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What does the Horizon 2020 mean for the scientific community in Montenegro?

Interview

Member of the Committee for European Integration and PCSP, Dritan Abazović

Region

Who will lead the EU in the next five years



Foreword:

Juncker



Vladan Žugić

There will be no new EU enlargement in the next five years.

This is what the new president of the European Commission, **Jean-Claude Juncker** told the MEPs in his inaugural speech. Last year, Juncker withdrew from the position of the Prime Minister of Luxembourg after 18 years, following accusations of mismanagement of country's secret services – despite his reputation as the master of behind-the-scenes deals. His words are perhaps unusual, coming from an EU official who is typically expected to spread optimistic messages, but should come to no surprise to anyone. Berlin too has recently made it known, albeit unofficially, that there will be no new EU members before 2020. “Under my leadership, ongoing negotiations will continue, notably with the western Balkans countries, which need a European perspective”, Juncker said. Again, nothing new. The EU will continue membership negotiations with Montenegro, Serbia and Albania along a well-trodden path, a little tougher than the one Croatia had to thread, and regardless of the fact that the post of the enlargement commissioner will likely be abolished.

The exit of the current commissioner **Štefan Füle** has been met with celebrations in the tabloid which serves as a mouthpiece of the Montenegrin top ruling circles, in a manner worthy of a Soviet party bulletin. But the party is probably premature. The way this paper treated both the Commissioner and the EU ambassador to Montenegro **Mitja Drobnič**, who also came under attack from the Prime Minister **Milo Đukanović** and the Foreign Affairs Minister **Igor Lukšić**, only helps to demonstrate to the new EU Commission what the Montenegrin rulers think of their European partners.

Calendar

- 02 July **Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg haven't forgotten the Balkans** / Three countries that will be heading the EU in the next year and a half – Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg – announced that they will “work to advance membership negotiations with the West Balkan countries”. In their joint programme, the three countries stress that the “enlargement policy is moreover of strategic importance as a fundamental tool of fostering peace, democracy and security in Europe”.
- 8 July **Some member states could ask for an end to visa-free travel** / European Commissioner for Home Affairs **Cecilia Malmström** said she “couldn't rule out” the possibility that some EU member states would ask for a temporary suspension of visa-free travel for the citizens of West Balkan states, due to the number of ungrounded applications for asylum. This issue, the Commissioner said, is primarily linked to the long-term improvements in the status of Roma. She warned that over 50 000 persons from the Balkans asked for asylum in the last year alone.
- 10 July **Füle: Drobnič is there to help the Government** / Asked to comment on the row in which the remarks of the head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro, **Mitja Drobnič** about Montenegrin sanctions against Russia had been called “clumsy” by the country's Foreign Affairs Minister **Igor Lukšić**, the EU Enlargement Commissioner **Štefan Füle** said the Commission places a lot of importance on the good relations between the Government and the Delegation. “The Delegation should cooperate with the host country in the best faith and I hope that most of the issues will be taken care of through everyday personal contacts and not through the media. The Delegation is in Montenegro, first of all, in order to help the EU accession process, and we communicate with them on the daily basis”, said Füle after the informal meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Western Balkans in Kotor.
- 15 July **Juncker the new President of EC, no enlargement in the next five years** / The former Prime Minister of Luxembourg Jean-Claude Juncker was confirmed the new President of the European Commission by a majority vote in the European Parliament. He told the MEPs that there will be “no new enlargements in the next five years”. “During my presidency of EC the ongoing negotiations will be continued, above all with the West Balkan countries, which need the European perspective”, Juncker said.
- 22 July **CBM doesn't think Montenegro will lose the euro** / The Central Bank of Montenegro (CBM) believes it is highly improbable that Montenegro could be asked to abolish the euro as the official currency in the course of accession negotiations.

A mushrooming of weak states



By: Arola Elbasani

What do the Western Balkan countries have in common two decades after the violent ethnic conflicts that characterised the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and more than a decade into the use of enlargement conditionality? Why do they still lag behind and show resistance to substantial sectors of the Copenhagen criteria?

Most academics and practitioners working on bloody ethnic conflicts of the 1990s, ongoing ethnic-religious cleavages, and stabilization concerns, might still be tempted to identify regional stabilization and ethno-national divisions as the main problem. From the very start, stabilization was seen as the first pillar of the so-called Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). Given the post-conflict Balkans context, the EU has often resorted to encouraging domestic elites into solving hard-core conflict-related issues first. Individual countries were promised the EU rewards, both the offer of assistance and progression of institutional relations, as long as they delivered on stabilisation aspects, as defined on a case by case basis. For most of the 2000s, collaboration with ICTJ and the handling of war criminals in Hague was number one priority in Serbia and Croatia.

Such concerns were often translated into an ad hoc and often politicised form of conditionality, which practically meant: 1) low thresholds in meeting the Copenhagen standards of democracy and rule of law; 2) lack of clarity on what was expected of candidates willing to progress; 3) no serious systematic assessment and related benchmarks; 4) and more problematically, no direct relation between advancement of EU relations with a country and its progress on democratic reforms.

A decade into the activation of the SAP, the EU and other international actors have managed to ensure stability of some sort in almost all countries in the region. Even if hidden conflict and claims of secessionism still exist, they are at a lower intensity and smaller scale. Minority and group rights, at the centre of EU attention, have also improved. Most of these gains, however, have come at the detriment of *functioning states* and the mushrooming of *corrupt governing elites* (including among 'liberals'), who prey on state sources and further reduce

formal institutions into "empty shells unable to pursue their tasks". The classic post-communist Balkan state is one that "is lacking functional bureaucracies, is hopelessly ensnared in loosing battles with predatory rent-seekers..., powerless to monitor lower state officials, unable to extract resources from the population".

In the Balkan cases, corrupt elites have randomly been able to get around the EU stabilisation priorities, and 'pick and chose' format of conditionality, in order to resist strengthening of capacities and tackling of clientelistic power networks that flourished during decades of unruly transition. As long as domestic elites were required to deliver mainly on stability-related issues, they could select, play around, and reverse other EU requirements on crucial aspects of state building and rule of law.

Typically, in the Western Balkans, corrupt elites have only paid lip service to the EU conditions that target their strong hold on power. All the while, they are taking back, during the implementation stages, what they have lost during the negotiation process. Whereas, one decade ago, the EU was busy in ousting nationalists and uniting liberals, the question today remains whether, and how, the EU can foster political commitment to strengthen state institutions, and neutralise corrupt networks that prey on weak states.

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Source: Balkans in Europe Policy Blog

1 Ganev, V. Post-communism as an episode of state building: A reversed Tillyan perspective (2005)

What benefits could Montenegro have from HORIZON 2020 and does it have the capacity to attract sufficient funding

A chance for Montenegrin scientists on the horizon



By: Svetlana Pešić

By the end of the decade the European Union will invest nearly 80 billion euro into science and education. HORIZON 2020 is the biggest science financing system in the world, and is designed to boost the competitiveness of European science vis-a-vis the rest of the world. The programme offers grants to participants from all sectors – the academic community, state institutions, private sector, small and medium enterprises, associations, non-governmental organisations etc. who choose to focus on innovation and marketable science and research activities. It consists of three pillars: Excellence in science, Industrial Leadership and Social Challenges. This structure allows for access to funding in various areas, as the money is to be distributed through programme units. Thus, an applicant will be able to draw part of the money from one and part from another research area. Special attention will be given to regions with less developed science infrastructure and small and medium enterprises, which should account for about 20% of total funding.

