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ANALYSES

Why agriculture has the top priority place in negotiations on stabilization and association

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INTERVIEW
Mr. Primož Vehar, main advisor for legal harmonisation at the Policy and Legal Advice Centre (PLAC) in Belgrade





FOREWORD

It is well noted by the authors of the latest report by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers that some of the key reforms in Montenegro are indeed pending on the referendum. Afterwards they will be pending on the Constitution which is to institutionalise some of the grand changes which are necessary for the Montenegrin society, among the most important of which should be the marking the road to independent judiciary. The first step is to change the procedure for appointment of the judges so that the decision to place justice in their hands will depend on their colleagues, and not on politicians. Independent judiciary, free of politics and other various interest lobbies, will lead to professionalized prosecution, altogether marking the gateway for Montenegro into the field of legal security, which is the main precondition for an effective fight against corruption.

Corruption in Montenegro and the way to overcome this problem is one of the subjects tackled in this February issue of EIC Bulletin. It shows how little attention has been given so far by the state to handling its gravest ailments. The way this is reflected in Montenegro is perhaps best illustrated by the former American ambassador to Serbia and Montenegro, Mr. Michael Polt, when he describes how he often had to explain to American investors that conditions for investment in Serbia and Montenegro are such that there are many risks, but that those who are ready to risk stand chance for much profit. Mr. Polt too, whose mission was to bring American capital to his host country, would probably like it better if he could say: "Gentlemen, Montenegro is one small, orderly state. Your capital will be safe here". As it is, he is obliged to mention "certain risks", which basically means: "Think about it, I'm not responsible if you run into unplanned expenses". In other words, after this referendum, Montenegro is yet to fight some fatal battles that long ago should have been won.

N.R.

BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF COOPERATION WITH THE HAGUE, EUROPEAN UNION CLOSE TO SUSPENDING STABILIZATION AND ASSOCIATION NEGOTIATIONS

Montenegro to pay for others' sins

There are no further deadlines – in case Serbia fails to achieve full cooperation with the Hague tribunal until Monday, 27 February, it is almost certain that the European Union Council of Ministers will decide to suspend negotiations on stabilization and association.

Speaking before the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament last Thursday, European Enlargement Commissioner **Olli Rehn** announced this decision, while at the same time the second round of technical negotiations was taking place in Belgrade between the experts of European Commission and those of Serbia and Montenegro. "It is important that Serbian efforts should lead to full cooperation, without further ado. That should result in the immediate arrest and delivery of **Ratko Mladić**", says Rehn.

Once again, Montenegro is in a situation to repay the sins of its bigger partner in the State Union, unless the State Union chief of diplomacy **Vuk Drašković** succeeds, as he announced, in convincing EU ministers to make further concessions to Belgrade.

Predrag Bošković, deputy foreign minister of Serbia and Montenegro immediately responded commenting that Montenegro will not have to bear consequences of the lack of cooperation with The Hague with respect to European integrations, if it votes independence in the upcoming referendum and abandons union with Serbia.

"It is very important that Montenegro continues implementing what has already been agreed with European Commission, that is, to keep these technical negotiations at the pace they were supposed to go", says Bošković.

On the same day when European Com-



missioner announced what was to be expected, the second round of negotiations dedicated to establishment of enterprises, harmonization of legislature, competition policy, articles of the free movement of goods, and the politics of cooperation was successfully completed. Among other items on the agenda there was also public procurement, while negotiations about lists of agricultural and industrial goods took place separately. Montenegrin minister of European integration, **Ms. Gordana Đurović** said that, in accordance with the model of double-track negotiations, "negotiation capacity of each member of the State Union is being clearly promoted".

On the side of the EU, negotiations were conducted by a team from the Enlargement Directorate-General, Unit Western Balkans, headed by **Ms. Therese Sobieski**.

Prior to this, the government of Montenegro hosted a series of work meetings which took the form of "enhanced continuous dialogue", where they discussed various matters concerning internal market, competition protection policy, transport, energy, nuclear safety, and information society.

EESC Forum soon

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), which has been increasingly involved in matters that concern Western Balkans, organises Western Balkans Civil Society Forum on 27 and 28 March 2006, bringing together representatives of various economic and social components of organised civil society.

This Forum will bring together app. 200 participants, including delegates from Western Balkans countries, members of the EESC, representatives of Economic and Social Councils of European countries, representatives of EU institutions, the diplomatic corps, international socio-professional organizations (employers, trade unions, farmers, consumers) and NGOs from Western Balkans.

The objectives of the Western Balkans Civil Society Forum are: to inform delegates on Western Balkans-EU relations; to assess the situation of organised civil society in the region, and to define common activities for the years 2006 & 2007.

This Forum is part of the work of the Western Balkans Contact Group created by the EESC in 2004, and it also coincides with the preparation of an exploratory opinion requested by the European Commission on "The situation of civil society in the Western Balkans". Within the context of the Austrian Presidency of the EU, it will be part of a broader effort to take forward the EU stabilisation and association process in the region.



by dr Judy Batt

Corruption, organised crime, trafficking in drugs and human beings... This litany of complaints is endlessly repeated in EU communications with the countries of the Western Balkans. Why do we seem to have a bigger problem here than was the case in Central and Eastern Europe transitions in the 1990s?

The CEE countries certainly went through a vulnerable period immediately after 1989. The collapse of the communist party's monopoly of power rocked these states to their foundations. For a brief period, whatever discipline there was in the state administration, and most importantly, the police, was shattered. Newly opened borders allowed free passage for international criminal gangs. In a relatively short time, however – and not without some pressure from alarmed west European neighbours – basic order was restored. The newly-elected CEE governments began to rebuild the legitimacy and authority of state institutions on a democratic basis. But the unprecedented experiment of mass privatisation in weak states provided ample scope for corruption. However, reforms progressed steadily, fired by the determination to join the EU as fast as possible. Governments changed regularly, but the basic course was consistent. This allowed the professionalism of state administration to develop, and the political independence of the judiciary and police to take root.

Of course, the problem of corruption far from over in CEE. Old habits

A VIEW FROM EUROPE

Is not enough only "European" vocation

die hard. Under communism, people used to say that 'if you don't rob the State, you are robbing your own family.' Elite groups got used to the idea that their heroic leadership of the people gave them the right to reward themselves generously from the public purse. Such mentalities were carried over into the new era after 1989. Similar self-serving notions pop up

Old habits die hard. Under communism, people used to say that 'if you don't rob the State, you are robbing your own family.' Elite groups got used to the idea that their heroic leadership of the people gave them the right to reward themselves generously from the public purse. Such mentalities were carried over into the new era after 1989. Similar self-serving notions pop up wherever democratic accountability and the rule of law are weak; where the political independence of the media is not firmly established; and where civil society lacks self-confidence.

wherever democratic accountability and the rule of law are weak; where the political independence of the media is not firmly established; and where civil society lacks self-confidence. When governments stay too long in power, these checks on the abuse of power weaken. Even long-established democracies are not immune to corruption.

In the Western Balkans, we are not just dealing with the standard 'teething troubles' of post-communist transition,

but an exceptionally dangerous malignancy, as the assassination of Djindjic showed. The wars of the 1990s, combined with western sanctions, led to widespread economic criminality. Yugoslav successor states not only failed to prevent this, but actually depended on it. Black markets, 'wild' privatisations, racketeering and sanctions-busting smuggling networks became enmeshed with political power. It has proven hard to unscramble this legacy, because we have not yet seen a decisive break with the past and real alternation of elites in power. Old elites have repackaged themselves as democrats – a step forward maybe, but not yet enough to deliver real accountability and transparency. This will only happen when new political forces emerge, capable of dislodging the grip of old elites over the state and breaking up shady networks rooted in the old regime.

