

European pulse

Electronic monthly magazine for European integration

No. 122, November 2015

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The EC keeps reiterating the same problems, but to what effect?

Interview

Nikola Marković,
Commission for the monitoring of
investigations into attacks on journalists

Challenges in the EU

After Paris – Western unity ever more
difficult, and ever more essential



Foreword: C...



Vladan Žugić

I had a professor in high school who used to give “C...” to those students he wished to distinguish from those he failed, but who were in his opinion very far from B.

That's exactly what Montenegro got from the European Commission for 2015. Most chapters of the progress report found that "some progress" has been achieved, which in Brussels-speak is an equivalent of a C.

In fact, this year's Progress Report brought nothing new, except for a new grading scale which benchmarks a country's results both against its prior achievements and against the overall process of accession, for which the new EC should be commended. The month-long delay in the publication of the Progress Report, on the other hand, is far from praiseworthy.

Once again, the EC reiterated its criticisms regarding the freedom of expression, insufficient track record on the rule of law, especially in fighting corruption on the highest level, problems with the public broadcaster RTCG, criminal networks, vote-buying by DPS...

And yet, the EC apparently lowered its criteria on the rule of law in anticipation of NATO invitation, which came fifteen days after the publication of the Progress Report.

Next year's parliamentary elections will be the litmus test of the progress achieved on political criteria in 2016, as they are to be conducted according to the new electoral rules and without abuse of public resources for party purposes.

In 2016, the Commission will also monitor the number of benchmarks the country successfully completed. Now, the 2016 Progress Report is bound to be an interesting read.

Calendar

- November 4 **We are going to need EUR 1 billion for the protection of environment** / Chapter 27 - Environment, is one of the most demanding in the membership negotiation process. Meeting all the standards stipulated by this chapter will cost Montenegro about EUR 1 billion, it was revealed during the public debate about this chapter.
- November 10 **2015 Progress report published** / The latest European Commission Progress report on Montenegro states that the election legislation, adopted in 2014, has to be fully implemented, and reminds that there were no political consequences of the affair “Recording”. The EC urged all parties to restore dialogue in the Parliament after the DF's protests.
- On chapter 23, the Report states that in the coming year Montenegro has to demonstrate a track record on investigations, prosecutions and final verdicts in corruption cases, especially those of high-level corruption. Regarding the fight against organised crime, in 2016 Montenegro will have to focus on improving its track record, including in the “dispersion of criminal networks and confiscation of wealth obtained through crime”. The EC also warned that cooperation between the Government and NGOs should be improved, expressing concerns over personal targeting of some NGO activists by the local media. The Report further stated that Montenegro should focus on and resolve the cases of attacks on the media, as well as ensure independence of public broadcaster (RTCG). It also notes that Montenegro continues to play an important role in regional cooperation, and commends the signing of border agreements with BiH and Kosovo. The report warns, however, that Montenegro is still at an early stage in terms of environment and climate change.
- November 18 **Fishermen have to organise better** / During a debate on fisheries in Herceg Novi, **Mitja Drobnič**, head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro, told Montenegrin fishermen to organise themselves and use their knowledge better so that they could make the most out of the pre-accession funds. Fishermen from all coastal municipalities asked for public assistance in resolving long-time problems, from fuel subsidies to the lack of fishing ports, barriers to export, and access to financial resources.
- November 20 **Visa-free regime for the Balkans remains in force** / As part of the set of adopted measures to fight terrorism, the European Union will amend Schengen provisions and reintroduce passport controls at its external borders also for the EU citizens. However, the visa-free regime for a period up to three months remains in force for the citizens of Western Balkan states

Deteriorating media situation reflects on the overall readiness to join EU



By: Johannes Hahn

This is the third time that the European Commission hosts the Speak-Up! Conference on the freedom of media and expression in enlargement countries.

The first Speak-up! event back in 2011 sent out a clear message that media freedom is fundamental to enlargement policy and underlined the importance of the media community as interlocutors for the Commission. Your view counts!. The second event – in June 2013 – was devoted to a thorough analysis of the different challenges of freedom of expression. The main conclusion was that the media issues in the enlargement countries require a long term engagement from the aspiring countries and the EU.

I have heard it said that the EU has "lost its interest" in media freedom in the Western Balkans and in Turkey. Let me be very clear: Freedom of media is at the core of the EU integration process and is not negotiable!

I firmly believe that one cannot have a properly functioning rule of law in a country in some areas, and then at the same time have many court cases where judges rule against journalists - only because they have been critical about government officials.

Threats to free journalism are complex. Media working today both in the EU and in the enlargement countries face major challenges. Vested interests often make it difficult for independent media to survive financially.

However, when we observe the media landscape in the enlargement region, we see fewer and fewer diverging opinions in media, at least in some countries, less investigative stories and even the disappearance of popular critical TV shows. Does it mean that governments work flawlessly or that there are no more corrupt business practices to investigate? This is rather doubtful.

Today's flourishing online and social media is a great contribution to our democracies. And citizens' media can play an important part. However, not all sources can be read with the same degree of trust. This is why we must continue to support professional journalism and the training of journalists.

This also means overcoming the often "digital" attitude in public discussions, of being either entirely "for" or entirely "against" something or someone. This will foster a true dialogue and a culture of compromise, which is key for a developed democracy. I would go even further: citizens need quality journalism to nourish their critical

thinking. This is what being a European is all about!

More efforts are needed to ensure the political and financial independence of public service broadcasters, to strengthen regulatory agencies and foster functional media self-regulation. And there is a need to prevent informal economic pressure on the media, including through increasing transparency of media ownership, preventing its excessive concentration and ensuring transparent rules on procurement of government advertising are in place.

Unfortunately, while the legal framework for freedom of expression and the media is largely in place in the enlargement countries, the law enforcement and the reality remains an issue of serious concern. In some countries it has continued to deteriorate. Sometimes governments themselves contribute to a climate of fear which demonises journalists critical of government policy as traitors, leading to self-censorship. Here, governments have a clear responsibility: they need to guarantee a safe environment where different opinion can be expressed and where all citizens have access to factual and objective information.