Until now, EU offered support to the scientific activities through its Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Experimentation (FP7). The now famous FP7 focused largely on technological research, whereas HORIZON 2020 puts more

It is believed that the new HORIZON 2020 programme for science funding has been initiated by the German chancellor Angela Merkel, who is herself a physicist and a scientist. HORIZON 2020 was announced as a tool for economic growth and job creation and has as such garnered much support from the European leaders and members of the European Parliament.

emphasis on innovation, greater economic growth and solutions for final beneficiaries, many of whom are government agencies. HORIZON 2020 was announced as a tool for economic growth and job creation and as such it has garnered much support from the European leaders and members of the European Parliament.

The first pillar, Scientific Excellence is, like its predecessor, dedicated to financing of the most interesting scientific research via public calls. The funds will be distributed through four programmes: European Research Council, Research Infrastructure, New and Future Infrastructure and Marie Curie programme. The support through the Marie Curie programme is especially interesting as it aims to support even development of science all across Europe by offering young scientists fellowships in the European excellence centres, and later by supporting their work in less advanced institutions in their home countries.

The support to small and medium enterprises comes through the second pillar, “Leadership in Industry”, and is also distributed via public calls. An important difference from the FP7 is greater focus on “innovation and activities close to the market”. This opens up the door to small and medium enterprises which are ready to enter into strategic partnerships with scientific institutions. EU’s financial support for such partnerships could be crucial for countries like Montenegro.

The third pillar, “Social Challenges” represents a novelty. It is designed to support research in those

“Given the positive experiences accumulated by the Montenegrin science and research community through the participation in the Seventh EU Framework Programme for research, technological development and experimentation (FP7), we expect a lot of interest in the HORIZON 2020, as well as a significant number of successful projects. I am confident that the Montenegrin science and research community can rise to this challenge and that in cooperation with their international partners it will prove that it can be competitive in the European research space”, says the Minister of Science Sanja Vlabović

areas which are of special importance for the everyday life of EU citizens, but which are facing certain challenges or are in need of new creative solutions. It is divided into seven key areas: *health, food, energy, transport, climate, demography and security*. The idea is to offer incentives, through project-based funding, to the scientists and companies which are open to innovation, to focus their attention to the issues which have been recognised as key by nearly all European societies, but are too costly to address by the use of current technologies.

What could be the benefits to Montenegro of this programme, and do we have the capacity to attract these funds?

On the 1 July this year, together with Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Moldova, Montenegro signed the agreement that allows it full access and participation in HORIZON 2020. With the signing of this agreement, Montenegrin scientists and researchers have gained access to all three components of the programme.

How much could that mean for Montenegro if it manages to draw enough funding from the programme is best reflected in the fact that the spending on science and technology currently accounts for only 0.43% of its GDP, or around

“Participation in HORIZON 2020 is desirable, because it will contribute to greater knowledge and experience of local researchers, but due to the intensity of competition in the EU, which is continuously on the rise, and the fact that Switzerland and Turkey will also be participating in the HORIZON 2020, it is not realistic to expect great scientific results”, warns the president of the Centre for Young Scientists of MASA Zvezdan Vukanović

14.362.000 euro – a fraction of the 3% of GDP recommended by the Lisbon Agenda. This is why proper preparation for applying for and using these funds will be essential for the progress of Montenegrin science. According to the Ministry of Science, Montenegro participated in the Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological change and experimentation (2007–2013) with 33 projects, either as a coordinator or as a partner. In the last four years, it attracted 4.174.793 euro from these funds, which is far less than it could gain from the new EU programme.

However, Montenegro’s scientific community worries that the HORIZON 2020 might have been sold to the Montenegrin public in a much more optimistic light than would be merited by the realistic capacity of our scientists to attract these funds. **Zvezdan Vukadinović**, president

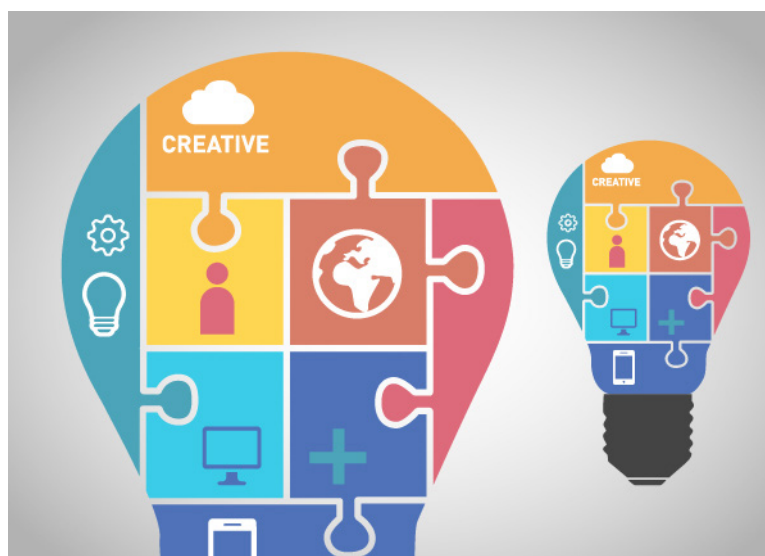
No interest in science



Zvezdan Vukanović

Advanced societies are characterized precisely by the fact that corporations invest more in scientific research. In Japan, for instance, 78% of investments come from the private sector and corporations, 72% in South Korea, 68% in Switzerland, 67% in USA, 66% in Germany and Finland, and 60% in Denmark. Also, in countries where most of the investment in research goes into development, applied and experimental research (e.g. China – 83%, Israel – 82%, South Korea – 64%, Japan – 63% and USA – 60%) the overall intensity of research is much greater than in the countries which spend most of their money on basic research and reserve a very small portion for development projects (Costa Rica and Mongolia – 5%, Paraguay and Mozambique – 6%, Uganda – 7%, Ecuador and Romania – 8%).

President of the Centre for Young Scientists in MSA Zvezdan Vukanović believes that *“in Montenegro, the likelihood that the private sector and corporations will increase investment in scientific research is very small. The profitable corporations, such as Porto Montenegro, Telecom or Telenor, are foreign companies whose primary interest is in reinvesting the profits in their home countries and financing their research there. The companies which are predominantly owned by domestic capital, on the other hand, are generally unprofitable and heavily indebted”*.



of the Centre for Young Scientists of the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts (MASA) confirmed to the European Pulse that the EU is planning to offer researchers 78.9 billion euro through its science and research programme, but stresses that this is the total amount of funding for 7 years (2014 to 2020). *This means only 11.2 billion euro per year, or 0.085% of EU's yearly GDP, which was 13 trillion and 70 million euro in 2013. The purpose of the programme is to develop new technologies and alleviate the negative trend in the financing of science within EU compared to the US and Japan. Both spend far more on scientific research every year – USA 2.66% of its GDP and Japan 3.48%, Vukanović explained.*

He also believes that of the three key pillars of HORIZON 2020, Montenegro has some hope of winning the funding from the first pillar, which offers stipends to the best PhD students and post-docs in Europe. These are modest, however, as the success rate of applications is generally 5% to 10%. The third pillar also offers some possibility of success with certain projects. The second pillar, according to him, is the least probable, because the sectors targeted by industrial leadership are the most technologically developed scientific branches, such as space research, nanotechnology, advanced materials, robotics, biotechnology etc. in which Montenegro lacks both the technology and institutional capacities. *"The difficulty in obtaining funding from HORIZON 2020 is best illustrated by*

the fact that the success rate in the most competitive segments of the programme will be 5% to 10%, which means that we can at best hope to get funding for one out of every ten projects we apply with", Vukanović said.

According to him, an additional difficulty in smaller countries, such as Montenegro, is the lack of adequate knowledge of English. Large universities in Europe have specialized legal offices which prepare and write demanding project applications, which can often amount to several hundred pages. In addition to this, Montenegrin universities have a very low reputation in Europe. Namely, not one of them is on the Shanghai list of 500 top universities in the world, unlike even those from the neighbouring countries – Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, each of which has its representatives on this list. Vukanović also stresses the problem of international accreditations, because not one Montenegrin department of economics and business has been accredited by the leading scientific accreditation bodies such as AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS.

