

# European pulse

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## FOCUS OF THIS ISSUE

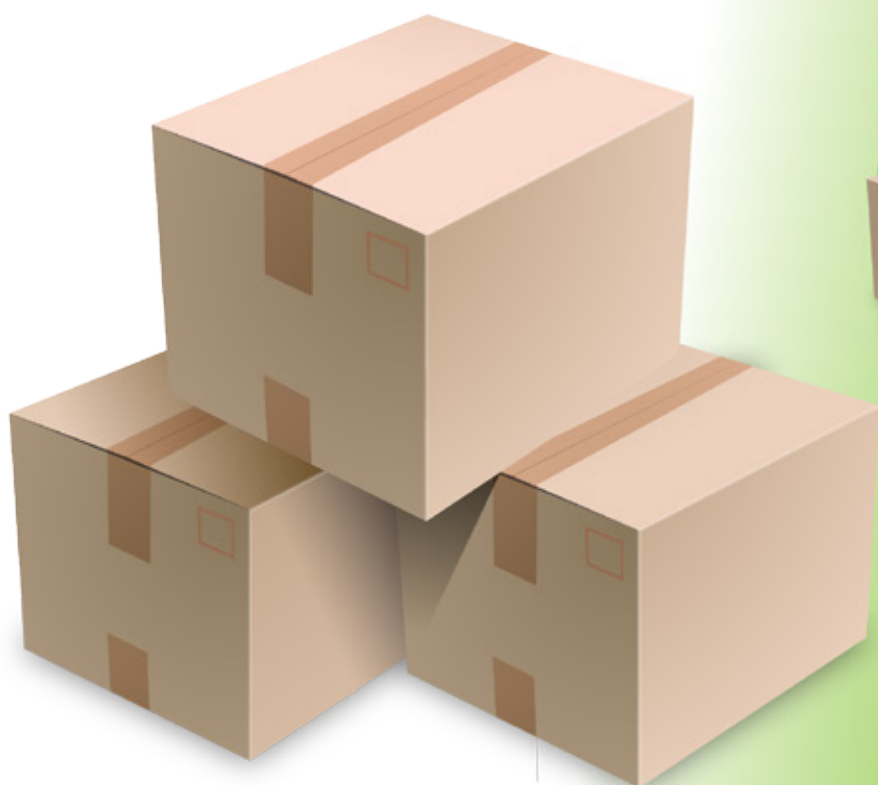
Why Chapter 5  
(Public Procurement) matters

## Interview

Minister of Interior Affairs,  
Raško Konjević

## Region

Whistleblowers  
whistle in vain



Foreword: **Fear**

Vladan Žugić

I have long stopped believing in spontaneous gatherings. I don't even believe that the protests of the citizens of Zenica, Tuzla, Sarajevo etc. are not backed by the interests of those who were just testing the waters or trying to articulate socio-economic dissatisfaction in a state which doesn't even know how many ministers it has – according to the media, the figure varies between 140 to 200. The protests, which in all honesty rather resembled a strike of French dairy farmers than the Arab Spring, protests at the Taksim square in Istanbul or the Ukrainian Maidan nevertheless drew shocking reactions from the Balkan political elites. Milorad Dodik immediately ran to **Aleksandar Vučić**, **Zoran Milanović** had an unannounced speed-visit to Herzegovina, while the now former BiH minister of interior **Fahrudin Radončić** said he didn't want to beat his own people... Montenegrin authorities rallied the loyal media to denounce the part of the non-governmental sector and independent media who asked the perfectly logical question – could the protests spread beyond the borders of BiH Federation? Also, it seems that the protesters' attack on the police in front of the Government building in Podgorica was in fact staged, so that by detaining the “extremists” the government could demonstrate the “strength of the state”. Better safe than sorry! These reactions point to the fears of social upheavals among some of the regional elites, especially those with close connections to the tycoon-criminal networks. When the EU promised the West Balkan states a European future, it did so in order to stabilize a region riven by nationalist divisions. Now, it seems, more than nationalism, the West Balkan states are in throes of another dividing line: between the disappearing middle classes and those living at or below the subsistence minimum on the one side, and the tiny new class of elites on the other. For the time being, the latter are still keeping the former subdued with tales of the end of recession, capital investments, better future... But if it really wants a stable neighbourhood, the EU should pay closer attention to the danger of growing inequality in the Balkans.

## Calendar

- 5 February **Fiile urges Montenegro to pass the Law on political party financing** / European Enlargement Commissioner **Štefan Fiile** urged Montenegro to pass amendments to the Law on political party financing without further delays. During the debate on the Resolution on Montenegro's progress in the European Parliament, Fiile said that the start of negotiations on Chapters 23 and 24 was a result of intensive work on the action plans and that the EC now expects them to be implemented “so that Montenegrin citizens can see and feel the benefits”.
- 5 February **NGO Coalition: Government reports incomprehensible** / The current approach to reporting on AP for Chapter 23 makes it difficult for the public to fully comprehend what has been done and objectively assess the result of the changes, warned the coalition of 16 Montenegrin NGOs which monitors negotiations on Chapter 23.
- 6 February **Lange: Montenegro late on Action Plans** / Representative of Commission's DG Enlargement **Dirk Lange** said the Commission has noted delays in the implementation of the Action Plans for Chapters 23 and 24. Lange said that by June it will be clear whether the plans have been properly implemented.
- 19 February **Support from Athens** / As the country currently presiding over the EU and one of the oldest members of NATO, Greece strongly supports Montenegro on its path to Euro-Atlantic integrations, said the deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece **Evangelos Venizelos** during his visit to Montenegro.
- 18/19 February **Law on party financing adopted, the electoral law still pending** / Opposition MPs, with support of the votes from the smaller coalition partner SDP outvoted DPS representatives and pushed through amendments on the Law on political party financing. Among other, the law restricts public spending and employment during electoral campaign, and gives the power to the State Electoral Commission to file procedural and criminal charges against parties suspected of abusing public resources. However, the Parliament failed to pass amendments to the Law on the election of local and national MPs, which requires two-third majority, due to the opposition from DPS and one minority party.
- 26 February **1400 laws by 2018** / According to an announcement made by the chief Montenegrin negotiator **Aleksandar Andrija Pejović** following the conference “Montenegro and the perspectives of the Western Balkans in EU”, Montenegro will adopt 209 strategies and 1400 legal acts by 2018.

## Time for the Balkans to attract more investments



By: Štefan Füle  
The author is the European  
Enlargement Commissioner

As Europe shows the first signs of emerging from the crisis, this is a key moment for the Western Balkans to seek to attract more investment. I am pleased to present in this context the European Commission's new approach to economic governance, competitiveness and growth for the Western Balkans region.

In last October's Enlargement Strategy Paper, we announced our intention to develop a new approach to the economies of the enlargement region. Today, I officially launch this new approach, which is about building a common understanding between leaders of these countries and potential investors on the priorities for economic reform.

What is the aim of this new approach? We want to continue to support you in meeting the challenges of creating jobs, enhancing competitiveness and boosting growth. Over the past five years, we have faced the same challenges in the European Union. Our efforts to tackle the crisis are bringing results. We have the experience – we want you to benefit from it already.

None of the Western Balkans is a functioning market economy. Unemployment across the region is high. The young are particularly affected. Public deficit and debt levels have been increasing. The external situation is vulnerable in many countries of the region. Competitiveness is often hindered through politicisation of decisions that should be market-driven. These problems should be addressed through a credible reform agenda coupled with ample funds from the private and public sector.