EU integration can provide an external motor of reform and constrain elite behaviour – but it can't do this in the absence of effective internal checks on power. It is not enough for governments merely to declare their 'European' vocation. Even a 'state-of the-art' anti-corruption programme will not make much impact if a government is not constrained by a credible domestic opposition, independent investigative media and a demanding civil society. Governments need political courage to break with the legacies of the past and rebuild the integrity of the state. But to keep them on track, they also need to know that they can be replaced any time if they fail to deliver.

The author is renowned expert for Western Balkans from Paris based European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)

HOW TO END CORRUPTION, ONE OF THE MAIN BARRIERS ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS OF EU ACCESSION

First political will, then greater power to the police

In Montenegro, for the past 10 years no important government official was trailed for corruption, although according to various public opinion researches in the last 4 years, 80 to 90 % of Montenegrin citizens consider it to be among four greatest social problems. This piece of information alone could be sufficient reason for Brussels administration to urge Montenegrin government to make serious efforts in solving this problem, if it wishes to join the company of EU25 in the times to come. Both in its Feasibility study and in the latest Progress report on SM, European Commission warned Montenegrin government that corruption, as well as other related

matters, such as problem of independent judiciary and the lack of transparency in the privatization process, will be critical barriers for further steps towards EU.

The revised European Partnership document adopted by the Council of Ministers on 30 January 2006 insists on the need for effective implementation of anti-corruption strategies through "creating government services responsible for its implementation" and applying thoroughly the Law on the Conflict of Interests.

Anti-corruption measures are evaluated in the context of Copenhagen criteria, defining country's preparedness to join EU. In July last year, Montenegrin government



photo VIJESTI

adopted a Programme for fight against corruption and organised crime. In this document, they conclude that "statistics show that very few persons have been reported, tried or convicted for criminal acts with elements of corruption", but also that "public opinion researches, without exception, indicate that citizens believe that corruption and organised crime are extremely prominent".

According to Bureau for anti-corruption, in the period from 2001 to 2004, around 500 reported cases of corruption have been processed, some 10% resulting in legal convictions.

In the contest of implementation of the government programme, a Commission for drafting of the Action plan – Matrix for Implementing the Programme of Fight against Corruption and Organised

THE LITHUANIAN EXPERIENCE

Lithuania has often been praised as a textbook example of a state whose national strategy for fight against corruption has been and is still exceptionally successful. Since last year, Lithuania has become a full EU member.

In January 2002, Lithuanian parliament adopted National Programme for Fight against Corruption outlining measures to be taken within a period of seven to ten years.

This programme consists of three main elements – preventing corruption, investigations and use of force, as well as public education measures, where all three elements are applied simultaneously.

All political parties of this country included corruption matters in their programme documents. Other institutions (e.g. customs office) send regular reports to the parliament, which then formulates resolutions obliging executive powers to apply certain anti-corruption measures.

Fight against corruption has an important place among the Government activities, focusing on those areas which are very sensitive to corruption, such as revenue offices, customs, public procurement service, privatisation and health security.

This is also an important area of concern for the media, who highlights the most vivid cases of corruption and often themselves disclose corrupt officials.

Crime was founded in the beginning of December 2005.

Commission consists of representatives of the Ministry, Association of prosecutors, judicial bodies, Anti money laundering agency and NGOs, together with the Council of Europe experts who were invited on the Commission's initiative.

President of the Commission, **Mr. Petko Spasojević**, Chief of the Police Department for Suppression of Economic Crime, says that the

main task of this Commission is to create a proposal of the Action plan until 1 April, which will contain concrete measures and activities for all Ministries, governmental bodies and other responsible institutions with clear timeframes and deadlines for accomplishment.

However, leader of Group for Changes, **Mr. Nebjoša Medojević** says that all initiatives by the government and its mixed commissions are just "empty tales".

JUDICIARY THE WEAKEST SPOT



Nikola Bulatović

Judiciary, we all know, is not independent. It is under direct control of the executive powers. In our conditions, judges can be bought by the mafia, tycoons, and the regime which is taking the lead – says president of the Free Lawyers Association, **Mr. Nikola Bulatović**.

Asked about his reasons for making such claims, Bulatović raised the following questions:

"What would you call it when a judge is given an apartment by the government without the prior public announcement, when he is bought an apartment outside regular procedures, when he pays two or three euros of rent when the market price is 200 to 300 euros, when he can exchange his apartment in Bijelo Polje for another one in Vektra or under Gorica at the

rate of 10:1?", says Bulatović, adding that he focuses on the issue of living conditions simply because they are of existential value in Montenegro.

However, Bulatović judges that Montenegrin judiciary, overall, is less corrupt than many other services, emphasising that the main problem is the fact that the majority of honest, responsible judges keep silent, helping certain irresponsible individuals among them in this way.

According to him, a judge can be bought not only with material benefits, but also through election of ignorant, incapable and exceptionally obedient judges who, defending the government, defend themselves.

As the most obvious example of corruption in Montenegro, Bulatović points at the so-called "zero-interest credits".

"Unless there is a change of political power in Montenegro, we can forget fight against corruption. What we will have is a mere simulation of this fight, forming various commissions led by obedient pawns. Obviously, there will be no concrete results, which will only enhance this negative social trend" prophesises Bulatović.

According to him, constitutional limits and the lack of political will are the true reasons for the corruption being "endemic" in Montenegro.

"Anti-corruption laws in Montenegro do not contain optimal solutions because of the current Constitution, which the parties in power have used as an excuse not to commit themselves to fight against corruption. With this Constitution and the embedded legal mechanisms you cannot fight corruption effectively. How will governmental institutions control the Government? What we need urgently is a new Constitution redefining separation between the three powers. We must create possibilities for the establishment of independent bodies whose controlling position will be defined by Constitution, giving them the power to control judiciary and, especially, the government", says Medojević.

In the last few years Montenegrin parliament adopted series of anti-corruption laws, such as Law on Public Procurement, laws preventing the conflict of interests, laws on free access to information, and the state Bureau for internal audit and prevention of money-laundering.

Most of these institutions are either financed from the state budget, or they have very limited responsibilities. The extent of powers of the Commission for preventing the conflict of interest doesn't go further from proclaiming in public the names of the officials who have refused to disclose their property. According to GFC research of public opinion in January 2005, 53% of the citizens do not believe in the current government's capability to successfully fight the corruption, while 26% trusts that the government has the power to combat this social vice.

Quoting paragraphs from the governmental Programme for Fight against Corruption and Organised

Crime, Spasojević emphasises that success in fighting these problems "depends on a great number of factors, the most important being political will and decisiveness".

In GFC they believe that standard experiences of other countries are not applicable in Montenegro.

Their suggestion is, once the government changes, to conduct a kind of lustration procedure in institutions such as police and secret police, customs and the financial police force, where a special attention would be given to those in charge of construction permits.

According to GFC research, corruption is most widely present in the customs, financial police, among top government officials, in the Privatisation Council, judiciary and police while the least corrupt institutions are private companies, banks, and the army.

As the second necessary step, Medojević proposes comprehensive investigations and trials "sending a clear message to the citizens that corruption is a criminal offence".

The last step in this process is to create institutional mechanisms for prevention of new corruption in the government.

According to Medojević, these should comprise Constitutional provisions for independent bodies and establishment of a Council for National Integrity. This Council would consist of party representatives, media community, Ombudsman, Public Prosecutor and it would coordinate all anti-corruption activities. The Council would have an executive branch charged with permanent supervision of transparency in certain processes.

Further anti-corruption measures, says the leader of GFC, should include increase of salaries for judges and forming a special unit for fighting corruption within the Ministry of Interior.