But not only governments have to assume their responsibility, also civil society and media representatives have important roles to play in holding governments to account when it comes to media freedom. The countries that have chosen closer relations with the EU have to live up to European standards in the media field. It's a challenge. But the alternative is a weakened process of state building, without democratic control, with limited scrutiny of corruption and public opinion dangerously exposed to misinformation and even to pressures from abroad.

The Commission has carefully considered the situation in each country and presented its recommendations for the improvement of freedom of media for the next 12 months. You know far better than I the power of freedom of expression, and the threats which it faces. Our challenge here is to harness that power and to combat the threat. I assure you that the European Commission is and will remain committed to this issue.

Excerpts from the speech of the European Commissioner for enlargement at the media freedom conference "Speak up!", 4 November 2015.

Will repeating the recommendations from earlier reports nudge Montenegro further down its European path?

All progress is undermined by problems in a handful of key areas



By: Svetlana Pešić

The fact that the European Commission (EC) has been warning from one Progress report to another about the lack of progress in a handful of key areas, sometimes even citing the criticisms from previous reports, only undermines the positive results achieved in all other areas.

Such criticisms typically concern issues within Chapter 23 (Judiciary and fundamental rights) and 24 (Justice, freedom and security). Typical examples are the lack of progress in the fight against corruption, especially on the highest level; failure to fully investigate assaults on the media; lack of confiscations of criminal assets and impunity for war crimes. On these issues, Brussels has practically copy-pasted its findings from one report to the next. This year's report, for instance, observes that "Financial investigations are not yet systematically used" and that "Seizure and confiscation of criminal assets should be systematically ordered".

"Montenegro should strengthen the independence of its judiciary in the coming year, and ensure its greater accountability and effectiveness, establish a track record on effective investigation, prosecution, and

The European Commission (EC) has been warning from one Progress report to another about the lack of progress in a handful of key areas, sometimes even citing the criticisms from previous reports. Typical examples are the impunity for assaults on journalists, war crimes and seizure of criminal assets.

final convictions in corruption cases, in particular regarding high-level corruption, and increase the capacity to conduct financial investigations".

With regard to the prosecution of war crimes, the observation that that "Montenegro's prosecution service needs to demonstrate a more proactive approach", as well as that "the judicial decisions reached so far have contained legal mistakes and shortcomings in the application of international humanitarian law", is only a slight reformulation of the last year Report's reminder that "Charges of command responsibility, co-perpetration and aiding and abetting have so far not been brought" and that "Montenegro needs to ensure that victims of war crimes have access to justice and reparations".

Regarding the freedom of expression, on which Montenegro received the lowest possible marks, the EC expressed concern that "There were instances of attacks against media practitioners and property during the reporting period, albeit fewer than in previous years". It added that "Some cases of violence against the media remain to be resolved, including the most serious case, that of the murder of an editor-in-chief

The lack of tangible progress in these areas will most certainly undermine the positive results achieved with regard to adoption of new legislation and establishment of new and strengthening of existing institutions, said the Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro Mitja Drobnič.

in 2004. Lack of solid professional and ethical standards, accompanied by lack of efficient self-regulation, does not advance media freedom".

Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro **Mitja Drobnič** believes that the process of European integration poses a "common challenge which demands that all parties should invest maximum effort and concentrate on the common goals".

He added that the process usually takes time, is extremely technical, and will only bear fruit in the long run. "Quality reforms in complex sectors, such as the rule of law, cannot be achieved overnight. Problems are likely to continue for a few years before we have some concrete results", Drobnič said.



Mitja Drobnič

Drobnič reminded that in this year's Report, the EC concluded that Montenegro continued to make progress on political and economical criteria, and improved its ability to assume obligations of EU membership. Regarding the remaining areas of concern, Drobnič reiterated that: "the EC expects Montenegro to

ensure systematic confiscations of criminal assets, as well as to take a more proactive approach in following the outstanding allegations of war crimes.

"Montenegro needs to do more to fight impunity over war crimes, and effectively investigate, prosecute, try and punish war crimes in line with international standards. Regarding freedom of the media, work needs to continue to solve older cases, including the 2004 murder of an editor-in-chief, and identify not only the material perpetrators but also those behind the attack", Drobnič told European pulse.

For the key problem areas, it is impossible to develop effective solutions in a mere year. It takes time for the system to start yielding the necessary sustainable results, and it is to be expected that the same issues will keep appearing in the future Progress reports as key preconditions for Montenegro to demonstrate its willingness to fully implement the principles of the rule of law, said the chief negotiator Aleksandar Andrija Pejović.

"The lack of tangible progress in these areas will most certainly undermine the positive results achieved with regard to adoption of new legislation and establishment of new and strengthening of existing institutions", Drobnič said.

State secretary and Montenegro's chief negotiator with the EU **Aleksandar Andrija Pejović** claims that this year's Progress report was "the best one so far", which, in his words, "shows that we are dedicated to meeting the obligations that stem from the process of negotiations."

"Alongside with the progress noted in all areas, the Report highlighted some challenges and provides the guidelines on how to best plan and implement future activities in the negotiation process. The Government of Montenegro and negotiation structure carefully analyse all recommendations from the annual Progress reports, and use them to create policies and guidelines for the continuation of the reforms", Pejović told the European pulse.

He added that, "being aware of the need to adequately regulate confiscation of criminal assets, we adopted the Law on confiscation of criminal assets in September."

"The Law provides the basis for establishment of bodies that will be in charge of confiscation and management of criminal assets, thus regulating the areas that were not covered by the previous legislation. With 40 million



Aleksandar Andrija Pejović

worth of assets confiscated in just two cases, Šarić and Kalić, Montenegro is among the top performers in Europe in terms of per capita amounts of confiscated assets. This issue has been singled out in the provisional benchmarks for chapters 23 and 24. The EC obviously stressed the need for further work in this area and the establishment of continuous track record that would demonstrate that the new legal and institutional provisions are capable of delivering results", Pejović said.