How underdeveloped the scientific human resources are is best illustrated by the fact that, compared to EU, Montenegro has 2.5 fewer persons with a university degree (only 9%), and around 4 times fewer researchers per 1000 employees. *"There are only 964 people with PhDs, and 3,713 with MAs – altogether 4,677 persons with MAs or PhDs, about half the number of illiterate people in the country. The number of those with only the primary schooling is twice as high as the number of those with a university degree. On the other hand, nearly half of the Montenegrin population is IT-illiterate, which means that they do not use computer and internet in their everyday communication", Vukanović said.*

Vukanović believes that the only realistic and long-term solution for the science in Montenegro is a more active and constructive role of the Government *"which, unfortunately, has not been the case lately, seen that the Government stopped financing the MASA two years ago, which is unprecedented in the history of our academic institutions, which*

managed to continue their work though some of the hardest periods of social history. This has not only undermined the scientific and academic integrity and authority of the most important academic institution in Montenegro, but also questions the most fundamental preconditions for the functioning of academia". Vukanović is convinced that "participation in the framework of HORIZON 2020 is desirable, because it will contribute to greater knowledge and experience of local researchers, but due to the intensity of competition in the EU, which is continuously on the rise, and the fact that Switzerland and Turkey will also be participating in the HORIZON 2020, it is not realistic to expect great scientific results".



Prof. Dr. Sanja Vlahović

Minister of Education, Prof. Dr **Sanja Vlahović** told European Pulse that *"The Ministry of Science has already initiated mechanisms for assistance to our science and research community, and to all other subjects who are eligible to take part in this programme. On 7 July 2014 the Ministry published its Call for co-funding of science and research activities in 2014, and the first item in the call is co-financing of participation in HORIZON 2020".* The Minister announced a promotional campaign for the programme from September onwards, first through the festival "Open Days of

Science", and later in October, in cooperation with the European Commission, via a large workshop that will be held in Podgorica. At the workshop, representatives of the EU Directorate for Science and Innovation will inform the Montenegrin science and research community, the private sector and the NGOs about all aspects of participation in the programme, including the requirements, application procedures, selection criteria etc. *"We are also planning regular info days during which the Ministry of Science will showcase all new calls and programmes in the framework of HORIZON 2020. Naturally, all those interested in participating in the HORIZON 2020 can contact the Directorate for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Science at any time",* Vlahović said.

Regarding the application process, the Ministry of Science has appointed national contact persons (NCP) for 22 thematic areas, in line with the EU's recommendations and regulations. "The role of NCPs is precisely to timely advertise all calls in their thematic areas and made them available to the Montenegrin research community. Also, the Ministry of Science will soon create a national website which will contain greater detail on the opportunities offered by this programme, open calls, deadlines and requirements".

Even Cuba invests more in science than we do

Between 2009 and 2014 the Government of Montenegro cut the funding to the University of Montenegro by 22.74%, or from 17 033 500 to 13 159 236 euro.

"In the EU members, for instance, universities of the size similar to the University of Montenegro receive between 200 million to 1.25 billion euro from their home countries, as in the case of the University of Zurich. The current science and research landscape in Montenegro is very bleak, as we only spend 0.43% of our GDP on research – which is at the level of African states such as Uganda and Botswana. And, speaking of Africa, it should be said that a number of African countries which are far behind Montenegro in terms of their level of development are spending much more on science. Gabon, for instance, spends 0.64% of its GDP, Morocco 0.73%, and South Africa 0.95%. Even Cuba, the country which is the symbol of global poverty and communist dictatorship, is ahead of Montenegro with 0.61% of GDP spent on science. In order to reap the minimum economic benefit in the society, a country must spend at least 1% of its GDP on science, and Montenegro currently spends half of this minimum level of economic sustainability. Seen from this angle, Montenegro only spends 21.5 euro per inhabitant on scientific research, which is 24.29% of the world average. In the EU, this figure is 510.5 euro", warns Vukanović.

Member of the Committee for European Integration and the Parliamentary Committee for Stabilisation and Association (PCSA) **Dritan Abazović**

More pressure from EU would mean a lot

Member of the Committee for European Integration and Parliamentary Committee for Stabilisation and Association (PCSA) **Dritan Abazović** says the problem is not in the Action Plans (AP) for Chapters 23 and 24, but in the lack of political will on the part of the Government to implement them. Commenting on the fact that

Montenegro has fallen behind its schedule for the implementation of commitments from the AP, the member of the opposition party Positive Montenegro and the youngest MP in the Parliament of Montenegro told European Pulse: "Action Plans have been very ambitious, unlike the Government which has no ambition to really fight organised crime and corruption. It is true that some of the delays are a consequence of objective circumstances, but there is no justification for why Montenegro has

done so little in these areas until now. Our laws are not bad, but their implementation is. There is plenty of evidence, but the prosecutors and the judges are doing nothing to bring about the verdicts that could profoundly change our society. This is why we are now left to race with time and statistics, all of which is meaningless if the core is missing. Once again, the problem is not the AP, but the political will. When there is political will, we won't worry about the pace of the Action Plans."

» *In fact, the final verdict on most big affairs is still pending: Zavalja, Telekom, Recordings... What could the EU do about it?*

There is simply no political will to solve any of these cases, since all of them, directly or indirectly, lead to the top of Montenegro's ruling structures. All the European Commission can do in such cases is to increase the pressure and monitoring of responsible institutions. That would mean a lot. In some of the reports these key affairs, such as "Recordings" received too little attention. That is

Action Plans have been very ambitious, unlike the Government which has no ambition to really fight organised crime and corruption.

a bad message from our partners. If they focus on them more, I am sure that our institutions won't be able to ignore it, and will have to respond to the demands of Brussels, as well as to their own citizens. This gives meaning to the integration process, because the citizens are looking for something tangible. The question is only how long we will have to wait for some visible results.

» *The new European Commission does not count enlargement among its priorities. How will this affect the European path of Montenegro and the Western Balkans?*

The Commission headed by the new President Juncker has, in my opinion, put things realistically. There will be no more enlargements any time soon, but the door remains open. This means that all West Balkan countries ought to work hard on meeting the requirements, above all for the benefit of their citizens. When the political moment changes, the EU will open the door again and we ought to be ready for it. The worst thing we could now do is halt the reform and indulge in euroscepticism. That would plunge this region into ruin. We ought to work harder than ever and believe that the transformation of our societies will be acknowledged by the EU member states with whom we hope to share a common future.

» *How do you assess the oversight and control role of the Parliament? There was a series of hearings last year, many committee meetings, a new set of electoral laws was adopted, but on the other hand all of this brought few tangible results – e.g. the trust in the electoral process did not increase.*

The oversight function of the parliament will remain questionable for as long as the MPs do not fully understand their role in the society. It is very common for them to defend the interest



Dritan Abazović

of their party instead of the public, and even to withhold certain information or observations for the fear of undermining the reputation of their party or their colleagues. For the same reason, the control hearings often become meaningless. The same happened in the affairs “Telecom” and “Recordings”. Simply, the ruling majority always undermines every parliamentary hearing, sabotaging the outcome and conclusions. Or, more paradoxically, uses the force of its majority, which is present in every committee to prevent the important hearings from taking place at all. All of this reveals the modest democratic capacities of our decision-makers, but also more generally the lack of commitment to the strengthening of the Parliament as the fundamental institution of the political system of the country.