Reforms of public finances and of labour market institutions and reduction of administrative burdens for businesses should be priorities. Investments in education, skills and research also need to be high on the agenda.

The rule of law is particularly relevant in terms of legal certainty and investor confidence and hence, key for economic reform.

Investments will only happen if the countries improve the investment climate and create the conditions for sustainable growth, necessary to create new jobs – including the conditions to help attract foreign direct investment; an environment in which businesses can be competitive and thrive; and the conditions that will reignite the spirit of

domestic entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises.

I encourage all investors to take this opportunity to set out the areas on which you would want governments to focus to make the investment climate in the Western Balkans region more attractive.

Let me outline how we will work with you to achieve these goals.

First, we need macroeconomic, fiscal and financial stability. We already have a dialogue on annual macro-economic and fiscal programmes with all countries except Kosovo. We want to beef up this process and focus it on key structural reforms. We will base our dialogue on National Economic Reform Programmes. The result should be to jointly agree on a set of Country Specific Recommendations to guide reforms. We will, together with the IMF, give technical assistance to support the implementation of these recommendations. Countries will also be asked draw up action plans on public financial management. Progress here will open up the possibility of sector budget support under the new Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II). Second, we need sectoral reforms and investment in targeted sectors, leading to increased exports and more jobs. The Commission will invite countries to give overviews every second year (starting from 2015) of their structural reform plans across sectors of most concern for improved competitiveness and growth, such as transport, energy and education. By setting out clearly the priority reforms for the short- and medium-term in one document, this will be a roadmap for the investors to identify where best to place their funds to get the best returns.

Third, significant funding through IPA II will support this process and the ensuing reforms, in cooperation with countries of the region and the International Financial Institutions, to deliver and finance these reforms.

The future of the West Balkan countries will depend on the ability of their leaders to ensure coordination across all government departments to deliver on the agreed reforms..

*Source: excerpts from the speech at the EBRD conference in London, 24 February 2014*

## Chapter 5 - public procurement: why does it matter?

## Less chance for rigged tenders



By: Svetlana Pešić

Although the beginning of Montenegro's negotiations with EU has been overshadowed by chapters 23 and 24, Chapter 5 – public procurement is bound to eventually attract more attention from the public and from those who are involved in such activities. The reason is simple: public procurement involves big money, and is thus closely related to the two most difficult chapters on the rule of law. As an example, the Public Procurement Authority received 4.423 procurement reports in 2012 from various contracting authorities, with a total value of over EUR 323 million. This is close to 25% of the budget for that year, or 10% of the Montenegrin GDP.

In late December 2013 Montenegro began negotiations on public procurement. In the case of Croatia, the talks on this chapter lasted fairly long, around a year and a half, especially if we remember that at the start of negotiations Croatia's public procurement system, just like the Montenegrin one, was already largely harmonized with the EU acquis. However, the EU was more interested to see how these laws were implemented in practice, how transparent were the public procurement procedures and especially how effective was the system for the protection against irregularities. Moreover, the EU keeps perfecting its internal procurement mechanisms and already in 2012 Croatia had to adopt a new law on public procurement to incorporate these changes.

The reason why the EU member states care so much about this chapter is of a pragmatic nature – they are probably not so concerned about the way candidate countries spend their taxpayers' money, but if Montenegro gives out contracts by circumventing legal procedures, their companies will have little chance to win Montenegrin tenders.

As a reminder, public procurement procedures are mandatory for all bodies which are primarily financed from the public budget – Government, ministries, Parliament, courts, municipal authorities, public companies and institutions. This area is regulated by general principles which are derived from the Treaties

*Public procurement involves big money, and is thus closely related to Chapters 23 and 24 which concern the rule of law. As an example, the Public Procurement Authority received 4.423 procurement reports in 2012 from various contracting authorities, with a total value of over EUR 323 million. This is close to 25% of the budget for that year, or 10% of the Montenegrin GDP.*

and case law of the European Court of Justice, and require transparency, equal treatment, freedom of competition and non-discrimination. All procurement procedures, including those which fall outside the scope of the EU public procurement directives (i.e. procurement whose value is below the threshold specified by the EU, as well as concessions and public-private partnerships) are governed by these principles. Directive 2004/18/EC on so-called "traditional" sectors ("the classics") and Directive 2004/18/EC on water, energy, transport and postal services sectors ("the service sector") specify the terms for awarding contracts for public works, public procurement and public services. Directive 2009/81/EC governs the procedures for public contracts in defence and security. The principle of transparency is especially important. Public procurement procedures must be adequately publicised, the contracting authorities must have annual procurement plans which contain information such as the subject of procurement, projected value of the contract, type of procedure, the projected date... which offers all interested parties a full overview of the procurement needs of any public body.

According to the EU regulation, important information for each contract must be published on the same website. If, for instance, a German company tries to find out what it could sell to the public authorities in France, Finland or Italy, it would run into enormous obstacles due to the wide range and variation of requirements. This is why the EU had developed the CPV (Common procurement vocabulary) which establishes a

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single classification system of unified codes which allows applicants to identify the subject of procurement in any EU member state.

The legal framework which regulates public procurement in Montenegro is based on the Law on the public procurement which came into force

in January 2012. Governments' plan for 2013 envisaged a proposal for amendments on the Law on the public procurement for the last quarter of 2013, but this task has been postponed for the first quarter of 2014. According to the plan, the changes are supposed to affect the business environment – economy and the citizens, as well as the public budget.

The scope of the present Law on public procurement covers all contracts on the procurement of goods, services and public works. Public procurement process in Montenegro is divided into three categories. Contracts of a value at or below EUR 5 000 are subject to direct approval, while the purchasing standards apply to contracts of a value between EUR 5 000 and EUR 25 000. Contracts for supply and maintenance

### Not one conviction for corruption in public procurement



Jovana Marović

Dr **Jovana Marović**, research coordinator in Institute Alternative told *European Pulse* that the Montenegrin legislation on public procurement is mostly in line with the relevant EU laws, with the exception of defence and public services, but that implementation has been “ridden by problems”.

*“These concern, among other, limited capacities of the relevant institutions and insufficient oversight of the implementation of contracts that have already been concluded. The lack of administrative capacities in this area leads to irregularities in the implementation of the law. The EC has also noted the lack of transparency of some procedures, the practice of dividing contracts into several smaller contracts and insufficient reporting, all of which opens up the space for corruption”.*

She added that the progress of negotiations on Chapter 5 will depend on the pace of harmonization of the laws in this area. *“However, the fight against corruption in public procurement, which is part of Chapter 23 (Judiciary and fundamental rights), will be measured by tangible achievements. At the moment there are numerous obstacles to the fight against corruption in this area, which concern legal shortcomings as well as problematic practice”.*

According to Marović, the Law on Public Procurement does not assign legal responsibility to the contracting authorities who submit incorrect or incomplete information about the public procurement process. As a result of this flaw, she points out, the SAI has on several occasions complained about false information submitted by numerous public bodies (e.g. Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Ministry of Health...).

According to her, “the lack of transparency is reflected in the fact that public procurement contracts awarded through direct agreements, which is the least transparent procedure, are not even published on the Public Procurements website. “The fact that so far there has not been a single conviction for corruption in public procurement casts another shadow on the fight against corruption”, Marović said.



which are worth EUR 25 000 or more and contracts for public works of a value above 50 000 may be awarded through several procedures: open tenders, and limited procedures with or without prior publication. They also include framework agreements (which are somewhat different from those specified by the EU directives on classical and service sectors) and special procedures for consulting services.