As for the investigations into war crimes, according to Pejović, "Over the past years Montenegro undertook a series of activities, in line with the Strategy for the investigation of war crimes, which undoubtedly demonstrate our commitment in this field".

He added that "we have cooperation with state prosecutors from the region, with whom we continuously exchange data and information, in order to prosecute the potential perpetrators of war crimes. However, in this area too it will take some time until we bring this process to completion".

As regards attacks on the media, the chief negotiator reminded that the Government had established the Commission for monitoring investigations into threats

and violence against journalists and assassinations of journalists. "The Commission was provided with premises, access to confidential information, and has so far provided the Government with two reports. In addition to this, the relevant authorities are continuously working to prevent violence against journalists, and all cases that were brought before courts were swiftly processed and received verdicts in the first instance. There is a consensus among judicial bodies that such cases should be given priority. Defamation and insult have already been decriminalised, and the courts are adhering to the practice of the European Court of Human Rights when determining compensation in civil proceedings. The latest amendments to the Criminal Code also introduce procedures to limit investigations against journalists who perpetrated the offence of violation of privacy where such violations led to discovery of certain criminal activities", Pejović said.

He stressed that "all three areas cannot be dealt with within one year".

"It takes time for the system to start yielding the necessary sustainable results, and it is to be expected that the same issues will keep appearing in the future Progress reports as key preconditions for Montenegro to demonstrate its willingness to fully implement the principles of the rule of law", Pejović said.

President of the Commission for the monitoring of investigations into attacks on journalists

This government is not ready to support media freedom



Nikola Marković

Nikola Marković, president of the Commission for the monitoring of investigations into attacks on journalists and editor of daily *Dan*, told *European pulse* that the latest European Commission Progress report, which gave the lowest possible rating to the of the media in Montenegro, only confirmed real state of affairs.

“Our country is suffering from multiple manifestations of soft censorship. Nobody will forbid you to publish anything. However, you have to be prepared to bear the consequences of critical articles, which come in the guise of insults, intimidation, beatings, even assassinations of journalists. The government proved that it is not really willing to support the media freedom and its values. To the contrary, **Đukanović's** government did everything it could to transplant regional tabloids into the country. Long experience in all kinds of manipulation suggests that Đukanović is not doing this in order to defend diversity, but is importing tabloids and spin doctors in order to create the impression that all media are the same, and make them all equally repulsive to the citizens. In this way, those in power hope to cover up numerous affairs brought against them by independent media” Marković said.

» *Do you believe that the authorities will act in accordance with EC's recommendations and implement recommendation provided by the Commission for the the monitoring of investigations into attacks on journalists?*

If it wanted to do something, the Government would not have waited for the EC Report to act. We asked the Government several times to offer rewards for information that could shed some light on the assaults on journalists, but Đukanović refused every time.

He even refused to confirm the reward for information on the assassination of **Duško Jovanović**, even though then minister of justice **Dragan Đurović** offered a multi-million reward in 2004. Why would he be afraid to make an offer like that, unless it could lead to someone close to him?

» *One of the cases the Commission dealt with were the assaults on journalist Tifk Softić? It was recently stated that these cases have been closed due to expiry of the statute of limitation. What do you say to that?*

In any other society, investigations into attacks on

Key reason why there is no unique self-regulation is that the independent and regime media have different systems of values. In my opinion, Đukanović is a dictator, his brother a tycoon who is robbing this state, and, for instance, Brano Mićunović is a criminal. For some of the editors of regime media, Đukanović is a democrat, his brother a prominent banker, and Mićunović a humanist and long-time sportsman. So how do you expect us to be on the same page on this one?

journalists, who are seen as the keepers of democracy, would never be closed. Instead, some new legal procedure would be found to ensure that the investigation proceeds until the perpetrators have been found.

I understand that not all cases can be solved, and I also understand that it takes time to investigate them, but if the state wants to prove that it really has an interest in solving these cases, then it must also address the responsibility for such failures. Not a single police official or prosecutor has been dismissed or replaced since the assassination of Duško Jovanović, despite the overall inefficiency of the investigation and numerous omissions. This is a clear signal of the lack of political will to punish the assaults on journalists.

So hiding behind the legal and procedural excuses does not fool anybody.

You can read as much also in the Progress Report. could have seen that the estimates provided in Progress report clearly indicate the same. Most of what the Commission has to say on media freedom in Montenegro comes from the recommendations and opinions I submitted to the representatives EC as president of Commission for the monitoring of investigations. It does give me personal satisfaction, but it is also an illustration of the awful truth that our recommendations are accepted by the EC, but not by our Government.

» *In its Progress report, the EC wrote that “Montenegro needs to focus on solving earlier cases of violence against media, including the case of assassination (Duško Jovanović) from 2004. Do you expect any progress on this case in the coming year?”*

As the president of the Commission, and with the help of our counterpart in Serbia, I have successfully arranged an interview with a person who offered to be a protected witness. Regardless of the veracity of his claims, what



Nikola Marković

worries me is that since March the prosecution did not find the time to interrogate him and check his claims from March of this year. If the Serbian prosecution and police found his statement relevant, then why did not our prosecution do the same? There are many things that point to obstruction in this case. I believe

that one of the reasons, beside political motives, is also the fact that the person who communicated the information to me, **Mihailo Jovović**, **Veran Matić** and representatives of Serbian judicial bodies, by his own admission already told the same story in 2008 to the former Montenegrin special prosecutor, who did not lift one finger to investigate these claims.

» *The EC also pointed out that there is no adequate self-regulation of the media in Montenegro. Is it possible to progress in that area and how?*

Given the current situation, we cannot expect the establishment of one independent self-regulation body, because self-regulation means that the media should improve on their own in order to become as professional as possible for the sake of the citizens. This is hard to do when there is a group of media regulated in line with instructions from DPS. Then there is the issue of relevance. Why would the independent media waste their hard-earned credibility by sharing it with the regime media which enjoyed very little trust, whether we measure it by the opinion polls or by the number of sold copies.