» *Why do most voters who belong to national minorities in Montenegro support DPS? What is your assessment of the position of national minorities more generally?*

There are two key reasons. First, there is still a prevailing opinion that the opposition is still trapped in the mindset of the 1990s, there is still a sense of insecurity, and the DPS, however ridiculous that may sound, is seen as a “protector”. Second, minority political elites are no different from DPS, and are willing to work against their constituencies for their own petty benefits. Paradoxically enough, in spite of being the main culprit for the state of minority

In some of the reports these key affairs, such as “Recordings” received too little attention. That is a bad message from our partners. If they focus on them more, I am sure that our institutions won’t be able to ignore it, and will have to respond to the demands of Brussels, as well as to their own citizens. This gives meaning to the integration process, because the citizens are looking for something tangible.

nations today, DPS is also the largest Bosniak or Albanian party in the country. More members of minority nations vote for DPS than for the national parties such as BS or Albanian parties. On the other hand, the minorities keep bringing up the same problems which the government does nothing about. It is clear that something is amiss here. I am sure that from the moment the minorities step out of the political bind and stop seeing the things as black and white, when they can regain at least some of their freedom, they will be able to judge each party on their own merits. For starters, it would be good enough if they left behind their servility towards those who are disappearing from one census to another and because of whom the minority-inhabited areas are also some of the poorest in the country.

V.Žugić

Independent media slated for economic execution

» *Although I am usually reluctant to ask politicians about the media landscape in Montenegro, how do you see the situation in this sphere? Despite high expectations of the last year’s “Speak up” conference in Brussels and the insistence on the part of European officials that the West Balkan states ought to respect the freedom of speech and media, the situation is only getting worse. In Montenegro we had new attacks on journalists, in Serbia there is a problem of censorship, Commissioner Fiüle and Ambassador Drobníć have also been the target of the tabloids...*

The media in Montenegro suffers the same problems as the rest of our political sphere. In a country which has never deposed its government in an election and where there are no independent institutions of any note, the environment is not conducive to free and professional media. However, the situation in Montenegro, and by that I mean above all the attacks on journalists and unresolved murders, is really outrageous. Foreign officials understand this very well, but in this moment I doubt that they are too eager to contribute to improving the situation in any tangible way. Everything just gets more complicated and is postponed for later. I believe that instead of greater freedom we are likely to see even more pressure on independent media in the future, a sort of calculated economic execution. This political environment is not conducive to anything else. Still, we must not give up. Just like the other peoples, we must win our democracy ourselves. This is not possible without professional media, and this is why we must make every effort to preserve them.

Calculating the gross criminal product



How does a night with a prostitute in a shady hotel or a line of cocaine impact the gross domestic product?

According to Eurostat's instructions, the EU member states should be trying to

find out. For some of them, this will mean a sizeable increase in the GDP, and accordingly a drop in the shares of public debt and deficit: not to be sniffed at in these times of crisis. While some representatives of NGOs and the member governments say they are shocked by this change in accounting, Eurostat retorts that the gross added value isn't an article of ethics.

In late May, Italy shocked the public by announcing that the GDP, which measures the wealth that is created in a territory every year, will from now on include the money from drugs, prostitution, as well as drug and alcohol smuggling. According to the Italian Central Bank, in 2012 this shadow economy amounted to 10.9% of the GDP. This means that the GDP of Italy will be much higher in the future, and the deficit as share of GDP will appear lower: a great relief for this heavily indebted state in the years of austerity. Italy has recently been seconded by London, which claims that income from drugs and prostitution could increase the GDP by 12.3 billion euro, a little under 1%.

Asia overtakes Europe in e-commerce



The e-commerce sector in the Asia-Pacific region has for the first time outstripped the online trade sector in Europe in volume, buoyed by the enormous Chinese market, reported the association of European online businesses

Ecommerce Europe. Europe was the largest e-trade market to date, having overtaken the United States two years ago. The study, which also covered Russia and other European countries which are not part of the EU shows that the EU accounts for the lion's share of total e-commerce in Europe.

The Asia-Pacific region had a turnover of 406.1 billion euro in 2013, whereas Europe as a whole had 363.1 billion. The UK, German and France were the largest markets by turnover in Europe.

Lower taxes on labour



European Commission warned the EU member states against increases in taxation, especially when it concerns labour taxation.

The overall tax burden is the highest in Denmark and lowest in Lithuania, while the labour tax wedge is the highest in Sweden and lowest in Bulgarian. Labour taxes are the most important source of tax revenue in 24 EU member states and in 13 of them they provide more than a half of total revenues. The Commission recommended the member states to lower taxes on labour and focus on environmental taxes and more effective value added taxes.

Greeks and Romanians work the hardest



A new study shows that Romanian and Greek people are among the hardest working in Europe. This defies the stereotypes from the outbreak of the crisis,

which maintained that the workers from the EU's north work harder whereas those from the Southern states who receive the bailout packages are work shy. As it turns out, Finns and French work the least, and the Germans are somewhere in the middle.

These are the findings of the Paris-based research institute Coe-Rexecode, which looked at "real" working hours in each EU state in the past four years - the amount of time spent actually at work, as opposed to nominal hours, which include absences due to sick leave, childcare, holidays, strikes, or commuting time.

In 2013, Romanian full-time employees worked 2,099 hours, while the Finnish and French worked 1,648 and 1,661 hours, respectively. Somewhat more hardworking are the Swedes, Danes, and Belgians, reported *EUobserver*.

Ahead of the public debate on the Draft Law on Special Prosecutor

Equipment needed for the big fish



By: Dina Bajramspahić

Although the fight against corruption and organized crime is one of the most prominent topics in the Montenegrin public discourse, European Commission's 2013 Montenegro Progress Report continues to express serious concerns for the situation in this area. Isolated cases of arrests as a result of work of the Special Prosecutor's Office do not create an impression of uncompromising determination of the state for everyone in Montenegro to be held equally responsible before the law.

The idea of reorganization and establishment of an independent Special Prosecutor's Office for the Suppression of Corruption and Organized Crime first came from **Miroslav Lajčák**, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia. His proposal was endorsed by the Government of Montenegro, which announced its plan to establish the Special Prosecutor's Office modelled after the Croatian Uskok.

The Government's *Analysis of the Organizational Structure, Capacities and Authorities of the State Bodies and Administration Bodies in Combating Organized Crime and Corruption* was supposed to provide context for the generally adopted decision for the formation of the Special Prosecutor's Office by pointing out to the problems in the work of the current Special Prosecutor's Office. However, the aforementioned problems were not presented in the published Analysis. This will remain one of the stumbling blocks for any reform of the SPO, because without understanding the problem an adequate solution cannot be found. According to the Plan for realization of conclusions from the Analysis, the public debate on the Draft Law on the Special Prosecutor's Office should take place in May-June 2014.

Following the indicators of the need for further reform of the institutional framework for investigations of corruption and organized crime in Montenegro, the research team of Institute Alternative (IA) has published a comparative study aimed at providing alternatives and models for improving cooperation and efficiency of all stakeholders, especially the Prosecution and the Police, in January 2014. We institutional frameworks of five countries – Bulgaria, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, and Serbia – and identified the problems and best practices. Our guiding idea was that all of these countries face similar problems, but that they have reached different stages of reform. The project was supported by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) of the State Department through the Embassy of the United States in Montenegro within the "Criminal Justice Civil Society Program".

For a successful start of a Special Prosecutor's Office, it is especially important to have a broad societal consensus with regard to appointment of the key officials. The office of the Public Prosecutor as a whole also needs to accept the need for certain personnel changes

Specialised prosecutors' offices for corruption and organised crime are an international and region-wide trend. Old member states of the European Union have specialized bodies in charge of solving complex criminal offences such as the Prosecutor's Office for the fight against mafia in Italy, the Office for suppression of corruption within the Prosecutor's Office in Spain, Serious Fraud Office in the United Kingdom, etc. In the East European states, similar entities have been formed over the last decade: Croatia and Latvia in 2001, Romania in 2004, Macedonia in 2008, Slovenia in 2011, and Bulgaria in 2012.