The screening report for Chapter 5 criticised the deadlines for public procurement, which are shorter than those envisaged by the EU rules. Progress report for 2013 states that Montenegro is yet to align its law with the EU acquis in the domain of concessions and procurement contracts which concern public services and defence. Also, it is necessary to further harmonise the methods of procurement and consulting services, and increase transparency in the publication of concessions and payments. The register of concessions should be more transparent and regularly updated. *“The implementation of the new public procurement law that entered into force in January 2012 remains a concern. The Public Procurement Authority’s responsibilities, e.g. in monitoring and assessing contract implementation and the risk of irregularities, analysing infringements and deviations from good practice, and providing legislative advice, still need to be clarified and strengthened”.*

Primary authorities in charge of overseeing

public procurement are the Ministry of Finance, *Public Procurement Authority*, the Commission for Concessions and the State Commission for the Control of Public Procurement. The Ministry of Finance oversees the legality and legitimacy of administrative acts, and coordinates the management of public procurement policies in Montenegro. Public Procurement Authority is responsible for the implementation of the Law on public procurement, and for monitoring and implementing the Strategy for public procurement.

*“As regards legal remedies, the State Commission for the Control of Public Procurement has consolidated its operations since having been set up in 2012. In 2012, the Commission reviewed 682 cases, 95% of which were completed, and conducted 49 controls on contracts above EUR 500 000. Statistics show that 42% of all appeals submitted to the State Commission for the Control of Public Procurement were upheld and one third of the procurement procedures checked were partially or fully cancelled. However, the high rate of rejection of the Commission’s decisions by the administrative courts is an issue of concern”,* warns the EC 2013 Progress Report on Montenegro.

It is also noted that Montenegro as not yet secured the resources to set up an effective inspection service for contracts lower than EUR 500 000, which points to the lack of capacity to implement EU legal acquis. The report stresses that *“this jeopardises the correct implementation of the law and supervision of contract procedures and the contracts awarded”.*

In November 2012, the State Audit Institution singled out unrealistic planning, non-transparent procedures, excessive use of direct agreements, lack of staff and inadequate reporting as the main problems in the area of public procurement.

The 2013 Progress report and the screening report for Chapter 5 agree that Montenegro has made satisfactory progress, but is still at an early stage with regard to harmonisation with the acquis on utilities, concessions, and defence procurement, and needs to strengthen implementation and enforcement capacity at all levels.

After the accession to EU, oversight of public procurement procedures will be far greater. All procedures will have to be published in the EU's Official Journal. It is also to be expected that the closer we get to EU we will see more involvement of the European firms which are protected by powerful law firms.

In short, the closer we get, the less space there will be for rigged tenders and for reluctance of the entrepreneurs to complain for the fear that they will never again win a tender. As the scope for manipulation disappears, the budget will increase.

For the Montenegrin companies, which are already allowed to compete for public tenders in EU based on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, the question is why they haven't already done so, are there enough employees who are capable of analysing the markets of EU member states and submitting complete applications to the public calls, and what will happen to them once the companies from the EU member states become interested in a share of the Montenegrin market, especially with regard to concessions.

### Competition and correct procedures could save us 30% of costs



Mersad Mujević

Director of the Public Procurement Authority Dr **Mersad Mujević** considers the area of public procurement to be among the most important for the overall process of European integration. *"Public procurement is not only one of the foundations of the EU internal market, but also a foundation of the system of integrity and accountability, which is essential for the consolidation of the rule of law and the functioning of democracy. This is one of the most challenging areas of the accession negotiations"*, Mujević told *European Pulse*.

According to him, public procurement in both EU and Montenegro constitute a sizeable market. According to some estimates, the total value of public procurement is around 15% of GDP. According to Mujević, more competition in public procurement is the key to more efficient public spending. *"Implementation of adequate procurement procedures, together with increased competition, can lower the cost of public procurement by up to 30%. The result would be more efficient spending of the taxpayers' money, economic development, new possibilities and greater competitiveness"*, Mujević said. Talking about the challenges to Montenegro in the course of negotiations about this chapter, he stressed the need for further harmonisation with the Directive on defence, concessions and public-private partnerships.

*"Also, Montenegro will continue to strengthen legal protection in the area of public procurement, ensure better oversight of contract implementation, and especially strengthen the control and activities aimed at the prevention of the conflict of interests in public procurement contracts, thus strengthening the anti-corruption policy. This was also the main task of the project Strengthening the public procurement system in Montenegro 2012/13, together with better alignment of the existing legislation with the EU directive on "sectoral policies". This project, financed by the EU, strengthened the system of electronic publication of calls and tender information, laying down preconditions to complete the system of e-procurement in the near future"*.

He stressed that the new law incorporates the principles of anti-corruption and prevention of the conflict of interests. *"The new regulation stipulates that the contracting authority must take note of such cases, make an official record and report to the relevant authorities. Similar clauses exist with regard to the violation of rules on the avoidance of the conflict of interest which the contracting authority must record and immediately report to the relevant unit of the Procurement authority"*, he explains. Mujević concludes that the Chapter 5 will be *"a measure of the strength of control mechanisms which are essential for a more detailed control of the executive phase of public procurement, simply because this issue falls outside the scope of the Directives on public procurement and thus also outside our own jurisdiction... This problem requires a systemic solution through coordination of several institutions"*.

Minister of Interior Raško Konjević about the fight against high level corruption

## Convictions would send a clear message to everyone

Minister of Interior Affairs **Raško Konjević** told European Pulse that achievements in the fight against high-level corruption, apart from successful repression, could also play a preventive role. Asked when the Montenegrin institutions, including the police, will finally start working seriously on the “big fish” cases – since there has not been a single conviction for high-level corruption so far, as also pointed out by EU – Konjević says that the fight against high-level corruption is a priority for law enforcement bodies.

“For the courts to be able to pass first-instance, and finally the concluding verdicts, it is necessary to secure firm evidence of high-level corruption. This requires cooperation of the Police Directorate with the Ministry of Interior and Prosecution, as part of the prosecutors’ investigation. The police responsibility in this area is clear and the police superiors, as well as the Ministry, expect them to soon yield results in the fight against high-level corruption, which would be beneficial both as means of repressing corruption and as an act of prevention”, Konjević said.

According to him, such results would send a clear message that nobody is untouchable and that everyone is equal before the law regardless of their public position. “Cooperation between the police and the prosecution in the last few months has already yielded some results which are known to the public. We expect more such results in the future”, he announced.

» *The public has high expectations of the announced Law on Special prosecutor for the fight against organised crime, terrorism and corruption, but is sceptical because of the perception, also shared by the European Commission, that Montenegrin institutions are too politicised. What do you expect from the Special prosecutor?*

It is very important to establish a strong and independent system for the fight against corruption and organised crime. The analysis conducted by the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior Affairs revealed the need for a separate Special prosecutor’s office for the fight against corruption and organised

*Implementation of commitments in some areas, such as the external borders and Schengen, will require significant financial resources, which can only be secured with EU’s help.*

crime. The experience of other countries in the region, above all Croatia and Slovenia, also confirms the advantages of this model compared to alternatives. The Law on Special prosecutor is the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice, and my expectation is that Montenegro will step up the fight against corruption and organised crime and achieve visible results in these areas in order to meet the set benchmarks by the end of 2015.