Finally, key reason why there is no single body for self-regulation is that the independent and regime media have different systems of values. In my opinion, **Đukanović** is a dictator, his brother a tycoon who is plundering this state, and **Brano Mićunović**, for instance, is a criminal. For some of the editors of the regime media, **Đukanović** is a democrat, his brother a prominent banker, and **Mićunović** a humanist and an old sportsman. So how do you expect us to be on the same page on this one?

V.Žugić

EC to address financial discrimination of independent media

» *Is it possible to put an end to the discriminatory treatment of critical media in terms of state advertising, as demanded by EC?*

The EC will address the issue of financial pressure next year. In all of my discussions with EU representatives, I was assured that as part of the membership negotiations with Montenegro the EU intends to address public procurement in 2016. It is a mechanism that will reduce, not eradicate the need of the government to use citizens' money to bail out the media supportive of its policy. There is no single parameter based on which you can know how the state, as the largest user source of advertising funds, decides where to advertise next. It is not based on the number of copies, or on influence, because if these were the case, then the majority of advertisements would go to *Dan* and *Vijesti*, whereas this is evidently not the case.

This is where you also have several types of discrimination. First, by financing these media, government is preventing a fair market game, since not all of us start from the same position. Second, many private companies follow the government's lead and move their advertising to the regime media - not because of financial reasons, but out of fear of various inspections and political retaliation. And third, media illegally assisted by the government launch campaigns against independent media in order to undermine their credibility, thereby reducing the readership. Our only hope lies in a more timely implementation of European standards and their rigid control.

The Police is doing everything it can to obstruct the work of the Commission

» *As the president of Commission, how would you assess your cooperation with institutions? Which ones are the least cooperative, or most obstructive to your efforts to uncover the facts?*

Besides the Government, the Police Department headed by **Slavko Stojanović** poses the greatest challenge since he is doing everything he can to obstruct the work of the Commission. Luckily, his obstructions are insignificant and not that innovative, which makes it perfectly clear for any international spectator that the problem lies with the same institution which is supposed to solve these cases - the Police. As for the prosecution, I must say that since the arrival of **Ivica Stanković** things began to improve. Even though these are minor steps, the prosecution, unlike the police, submitted all of the requested information to Commission without attempts to conceal identities and protect "personal" information.

Refugees will cost Germany EUR 21 billion



Hosting the refugees could cost Germany double of what was originally planned, according to experts from Ifo institute.

Munich-based Institute for economic research estimated that refugees will cost Germany EUR 21.1 billion this year alone, including accommodation, food, health care, education, German classes, training... According to an earlier estimate, the first year of reception was to cost EUR 10 billion, enough to cover food and accommodation for 800 000 persons. Many refugees lack the education necessary to work in Germany. More than 40% of the German industrial companies contacted by Ifo said that they could only hire refugees as unqualified labour force. For many German companies, the minimum wage of EUR 8.5 per hour introduced this year is an obstacle to the employment of refugees. However, according to the Organisation for economic cooperation and development (OECD), Germany can expect long-term economic benefit from waves of migration given Germany's aging population.

Journalists sue the European Parliament



29 European journalists filed complaints at the European Court of Justice against the European Parliament, for its alleged refusal to provide them with information on the spending of European MPs.

Journalists stressed that they did not request information about the things MPs spent their money on, but how they spend the money of European taxpayers, paid through their salaries to reimburse a variety of expenses. The Parliament rejected the request citing protection of information, however, journalists claim that this decision has no grounds in any European legislation.

Their request included copies of spending reports for a period of four years. The journalists were especially particularly interested in

the documents related to money which the European MPs receive “through salary”, including reimbursement for travels, per diems, and financing of staff.

In 2014, general cost reimbursement averaged EUR 4 299 per month, and included the costs of an MEPs’ office, telephone bills and computers. The payments were halved for those MEPs who attended less than half of the plenary sessions. European MPs have EUR 21 349 per month to pay their assistants, but the EP has been looking into ways to end to excessive employment of assistants.

Conservatives want mission-driven, i.e. government-controlled media

The new Polish government recently announced a reform of the public media – TV stations, radio stations and PAP agencies, which are supposed to be the “institutions of culture”, with a “mission” to promote – thereby implying possible changes in the management of the public media.



Furthermore, it was announced that the local press, mostly foreign-owned, will be “returned to the Polish people”. After the conservative party Right and Justice (PiS) won the elections, commentators in the Polish media expressed their concerns about the constitutional reform demanded by the leader of PiS, **Jarosław Kaczyński**, as well as his tendency toward authoritarian rule, and reminded of the attempts of control the public media during the PiS’ previous government in 2005-2007.

Piotr Gliński, the new deputy Prime Minister of Poland and Minister for Culture in the new conservative government, announced that from now on, the media will be turned into national cultural institutions of public importance.

“We would like to change ownership relations in the local press. As in the case of the banking sector, we will buy the media from the foreign owners when possible, and if not create our own institutions to improve the offer”, he explained. These announcements could be interpreted as a confirmation of the fears expressed by the Polish media after the victory of Right and Justice.

Jacek Nizinkiewicz told the right-centre paper **Rzeczpospolita** that the new government has to clarify whether it will try to control the public media like it tried to do back in 2005-2007.

Soft Censorship Eroding Media Freedom in Montenegro



Eroding Freedoms: Media and Soft Censorship in Montenegro



'Soft' censorship is quickening an already serious decline in media independence in Montenegro. This is the conclusion of a new report published today by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), the Centre for International Media Assistance (CIMA) and the Montenegrin-based Centre for Civic Education (CCE).