Montenegro must bring the level

SECRET SURVEILLANCE THE BEST METHOD

Adoption of a Criminal Code singling the corruption as a new criminal offence is considered to be the most important segment of legislative efforts to fight this problem. According to the Criminal Code, the notion of corruption includes, among the rest, abuse of monopoly, causing false bankrupt, abuse of economic powers, fake balance, revealing business secrets, revealing or misusing secrets of the stock market, abuse of public office, illegal mediation, accepting and offering bribe.

However, this Code, like so many other laws, shows its flaws once we look at the way it is implemented. **Mr. Petko Spasojević** says that their experience insofar shows that classical corruption, which is conducted in private, cannot be discovered without using special investigation methods, defined by the Law on Criminal Procedure as measures of secret surveillance.

– It is not only our experience, but also the rule which has been often pointed at by criminal police experts from other countries in the region.

"Commission will propose to amend certain legal regulations to enable us to use measures of secret surveillance in discovering corruption. At the moment, these measures are only appropriate for criminal offences which are punishable with a minimum 10 years of prison sentence, or criminal acts having elements of organised crime. Our criminal legislation does not give a precise definition of "capital offence", consequently, it is possible to discriminate against certain acts with respect to implementation of secret surveillance. We are planning to recommend either lowering the criteria for these measures, or defining a clear set of criminal acts where these measures are appropriate", says Spasojević.

of corruption down to the minimum if it wishes to join EU.

This conclusion is clearly illustrated by the findings of international NGO Transparency International, whose research is taken as the most relevant indicator of the spread of corruption in any state, even though they are not directly interested in European integrations.

The "old" member states of EU, on a scale from 10 to one, have shown indexes of corruption between 8 and 10. Last year, this index was 9.5 in Finland, 9.2 in Sweden, 8.6 in the Netherlands, while Slovenia, as a new member state, had the corruption index 6.1. In Croatia, as a candidate state, this index was 3.4 in 2005.

Serbia and Montenegro, with the corruption index 2.8 was on pairs last year with Malawi, Mozambique and Algeria. This research was not conducted specifically for

Montenegro, but there is little reason to think that there should be much difference from the results obtained on the Union level.

Asked what is to be expected from Brussels if the Montenegrin government fails to deal seriously with corruption, Medojević answers that this problem will certainly "put breaks" on Montenegrin progress towards EU, whether it remains in the state union or not.

"If we look at stabilisation and association agreement, we can see that more than a half of one chapter deals with corruption – everything from rule of law to judicial reforms, police, grey economy, etc. Montenegro can virtually make no step forward in any segment of this agreement until it is ready to face the problem of corruption", concludes Medojević.

Vladan ŽUGIĆ

MR. PRIMOŽ VEHAR, MAIN ADVISOR FOR LEGAL HARMONISATION AT THE POLICY AND LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE (PLAC) IN BELGRADE

Your problem is that you believe everything will get sorted out on its own



Primož Vehar

Quality state administration is the key to EU accession, because without qualified cadre it is impossible to prepare or implement new regulations. This administration is not only in charge of EU association process – it also has the task of creating an independent state, and that is huge pressure that will only become bigger, says in the interview for EIC Bulletin Mr. Primoz Vehar, the main legal advisor for legislative harmonisation at the Policy and Legal Advice Centre in Belgrade, which is financed by EU through European Agency for Reconstruction. Mr. Vehar worked for the government of Slovenia Secretariat for Legislative Harmonisation, and later in the Parliament of Slovenia as Secretary of the Committee for EU affairs. In this way, he was directly involved with EU association process, both within the government and the parliament, for the whole period from before the signing of Stabilisation and Association Agreement, until the final act of mem-

bership. He is currently working on transferring his experience to Serbia and Montenegro.

- What are your experiences so far regarding your work in Montenegro and Montenegro's capacity to successfully manage its road to EU accession?

Although people tend to think that Montenegro has serious trouble managing EU association process, especially with respect to the capacities of its administration personnel, I believe that small administration, if properly organised, can be a great advantage, because so many organisation and coordination problems can be solved with a simple phone call,

because people know each other by name.

Working in Montenegro, I met many more people than I expected who have experience and knowledge about EU law, and who are committed to their work. However, this is not a majority, which is normal; if you consider that the process of EU association has only just begun.

A lot more effort will be needed to strengthen administrative capacities, not only in terms of quantity, but especially in terms of quality. Continuous education of personnel is going to be a permanent task, and both your government's and EU efforts in this direction are the right way to go.

SINCE 1998 SLOVENIA HAD TO ADOPT MORE THAN 800 LAWS

- How many legal acts in total – laws and regulations – did Slovenia adopt until now in order to fully implement *acquis communautaire*?

It is difficult to say in concrete numbers, but I remember well that our Parliament had to adopt more than a 100 laws in 1998, almost 200 in 1999, more than 200 in 2000, and for the rest between 100 and 200 each year, while in 2004 it was more than 200 again.

Of course, I include here all amendments to the existing laws.

It should be said that for the greatest part legislature is harmonised through decisions of the government or the ministries, so that the number of other legal acts is a lot, lot higher. The real, essential, tangible work on harmonisation in Slovenia only began once we started to implement Association agreement, because from that point onwards European Commission was monitoring our work and implementation, through various common bodies. From then on, we were much better organised and the prospect of EU membership became a reality.

However, you must know that working on harmonisation never ended, and it isn't going to end.

EU legislature is a moving target which is ever changing and developing and you can never be perfectly harmonised. Your work doesn't end once you join EU even if regulations and primary legislature become directly applicable – you still need to harmonise directives, to transfer them fully into domestic legal system. With that, I must emphasise the work on preparing these directives with other Member States.

● Can you give us an overall estimate of harmonisation between Montenegro's legislation and EU laws?

Montenegrin legislature is only making its first steps toward harmonisation and every estimate in points per cent of similar would be manipulation of sheer guessing. Some laws which have been adopted, such as protection of competition, are very much in accordance with EU law. However, this does not mean that all problems have been solved in this sector, because these laws need to be implemented too, which is not the responsibility of those who have written them, but of those who must apply them. Therefore, this is not a task for a single ministry, but also for the courts, inspection and other.

Some other draft laws are also quite harmonised, although they have not been forwarded to the Parliament yet. Such is the draft of the Law on the control of state assistance, as well as the Law on consumer protection, where cooperation between domestic and foreign experts in preparing the law has proven to be the winning combination. Regardless of how well acquainted

they might be with EU or legal systems of some Member States, foreign experts cannot draft laws without knowledge of the local legal system and tradition. Cooperation with local experts is essential; otherwise you will get laws which nobody understands and which remain on paper without ever being implemented.

Legal harmonisation should not be measured by the number of the laws adopted, but through their implementation in practice. Otherwise, I can take 10 foreign and 10 local experts and within a year you will have your entire legislature harmonised on paper, but that's not the point! You have to apply laws, not only to adopt them. And that takes time.

● According to you, what are going to be the most difficult moments in negotiations on stabilisation and association? Which are, if there are any, areas where we can have serious disputes?

This treaty is to prepare states for their future membership in EU, and in its first instance, it simply means a trade agreement. Trade cooperation will create common institutions and

urge political cooperation, and this is the beginning of the road to EU. Being familiar with agreements which the new EU member states signed in the 90's, as well as those of other states in the region, and taking into consideration Montenegrin economy and its liberalisation, I can say that I do not expect any serious problems with these negotiations.

● Speaking about EU association process, what, according to you will be Montenegro's main assets, and what will be the greatest problems?

It is difficult to speak about advantages and disadvantages when you don't know a country well. One problem could be legal implementation because of the small and insufficiently trained administration, or the attitude that everything will get sorted out on its own. On the other hand, small administration could be a great advantage, provided it is well organised.