» *Most of the responsibilities from Chapter 24 fall on the Ministry of Interior – the borders, asylum, illegal migration, fight against the trade in narcotics... Which of these are likely to be the most difficult, and which do you think will be relatively easy?*

Government of Montenegro adopted Action Plan for Chapter 24, which consists of 10 areas and clearly stipulates the activities that must be achieved by the Ministry of Interior as well as other bodies in order to strengthen Montenegrin institutions, achieve visible results and adopt values which are present in EU member states.

All measures envisaged by the Action Plan are to be implemented in a timely and quality manner and each of them, the more and the less demanding ones, are equally important for EU integration. Through the implementation of these measures we are building a more responsible society, strengthening our institutions and ensuring that every Montenegrin citizen will feel the benefits of integration. There are challenges in all areas which must be addressed by the Montenegrin institutions. They have been identified, and will be approached, where possible, in cooperation and with assistance of the European partners.

It is important to stress that the implementation of commitments in some areas, such as the external borders and Schengen, will require significant



Raško Konjević

financial resources, which can only be secured with EU's help.

» *What is the state of cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and the Police Authority and EUROPOL? Have you ever had contacts with EUROPOL representatives concerning the report this institution has been asked to complete at the meeting of the Council of EU on 28 June 2012?*

Montenegro signed the Strategic agreement on cooperation with Europol in 2008, and two years later we also signed the Bilateral agreement on the

establishment of a communication line, followed by an actual safe communication line for the exchange of strategic information between Montenegro and Europol. Last year we agreed on a draft Agreement on operative and strategic cooperation between Montenegro and Europol. The Government of Montenegro asked the Interior Minister to sign this act once the accompanying procedural activities between Europol, EC and the Council of EU have been completed.

V. Žugčić

### Soon the agreement on the state border between Montenegro and Kosovo

» *In the coming years, Montenegro has to solve the question of borders and border crossings. It seems this issue is particularly sensitive with regard to the borders between Montenegro and Serbia and Kosovo, because of the difficult relations between these two countries. When and how are you planning to solve this and other issues of inter-state borders?*

With regards to question of borders and border crossings, the Ministry of Interior Affairs has been planning, as a matter of top priority, to sign international agreements on the state border and border crossings with the neighbouring countries, which will contribute to development of good neighbourly relations, stability in the region, and respect for territorial integrity of Montenegro and its neighbouring states.

In November 2009 the Government of Montenegro signed an agreement with the Council of Ministers of Albania on the restoration and maintenance of pyramids, inter-pyramids and other border signs alongside the Montenegrin-Albanian border, as set in the 1926 Border Protocol. In June 2013, we also agreed to sign a Treaty on the state border between Montenegro and Republic of Albania based on the 1926 Protocol.

There are four border crossings between Montenegro and Albania for the international road and rail transport, and we have also agreed to open up new ones.

The Commission for the border between Montenegro and BiH has fully charted the border line between the two countries and agreed on the Treaty on the state border between Montenegro and BiH. This line will be charted on a topographic card, and after completion of internal agreements the two countries will sign the Treaty. There are eight border crossings in the international road, passenger, goods and border transport. Agreements between the Government of Montenegro and the Council of Ministers of BiH on these border crossings have been signed in 2010.

There were no talks with Serbia so far to renew activities on the delineation of borders, charging of the state border and preparation of the Treaty on the State border between Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia. Montenegro and Serbia have six border crossings for international road and rail transport. In September 2011, we reached preliminary agreement on four out of six agreements. We expect the negotiations to continue and the agreements to be signed in the near future.

Delineation of the border between Montenegro and Croatia is the responsibility of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and European Integration. There are two border crossings for international road transport between Croatia and Montenegro. In 2013 we harmonised the text of the Agreement on border crossings, but not the Agreement on transport in the border area. After the latter has been finalized, both agreements will be signed by the Government of Montenegro and the Government of Croatia.

Montenegro and Kosovo are in the midst of intensive negotiations on the agreement on the state border between the two countries. Preparations for the completion of this treaty are in their final stage. There is one border crossing for international road transport between Montenegro and Kosovo. The agreements on the border crossings between Montenegro and Kosovo have been finalized and we expect them to be signed in the near future.

### Lithuanians to keep the ban on land sale



Lithuania will hold a referendum on keeping a ban on land sales to foreigners, a move analysts warned would put it at odds with EU regulations on the free movement of capital.

Lithuania had promised to drop the ban after joining the European Union in 2004 and was given a transitional period to keep it in place until May 2014. But the opinion polls showed two-thirds of Lithuanians still opposed selling land to foreigners. The vote got the go ahead after backers - among them a party led by one of the Baltic state's biggest farmland owners - collected the signatures of more than a tenth of the population. According to *Reuters*, ownership of land is an emotional subject in a country that has suffered a string of occupations through its history.

### Lottery for taxes

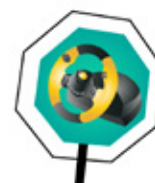


Portugal, which is struggling with its public debt, decided to nudge its taxpayers to participate in fighting undeclared taxes - with a

lottery. From April, the government will give out luxury cars every week as prizes to the citizens who submit fiscal receipts with their personal tax number. The scheme is expected to cost around EUR 10 million. All receipts issued from 1 January onwards can be considered valid lottery tickets, and the draw will be televised. Receipts from cafes, supermarkets or bookings of exotic travel holidays are all eligible, and the amount on the receipt will not be taken into account.

Another incentive is that the government will allow citizens to reduce their due in income taxes by 15% of the total amount of VAT paid in various visits to the hairdressers, car repairmen or restaurants, as long as they can provide the bills. This is meant to combat tax evasion which is fairly widespread in these sectors. However, some experts warn that the government initiative will affect small enterprises, such as corner shops, hairdressers and repairmen, but not the large-scale tax evasion in sectors such as construction.

### Swedes most responsible at the wheel



Spaniards honk, Swedish drivers chat on their cellphones, Italians often forget to fasten their seat belts, and the French are afraid of other drivers, according to a survey on the habits of European drivers, published by the French foundation Vinci Autoroutes. All European drivers agree in one: their rate their own proves behind the wheel better than that of others.

Practically every second respondent (47%) rated Sweden as a country with most responsible drivers, followed by Germany (26%) and UK (13%). On the other hand, overall half of respondents in all the countries said the Italians were the most unsafe ahead of the Spanish (16%) and the French (14%).

Italians were also most likely to rate their countrymen as the worst drivers (71%).

Most of the drivers (86%) admitted to occasionally driving a bit faster than the speed limit, and disrespecting the minimum security distance. However, they also displayed awareness of the dangers caused by irresponsible driving.

### MEPs and elections in Azerbaijan



The European Parliament's ethics committee is set to censure a group of seven lawmakers who are suspected of accepting favors from Azerbaijan during an electoral observation mission. Seven MEPs monitored the elections in Azerbaijan in October 2013 but "forgot" to tell Parliament that they had been invited by the Azeri government and did not declare the trip on their website, as required by the EP's new code of conduct. Moreover, the MEPs reported that the elections were "free and fair", while other external observers, such as those from the OSCE, found serious breaches of freedom of expression and assembly. According to the European Parliament's new code of conduct, adopted last July, any kind of present, invitation to a football game, show or trip must be mentioned on the lawmaker's website if its price exceeds 150 euros. Penalties range from a rebuke to a suspension of Parliamentary activities.