"Eroding Freedoms: Media and Soft Censorship in Montenegro" outlines a selective approach to the public funding that is manipulated to reward positive coverage of the work of authorities and otherwise withheld to punish media outlets that question official policies or practices. Media coverage is therefore polarised and encourages poor-quality journalism that is of little service to public discussion. As a result, media credibility has been severely diminished in the country.

Official soft censorship, or indirect censorship, is defined as "an array of official actions intended to influence media output, short of legal or extra-legal bans, direct censorship of specific content, or physical attacks on media outlets or media practitioners."

"Once again the research in Montenegro shows that soft censorship is one of the least talked about, but most effective ways of influencing media content," said WAN-IFRA Press Freedom director, **Andrew Heslop**.

"The effect of manipulation of public funds in a small media market with many competing outlets is simply huge."

Tragic examples of 'hard censorship', such as the unresolved murder of the editor-in-chief of daily *Dan*, **Duško Jovanović**, in 2004, and of other reported attacks on journalists and media property are testimony to the Montenegrin press' violent past. More recently, however, soft censorship has drastically increased and now has far-reaching negative effects in the country's media. Indirect, often financial pressures intended to weaken the capacity and even threaten the viability of targeted media outlets that criticize the government have become commonplace.

Research conducted by the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) in Montenegro catalogues the forms and maps the extent of soft censorship in the country's state and public institutions. While public spending on media remains unregulated, political actors exercise control or significant pressure on both

media content and viability by distributing these funds. The report's recommendations urge action to reverse the erosion of media freedom in Montenegro and improve prospects for the development of free, independent and pluralistic media. A lack of accurate, impartial reporting on the activities of government, political parties and other institutions has significantly slowed the democratisation of Montenegrin society and its governance structures. Full implementation of laws and regulations that prevent state interference in media business operations and media outlets' reporting, while ensuring fair opportunities for all media to obtain public funding and advertising is sorely needed – and required – in order to meet European Union standards, the report says.

"The entire process of democratisation and European integration of Montenegro is undermined by obstacles to the free development of independent media whose survival is endangered by unfair competition and state interference," said **Daliborka Uljarević**, Executive Director of the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) in Montenegro.

In addition, transparency of ownership structures should be mandatory and possible conflicts of interest publicly aired. Strict adherence to the journalists' code of conduct and appropriate mechanisms of accountability for violations overseen by a credible self-regulating body should be the norm, warns the report. *"If Montenegro's spending of public funds for advertising remains unregulated and the practices opaque, it will be very difficult to solve the problem of soft censorship there,"* said **Don Podesta**, Manager and Editor at CIMA.

The report for Montenegro was presented in Podgorica by **Ana Vujošević**, Programme Coordinator in the CCE and one of the authors, and **Daliborka Uljarević**, CCE Executive Director and editor of the report. **Mariona Sanz Cortel**, Project Manager in WAN IFRA participated via Skype.

Through detailed research into soft censorship practices globally, WAN-IFRA and CIMA are drawing attention to the kinds of widespread and deleterious problems facing independent media that rarely generate the same level of international outrage as direct attacks on the press. The findings and recommendations of the soft censorship research series aim to contribute to the implementation of fair and transparent rules that are necessary for the development of independent media sectors around the world, and can be seen at www.softcensorship.org.

A.V

Schengen is not the problem



By: Vladimir Vučković

After the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) took over the responsibility for 13 November terrorist attacks in Paris, ministers of interior of EU member states held an urgent meeting in Brussels to discuss the security challenges both at the global level and within the member states. To address terrorism and smuggling of weapons from the Middle East to the EU, the member states seek to reinforce the Schengen agreement to strengthen the EU's external borders. Some of them, however, also requested that internal internal border controls should be reinstated, andn the Schengen agreement provisionally suspended, not just because of terrorist threats, but also because of the large influx of immigrants from the Balkans. Nevertheless, we can be certain that the flow of people will not be hindered, and that people will be allowed to stay up to three months inside the Schengen area.

The terrorist attacks in Paris sparked a broad debate about the security and safety of EU citizens, but also raised questions about functionality of the EU area. The European Commission warned member states not to use the available safety mechanisms and border controls for the purpose of increased control of EU citizens. The Commission also pointed out that the controls are minimal, and that governments have made poor use of the existing safety provisions.

Inadequate security check of EU citizens that have been linked to terrorist recruitment centres are precisely what compromises the functional implementation of the Schengen agreement. According to Europol data, the database with the names of foreign fighters, suspects and associates who travel through Europe, Syria and Iraq has doubled in a year. Europol pointed out that they have identified 2 000 fighters. By reacting to France's request to enable "systematic and coordinated control" of external borders, European commissioner for migrations, internal affairs and citizenship **Dimitris Avramopoulos** said that "Schengen is not a problem", as the fault lies with the EU member states which do not adequately use the available safety mechanism. Furthermore, Europol director **Rob Wainwright** underlined in European Parliament that database of identified foreign fighters and suspects who

Any long-term suspension or abolishment of Schengen would constitute a major setback in the EU integration process, with dire consequences not just for the EU, but also for the Western Balkan states and their fragile stability and security

travel through Europe, Syria and Iraq has doubled in previous year, and now contains 10 000 names.

The Schengen agreement was signed in 1985 between Germany, France, Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, and came into force 10 years later. The purpose of this agreement is to abolish internal borders between EU member states and enable joint control of the external border with non-EU member states. The Schengen agreement made room for free movement of people from the area of signatory states. Every new member state has the obligation of implementing the norms of the Schengen agreement which had been incorporated into the EU acquis by the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam. By adopting the acquis, the member states agree to the requirements of control of EU airspace, maritime borders, visas, police cooperation and protection of personal information.

Clearly, the implementation of the Schengen agreement ought to become more efficient, which also would also include improvement of existing mechanisms to control more effectively the movement of foreign fighters, and special mechanisms to combat weapons smuggling. It is necessary to strengthen existing norms that regulate the control of internal and external borders for the sake of early discovery and timely response to security threats that are becoming more and more complex. However, any long-term suspension or abolishment of Schengen would constitute a major setback in the integration processes, with dire consequences not just for the EU, but also for the Western Balkan states and their fragile stability and security.

