminded students that they should be the "vanguard" of society. "Always look for and demand a bigger opportunity, or someone else will take your place instead", Perić concluded. Students said that they were very satisfied with the Programme, that they learned a lot, and that it gave them the motivation for future actions. They also had many questions for the Committee members.

This year's Student Leadership Programme was successfully completed by 29 students from the University of Montenegro, University of Donja Gorica and Faculty of Administrative and European studies: **Aleksandra Dujović, Amar Škrijelj, Anja Avramović, Anđela Đuković, Dejan Daković, Dimitrije Jovičević, Elma Hot, Filip Đelević, Irina Koprivica, Iva Mijović, Jelena Backović, Jelena Kontić, Jovan Dašić, Jovana Nikčević, Ljiljana Jokić, Maja Radonjić, Maša Velimirović, Milena Bojanić, Milosava Cerović, Mirha Tahirović, Nemanja Ostojić, Nikola Bošković, Nikola Maksan, Samra Radončić, Svetlana Janković, Tamara Mijušković, Vildana Ljuković, Zoran Dabetić and Željka Četković**. Centre for Civic Education (CCE) organised the Student Leadership Programme as part of its project "Only knowledge should get the title", conducted in cooperation with ELIAMEP, with support of the EU Delegation to Montenegro, Heinrich Böll Foundation and the Commission for the allocation of part of the revenue from games of chance.

## Public debate on the new Law on prohibition of discrimination of persons with disability

Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro (UMHCG) organised a public debate on the new Law on the prohibition of discrimination of persons with disability in Podgorica on 18 December 2015, as part of the project "How the law becomes practice". The debate was opened by H.E. **Ian Whitting**, the UK ambassador to Montenegro, Minister for human and minority rights Dr **Suad Numanović**, MP in the Parliament of Montenegro **Snežana Jonica**, and executive director of UMHCG **Marina Vujačić**. The introductory remarks were followed by a panel discussion involving Deputy Ombudsman **Siniša Bjeković**, president of the Basic Court in Podgorica **Zoran Radović**, lawyer **Tijana Živković** and coordinator of the legal programme and antidiscrimination at UMHCG **Miroslava-Mima Ivanović**. The objective of the public debate was to familiarise the persons with disabilities and other interested parties with the novelties and possibilities introduced by the Law on the prohibition of discrimination of persons with disabilities, adopted in June 2015, as well as to foster discussion on the current state of rights of persons with disabilities and their protection from discrimination. The debate concluded with the adoption of joint conclusions and recommendations. **Željka Četković**, CCE programme associate, attended the debate on behalf of the Centre for Civic Education.

A.V

## Incoming volunteers program at SHL Germany

The German youth organization “Schüler Helfen Leben” (SHL), located in Neumünster and Berlin offers this opportunity from July 2016 to August 2017. This volunteer program is carried out successfully over the last 20 years has recently been extended by an Incoming Volunteers Program to the volunteers from all over Europe each year.

SHL is looking for young activists who want to contribute to SHL’s work in Germany and share their experience among a team of seven German volunteers organizing our big youth event “Social Day”. At the same time volunteers gain personal experience by implementing smaller and bigger projects.

*Deadline for applications: 29 February 2016*

Further information and requirements can be found in our [online brochure](#). When applying, please fill in and attach our questionnaire, which can be downloaded [here](#).

More information on: <http://shl.ba/index.php/lat/novosti/item/161-incoming-volunteers-program-at-shl-germany>

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