Key findings on the state of the enabling environment for civil society development in Montenegro

## Bad environment for NGOs



Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CDNGO) published its first *Monitoring Report on the Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development in Montenegro*. The report is part of the project “Balkan Civil Society Acquis” funded by the European Union and the Balkan Trust for Democracy. The Report is based on the Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development of the Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) and European Centre for Non-Profit Law (ECNL), and is part of a series of eight reports covering West Balkan countries and Turkey. The Matrix is organized around three areas: 1) Basic Legal Guarantees of Freedoms; 2) Framework for CSOs’ Financial Viability and Sustainability; 3) Government – CSO Relationship, each of them divided into sub-areas.

The principles, standards and indicators have been formulated with consideration of the current state of development, as well as the specific situation of each country. They rely on the internationally guaranteed freedoms and rights and best regulatory practices at the European Union level and in European countries. The matrix aims to define an optimum situation desired for civil society to function and develop effectively and at the same time it aims to set a realistic framework which can be followed and implemented by public authorities. Having in mind that the main challenges lies in implementation, the indicators

are defined to monitor the situation on level of legal framework and practical application.

The report therefore involved a detailed analysis of the legal and strategic documents relevant to the functioning of civil society organisations in Montenegro, as well as a survey conducted by CDNGO among 35 non-governmental organisations and 6 public bodies.

### Key findings of the Report:

- » Montenegro has a fairly well developed legislative, strategic and institutional framework for the functioning of civil society organisations, most of which is in line with international standards. Strategy for the development of NGOs and Strategy for cooperation of Government of Montenegro and NGOs have been adopted.
- » Montenegro is the only candidate for EU membership which formally involved civil society representatives in the work of the working groups for the preparation of membership negotiations.
- » Nevertheless, the implementation of certain pieces of legislation, which are key to the functioning of NGOs, as well as the cooperation between the Government and the civil society, is still completely absent in some areas and insufficient or inefficient in others.
- » Since 2011 and the adoption of the Law on NGOs, other legal acts have not been aligned with it, especially with regard to financing.
- » The Decree on procedure for achieving cooperation between state bodies and NGOs has been adopted, but only 6 out of 30 state bodies announced call for CSO representatives to participate in working groups formed by state authorities, which is one of the issues regulated by the Decree.
- » The Decree of the procedure method of a public discussion in preparing laws has been adopted. Monitoring of the implementation of the Decree showed that only 3 out of 16 ministries published on-line list of laws on whose content will be held public discussion.

- » CSOs are not recognized in practice as entities that could take over the provision of certain services for the government, such as research etc., although many of these organisations have many years of experience in providing highly professional services, such as support for women and children victims of violence, services for children with difficulties in development, offering free legal aid etc.
- » Several organizations reported unannounced visits and inspections by the labour inspection or police as part of prosecution investigation, which were based on anonymous, unsubstantiated and unclear reports. These procedures remained open for months on, as a form of pressure on the work of these organisations. One organization, which deals with highly sensitive issues for our society, had to face unfounded prolongation of the registration procedures. Also, a number of organisations reported pressure because of their critical attitude, whereby they became target of biased reporting and slanderous pieces in the media, which were clearly supported by the state.

### As regards financing, the Report concludes:

- » State financing for civil society organisations is characterised by repeated violations of the legal procedures by the Ministry of Finance, as well as failure to fulfill obligations stipulated by Law.
- » Public financial support to the projects of civil society organisations in Montenegro is insufficient, and proportionally lower than in any other country of the region. Not only the amount, but also the system of distribution of the funds must be regulated in a way that would guarantee a quality procedure.
- » According to the Law on NGOs, distribution of public funds to NGOs is the responsibility of the specially formed Commission. However, two years after the Law had been adopted, the legal preconditions for the establishment of the Commission have not been met. Consequently, distribution of public funds to NGOs takes place in a way which is contrary to the Law.
- » The funding of CSOs at the local level is characterized by under clearly defined terms for a public announcement and the lack of



clear criteria. Some local governments, due to the budget deficit, do not distribute funds to CSOs, regardless of the adopted budget decision.

- » State support to CSO projects decreased by 50% in two years.

It is therefore clear that Montenegro does not yet have an enabling environment for civil society development. So far, legal and institutional framework has been developed, but its results in practice are far from satisfactory. More work is needed to ensure that the existing framework provides the right results, but also, and equally importantly, for the decision makers to accept the civil society as a necessary corrective factor of the social life.

The report is available online, in English and Montenegrin and can be downloaded from the CDNGO website [www.crnvo.me](http://www.crnvo.me)

## Chapter 14 – Transport policy



By: Eliška Veselá

Chapter 14 covers all forms of transport - road transport, railways, inland waterways, intermodal transport, air and maritime transport, as well as the European Union goals of integrating different transport sectors. The objectives of the EU transport policy is to enable rational transport of goods and passengers across the EU and internationally, to improve the functioning of the internal market and promote safe, efficient and environmentally sound and user-friendly transport services.

Implementation of the EU acquis in this area leads to development of an effective transport system which offers a sustainable solution to mobility, protects the environment and ensures safety of the EU citizens. Much of the acquis in this area consists of regulations and decisions. Consequently, their direct enforcement must be ensured from the day of accession. The other part of the acquis, however, consists of directives which need to be transposed into the legal system of the acceding country

within reasonable time. It relates to technical and safety standards, social standards, state aid control and market liberalisation in the context of the internal transport market.

European Commission Progress Report on Montenegro notes that good progress as achieved on road transport with the adoption of the new law for this area. The road fees for foreign-registered cars and the eco-tax were repealed, in compliance with EU recommendations. In December 2011, Montenegro adopted the action plan for implementing the road safety strategy, and in June 2012 the Law on road traffic safety. However, further alignment is needed with regard to the transport of dangerous goods. Legislation on driving time, rest periods of drivers and the use of tachographs is in line with the EU legal and social acquis. The report also notes that the capacities, equipment and staffing of inspection services for road transport remain underdeveloped. Another problem is the fact that Montenegro is generally left out of the international strategies, especially the trans-European network, which does not include a single kilometer of Montenegrin roads. The road network is generally underdeveloped, and the quality of existing roads is far below European standards.

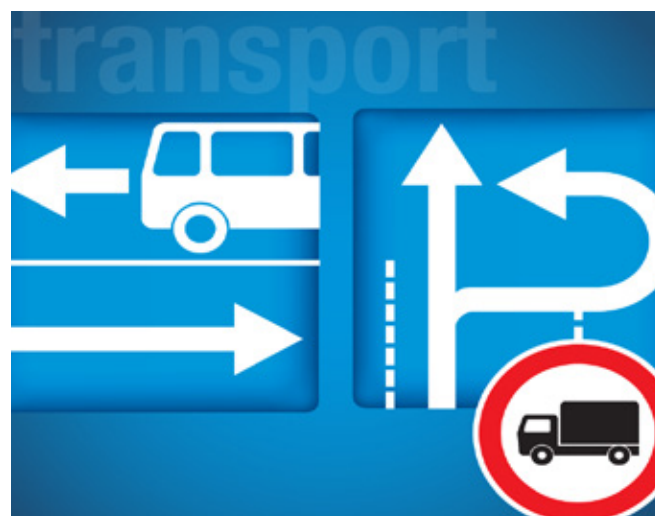
The railway acquis focuses on liberalisation and access to the infrastructure, as well as the technical and safety requirements. Montenegro will have to make significant efforts in this area in order to align its legislation with EU acquis. The rules on the rights and duties of passengers have been introduced into the railway transport through the Law on Railway Transport Contracts. Still, the rules on rail transport safety must be further improved, as this form of transport suffers from the low quality of infrastructure, underutilization, and the lack of competitiveness and cooperation with regional transportation networks, which are essential to its future sustainability. For many years there have been no major investments in the railway network. The Belgrade-Bar line,



which is of key strategic importance for the economy of the region, has not been upgraded for decades. Improvements are also needed in the area of administrative capacities. According to the Progress Report, the Railway Directorate is still not fully operational, and its administrative capacities need strengthening. Its responsibilities should also be expanded to include the collection of fines and the ability to request any information from railway companies. The EU will also require establishment of independent bodies for road safety and investigations of traffic accidents.