Chapter 35: Other issues



By: Chiara Gaia Iascone

The new approach in negotiations with both Montenegro and Croatia introduced 35 chapters of *acquis communautaire* of European Union, meaning that the corpus of EU laws have been divided into 35 sections in order to facilitate consultation and screening of national laws and regulations. During the screening process there will be certain issues that are not covered by any of the individual chapters but which play a major role in the process of negotiations, both for the candidate country and for the EU member states.

Areas covered by this chapter are addressed at the very end of negotiations process. Even though there is no concise explanation as to what should this chapter cover, it does include “various issues” (...) *that were not covered under any other negotiations chapter.* Contents of this chapter vary from one country to another,

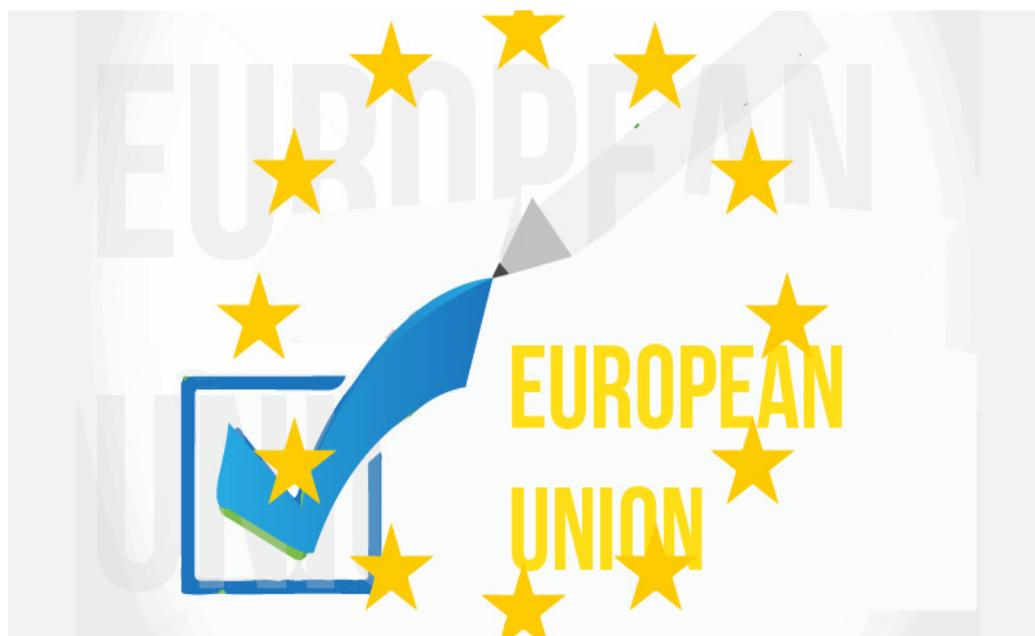
making it impossible to predict entirely which “other issues” will be pending in negotiations between a certain state and the EU. In the past, they have commonly concerned issues of participation in the European Investment Bank, Research Fund for the coal and steel, and similar.

In case of Croatia, there were eight topics in this chapter, which addressed the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Research Fund for coal and steel, agreements related to the transitional period, implementation and management of pre-accession funds in Croatia, amendments to the statute of the European Investment Bank, agreement on partial cancellation of input/output declarations for goods transiting the Neum corridor, monitoring and protection, as well as the Protocol on specific arrangements concerning the potential one-time transfers of “allocated carbon trade emissions” in Croatia under the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the related compensation.

Montenegro's experience will probably be different and it is more likely that chapter 35 will further address the issues of monitoring, regarded as troublesome and contentious. The Government of Montenegro was asked to address many issues related to local and international developments improve the situation in a great number of areas relevant to the country's entry into the EU. Above all, it has to ensure independence and freedom of the media – especially in terms of resolving cases of physical and verbal attacks on Montenegrin journalists which occurred in the recent years.

As underlined in seven key priorities the European Commission identified in its





Opinion on Montenegro's membership application, there is a need to *increase media freedom by aligning the country's practices with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights related to defamation and strengthening of cooperation with civil society*. The 2011 Progress report mentioned some improvement in media freedom. References to defamation and insult were removed from the Criminal Code, and the Supreme Court issued guidelines setting the level of financial compensation awarded in cases of defamation in line with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, and organised a training for judges. However, the actual implementation of the Supreme Court's recommendations on defamation still has to be confirmed.

Cases of corruption in state administration, as well as cases related to the privatisation of former state-owned companies require impartial investigations. This is the case with the privatisation of the Telecom Montenegro, which was sold to the Hungarian Telecom, and which was also examined by the US prosecutors.

The Government also has to find a solution to

the accumulated debts of the Russian-owned Aluminium Company (KAP), whose electricity bill caused losses to the national electricity company (Elektroprivreda Montenegro - EPCG). With EPCG being state-owned, this led to increases in the price of electricity for Montenegrin citizens.

In addition to priority number 6 on media and the civil society, identified in the Commission's Opinion on Montenegro's membership application, the country was also asked to improve the legislative and oversight role of the Parliament, as well as to improve electoral legislation in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission. There was some improvement in this regard, however, the Parliament still needs to improve its administrative capacities.

Additionally, the rule of law and, particularly, independence of judiciary pose very important challenges that feature prominently in the 2011 progress report. The importance of these issues was emphasised in the decision to initiate the screenings on Chapter 23 – Judiciary and fundamental rights. Fight against corruption and organised crime, and application of anti-



discrimination policies towards minorities and LGBT population remain contentious issues. When accession negotiations start, it is most likely that focus will be on key priorities, as a test of the situation in country on its path to Union.