However, a comparison of their experiences shows that the establishment of special prosecutor's offices is no guarantee of quick and significant results. The path to better and more meaningful results in the fight against organized crime and corruption depends on a set of internal and external factors, and the first tangible results will take time to materialise. For a successful start of a SPO, it is especially important to have a broad societal consensus with regard to appointment of key officials. The office of the Public Prosecutor as a whole also needs to accept certain personnel changes in order to create a new working environment based on fundamentally different principles and ensure effectiveness of reform. The results of our comparative analysis suggest that nominations for the position of the special prosecutor should come from a broad base of experts with experience in criminal justice: investigative judges, police inspectors with a record of dealing with organized crime, etc. in order to take into account a wide range of experiences.

Prosecutors and other employees in the Special Prosecutor's Office ought to undergo prior and ongoing security and asset checks. IA recommends that this should be a definite requirement in the process of appointment of the Chief Special Prosecutor and special prosecutors. This is standard practice, which takes into account the special sensitivity of the cases that fall under the competence of special prosecutor's offices. Accordingly, the law should prescribe the procedure and assign the responsible administrative body to carry out such

checks, including a provision defining the necessary consent of the person that is being checked. In case of a negative opinion, an insight into the material collected should be provided, as well as the possibility for the person in question to respond.

The question of substantive competencies of Special Prosecutor's Office is a key issue and should be regulated according to the principle of least burden, i.e. by redirecting cases which could fall under the jurisdiction of Higher State Prosecutors' Offices. Criminal offences which are to fall under the competency of SPO should comprise all forms of organized crime, corruption-related offences committed by public officials, as stipulated by the Law on the prevention of conflict of interest, or by civil servants when they exceed a specified amount, according to the principle of greater public threat.

On the other hand, if the new Law on the Special Prosecutor's Office brings about the improvements of the investigative tools of SPO, as well as of its administrative and technical capacities, its competencies should not be defined too narrowly, and should be extended to other criminal hard-to-prove offences.

Law on the SPO should stipulate that public authorities, administrative bodies and companies, above all banks, should make themselves available to the SPO and promptly respond to its requests for data. To ensure this, failure to comply with the SPO's request within the stipulated timeframe should be defined as a misdemeanour and strictly prosecuted. The SPO should also be able to "borrow" employees of other agencies (e.g. the police officers, employees of the Customs Administration, Tax Administration, Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing Terrorism, Directorate for Inspection Affairs etc.) and set up investigative teams.

The most complex and crucial challenge is establishing communication, cooperation and coordination

Prosecutors and other employees in the Special Prosecutor's Office must undergo prior and continuous security and asset checks

between the SPO and the Police Administration, both between the directors and among the prosecutors and police officers who will be working together daily. To that end, one unit of the Criminal Police should be institutionally and organizationally linked to the SPO. In order to strengthen the authority of the Chief Special Prosecutor in the strict hierarchy of the Police Administration, the Chief of Police should, upon consultation with the Chief Special Prosecutor, appoint and dismiss the head of this unit and approve decisions that regulate the work of the department in greater detail.

Performance evaluation of the Chief Special

Competencies of the SPO should comprise all forms of organized crime, corruption-related offences committed by public officials, as stipulated by the Law on the prevention of conflict of interest, or by civil servants when they exceed a specified amount, according to the principle of greater public threat.

Prosecutor and special prosecutors should be conducted in accordance with more rigorous criteria than that of other state prosecutors. In case of underperformance, they should be demoted back to the prosecution unit they were in before their appointment to SPO. Similarly, salary scales and other incentives for prosecutors and their expert and administrative staff is essential for the integrity and professionalism of the office, and should be such as to attract applications by the most qualified experts in the field.

It is also important to specify the necessary qualifications for the expert staff at SPO, bearing in mind the needs and limitations in the market for skilled workforce. There should also be an option to outsource highly specialised services in the domestic and international markets. An interesting solution exists in Serbia, with the option of 'introducing a team of economic forensic experts in public prosecutor's offices', which addresses the difficulties in initiating and carrying out financial investigations due to the lack of economic and financial experts among the prosecutors.

Given the high expectations of the new SPO and the likelihoods that its competencies will be expanded by the new law, the SPO should be required to produce a separate annual report summarising its work and achievements, and submit it for review to the relevant committee of the Montenegrin Parliament. The content, i.e. the type of information that ought to be contained in this report should be defined in advance. Additionally, communication with the public ought to be significantly improved.

Finally, in order to avoid legal uncertainties, a special challenge will be in harmonising this law with amendments to a number of acts that currently govern the work of the State Prosecutor's Office and the Police – such as the Code of Criminal Procedures, Law on State Prosecutor's Office, Law on Conducting Financial Investigations, Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, Anti-Corruption Law, etc. Therefore, special attention should be devoted to coordination of these processes.

Further recommendations and the complete study can be accessed at: www.institut-alternative.org

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Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment



By: Snežana Kaluđerović

Social policy and employment in the European Union is one of the most complex chapters. In the broadest sense, it covers the free movement of workers and migrants' social security rights, equal treatment of men and women, ensuring the optimal working conditions, health and safety at work, public health, care for the elderly, fight against poverty, including integration of minority groups, employment, vocational training for youth and employment policy. Another important aspect of the chapter is the development of social security services and education.

The EU employment and social policy is grounded in the European Strategy for Employment and Labour Market Reform and EU Social Charter. The latter was developed in order to ensure that all members of societies in each EU member state can benefit from the development of the Union. Financial support for these goals is provided through the Social Fund, which was allocated 77 billion euro in the last 2007-2013 budgeting period.

At the EU level, the *acquis* concerns only the field of labour relations, and is limited to certain areas (e.g. health and safety at work, anti-discrimination etc). Social protection remains the exclusive domain of the member states. In the past, there have been several attempts to harmonise national law in the realm of social policy, but they have yielded little result. Some EU member states, the United Kingdom especially, firmly maintain that due to specific circumstances and historical traditions, the member states should continue to manage this area independently. Accordingly, although the Social Charter (Charter of Fundamental Social Rights) defines basic social rights on the EU level, it also sets a firm limit to the expansion of EU's competencies by imposing the principle of subsidiarity in social policy.

Nevertheless, besides adopting common minimum standards, the EU member states have engaged in cooperation in the fields of employment policy, social inclusion and social protection. These areas are subject to a voluntary process of political coordination, based on an agreement on the common goals and benchmarks which help to measure the progress towards these goals. The result of this cooperation is the EU's new strategic development framework – Strategy Europe 2020 (adopted in 2010), which contains a range of priorities in the fields of employment and social policy, further developed in the accompanying documents: European platform for the fight against poverty and social exclusion and Agenda for new skills and jobs.