Although air transport is less pervasive in Montenegro than in most EU member states, it should nevertheless be aligned with EU rules. Montenegro made some progress in this area by signing the Agreement on the European Common Air Area (ECAA). Nevertheless, there remains a series of requirements to fulfil, such as the implementation of the system of airport safety management and adoption of the Law on Air Transport. Another issue is the institution of an accident investigation body, its independence, and generally the need to strengthen administrative capacities in air transport. Further measures are needed to fulfil requirements with regard to the environment, protection of passengers and safety in air transport. EU transport policy also covers issues such as the working time, flight and rest times and other measures to improve the health and safety of the air staff, all of which had been successfully incorporated into Montenegrin legislation. The directive on groundhalting of aircrafts was also transposed, but its implementation needs to be improved. There is still no assessment of airport capacity, and the Montenegrin airports are not yet fully ready to handle more intensive inter-European and inter-continental traffic. Moreover, it is necessary to equalise airport tax treatment of domestic and foreign companies in order to avoid discrimination.

The goal of EU's policy in maritime transport is to guarantee market access in all EU member states and to ensure a minimum of common technical and social standards, including maritime safety and security. All barriers to access to international



line shipping between Montenegro and foreign ports must be abolished. Although maritime transport was one of the pillars of Montenegro's economic development in the last century, at the moment there is hardly any transport activity in Montenegrin seas, as a consequence of the general economic decline of the country. Montenegrin ports do not meet strict and expensive international requirements, and their capacities remain underutilized. The most glaring example is the Bar Port, which has long lost the race with other harbours in the region. Underutilization of the harbor entail underutilization of road and rail networks as well. The depth of the Bar Port is also below European standards, and the port is incapable of hosting larger cargo and passenger vessels, including cruisers. Search and rescue services are also underdeveloped, and the working conditions of the sailors are yet to be harmonized with EU directives. Maritime safety is extensively regulated, and includes provisions ranging from the safety of ships to standards of vessel inspection and monitoring, inspector training, monitoring of cargo, requirements for staff (medical certificates, working time and rest periods etc.). Some progress was made in the area of waste management, with the adoption of the new Law on the prevention of pollution from vessels in April 2011. Nevertheless, more attention is needed to the safety of the marine areas.

According to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the acquis in the area of transport



Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between Montenegro and EU stipulates that the cooperation “may notably aim at restructuring and modernising the Montenegrin transport modes, improving the free movement of passengers and goods, enhancing the access to the transport market and facilities, including ports and airports. The objective of the cooperation should be to achieve operating standards comparable to those in the Community as well as to develop a transport system in Montenegro compatible and aligned with the Community system and improving protection of the environment in transport”. According to the SAA, Montenegro should ensure progressive harmonization of the transport legislation of Montenegro with that of the Community, and the effective application of the principle of non-discrimination. This means refraining from all restrictions or discriminatory measures and abolishing the existing administrative and technical obstacles.

policy should be focused primarily on regulating international transport in each member state, business conditions for non-resident enterprises, transport services in other member states and measures for the improvement of transport safety. In this way, the EU aims to harmonise conditions across the internal market in order to achieve a unified transport system in the whole Union.

Harmonization of transportation systems in EU member states stimulates economic growth in each of these countries, and in the EU as a whole. Implementation of the EU criteria in this field will require changes which are likely to pose great challenges to the country. Eventually, however, the result will be a transport system supportive of economic, social, and environmental needs of the society.

- » *The total value of consumption of EU households is estimated at around EUR 750 bn per year, 15% of which is spent on transport*
- » *Montenegrin railways belong to the category of extremely slow railways. More than 50% of the network cannot support train speeds greater than 50 km/h.*
- » *Transport today accounts for about 10% of EU output and employs more than 10 million people. Its importance is increasing by the day, in view of the steep increases in the volume of earnings.*
- » *EU has 4.5 million kilometres of roads, 202 500 km of railways and 41 00 km of inland waterways.*

European Commission publishes the long-awaited report on the corruption in 28 EU member states

## The most corrupted politicians, and the the least corrupted prosecutors

In early February, the Commission published its much awaited anti-corruption report covering the overall situation in the 28-country bloc. The EU executive said that its rather modest ambition was to launch a debate on the corruption and identify ways in which the EU could help fight the scourge. On the other hand, the Home Affairs Commissioner **Cecilia Malmström** called the scope of corruption in EU “breathtaking” and warned that corruption costs the EU economy an estimated €120 billion per year – practically the total value of its annual budget. “We are simply not doing enough,” she said. “That is true for all member states. Existing laws and policies are not enforced enough, and a firm political commitment to root out corruption still seems to be missing.” The anti-corruption package has been in the pipeline since June 2011, when the DG Home Affairs announced the establishment of an EU anti-corruption reporting mechanism. The report contains detailed analyses of the institutional and legal framework in all member states, existing anti-corruption strategies, assessment of how they work in practice and suggestions for how each EU country could step up the fight against corruption. “The Report will hopefully provide everyone – politicians, the public, media and practitioners – with a useful tool for taking national corruption policy forward,” Malmström said.

According to the Eurobarometer survey which forms part of the Commission report, a vast majority (76%) of Europeans think that corruption is widespread in their own country. The most corrupt, according to a Europe-wide consensus, are politicians. Close to sixty percent of respondents believe that the abuse of positions of power for personal gain is widespread within political parties (59%) and among politicians at national, regional or local level (56%). More than four in ten think corruption is widespread among officials awarding public tenders (45%) and those issuing building permits (43%). Just under two-fifths of Europeans believe that there is widespread corruption among private companies (38%) and more than one in three think it widespread within

*The EU Home Affairs Commissioner Cecilia Malmström called the scope of corruption in EU “breathtaking” and warned that corruption costs the EU economy an estimated €120 billion per year*

the police or customs (36%), banks and financial institutions (36%) and inspectors (35%). The least corrupt, according to Europeans, are public prosecutors (19%), social security and welfare authorities (18%) and the education sector (16%). On the other hand, only a small minority (5%) believe that widespread corrupt activity does not exist in any of these areas.

Also, more than half of Europeans (56%) think the level of corruption in their country has increased over the past three years, an apparent indication that the eurozone crisis has impacted negatively on the fight against corruption.

### Too much diplomacy?

The report shows the state of play in the member states in terms of legislation, institutional framework, and problematic areas for each individual country. It also points to some of the “good practices”, such as the new Finnish legal framework for party financing, or the recent successes of the Slovenian, Romanian, Croatian and Latvian anti-corruption agencies.

However, the Commission refused to provide any general ranking of corruption levels in different EU countries, insisting that in each member state there was scope for improvement. Commissioner Malmström was also careful not to speak of dividing lines and of major divisions between North and South, acknowledging only that Bulgaria and Romania were special cases, which required continued monitoring.