Once Montenegro joins the European Union, it is likely to encounter two further challenges: first, the language, and second, further enlargement to the Western Balkan states. It is expected that in June 2013, Croatian will become the 24th official language of the EU, but Montenegrin language poses additional difficulties, as language is a sensitive matter in that country, especially because of its connection with the issue of national identity. For instance, the UN Tribunal for war crimes introduced BCS (Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian) as a way to overcome this sensitive issue. A positive answer to this peculiarity would be the use of a BCSMNE language in order to avoid complaints from some of the member states.

Joining the EU is not a simple matter of harmonising member state's laws with the EU

Even though Montenegro already uses euro as its official tender, it is questionable whether it will be able to meet the requirements necessary to join the monetary union. These stipulate that the public debt must not exceed 60% of the GDP, that inflation must not be higher than 1.5% above the level of the three EU member states with lowest inflation, and that the public budget deficit should not exceed 3% of revenues in the previous fiscal year. This leaves open the dilemma as to what would happen in case Montenegro is unable to meet the required conditions.

acquis, but a matter of great effort to continuously transform institutions and policies.

The 2015 EU Enlargement Strategy

Thorough preparations key to the EU membership

On 10 November, a month later than usual, the European Commission published its assessments of the progress of countries in the accession process, as well as the Strategy outlining the plans for the enlargement policy in the coming years. The Commission notes that many enlargement countries have made progress in the past year. A Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) was signed with Kosovo in October and the SAA with Bosnia and Herzegovina entered into force in June. The accession negotiations that began with Montenegro in 2012 and Serbia in 2014 are progressing well. Albania was also granted candidate status in 2014, but still has to address a number of key priorities before the Commission can recommend the opening of accession negotiations. On the other hand, negotiations with Turkey, that began in 2005, are moving forward only slowly, and the accession process with Macedonia remains at an impasse.

The key challenge remains the rule of law: judicial systems are not sufficiently independent, efficient or accountable, and serious efforts are still needed to tackle organised crime and corruption. Most countries also face significant challenges in terms of economic competitiveness. Overall, the Commission believes that the challenges faced by these countries are such that none will be ready to join the EU during the mandate of the current Commission, that is before 2020, warns the document.

At the same time, the Commission recognises that the EU's enlargement policy is an investment in peace, security and stability in Europe, and believes that the prospect of EU membership still has a powerful transformative effect on the countries

The key challenge remains the rule of law: judicial systems are not sufficiently independent, efficient or accountable, and serious efforts are still needed to tackle organised crime and corruption. Most countries also face significant challenges in terms of economic competitiveness.

The Commission believes that none of the Western Balkan states or Turkey will be ready to join the EU during the mandate of the current Commission, that is before 2020.

concerned, embedding positive democratic, political, economic and societal change. But enlargement can only be of benefit to the EU and to partner countries if there is genuine, sustainable reform. This is why ensuring future Member States are well prepared is crucial for the credibility of enlargement policy, as well as for public support in both current and future Member States.

The longer-term nature of the challenges faced by the enlargement countries underlines the need to reaffirm the strong focus on the principle of "fundamentals first" in the accession process. This year's review therefore pays special attention to the key areas of rule of law, fundamental rights, the functioning of democratic institutions, and economic development.

Rule of Law

The Strategy warns that the rule of law is not only a fundamental democratic principle but also a crucial precondition for a stable business environment and growth. In general, this remains a challenge for all enlargement countries, especially in terms of improving the functioning and independence of the judiciary. Some countries have seen positive developments: *Serbia* has put together comprehensive action plans for reforms, and *Montenegro* is completing the necessary legal frameworks and institutional structures. The Commission also commended *Kosovo* on its decision to establish the Specialist Chambers to try serious crimes committed in the context of the Kosovo conflict as a significant step forward. However, the document stresses that all these countries still have to ensure that these changes are fully implemented. The Commission also urged *Albania* to adopt the judicial reform package in the near future, as well as to demonstrate a solid track record of pro-active investigations, prosecutions and final convictions at all levels in the fight against

corruption and organised crime. Moreover, the Commission expressed concern about a number of serious threats to the rule of law observed over the last twelve months. It warned that the independence of the judicial system in *Turkey* has been undermined by political interference in individual cases, including through reassignment and arrest of judges, and that the wiretapping case in *Macedonia* also brought to light widespread attacks on the rule of law, abuses of fundamental rights and weaknesses in the democratic functioning of the state. That these shortcomings have occurred despite many rule of law and other reforms having been introduced both in terms of legislation and the establishment of relevant institutional structures only highlights the importance of countries in the enlargement process delivering on reforms in practice and not only on paper, states the Strategy.

Fundamental rights

The Commission notes that the fundamental rights are largely enshrined in the legislation of the enlargement countries but warns that more needs to be done to ensure they are fully implemented in practice. Freedom of expression and media remains a particular concern, and the document points especially to undue political interference in the work of public broadcasters in the Western Balkans, as well as intimidation of journalists and limited progress with media self-regulation. The Commission expressed special concern about *Turkey*, where the freedom of expression has been severely curtailed, both through legislative changes as well as in practice through prosecutions for allegedly insulting high level politicians. However, it also noted deterioration in this field in BiH and noted that cases of attacks against media practitioners and property have again been registered in Montenegro, although somewhat fewer than in previous years. The Commission commended Serbian authorities for taking steps to strengthen the protection of the rights LGBT persons, and for facilitating a pride parade in Belgrade, but noted that a stronger culture of respect for LGBT persons is still needed. Overall, the document urges all enlargement countries to ensure better protection of minorities and vulnerable groups, especially Roma, and curb discrimination and hostility on grounds of sexual identity.

Functioning of democratic institutions

The Strategy warns that democratic institutions remain fragile in a number of countries. Some positive developments were noted in Albania and

Freedom of expression and media remains a particular concern, and the Strategy points especially to undue political interference in the work of public broadcasters in the Western Balkans, as well as intimidation of journalists and limited progress with media self-regulation.