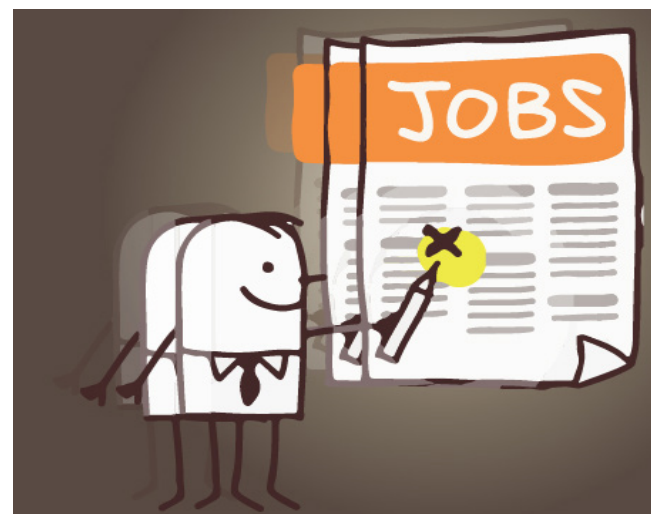
The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) mandates harmonization in a number of areas concerning the world of work, especially health and safety at work and equal opportunities for employment (Article 79). In addition to this, Article 101 of the SAA governs cooperation in the areas of social policy and employment, with the aim of assisting Montenegro in the process of harmonisation with the EU *acquis*. The cooperation focuses on improving the capacities of agencies for employment mediation



and professional orientation, and providing support and local development resources for the restructuring of industries and labour markets. Further cooperation projects will be directed at the adaptation of Montenegro's social security system to the new economic and social challenges and towards harmonization of Montenegrin legislation on working conditions, health and safety at work, and equal treatment of men and women, as well as of persons with disabilities and members of minorities and other vulnerable groups. Montenegro has also undertaken to respect and implement the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Montenegro's legal and institutional framework in this area is already partly aligned with the EU acquis. Negotiations will mostly concern harmonisation of employment legislation, with a focus on the health and safety at work and social dialogue. Special attention will be dedicated to individual policies within this chapter, such as employment policy, social inclusion, anti-discrimination, social protection, European Social Fund and equal opportunities.

As for the Montenegrin labour legislation, the European Commission 2011 Progress Report on Montenegro notes an improvement in this area. To align the Montenegrin law with the employment acquis, the country introduced major revisions of the Labour Code in 2011. The changes include new provisions on anti-discrimination, definition of workplace mobbing and procedures for the protection against mobbing, the rule that stipulates that open-ended employment contracts should be the dominant form of employment and limits opportunities for fixed-term contracts, new provisions on the protection of whistleblowers, parental leave for both parents, procedures for minimum wage etc. It also introduces the institution of employee leasing, through the Agency for temporary leasing of employees (which has not yet been established), eliminates assignment contracts and adds legal and technical improvements to some provisions, such as those on collective agreements, to ensure better implementation in practice. Inconsistency



in the implementation of some provisions, as well as the lack of administrative and financial capacities remain a problem. For instance, the fact that the Agency for temporary leasing of employees is prescribed by law but has not been established, which the assignment contracts have been eliminated, creates a legal void and prevents implementation of the newly adopted provisions. Such situations suggest that a mere transfer of rules, without proper conditions for their enforcement, will not only not result in improvement, but will create confusion and complicate the situation in a given area. Protection at work is regulated by the Law on Healthcare and a series of other subsidiary acts in this field.

Some progress was also made with regard to anti-discrimination. Anti-Discrimination Law was adopted in 2010, but is still awaiting some amendments. Law on the prohibition of discrimination of persons with disabilities was also adopted but the enforcement remains limited. Additional progress was made with adoption of the Law on the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms, as well as in the area of social inclusion.

Pension system reform is an important part of economic, social and financial system of the country. Unfortunately, Montenegro has made very little progress in this area and it needs to find ways to bridge the gap created by pay-as-you-go (PAYG) financing system in which those who are currently employed are financing the



pensions of those currently in retirement. Given demographic trends in the country, this form of inter-generational solidarity is not sustainable in the long run.

Unemployment in Montenegro is very high, substantially higher than the EU average, and partly exacerbated by the mismatch between educational system and the labour market. In order to reduce the gap, National Strategy for Employment and Development of Human Resources will be launched in the period 2012-2015, aligned with a number of other development priorities and strategic documents of the Government of Montenegro. The Employment Bureau is the key institution in this context, being the main provider of services to the unemployed. The Bureau offers programmes for activation and job-search, as well as opportunities

for professional education. It also organises public works, offers mediation and advisory services to the job-seekers, keeps statistical records etc. The Bureau also participates in the financing of the training programmes for interns with upper secondary and higher education.

Regarding preparatory activities for Montenegro's participation in the European Social Fund, the progress so far has been limited, although the operative programme has been drafted. As in many other areas, the biggest challenge is the lack of administrative capacities in the relevant ministries.

Montenegro has made some progress in the areas of social policy and employment, but more effort is needed in order to make the system more flexible and integrate new solutions.

After it completes negotiations and becomes a full member of EU, Montenegro will become part of the single European labour market, and its citizens will be able to seek employment in any member state of the Union, which may help to reduce currently high unemployment. EU supports labour mobility because of the benefits it brings to the individuals in terms of personal and professional development, and because it improves the allocation of skills according to demand. On the other hand, once a person moves to another EU member state in search of work, their social security rights move with them. The membership of EU can help to create a social policy that will ensure economically sustainable and at the same time socially acceptable level of protection against the influence of detrimental social effects on all members of society.

The official figures show that in Montenegro the number of unemployed persons with higher education degree reaches 1.708 or 37.32% in the age group 18-25, and 1.429 or 31.22% in the age group 25-30. There are also 100 unemployed persons with a master degree and 5 with PhDs. One of EU's goals is to offer every young person with a degree a job, a traineeship or further education within six months from the moment they complete their education.

Unemployment rate in EU was 8.3% in May 2011, while the unemployment rate in Montenegro is on the rise, already higher than 12% according to the official figures.

After the European Parliament election, time to distribute the top jobs in the EU

Who will be in the EU's top team?



This year's elections to the European Parliament marked the start of the "transfer season" in EU as new people take over the Union's top jobs. All twenty-eight EU Commissioners, the Speaker of the European Parliament and the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy ought to be appointed by the end of the summer, and by November at the latest the decision should also be taken on the next President of the EU Council. Top jobs are always a cause of hard bargains between the member states, requiring them to balance geography, party politics and gender. But if the events surrounding the appointment of **Jean-Paul Juncker** to the head of the European Commission are anything to go by, this season is likely to be especially difficult.

Nobody's favourite

Mr. Juncker, the former Prime Minister of Luxembourg, first emerged as the likely candidate for the Commission's Presidency following the success of the European People's Party (EPP) at this year's European elections. As part of the effort to "democratize" the European executive branch and raise the profile of the European Parliament elections, the MPs had selected the "top candidates" for each of the European party family, and pressured European Council to accept them as the next presidents of the European

Commission. However, although Mr. Juncker was nominated the EPP's "top candidate" at the party summit in April, many European leaders from his own party were not sure he was the right man for the job. German chancellor **Angela Merkel** had initially opposed the idea that the "top candidate" should be automatically elected to the head the Commission, and was said to prefer the current head of the IMF, **Christine Lagarde**, over Juncker. Others feared that the 59-year old was too "old guard" to bring new visions and be the force for change the EU so desperately needs. Mr. Juncker has been around the EU leadership circles for longer than almost anybody else in the job. He is the only current EU leader to have been part of the original European Council which signed the Treaty of Maastricht that laid the foundations of the Eurozone. As the head of the council of Eurozone finance ministers, he was also heavily involved in managing the recent financial crisis. His reputation for fiscal conservatism won him a very bad press among the left-leaning European politicians, many of whom feared that a European Commission under Juncker will continue the politics of austerity which had weakened demand and contributed to rising unemployment in the Eurozone.

However, after the EP elections the European Socialists found themselves caught in their own trap. As fervent supporters of the "direct" election of the Commission President they found it hard to backtrack from their stance once the EPP won the largest number of votes, even if they disliked the candidate. Thus, it was ironically the support of the left-wing parties that cemented the candidacy Jean-Paul Juncker – that, and the staunch opposition of one of the most prominent European conservatives, the British Prime Minister **David Cameron**. In an attempt to court the UK's eurosceptic voters, Cameron publicly attacked Juncker, calling him an "old federalist" who had "spent his entire working life at the heart of the project to increase the power of Brussels and reduce the power of nation states". This attempt to demonstrate force and prove the importance

of UK's vote in the selection of European leaders sorely backfired. Cameron's opposition turned the decision on the appointment of a man whom nobody really wanted for the job into a vote for or against European unity – which made the rest of European leaders cast their lot with Juncker.