The Commission was also careful in the report not to mention countries by name. Sources told EurActiv that EU countries had rejected the option of “naming and shaming”, and this had been the main reason for the delay of the report’s publication by a few months. The paper now only

says that “in some member countries”, vulnerability to corruption in public procurement processes is the main problem, while “in others” political party financing is not transparent enough. Widespread corruption at the level of local authorities is another example, with “many healthcare patients” having to “pay under the table to receive proper medical care”. “In one Member State, numerous cases of alleged illegal party funding at central or regional level were also linked to organised crime groups”, the report says, without mentioning Italy.

The report also shies away from naming individuals or parties. The report cites “investigations involving a former treasurer of a political party” in Spain. The prime minister of Spain, **Mariano Rajoy**, last year became embroiled in a corruption scandal, saying that he made a mistake in trusting the former treasurer of his Popular Party, **Luis Bárcenas**.

Spain also witnessed another corruption scandal

*In the part of the report that details specific examples of corruption, countries are not mentioned by name. Sources told EurActiv that EU members had rejected the option of “naming and shaming”, and this had been the main reason for the delay of the report’s publication by several months.*

involving Princess **Cristina**, the youngest daughter of Spain’s King **Juan Carlos**.

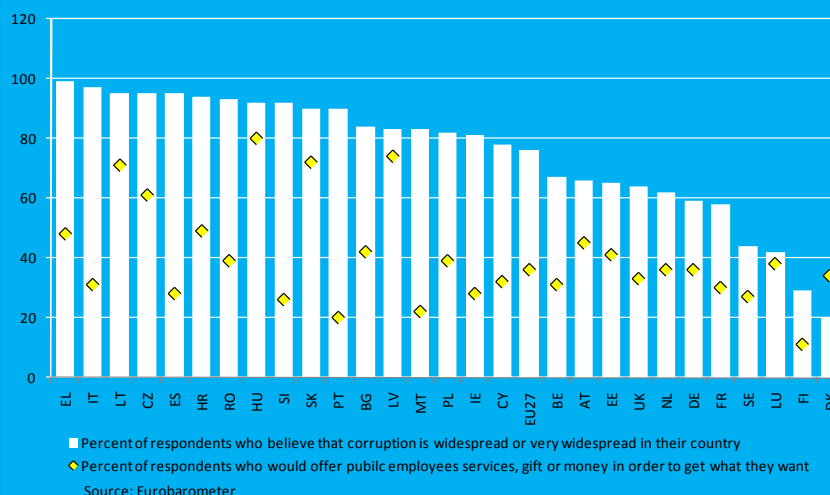
Malmström said that the idea had been discussed to conduct a corruption investigation into the EU institutions but that it was decided that the EU executive could not do this independently.

Source: EurActiv

### A third of Europeans think bribing is acceptable

According to the Eurobarometer study which accompanied the Commission report, three quarters of Europeans think that corruption is widespread in their own country. This opinion is particularly present in Greece (99%), Italy (97%), Lithuania, Spain and the Czech Republic (all 95%), Croatia (94%), Romania (93%), Slovenia (91%), Portugal and Slovakia (both 90%). The Nordic countries are the only Member States where the majority think corruption is rare – Denmark (75%), Finland (64%) and Sweden (54%).

On the other hand, a third of EU citizens seem to believe that some form of bribery can be tolerated. Across the EU 36% of the respondents think it is at least sometimes acceptable to do favours to public officials, or offer gifts or money in order to receive something they want. The highest level of tolerance to corruption is found in Hungary (80%), followed by Lithuania (74%), Slovakia (72%), Latvia (71%) and the Czech Republic (61%). Countries where the citizens find it least acceptable to offer services or bribes to public employees are Finland (11%), Portugal (20%) and Malta (26%).



Whistleblowers in the region rarely report corruption in the public sector as they receive too little protection from the state

## Why whistle if the police and the prosecution don't want to hear you



Lack of support and protection from authorities are the main reasons that whistleblowers do not come forward to report crime and corruption in public institutions, according to employees in the region.

**Jasmina Jovev**, the former head of Sisak County Prefect **Marina Lovrić - Merzel's** cabinet, told Croatia state television on February 2nd that Lovrić - Merzel ordered her to issue false bills and that the prefect used county funds for personal and party purposes. Lovrić - Merzel fired Jovev a year ago. Prime Minister **Zoran Milanović** said the facts in this case should be established to see who was at fault - Lovrić - Merzel or Jovev. "I talked to Merzel. Someone is in serious trouble there, either Lovrić- Merzel or the person accusing her. The accusations are about the county head pillaging the county budget," Milanović said at a press conference.

**Vesna Balenović**, the founder of the Whistleblower's Association in Zagreb, is leading a similar battle after reporting corruption in state oil company INA in 2001. After Balenović reported the alleged corruption, which was supposedly worth 100 million euros, to police, she was immediately

*Whistleblowers in Croatia are completely unprotected. There are about 200 whistleblowers who anonymously and regularly report corruption to our association, but they fear speaking publicly, says Vesna Balenović, the founder of the Whistleblower's Association in Zagreb*

fired. So far, more than 10 lawsuits by high-ranking officials and INA administrators have been filed against her. "For this 11 years I lost my health, I suffered countless threats and blackmails. Unfortunately, I fear that the same will happen to Jasmina. Whistleblowers in Croatia are completely unprotected. There are about 200 whistleblowers who anonymously and regularly report corruption to our association, but they fear speaking publicly," Balenović told *SETimes*.

Experts said the state should adopt legislation to protect whistleblowers. "I think it's been attempted in the past, but the law has never entered into force because it was always proposed by the opposition parties. Therefore, we can conclude that there is no political will for such a law," **Davor Đenero**, a professor at Zagreb's Faculty of Political Sciences, told *SETimes*.

*In December, the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) state assembly adopted a law on protection for whistleblowers, the first of its kind in the region*

In December, the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) state assembly adopted a law on protection for whistleblowers, the first of its kind in the region. The legislation went into effect on January 1st.

The law provides a special status for whistleblowers, which protects them against



*Two years ago, the European Commission adopted its own guidelines for whistleblowing in order to encourage staff to report cases of corruption. EU officials said the guidelines reassured employees that the Commission will give them advice and protection.*

dismissal and other harmful effects from the institution they report on. The law also stipulates that the institution must turn over all documentation on the whistleblower to investigation agencies. "The essence of the law is that the government now protects whistleblowers from revenge or retaliation from the reported person or institution. This law also serves as a stimulus to persons who work in government institutions to report corruption or other irregularities if they know about it. This is just another in a series of important measures that the government is taking to deal with corruption," **Šefik Džaferović**, an MP in the BiH parliament, told *SETimes*.

Two years ago, the European Commission adopted its own guidelines for whistleblowing in order to encourage staff to report cases of corruption. EU officials said the guidelines reassured employees that the Commission will give them advice and protection.

"The very first sentence of our guidelines make clear: 'Having procedures for raising concerns about fraud, corruption or other serious wrongdoing is relevant for all responsible organisations and for the people who work

there.' I would not single out candidate countries as especially in need of such rules, it is important for everyone to have such rules," says **Antonio Gravili**, the spokesman for the EC Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration.

He stressed that it is important for all organisations to encourage legitimate whistleblowing and protect legitimate whistleblowers. Each organisation should take responsibility for this, rather than relying on the state. "The Commission goes even further. Whistleblowing isn't just a possibility, it is an obligation. As the guidelines make clear, 'Members of staff have a duty to report serious irregularities'," Gravili said.