● What were the areas where Slovenia had most difficulties implementing the EU-harmonised laws? What were the biggest problems?

As all new member states of Central and Eastern Europe, we had most problems in the areas which we had no prior experience with, because we had a different social system. Main problems were with implementation in practice. We invested a lot of effort to realise that legal harmonisation does not simply mean copying EU directives, which were written for other member states where the game is played by different rules. It means adopting the essence of these regulations, bearing in mind our own legal rules and the domestic tradition of law writing.

For us, cooperation between the government and the parliament was extremely important – to prevent the legislative, acting with best intentions but without enough knowledge on the matter, from modifying the laws through parliament procedure, resulting in laws which are not harmonised or which cannot be implemented in accordance with EU regulations. N.R.

THE BIG WORK IS YET TO COME

● What are the most important laws which, according to you, are the priority for harmonisation with EU law in the times to come, in the light of negotiations on stabilisation and association?

Stabilisation and Association Agreement is a classical case of a simple trade agreement with some elements of political cooperation, which is the real beginning of association process and the gateway to continued cooperation with EU, all of which was halted in 1991, when EU gave up on the cooperation agreement with former SFRY.

Stabilisation and Association Agreement will demand very clearly that all current as well as future legislature in Montenegro be harmonised with EU laws, in such a way as to make harmonisation process an international commitment for Montenegro, replacing the currently voluntary phase of harmonisation with a legally binding process. You must realise that this agreement, once ratified and proclaimed, will take its place in the hierarchy of legal regulation just below Constitution.

This agreement will demand that you speed up harmonisation especially in the area of EU internal market and other trade-related areas, but later also in all other segments of the so-called Acquis.

It is important to remember that all achievements in the harmonisation and implementation process will be constantly monitored by common bodies created through this agreement. That means that the real work for state administration and cooperation with EU are yet to begin.

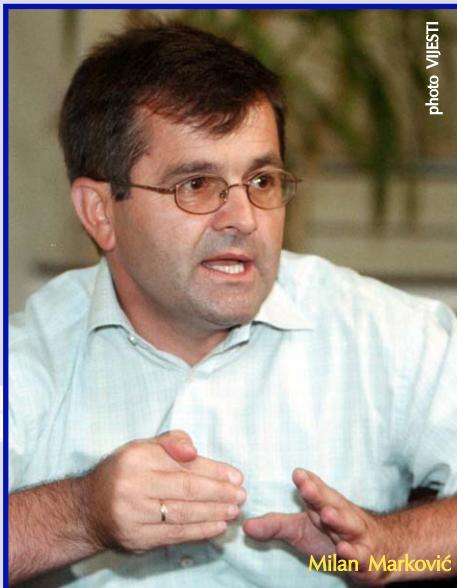
WHY AGRICULTURE HAS THE TOP PRIORITY PLACE IN NEGOTIATIONS ON STABILIZATION AND ASSOCIATION

Domestic food producers deserve to be protected by the state

Buried behind "big" political stories of the day and disregarding warnings that negotiations on Stabilisation and Association Agreement might be blocked because of the lack of cooperation with the Hague tribunal, governmental working groups work day and night from the beginning of the new year to prepare for the second round of negotiations with the European Commission experts, taking place on 22 and 23 February, about matters of vital concern for everyday life.

Maybe on the first glance it may appear unusual for such a small country of coast and mountains, but agriculture is an issue which is given huge amount of attention.

The main goal is to secure the right environment for expansion of Montenegrin agricultural producers which in the last few years made significant progress in the domestic market. For example, until recently Montenegro had no meat industry enterprises, and today there are at least a dozen. This is why Montenegrin team will insist on the maximum protection of home industry



in the negotiations, hoping that in future it will grow strong enough to compete with cheap and quality products of the EU free market.

Milan Marković, deputy minister of agriculture and the Head of the working group for agriculture and fishery, explains that, within Stabilisation and Association

Agreement, which is mainly a trade agreement, agricultural goods are divided into four categories: basic agricultural products, derivatives, fishery and wine.

"Basically, this is a bilateral trade agreement between EU and a third country negotiating trade liberalisation. This is an asymmetrical agreement, because by signing this treaty Montenegro will gain unlimited access to EU 25 common market for all products except for baby beef, wine, certain fish products, and some vegetables. For these products, EU will not remove all taxes, but in the course of negotiations, certain export quotas will be defined, enabling Montenegro to export its goods under privileged conditions, i.e. with significantly lower customs duties. We are offering to liberalise our markets in order to become a part of the European common market, but this cannot be done at once", says Marković.

In the eve of the second round of negotiations, Montenegrin government has sent three documents to European Commission: an overview of the current trade in basic agricultural products, derivatives and fishery.

These documents show that Montenegro has very little export to EU countries, while the import rates are very high. There are also two strategic documents: Strategy for development of agriculture and Draft Strategy for development of fisheries, as well as sector analysis of the production of beef and wine.

"Overall, we ranked our agricultural products in three categories by vulnerability. First category lists resilient products where we can offer full liberalisation and where import taxes are already low – 10% or less, seen that some of these products are not produced in Montenegro. These are, for instance, some categories of live animals, certain

LOGIC VS. LUXURY

All analyses speak in favour of the existence of significant agricultural resources in Montenegro with respect to the population: 0.84 hectares per capita, which is more than any EU country except for Ireland, which has 1.1 hectares.

"We must learn to manage resources we have and to protect one dynamic perspective, demonstrating real development potential. From the Strategy for fisheries document, which was mainly drawn by foreign experts, it is evident that we have significantly unexploited potentials. Strategy for development of agriculture shows wide unexploited resources of agricultural land, and that it would be luxury not to use this limited resource" says Marković. According to him, in today's world it is rare to find a country that so neglects its God given resources because globally, there is a trend of agricultural land depletion parallel with a population growth.

"It is a luxury, for instance, to keep weed-ridden pastures in Bjelopavlići if you can use them to produce any other product in larger amounts where God had given you enough sun, water, and flat land".

meats, some sorts of decorative plants, vegetables and fruit which we import, grain and grain products, components for concentrate animal food, oil, some sweets and a number of articles among vegetable and fruit derivatives", says Marković.

"On the second list, there are products where we expect to gradually lower the import taxes in the next 5 years. We are hoping to close negotiations by the end of 2006, and from 2007 onwards to lower the customs duties for 20% from the current", explains Marković, adding that products which belong to this second category are: beef and pigs for slaughter, poultry, pork, some poultry products, whey, eggs, flowers, most vegetables, fruit and fruit products...

Third list comprises the most sensitive products which we intend to protect as long as possible, liberalising some 50% of the current level of trade in the next 5 years.

These are mainly goats and sheep for slaughter, except for animals for reproduction on which customs duties are zero. "Further, this includes goat meat and lamb, milk and dairy products, vegetables, most fruit – from citrus to continental fruit, olive oil, meat products, mineral water, beer, tobacco and alcohol, except for wine where we are planning separate negotiations. Some of these products are imported, but we have the potential to increase our home

WINE AND VEGETABLES MAIN ASSETS

Looking at the presence of Montenegrin producers in European markets, our main assets at this moment are wine and vegetables, beer, mushrooms, medicinal plants...

"Our wine meets all European standards, we export a lot more than we import, and last year we started exporting vegetables to Slovenia. I think that very soon we will be able to export lamb and meat products to EU. There are still difficulties with certain slaughter-houses which have not yet introduced some very demanding EU standards, but we are working on this issue. We are introducing a new system for labelling animals so that within two years at most we should be able to export meat and meat products", says Marković.

According to the ministry, the first goal should be expanding domestic capacities to achieve maximum substitutions for imported goods.