Political horsetrading

The resistance to Juncker's appointment is partly a tactical move, calculated to extract more gains elsewhere. In exchange for their support for the EPP's president of the Commission, the Socialists got the reassurances that their representative, **Martin Schulz**, will be re-elected to the post of the Speaker of EP. Italy's Prime Minister **Matteo Renzi** made his support for Juncker conditional upon more flexible budget rules, and Italy is also seeking the place of the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy for its current Foreign Affairs Minister, **Federica Mogherini**. The European Socialists, eager to see more of their people in the top jobs, also support Mogherini. However, with a mere five-month tenure at the helm of Italian foreign service, Mogherini has little experience in foreign policy, which is a serious drawback, given the difficult situation on EU's eastern borders. Polish Foreign Affairs Minister **Radek Sikorski** and the Bulgarian European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid **Kristalina Georgieva** are also rumoured to be among the candidates, but if Italy insists this position they will have a hard time outcompeting the candidate of one of the oldest and most influential member states.

It is even less clear who could replace the current president of the European Council, the former Belgian Prime Minister **Herman van Rompuy**. The most frequently mentioned candidates from the European People's Party are the former Prime Ministers of Finland and Latvia, **Jyrki Katainen** and **Valdis Dombrovskis**, while the Socialists are counting on the Danish Prime Minister **Helle Thorning-Schmidt**. Although from the opposite party camp, Thorning-Schmidt also enjoys the sympathies of highly placed women in the EPP, such as the Dutch Commissioner **Neelie Kroes** and German chancellor Angela Merkel. Overall, however, this selection of candidates is fairly unusual: all candidates are fairly young, from smaller member states and with little experience on the

European stage. As the office of the President has been created as a purely representative one, reserved for the semi-retired heavy-weights of European politics, it is likely that more names will appear by the end of the summer.

Too few women in the Commission

Juncker may not be a new face with lots of charisma and a great vision, but he is certainly an experienced diplomat with a great skill in forging compromises. Since he was appointed to the helm of the European Commission, Juncker has been visiting all fractions of the European Parliament to present his programme, offering the conservatives prudent fiscal policy and the Socialists greater flexibility in debt restructuring and a guaranteed minimum wage at the EU level. Juncker also said he would like to see more women in his Commission, but this depends on the nominations coming from the member states. So far 12 out of 28 EU members confirmed their candidates (Germany, UK, Romania, Austria, Finland, Slovakia, Ireland, Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Malta), and all of them are men. Other member states have until the end of the summer to nominate their candidates and suggest portfolios they would like to be in charge of. The new Commission comes into office on 1 November 2014.

Juncker wants a break from enlargement

In the speech which preceded his appointment to the office of the President of European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker announced that there will be no further enlargements over the next five years, while his Commission is in office. "The EU needs a break from enlargement so that we can consolidate what has been achieved with the current 28 members", Juncker said, adding that the ongoing negotiations will continue, "especially with the West Balkan countries, which need the European perspective". Juncker also urged closer relations with the countries on the EU's eastern borders, such as Ukraine and Moldova, which are facing a difficult position due to the conflicts with Russia.

V. Šćepanović

Across the region, the retirement age is going up and the conditions for men and women are converging

Will we ever retire?



According to the laws presently in force around the region, the retirement age is the lowest for Slovenians. Children are counted towards the women's retirement age – six months for one child, 16 months for two, and 48 months for five or more.

Serbia adopted a new round of amendments to the Labour Law and Law on Pension and Disability Insurance on 29 July, and has thus joined the regional trend of increasing retirement age and converging retirement conditions for men and women. From January 2015, the retirement age for women will be raised every six months until 2032, when it is supposed to reach 65 years, the same age that currently applies to men. According to the laws presently in force around the region, the retirement age is the lowest for Slovenians.

In *Croatia*, according to the Law on Pension Insurance which came into force in January this year, until 2030 it will be possible to retire at age 65 with at least 15 years of contributions. After 1 January 2031, the retirement age will be raised every year by three months, until it reaches 67 years in 2038. For women, however, there will be a transition period until 2030, when their retirement conditions will converge with those of men. The retirement age will be increased by three months: thus in 2014, women can retire at age 61 and at least 15 years of contributions. From 1 January 2031, the retirement age will be increased by three months, so that from 1 January 2038 the

retirement condition for women will be 62 years and 35 years of contributions. The conditions for men and women will be gradually aligned in the transition period until 2030 also with regard to other forms of pensions. Early retirement, for instance, is possible for women at the moment at age 56 with at least 31 years of contributions, but the age and the years of contributions are set to increase by 3 months every year until 2029. The Croatian law also includes penalties for early retirement, in order to encourage later retirement with more years of contributions.

In *Bosnia and Herzegovina* the two entities have separate laws on pension and disability insurance, which are far from aligned. In the Republic of Srpska, according to the new law which came into force on 1 January 2012,





In BiH the two entities have different laws on pension and disability insurance which have not been aligned.

the right to retirement is acquired at age 65, with at least 15 years of contributions. Earlier retirement is possible for men at age 60 with 40 years of contributions, and for women at age 58 and 35 years of contributions. The law also stipulates the possibility of lowering the pension age below 55. Early retirement is possible only in case of disability. In the BiH Federation, the existing law on pension and disability insurance has not been revised. The right to retirement is acquired at age 65 with at least 20 years of contributions, or with 40 years of contributions regardless of age. Early retirement is possible for men at age 60 with 35 years of contributions, and for women at age 55 with 30 years of contributions.

In *Montenegro* it is possible to retire at age 67 with at least 15 years of contributions or with 40 years of contributions regardless of age. Exceptionally, in 2014 it is possible to retire at age 65 and 2 months (for men) or at age 60 and

According to the Croatian Law on Pension Insurance until 2030 it will be possible to retire at age 65 with at least 15 years of contributions. The Croatian law also includes penalties for early retirement, in order to encourage later retirement with more years of contributions.

three months (women), with a minimum of 15 years of contributions. The condition for early retirement is 62 years of age and at least 15 years of contributions. For women, each child they had is counted as additional six months of contributions.

Slovenia has also been gradually increasing the retirement age. The earliest a person can retired at the moment is at the age of 58 and 4 months, as long as they have 40 years of contributions and are ready to pay the difference in contributions until the age of full retirement. For women, the conditions are 58 years of age, and 38 years and 4 months of contributions, without additional payments. Over the coming years, the retirement age will be increased by four months every year, and in 2018 men will be able to retire at 60 with 40 years of contributions without additional payments (for women it is 2019). Children are counted towards the women's retirement age – six months for one child, 16 months for two, and 48 months for five or more. Years of army service are counted towards the men's retirement.

Source: EUaktiv.rs

Srebrenica Genocide Remembrance Day

On 11 July – the Srebrenica Genocide Remembrance Day, on behalf of the Coalition for RECOM, Centre for Civic Education (CCE) paid respects to the victims and reminded the public that even 19 years since that terrible crime the justice still remains to be done. As part of the commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide Remembrance Day, CCE activists distributed several hundred leaflets in Podgorica, and reminded the citizens of the importance of establishing RECOM (Regional Commission for seeking facts on war crimes and other grave violations of human rights committed during the conflict in the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 2001). CCE also organised and hosted a screening of the film “Halima’s Road” directed by Arsen Ostojić, which premiered at the Fast Forward Human Rights Film Festival 2013. The screening was accompanied by a panel discussion with RECOM’s representatives in Montenegro: **Duško Vuković**, journalist and a public advocate of RECOM, and **Tamara Milaš**, CCE’s programme associate. The discussion offered all interested citizens a chance to hear more about the importance of establishing a Regional Truth Commission.