Citizens said they are encouraged when someone comes out publicly with information about corruption. "I would definitely report corruption if I worked at a public institution. In my opinion, the most important thing is that the public is on your side. Then you cannot lose. This fight is definitely not easy, but in the end it is worth it. All will be seeing you as a hero," **Stevan Vukčević**, an electrical engineer from Podgorica, told *SETimes*.

*Source: SETimes.com*

## Inter-generational learning for European active citizenship

On 25 February in Podgorica Centre for Civic Education (CCE) organised a national seminar *Inter-generational learning for European active citizenship*, which brought together over 50 university and high-school students, and members of the pensioners' and veteran associations. The seminar was opened by **Mirela Rebronja**, CCE programme coordinator, who presented the overall project on inter-generational learning. The goal of the project is to offer a chance to the youngest and oldest citizens (aged under 30 and over 65) to come together in seminars, debates and workshops and analyse the reasons for European integration, discuss the impact of European Union policies on the everyday lives of the citizens and start inter-generational dialogue on the importance of European values, stressing the importance of knowledge for active participation in EU's democratic processes. The introduction was followed by a presentation titled *"Active citizenship knows no borders"*. **Vladimir Vučković**, CCE programme associate, presented on the topic "United Europe – history and development of European Union" – from the idea that spurred on supranational integration, through different waves of enlargement, to the challenges of development inside the EU, reforms of its institutional structures and experiences from the region, with a particular focus on Croatia, which joined the EU in the latest (sixth) wave. **Boris Marić**, senior legal advisor and member of the Working Group for the preparation of negotiations on Chapter 23, spoke about "Montenegro's European Road – Montenegro since the dissolution of SFR Yugoslavia until today". His lecture focused on the recent Montenegrin history, highlighting four key moments: the anti-bureaucratic revolution, assault on Dubrovnik, referendum in 1992 and in 2006, and the chronology of events from the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) in 2007 to 18 December 2013 and the official start of negotiations on five chapters between Montenegro and EU. Following these presentations, the participants engaged in a lively discussion on the topic "Life between two systems – SFRY and European Union through the stories of our citizens". The project Inter-generational learning for European active citizenship is simultaneously implemented in Italy, France, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Sweden and Montenegro, with support of the programme "Europe for citizens". Montenegro signed a Memorandum on participation in the programme with the European Commission on 24 October 2012, and this is one of the first projects within the programme to be implemented in Montenegro. The project is organised by CCE with its partners from five EU member states.



## Coalition STEP for LGBT rights

On 14 February, in Prishtina, Coalition for Equality STEP organised a conference titled *"LGBT rights in the region"*, as part of the regional project *Civil Society Networking on Critical Human Rights Values in Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo*. The conference brought together some 40 representatives of civil society and institutions from all three countries in order to form a regional LGBT network that would monitor the state of rights of LGBT persons, and facilitate regional networking and cooperation for the purpose of common undertakings and projects focused on improving the rights and status of sexual minorities. CCE was represented at the conference by the CCE programme associate **Tamara Milaš** and programme coordinator **Petar Đukanović**, who also spoke at the panel "European Integration and Rights of LGBT persons".

STEP is a coalition of non-governmental organisations from Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, organised with the aim of fighting discrimination on the regional level. STEP's members are: Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights – YUCOM, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, CHRIS network and Gay Straight Alliance from Serbia; Centre for Civic Education (CCE) and LGBT Forum Progress from Montenegro; and Humanitarian Law Centre and Youth Initiative for Human Rights from Kosovo.

## Ready for Europe!

As part of the project “Ready for Europe!” on 5 February Radio Television Montenegro (RTCG), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations, Ministry of Education, Centre for Civic Education (CCE) and Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CDNGO) signed a Memorandum of Cooperation which details the terms of their cooperation on this project. The goal of “Ready for Europe!” is to intensify communication of European integration to Montenegrin citizens, raise awareness, and offer information and education on European integration to high-school students in 21 municipalities of Montenegro.



The project “Ready for Europe!” envisages visits and workshops to high-schools across Montenegro, promotion of important elements of the process of European integration, television shows on RTCG with the aim of educating the viewers about the process of European integration in Montenegro, EU institutions, European culture and other interesting issues from EU. The project will bring together the best and most informed students, selected on the basis of tests that will be administered in all schools. Every school will then send three representatives to the quiz competition at RTCG.

In the course of February, representatives of RTCG, CCE and CDNGO visited high schools in nearly all Montenegrin municipalities to introduce the project directly to the teachers and students, and explain the details of the competition, which is the first of its kind in Montenegro..



The project “ready for Europe” is supported by EU Delegation to Montenegro, and implemented by the Public Service RTCG in cooperation with the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) and Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CDNGO)..

## Public procurement in Montenegrin municipalities

The study “Public Procurement in Montenegrin municipalities” was presented at a press conference in the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) on 18 February. The speakers were **Nikola Djonović** (CCE), coordinator of the project “Corruption at the local level – zero tolerance”, **Marko Sošić**, public policy researcher (Institute Alternative) and , research coordinator (Institute Alternative) and **Jovana Marović**, one of the authors of the study.

The study was prepared as part of the project “Corruption at the local level – zero tolerance!”, which is implemented by Centre for Civic Education (CCE) in cooperation with NGO Institute Alternative (IA) from Podgorica, NGO Bonum from Pljevlja and NGO Nada from Herzeg Novi. It is supported by the European Union IPA 2011 fund via the EU Delegation to Montenegro, and co-financed by the Royal Embassy of Norway.

## UN Summer School in Tarrytown, New York

The conviction that youth are a driving force for positive social change is the basis for the UNAOC-EF (United Nations Alliance of Civilizations – Education First) Summer School. This week-long summer school brings together 75 youth from across the globe, to address pressing global challenges, within the context of cultural and religious diversity. The highly interactive program will immerse participants in the essentials of global citizenship.

The UNAOC-EF Summer School will be held on EF's historic American campus in Tarrytown, New York, from 16 - 23 August 2014. Participants will be hosted on the center's 25-acre campus, which boasts on site residences, student lounges, a fitness center and swimming pool. One highlight of this year's Summer School will be a guided tour of the United Nations headquarters in New York City, where participants will explore a variety of exhibits detailing the history of the UN and learn about how the UN addresses issues such as disarmament, peace and security.

Eligibility criteria:

- » be between the ages of 18 and 35 years old on 16 August 2014 — the start of the UNAOC – EF Summer School;
- » be linked to an organization or a network (e.g. youth council, youth NGO, not-profit organization, youth-led organization, community organization, faith-based organization, youth network or platform, college, university), or be a social entrepreneur, blogger, intern or volunteer;
- » hold a passport valid until at least March 2015 (for a visa to be issued, a passport needs to be valid for at least 6 months after the expected date of entry into the country);
- » possess upper-intermediate English proficiency.

The selection of the 75 participants will be based on responses to essay questions regarding motivation as well as past and future involvement in issues to be tackled during the Summer School. In addition, the organizers will take a look at your professional and/or educational and/or volunteering background to see how it is positioning you in a way that would help you disseminate what you will learn. Also, the applicants' level of English proficiency will play a role in the selection process. Lastly, balance in terms of region and gender will be respected in the final selection.

Deadline: 22 April 2014 at 23:59 New York City local time.

Read more at official web site : <http://www.unaocefsummerschool.org/>

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