"In perspective, except for those products listed above, lamb has the potential for becoming very interesting. In order to implement a control system for product quality and safety, we established, with support of EU, two very important laboratories – one for milk, where we introduced parameters very similar to European ones, and another one for veterinary. Through TAIEX project, we are conducting training programmes for inspectors and administration, in order to become familiar with EU standards, and we organised a few seminars for the producers. They have taken it very seriously: "Martex", "Plantaže" and "Aleksandrija" already implemented the HACCP quality system, while "Pirella" and "Goranović" are just about to do it", says Marković.

production. Currently, customs tax on these products ranges between 20 and 30%", emphasises Marković.



As for the fish, our negotiation team plans to propose limited import quotas without customs burden. Everything above this quota will have customs duties added to the price, but they will be gradually lowered.

"What we really need to protect is trout, sea bass and certain fish products such as those produced by the factory in Rijeka Crnojevića", says Marković.

He warned that in these negotiations sound arguments to defend our proposals can be very important.

"We prepared detailed justification for each of these points. It is crucial for us not to remain with present levels, because we are all aware that today we have industry which we didn't have two or five years ago. Five years ago we had no home production of sausages, and today we have "Goranović", "Carine", "Pantomarket", "Martex" ..., and we need to take care of future developments and our potential for expanding domestic resources and products. We have enough arguments to show positive trends, speed of development and our overall potential", says Marković.

N.R.

PARTITIONED PROPERTY THE BIGGEST PROBLEM

The biggest problem will be to persuade our producers to adjust their expectations to reality, because by working a small piece of land or keeping a few milking animals no one can hope to produce enough to sustain a family. Consequently, they are trying to increase gains through raising prices. People must learn to play by the market rules, to continuously improve quality and lower the prices – says Marković. According to him, Montenegro has the advantage of never having had the massive, state-owned corporations, which will help it avoid reform breakdowns. "However, I believe we will have to face the challenge of lowering the profit for our producers per production unit, and that will boost productivity. Our tomato producer, for instance, must be competitive in Macedonia or Belgrade markets. Some regional differences in this respect are merely a matter of nuance. Milk industry is under the same kind of pressure: for the time being, producers are happy with the price of milk, but they must realise that the general trend is to keep lowering the prices. It is up to the state to implement these reforms and to find ways to motivate certain industries in accordance with principles and practice of the EU Common Agricultural Policy", says Marković.



by Ivan Jovetić

History and transition are among the expressions most commonly used in the last few years. And yet, we keep forgetting that transition is a process which is not only happening to us, and that history may be little more than a set of events somebody wrote down. Obviously, historical events have their weight, but only as road signs pointing at some successful or faulty moves of the past: they should not become shackles for the everyday life. This is perhaps the greatest contribution of that European transition process which resulted in the European Union. If the French and the Germans managed to cast away their past rancour after three wars, and, within merely 70 years succeed in initiating economic cooperation and integration, than it should be possible for the people of the Balkans too, without exception. The requirement is to liberate ourselves of the burden of the past crammed with prejudice. This is a condition *sine qua non* for every transition, even the psychological one. It is, however, something that we must manage on our own.

Still, European transition goes on and it won't be waiting for us. This transition concerns civil society, politics, economic, social issues, but also industry and informatics. One of the primary concerns here is what happens to a citizen in this process, today and in the future: what happens to the individual and what the EU has come to represent for ordinary citizens.

We probably believe that, as citizens of the EU, we are bound to gain greater civic, political, individual and economic freedoms. However, this depends on our vantage point and the political concept that we know of. If we compare EU to Zimbabwe, Montenegro, or USA, we may draw completely different conclusions. But is this enough?

It isn't. The point of reference must be the very citizen, as individual. This, again, is a question of the political culture. Despite its bad fame in this country, "politics" is insepa-

Why do I want to be a citizen of Europe?

rable from economics, human rights, citizenship. For the citizens, however, this unity has its limits. Political concept stating that Constitution must protect citizens against their own state is lacking in Europe. European Constitution failed, I believe for all the wrong reasons, but even so it hardly tackled the rights of the individual. According to this text, EU is a union of peoples and states. I believe it should rather be a union of citizens, because what really matters in the everyday life isn't Italy of France but some Laura or Catherine. Maybe some new Constitution will take better care of this issue, because the most serious threat to the rights of people comes from the legal monopoly over the violence which every state possesses. To quote Ayn Rand, the state is the man's fiercest enemy when it is not bound by individual rights. Rights that belong to all of us. There are countless examples to support this claim.

We often hear that the mere accession to the EU is enough for a country to achieve economic expansion. It is as if we have forgotten the other side of the coin. The biggest common market of the world has its own problems. Some of the most successful European economies are struggling with unemployment, low growth rates and huge public spending. And, of course, they can't wait for the cheap labour power from the rest of Europe. You can ask the French and the Polish about it. It is a fast fact that EU from within is a liberal market of great potential and power. It is also evident, however, that today's EU is changing and that in the future we can expect a different paradigm of competition. Even if quantity does not mean quality, you cannot ignore a million-fold growth in competition and its natural implications. Inevitably, it leads to an increase in various forms of cooperation, and a more efficient competition with one's own resources in order to succeed in selling a product or a service. It remains an open question whether the "current" citizens of EU will be forever willing to finance new enlargements bringing ever more competition.

I cannot avoid mentioning the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Some would call it a fantastic policy, and an achievement worthy of praise. Perhaps in the past the existence of CAP appeared necessary, but I consider it to be a mistake. And I am glad that my opinion should be shared by one Michael Moore. I have four reasons to oppose CAP. First of all, state has no right to use citizen's

money to finance one and damage the other (this does not include helping those who really need assistance). Second, CAP is costing the EU citizens doubly: once when they buy a product at a high price, and then again when they pay taxes on it (did you ever wonder how CAP is financed?). Third, EU meddles with preferences of ordinary citizens, dictating their choices or making them more expensive. Finally, because of the "generous" CAP policies guarding the EU standards, poor and developing countries are put at disadvantage, and tons of foods are destroyed daily while millions of people die of famine. When we speak about "rights", do we mean only EU or we still believe rights are universal? CAP is not the only factor which diminishes individual and economic freedoms in the EU.

Brussels "aristocracy" recently announced the possibility of forced tax harmonisation. In the last week, they announced "European" corporative tax. Some European companies are supporting this move, hoping that they'll be able to even their losses in one member state with profit in another. However, if this is achieved through increased tax rates, the road to derogation in public service and restrictions on economic freedoms is just a step away. Another danger would be to federalise Europe so it can become more socialist than it is at the moment. Will EU be able to survive this? To find your answers, you need only compare the rates of employment, growth and the quality of life across the "socialist continent" against those which reign on the "market island". If you're still wondering what all of this has to do with being a European citizen, bear in mind that your everyday life is not governed by Leonardo's and Gaudi's masterpieces and the relaxing of the visa regime, but by policies of taxes and competition, individual rights and mechanisms of protection.

There are surely great advantages in living in the EU, but these "key points" will decide on the future quality of life of its citizens. This is something ponder over, avoiding all glorification and imposing of unilateral solutions. This and how it will affect your own life. This, and who, in the final countdown is the real backbone of a society: state, or individual?

The author is director of the Centre for European Education. He attended II generation of the European Integration School.

DR TANJA MIŠČEVIĆ, PROFESSOR AT THE FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCES IN BELGRADE



Dr Tanja Miščević

Consumers the first big winners

Citizens will feel the effect of the association process with EU only once the customs taxes on goods imported from EU market have been significantly lowered. We hope that first beneficiaries of Stabilisation and Association Agreement will be a consumer, which is the widest social category, says **dr Tanja Miščević**, professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade and director of the European Integration Office of the Serbian government.