The Initiative for RECOM brings together 2.050 human-rights related non-governmental organisations, associations of former camp inmates, refugees, families of missing persons, artists, writers, lawyers and other individuals who believe that only a regional approach can guarantee a comprehensive historical documentation of our recent past. After three years of consultations which included 128 national and regional debates and 9 international fora, the Coalition for RECOM adopted a draft RECOM Statute. The document is still being discussed with the authorities in the region which ought to take over the task of establishing RECOM.

Youth participation – more than a phrase?

On 23 July, Centre for Civic Education (CCE) presented a public policy proposal titled “Youth Participation – more than a phrase?”. The proposal is a result of a project of the same title, supported by the European Commission through its programme *Youth in Action*. Over the last six months, the project was jointly implemented by organisations from five states of the region – two EU member states (Croatia and Slovenia) and three candidates for membership (Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia). The participating organisations were: Centre for Civic Education (CCE) from Podgorica, Montenegro; West Balkan Institute (WEBIN) from Belgrade, Serbia; Umbrella organisation of Serbian Youth (KOMS) from Belgrade, Serbia; Youth Network Croatia (MMH) from Zagreb, Croatia; Slovenia Youth Council (MSS) from Ljubljana, Slovenia; and Coalition of Youth Organisations (SEGA) from Prilep, Macedonia. The goal of the project, which culminated in this conference, was to contribute to increasing the capacities and knowledge of national youth councils from EU member states and candidate countries to participate in the development of public policies and in preparing the national youth reports. Speakers at the event were **Jelena Bubanja**, coordinator of the Youth Sector in West Balkans Institute and **Miloš Knežević**, coordinator of the CCE Youth Group. The publication is available at <http://media.cgo-ccce.org/2014/09/youthparticipation.pdf>.

Protection of whistleblowers in Montenegro

Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CDNGO) organised on 25 July in Podgorica a round table to mark the successful completion of its project “*Protection of Whistleblowers in Montenegro*”, implemented in cooperation with NGO MANS and TV Vijesti, and funded by the USA Embassy to Montenegro. At the event, representatives of the state, private and non-governmental sector, as well as the wider Montenegrin public, had a chance to hear about the model Law on the protection of whistleblowers, which offers solutions to comprehensively regulate this issue and contribute to the development of legal prerequisites to effectively protect such persons.

The event was opened by **Ana Novaković**, executive director of CDNGO and H.E. **Sue K. Brown**, US Ambassador to Montenegro. Among the speakers were Svetlana Rajković, assistant to the Minister of Justice; **Aleksandar Damjanović**, member of the National Commission of for the implementation of the Strategy for the fight against corruption and organised crime (2010-2014); **Marina Vuković**, programme director of CDNGO; **Milislav Dragojević**, whistleblower, and others. **Snežana Kaluđerović**, CCE programme coordinator, attended the round table on behalf of the Centre for Civic Education.

The impact of political corruption on local decision-making processes

As part of its project “Local level corruption – zero tolerance!”, Centre for Civic Education (CCE) organised on 28 July a panel discussion titled “The impact of political corruption on local decision-making processes”. Speakers were **Daliborka Uljarević**, executive director of the Centre for Civic Education (CCE); **Stevo Muk**, president of the Board of Managers of Institute Alternative (IA); **Momčilo Vujošević**, president of the parliamentary group of the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS); **Aleksa Bečić**, leader of the parliamentary list of the Socialist People's Party (SNP) at the local elections in Podgorica and **Slaviša Čurović**, local MP of the Democratic Front in Podgorica and member of the DF's Civic Club.

Daliborka Uljarević warned that political corruption has grown to alarming proportions in the last few years, especially at the local level, and said that “the worst and the most dangerous part was that the political corruption has undermined the fight against corruption initiated in our state and society by those who are aware of its devastating consequences”. She pointed to the lack of effectiveness of public institutions and concluded that “various affairs that are all symbolically summed up in the



‘Recording’ should be seen through, if we are to establish functional democracy”.

Stevo Muk stressed that “political corruption is not limited to abuse in the context of elections to local or the national parliament, or to the ways in which the MPs then appoint public executives (in these parliaments)”, but also comprises the lack of proactive investigations by the prosecutors. Muk also spoke at length about the impact of political corruption on employment, public procurement and private-public partnerships.

Momčilo Vujošević presented the current legal and institutional framework for the fight against corruption at the local level and warned that “the line is very thin before what we could call political corruption and what others consider to be free expression of their opinion”. He concluded that “in order to make anti-corruption policies more effective, we need a more active approach by all societal actors, but not in a way that takes over the work of public institutions by overloading them with unnecessary and unfounded complaints, because if these institutions are treated generically, it will be very hard to combat corruption”.

Aleksa Bečić revisited the cases of political corruption he encountered as a local MP in the Capital City which, he said, is reflected in “continuous gerrymandering of the electoral will of the citizens of Podgorica, as well as of other municipalities, which undermine the very act of elections as one of the key democratic achievements here and abroad”.

Slaviša Čurović pointed to vote-buying as one of the key obstacles to democracy and said this “unprecedented phenomenon has become part of our dark everyday lives”. He added that Montenegro has a good legal framework, but the problems arise when it comes to its implementation. Čurović concluded that “It will be impossible to change the climate in a society like this without changing the system, whose end can be very dangerous and very long”.

The panel brought together about 30 representatives of local governments that were part of this project, relevant public institutions, political parties, NGOs, media, diplomatic representatives etc. The project “**Local level corruption – Zero tolerance**” is implemented by the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) in cooperation with NGO Institute Alternative (IA) from Podgorica, NGO Bonum from Pljevlja and NGO Nada from Herzeg Novi, with support of the EU IPA 2011 funds via the EU Delegation to Montenegro, and with co-funding from the Royal Embassy of Norway.

Prepared by: A.V

Summer School “Prejudice, Genocide, Remembrance” in Budapest, Hungary

The Tom Lantos Institute (Budapest), the Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Education and Psychology (Budapest), and CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe (Brussels) are organizing a European Summer School, on “Prejudice, Genocide, Remembrance” - 25-29 August 2014 in Budapest, Hungary

The Summer School combines substantive education with skills training. In its methodology it combines collective-memory workshops with the discussion of relevant cases of human rights violations and the teaching of skills to prevent and counter these violations. The lectures and trainings will focus on the following themes: The Holocaust and the Roma genocide; Prejudices: then and now; Anti-discrimination: countering anti-Semitism and racism against Roma; After genocide: collective memory and reconciliation; Minority rights including Roma rights; Human rights education, holocaust education, education on anti-Semitism; Human rights, minority rights and public policies; Human rights in the media.

The summer school is open to: educators from secondary and higher education; journalists; civil servants, decision-makers and public officials who deal primarily with education policies, human and minority right and other related policy-fields; members of CSOs, practitioners; representatives of the different churches; MA and PhD students who wish to acquire competitive personal competence beneficial for their future careers in academia or in practice-oriented professions. A good command of English is required as the language of the Summer School will be English.

Tom Lantos Institute offers 10 scholarships for applicants from the member states of the Council of Europe. The scholarships cover the tuition, accommodation, meals and travel costs to Budapest.

The application deadline is 20 July 2014.

For further information please visit: <http://tomlantosinstitute.hu/content/call-applications-european-summer-school-prejudice-genocide-remembrance-25-29-august-2014>

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