"Why do we expect such benefits? Because lowering the customs taxes you allow foreign goods of high quality and lower price to reach your markets, compelling your domestic producers to compete, both in price and quality. This has a direct impact on the consumers. On the other hand, it means forcing domestic producers to become competitive, which, as you may know, is not exactly the case with

industry and entrepreneurs in Serbia and Montenegro right now", explains Miščević, who is also a lecturer at the European Integration School, organised by Centre for Civic Education (CCE), Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CDNGO) and European Movement in Montenegro (EMiM), with support of Foundation Open Society Institute, Representative Office in Montenegro.

Except for this, very important effect of rapprochement with European Union, Miščević emphasises other advantages, which are perhaps not so obvious at the moment, but in the long run they are expected to lead the way to EU accession: harmonisation with EU standards, which will become obligatory through Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA).

"Domestic laws must be harmonised with EU standards, although

in this phase this will only be the case with the rules on the four freedoms – movement of labour, services, capital and goods. Why? So you can compete on that market. The effect of harmonisation will not immediately become obvious, but in the long run this is the basic requirement in applying for EU membership" says Miščević.

Asked why membership in the EU should be the ultimate goal for Serbia and Montenegro, Miščević gives a straight answer:

"Because today there is no alternative model for Serbia and Montenegro to help them achieve what they want, which is a stable, democratic, one or to states, it does not matter, as long as the rule of law is the basic postulate and the protection of human rights a fundamental rule, respecting the leading principle of EU, competition", states dr Tanja Miščević.

WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAST REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS ABOUT SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO?



CoE building in Strasbourg

The way in which Serbia and Montenegro and its member states are going to deal with the question of Montenegro's potential withdrawal from the State Union, the way in which they will contribute to resolving the final status of Kosovo and the way in which they will ensure full cooperation with the Hague tribunal are going to be the real tests of their ability to keep the commitments which they made by becoming members of the Council of Europe. These matters will require monitoring and dialogue in the following months, says the new Council of Europe report on Serbia and Montenegro, adopted by the CoE Committee of Ministers in mid-February.

This report was written by CoE Secretariat after a visit by CoE delegation headed by Mr. Marc Scheuer to Podgorica, Belgrade, and Novi Sad and a series of talks with officials, representatives of the media and of the civil society.

The report emphasises that "proper handling of the Montenegro issue and a constructive contribution to a solution on Kosovo constitute in themselves key commitments, which require great attention in coming months".

"At the end of 2005, Serbia and Montenegro is still a country with an uncertain future, as the procedure for withdrawal from the State Union is likely to be initiated by Montenegro in coming weeks. The way each of the Republic, notably Montenegro, and the State Union will further handle the sensitive issue of independence is of course central in any global assessment of compliance with commitments made when the country joined the Council of Europe" – says this report.

Noting that the State Union Parliament is still perceived as a temporary body, until

Reforms are waiting for referendum and constitution

there is a clear idea on the future of the Union, the report says that "most interlocutors suggest that, should referendum not lead to the independence of Montenegro, the competences and means of the State Union would need major overhaul and strengthening, starting with the creation of a proper budget".

"Linked to the uncertainties concerning the future of the State Union, the failure to reform constitutions in both member States remain one of the most central problems in that context, with repercussions on key issues like the independence of the judiciary, decentralisation and balanced democratic institutions" recommends Council of Europe.

It is estimated that in Montenegro reforms are waiting for a constitutional reforms, and the latter one are pending on the outcome of the referendum on independence.

"The lack of constitutional reform is also considered as an important impediment to a genuine reform and establishment of an independent and impartial judiciary" reads further this document.

As a positive development, they emphasise the long-awaited Law on free access to information, which "has an instrumental role in the fight against corruption".

"Its implementation represents a challenge for the whole society, and should be closely observed in the forthcoming years. Important reforms begin to bear fruits in the fight against organised crime, with special prosecutors and courts achieving concrete results. Structures for a fight against corruption are basically there, but they do not yet bite", says the report.

It also notes that reforms in the field of local governance are showing real will to make progress, although further efforts are still needed to adopt and implement legislation on minority protection.

"More active inclusion of ethnic communities into State structures should be pursued. Efforts to fight against trafficking by criminal prosecution of traffickers, prevention of trafficking and protection of victims

have improved in the past year and trafficking activities have reportedly reduced", says this CoE document.

RTCG IS NOT YET A PUBLIC SERVICE

The Council of Europe standards with respect to conduct of the media in times of election campaigns should be closely followed in Montenegro in the forthcoming months.

The independence of the media and transparency is extremely important. The referendum needs to be organised in an environment of democratic and fair voting with a balanced and impartial media reporting underlines CoE document.

Quoting its interlocutors in Montenegro, CoE notes that there is not much evidence of transparency in the field of media. The package of media legislation adopted in 2002 is in line with the European standards; however, the lack of experience, and especially the lack of knowledge of the code of conduct appears to cause problems.

"The Secretariat delegation was informed both by representatives of Government and civil sector that there is still a lack of media professionalism in the country. The Radio–Television Montenegro (RTCG) has not yet been transformed in a genuine independent public broadcasting service", says this document.

It is also said that, contrasting with the existence of a vibrant civil society in Serbia, a sizable number of attacks, language of hatred and in some cases criminal suits directed against several human rights NGOs, "in Montenegro, representatives of the civil society do not seem to display, at least at a comparable level, the kind of initiative and critical dialogue with authorities".

STABILITY PACT FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE – FROM REGIONAL STABILITY TO PROSPERITY AND INTEGRATION IN EUROPEAN UNION



By: Dragan Stojović

The year 2005 has seen important developments in South-East Europe. Croatia and Turkey started accession negotiations with EU and FYR of Macedonia received a positive avis and was recommended for candidate status by European Commission, which was subsequently endorsed by the European Council. Stability and association agreement negotiations with Albania are well on the track, those with Serbia and Montenegro recently started and there is a prospective of opening the talks with Bosnia and Herzegovina in near future. All this is a clear sign of EU's firm commitment to the region. Moldova signing the Action Plan with EU as a part of the European Neighbourhood Policy is another positive development.

According to the European Bank for Research and Development Transition report for 2005, foreign direct investment in SEE is expected to reach 10 billion Euros – a substantial increase, albeit unevenly spread among the countries.

In political, economic and historical-civilisation sense, the future of South East Europe lies within European Union and every activity that helps expedite the challenging process of EU accession or membership in other international bodies such as NATO or WTO is extremely valuable. Region has been benefiting from considerable external assistance and given the vast needs, better co-ordination can only help make better use of scarce resources.

Mission of democratic values and peace

These are, briefly, the main objectives of the Stability Pact for South East Europe (SP SEE) which was created at Sarajevo Summit in 1999 as first attempt to implement one comprehensive long-term conflict prevention strategy in that part of the Europe. Its mission is primarily focused on strengthening the efforts of the SEE countries in fostering peace, democracy and economic prosperity. It has a permanent secretariat based in Brussels, and its activities are generally structured in three working tables: Human Rights and Democracy, Economic Development and Co-operation and Security Issues.

Stability Pact has more than 40 partner countries and organizations including SEE countries, EU Member States, as well as other countries (USA, Switzerland, Norway, Canada) and numerous international organizations, such as World Bank, UN and its various agencies, World trade organization...

Activities under Working Table II (economic development and co-operation) are divided into three areas: (a) Energy and other Regional Infrastructure (b) Trade and Investment and (c) Social Cohesion, Housing and Urban Management. WT II specific objectives are to facilitate sustainable economic development through modernising infrastructure, particularly energy and transport, as well as trade liberalisation and investment promotion. Main concern is to ensure that both SEE countries and the international community endorse regional approach to economic development, in order to make a full and effective use of the financial resources from both the public and private sector.

Several significant developments have occurred in specific WT II related areas during 2005. Signing the international treaty on Energy Community between EU and SEE countries in Athens on the 25 October represents important

moment regarding integration in EU and other international structures. It is expected that a single Free Trade Agreement announced by SEE Economic Ministers in June will boost trade in the region and complement the more comprehensive approach to investment reforms. Finally, significant progress has also been made in developing the regional institutional framework for cooperation including the South Eastern Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO), the Regional Health Network and Regional capacity building programme for housing.

The next steps and objectives for 2006 are to foster a business climate conducive to investment, trade and employment. Realisation of these priorities is possible through enhancing regional co-operation in policy development and implementation of common development policies, including advantages of free trade zone functioning...

Recent and encouraging progress in most of South Eastern European countries, has increased the political momentum for a reassessment of the role of the Stability Pact in future. The Regional Ownership Process started at the last Regional Table Meeting in May 2005 in Sofia has moved this reassessment ahead significantly. The Regional Table held in November in Prague welcomed the first report of the Senior Review Group as a basis for its discussions on how best to ensure the sustainability of regional co-operation processes launched under the auspices of the SP. A second report with detailed recommendation on the way ahead will be circulated in advance of the next RT meeting to be held in May 2006 in Belgrade.

Author is expert within Working Table II of the SP SEE and Secretary General of the Association of Political Scientists of Montenegro

INTRODUCING THE EU INSTITUTIONS

European Parliament



EP building in Strasbourg

The European Parliament can be described as one of the most important indicators of success of the integration processes within the EU, and perhaps the most obvious element of supra-nationality of this institution. Although assemblies or parliaments are not rare in other European inter-governmental organisations (Council of Europe, OSCE, etc.), their members are appointed by the national parliaments. European Parliament is the only international body whose members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a 5-year period, ever since the first elections in 1979.

Since the last voting in June 2004, European Parliament counts 732 members who represent the entire European population from 25 Member States – over 459 million of citizens of Europe. The number of representatives per country is decided in proportion to its population, limited to a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 99 representatives. President of the Parliament is elected by absolute majority for a mandate of 2.5 years. This position is currently occupied by Mr. Joseph Borrell Fontelles, representative of the Spanish Socialist Party. Parliament holds regular plenary sessions in Strasbourg, and the additional ones in Brussels, while the seat of the Secretariat is in Luxembourg. European Parliament is most similar to the national parliaments in its legislative function. Although it does not have a right to propose legislative acts (this right is reserved solely for the Commission), together with the Council of Ministers of EU it decides on some 3/4 of the common policies, holding the right to veto certain legislative acts or to demand amendments to aforementioned. Parliament also has the last word in deciding on budget. Similarly, even in those areas that are not under its direct jurisdiction, European Parliament has the right to be formally consulted by the Council of Ministers, before the final decision can be made.

However, EP differs from the national parliament structure, first of all because

there is no government–opposition division. Instead, all the members are organised in political groups, not by nationality but by their party affiliation. Currently there are 7 political groups within the parliament, and another group of non-attached members. Group of European Peoples' Parties and European Democrats (EPP–ED) and the Group of European Socialist Parties (PES) are the biggest and most influential, jointly numbering some 2/3 of EP representatives.

Apart from its legislative function, European Parliament has the power of control over other EU institutions. If the past work of the European Commission has earned it the title of the "guardian of the treaties", European Parliament can be dubbed "guardian of democracy" within the EU. Many have blamed the EU for so-called "democratic deficit", assuming that its development up to date has proceeded in fairly elitist manner. Throughout its history, from one treaty to next the power of the European Parliament has been steadily increasing, which is seen as an effort to correct this imbalance. Simply put, while Council of Ministers is charged with defending the interests of the Member States, and the Commission takes care of the interests of EU as a supranational organisation, European Parliament is there to defend the interests and will of the population. Its monitoring function is particularly strong with respect to the Commission. European Parliament plays part in appointing the commissioners, and it has the power to dismiss the Commission. It is also its task to appoint the European Ombudsman.

Another important role of the European Parliament is the strengthening of relations between EU and non-member states. It is customary for candidate countries to send "observers" to the European Parliament prior to their accession. These observers participate in the daily work of the parliament, although they have no formal voting rights. European Parliament has 35 delegations which maintain relationships with other countries. Our country is under the responsibility of Delegation for South-East Europe, which is chaired by Doris Pack from Germany, a member of European Peoples' Party. For more information on European Parliament, please visit.

<http://www.europarl.eu.int>

Vera ŠČEPANOVIĆ

NON – GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN EUROPEAN UNION



The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office is the alliance of European NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks active in the field of peacebuilding, who share an interest in promoting sustainable peacebuilding policies among decision-makers in the EU. EPLO aims to influence the EU so it promotes and implements measures that lead to sustainable peace between states and within states and peoples, and that transform and resolve conflicts non-violently. We want the EU to recognise the crucial connection between peacebuilding, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development world wide and the crucial role NGOs have to play in sustainable EU efforts for peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and crisis management.

The Office advances the interests of its members through common policy positions and consequently advocating for those common positions. EPLO disseminates information and promotes understanding of EU policies of concern to its Members and the wider public, notably through the Conflict Prevention Partnership Newsletter. The Office builds also solidarity and cooperation amongst its members and with other relevant NGO networks. Finally, EPLO raises awareness about the contribution the EU should make to peacebuilding and the need to hold the EU accountable to its own political commitments of helping secure peace within and outside its borders. Currently, EPLO is working on the following issues: increase the awareness, the scope and the effectiveness of civilian contributions to conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding; stress the link between conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development policies; advocate the EU for a special budget on civilian conflict prevention activities; and the implication of gender issues at all stages in peace negotiations, conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction. EPLO is also part of the Conflict Prevention Partnership (www.conflictprevention.net). The Partnership, funded by the EU, provides EU and national policy-makers with timely, focused information and analysis, as well as practical policy recommendations, through the publication and discussion of a series of studies on conflict-related issues.

EPLO web site is: www.eplo.org.
E-mail is info@eplo.org.

Prepared by: Philippe Bartholome
EPLO Policy Officer

Three debates of CDNGO

Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CDNGO) completed its nine months long project "Non-governmental organisations and European Integration", supported by the European Integration Fund, financed by EU through EAR in cooperation with European Movement in Serbia.

In February, CDNGO organised three public debates titled "Managing industrial water in Montenegro – how to reach EU standards"; "Strategy for interaction of state administration and non-governmental organisations" and "Montenegrin administrative capacity for European Integration".

Participants of the first debate were Mr. Siniša Stanković, deputy Minister for Environmental Management of the Montenegrin government, Mr. Veselin Perović, advisor of the general director of Podgorica Water Supply System, Mr. Slavko Hrvačević, member of Managing Board of

Group for Changes and Mr. Zoran Janković, Chief of Directorate for Waters of the Government of Montenegro.

The second subject, "Strategy for interaction of state administration and non-governmental organisations" was discussed by Mr. Dragan Đurić, deputy Minister for Foreign Economic Relations and European Integrations of the Montenegrin government, Mr. Predrag Vulikić, advisor for political systems and internal politics of the Cabinet of the Vice-President of the Republic of Montenegro, Mr. Zlatko Vujović, Executive Director of Centre for Monitoring, Mr. Fadil Mučić, Secretary of Alliance of the Blind of Montenegro, and Mr. Stevo Muk, Executive Director of Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations.

Participants on the debate "Montenegrin administrative capacity for European Integrations" were Mr. Srđan Milić of



the Socialist People's Party, member of the parliamentary Committee for European Integrations, Ms. Svetlana Vuković, Chief of Human Resources Agency, Mr. Nedeljko Rudović, journalist from "Vijesti" and Mr. Momčilo Radulović, Secretary General of European Movement in Montenegro.

Debates were open for participation of all interested non-governmental organisations and citizens. The subjects of these debates form part of the framework that was defined and presented in the Decision of the European Council Partnership for Serbia and Montenegro.

EIS Forum opened



Forum of European Integration School, Organised by Centre for Civic Education, Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations and European Movement in Montenegro, with support of Foundation Open Society Institute, Representative Office in Montenegro, was opened on 23 February 2006 at Political Science Department of the Law Faculty in Podgorica.

This project is a continuation of a unique programme of alternative education in the field of ideas, significance, standards and features of European Integrations, but also of European civilisation and European heritage. The project envisages strengthening of the network of previous participants of the School, through series of activities involving (in)directly participants themselves and encouraging their further personal, professional or institutional activism in the direction of promotion and establishment of European integrations in Montenegro. It is also aiming to enhance links with decision-

makers, both those coming from EU institutions as well as those of other relevant institutions, organisations, or academic circles.

The first guest of this Forum was dr Judy Batt, expert of the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), based in Paris. Her area of expertise are the new EU member states from Central and South Europe and their contribution to the common foreign and security policy, as well as security issues in the Balkans and the role of European Union in this region.

Dr Batt spoke about the current relationship between the countries of the Western Balkans and European Union, comparing the current state of affairs with situation in Central and Eastern Europe on their road to EU. She explained that on both sides there is a notable sense of frustration and impatience to speed up the process, as well as the fear of the so-called "enlargement fatigue" within EU, although looking at the real developments in the region such fears do not prove to be rational.

The biggest problem, according to dr Batt, is that there is pervasive lack of trust on all sides: various social sectors within the states of the region do not trust each other, and the countries themselves trust neither one another nor European Union. In order to proceed with the process of integrations, you must, first of all, create a wide national consensus and secure participation of all social actors in this field, said dr Batt.

EU debate clubs

Within the European Integrations programme, Centre for Monitoring (CEMI) is implementing the project "Get to know European Union". EU debate clubs are organised in the context of the third phase of project implementation, where peer educators are supposed to hold workshops in their home schools, educating another 500 pupils about EU.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Education, 6 high schools were selected to organise these debate clubs: Gymnasium "Slobodan Škerović" in Podgorica, Gymnasium in Cetinje, gymnasium "Tanašije Pejatović" in Pljevlja, high school "30. September" in Rožaje, high school "Ivan Goran Kovačić" in Herceg Novi and high school "Bratstvo i jedinstvo" in Ulcinj.

Directory boards of these schools choose one professor each to chair these EU clubs. The selected professors will take part in a three-day theory and practice training on debate techniques and non-violent communication.

EU clubs will meet once a week and their work will last until the end of the spring semester. All of these six clubs will have identical programmes, and during the summer holidays they will have a final seminar and a debate tournament. Except for the professors selected, these clubs will be supported by peer educators, who participated in the Winter school training in Tivat from 17 to 21 December 2005.

FOR THIS ISSUE WE RECOMMEND:

MASTER IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND REGIONALISM

The programme targets mainly civil servants, lawyers, economists, social scientists and people working for non-governmental organisations; and journalists and teachers.

The first module (in Bolzano) on The Enlarged European Union and Its Regions will explore the development of federalism in the history of European integration and processes of Eastern enlargement as well as on the position of Turkey and the Western Balkans.

The second module delivered by EIPAs Antenna in Luxembourg on European Union Law with the aim of attaining two principal aims: to provide a comprehensive view of the constitutional organisation of the European Union and to introduce fundamental concepts of European Union law. The third module (in Graz) will be on Political Economic Aspects of Regionalism. The fourth module in Barcelona would focus on Regional and Social Cohesion.

The last module (in Bolzano) will deal with the complexities of Cultural Diversity and Minority Protection in Europe, mainly through discussion of the international and interregional protection mechanisms of the European Union, United Nations, OSCE and Council of Europe with leading experts from these organisations.

The application process will start on 1 March 2006, with the deadline for applications for the academic year 2006/ 2007 being 31 May 2006. Applications for participation in individual modules may be lodged until 2 weeks before the module will take place. The first module of the academic year 2006/2007 will



start on 28 August 2006. Further information about the overall programme as well as the application form can be found at:

<http://www.eurac.edu/meir>

and/or by contacting: Peter Goldschmidt, Senior Lecturer, Head of Unit ad interim, European Centre for Judges and Lawyers (EIPA Antenna Luxembourg), Member of Executive Board M.E.I.R.; E-mail: p.goldschmidt@eipa-nl.com

trained in the MA programme will be well equipped to go on to academic research interests centring on Europe or professional career opportunities with a European focus. More information could be found on <http://www.kuleuven.be/maes/>

OLD EUROPE, NEW EUROPE, NON EUROPE SUMMER COURSE, SWEDEN

This is a summer course offered at the Øresund Summer University during the period July 31st – August 17th 2006. The course, "Old Europe, New Europe, Non Europe – Re-shaping the European Union at the beginning of the 21st century", deals with the impact of the entry into the EU of some of the former communist states, as well as with the influence of new neighbourhoods on the politics of the EU. <http://www.summeruniversity.org/sw10937.asp> The course is free of cost and funding for living expenses could be obtained via the Swedish Institute (www.si.se)



"EUROPEAN INTEGRATION" SUMMER SCHOOL NORWAY 2006

June 19 – August 11

The aim of the European Integration Summer School is to provide students with empirical updated knowledge and new analytical models of the economic, political and social integration of Europe. It brings together leading academics from the disciplines of political science, law, economics and cultural studies to reflect on the key theoretical and policy issues arising from the new phase of integration in Europe. Deadline: within 15 April <http://www.hia.no/oksam/europa/english.html>

ICG INTERNSHIP

The International Crisis Group is seeking an intern to work at its Brussels headquarters from the beginning of July 2006 for six months supporting the Research Department

and the Office of the President. The internship would suit a candidate with a recent graduate degree in international relations, conflict studies, government or similar.

If you wish to apply please send your CV and cover letter to Anna Osborne. The deadline for receipt of applications is Friday 12 May. Telephone interviews will take place at the beginning of June.

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index>

ERASMUS MUNDUS MASTER COURSE EUROCULTURE

Open to students who have successfully completed three years of university studies.

The load of the programme is 90 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) points (at Palacky University Olomouc 120 ECTS points) which represents 16 (at Palacky University 20) months of full time study. It is conducted jointly by eight renoun-

ned European universities which provide double degrees (MA in Euroculture).

Several scholarships are available:

1. Erasmus Mundus Scholarships (ERASMUS MUNDUS is The European Community Action programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through co-operation with third countries).
2. for Czech and Palacky University students
3. for students from developing countries or countries undergoing economic or social transformation (the scholarships will cover tuition, basic board and accommodation – 6000 CZK/month)

The deadline for applications is:

- December 31st 2005 for candidates applying for Erasmus Mundus scholarships.
- March 31st 2006 for the other candidates.

Contact: Radmila Slabakova,

e-mail: slabak@ffnw.upol.cz

Website: www.euroculture.upol.cz

SUMMER SCHOOL – EUROPEAN DECISION- MAKING PROCESS, BRUSSELS AND VIENNA

Summer school jointly organised by the Institute for European Studies of the Vrije Universiteit Brussels, the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna and the University of Vienna, Dates: Monday 10 – Saturday 22 July 2006 Website: <http://www.ies.be/summerschool/>

Deadline for registration: 5 May 2006.

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