BiH, both of which conducted orderly elections in 2014 and 2015 and improved political cooperation. The elections in *Turkey* were much more tense, accompanied by protests and a deteriorating security situation. Boycotting of parliament has occurred in the reporting period in Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro. In Kosovo and Montenegro, members of the opposition have been involved in incidents of violence against the government. In Macedonia, the breakdown of political dialogue has caused significant upheaval and threatened the already fragile interethnic relations, and an intervention by the EU officials was required to return the Parliament to function.

Economic development and competitiveness

The enlargement countries have largely maintained overall macroeconomic stability in the past year, and modest recovery is continuing, with an expected average growth of 2.5% in 2015. However, these countries also face major structural economic and social challenges, including low revenues and exports and very high unemployment. The unemployment rate is on average 22%, and is especially high in BiH and Kosovo, where the lack of job opportunities inside the countries is prompting emigration and reliance on remittances from abroad. Albania and Montenegro are grappling with rapidly increasing public and private indebtedness, and informal economy remains a challenge in much of the Balkans. Over the past year, the Commission created several initiatives to counter these challenges. From this year, all enlargement countries will be asked to submit Economic Reform Programmes addressing medium-term macroeconomic and fiscal policy framework as well as structural reforms, which will be closely monitored by the Commission. Initiatives to improve cross-border transport infrastructure and unify energy markets were also set in motion, in the hope that a larger regional market would attract more investment to these countries.

V.Šćepanović

After Paris

Western unity ever more difficult, ever more essential



By: Daniela Schwarzer

Terrorist attacks in Paris caused tremendous shock and grief, but also fear and insecurity, not only in France, but throughout Europe. This new wave of Islamist terror, which may be followed by further attacks in Europe and elsewhere, has hit France and the EU at a particularly sensitive moment. The atrocious killings may have disruptive effects for European integration, liberalism, and democracy in Europe, in particular given the multiple crises the Union is already facing.



By: Ivan Vejvoda

European policymakers have three prime tasks now. The first is to continue to show unequivocal solidarity with Paris and stand united. But European states must now work much more determinately toward a unified, robust response to the threat posed by the self-declared Islamic State group (ISIS). And they need to decide how to confront the multiple challenges posed to our societies.

Beyond supporting France, the priority for Europe's states is now to get their act together on foreign policy in the Middle East. The Islamic State militant group has claimed responsibility for the carnage, not even a year after Paris had been the target of a terrorist attack that killed 17, leading France's President **Hollande** to declare that "France is at war with Daesh." France will not be able to win this war alone.

It is time to set aside differences over how to deal with Syria's President Bashar al-Assad. Divisions over Assad between France, Germany, the United States, Russia, and others has stood in the way of a more robust response to ISIS, but also to a better response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

Under the shadow of the dramatic scenes in Paris, Saturday's meeting in Vienna of the International Syria Support Group of 17

nations, the United Nations, the EU, and the Arab League led to the first breakthrough in devising a political solution for Syria. The question Western leaders yet need to tackle is whether more military intervention will be required to support the envisaged political process on the ground.

More decided action in the Middle East is also needed as part of Europe's response to the refugee crisis. The distribution of refugees was already testing European unity, and will now likely become an even more contentious issue. As early as Saturday, populist leaders around Europe demanded an end to the influx of migrants from the Middle East and Africa. Political leaders in Poland and Slovakia's Prime Minister **Robert Fico** reiterated their resistance to an EU refugee quota system. The growing sense of insecurity in Europe will make it even more difficult for Europe to act coherently.

The Schengen open border regime, a potent symbol of the EU as a political peace project, is endangered by this insecurity. France closed its borders in a state of emergency after the attacks. Hungary built a razor-wire fence along its borders to stop the entry of migrants, and Slovenia is now following suit. Europe will see more and more internal borders erected unless or until it can address the root causes of terrorism and the refugee crisis, improve the control and registration at the EU's external borders, stabilize the EU's neighbouring countries, and make its citizens feel protected. Individual, national responses to these problems will be pushed by right-wing populists throughout the EU. By using insecurity and fear, they will exploit people's insecurity and try to awaken patriotic nostalgia for a time when everybody could control their borders, and thus undermine the impact of big political parties in Europe.

United in disunity

A few days after Paris attacks the French government invoked Article 42/7 of the Treaty of Lisbon at the extraordinary summit of EU leaders, activating the clause that pledges mutual defence among the EU member states should one of them become target of armed attack.

All 27 EU member states responded positively, but it remains unclear what kind of support France is expecting of them, as well as what kind of obligations are really imposed by this clause. This is the first time in the history of the Union that a state decided to activate this clause.

Article 42/7 also states that member states are expected to respond “in accordance with their capacities and external policy” which leaves room for broad interpretation and allows “neutral” countries such as Austria, Sweden and Ireland to decline military assistance. For the time being, the importance of the clause is largely political - an expression of solidarity with France.

Meanwhile, however, mutual accusations have begun to flare up among the member states who blame one another for the failure to prevent the attacks. After it was discovered that three out of eight Paris attackers came from Belgium, France accused Belgium of incompetence and of constituting a threat to common security. Belgium responded in kind, pointing out that the rest of attackers were all French citizens. The Eastern member states also found themselves on the line when Greece announced that the name and passport number of one of the attackers matched those of an immigrant registered at a Greek border a few months earlier, implying that the terrorist entered Europe from the East. It was soon established that both passports were false, which however did little to appease the outburst against refugees in Europe. In fact, the only thing on which the EU member states appear to agree at the moment is that they should lock up the borders and rely each on their own forces. Although the negotiations on the official suspension of the Schengen agreement are still under way, most member states, beginning with France, have reintroduced document checks at the borders.

The quadruple challenge of immigration, rising security threats, external destabilisation efforts, and socio-economic pressure are squeezing mainstream parties and testing Europe. How will these four trends affect the nature of societies in Europe? How can governments strike the right balance between the defence of rights and freedoms, democracy, and the need for more security? If democracy thrives in the absence of fear, then socio-economic uncertainty, now compounded with fear of violence, will encourage many to search for populist, inward-looking, xenophobic policies. Liberalism in our societies is under siege, and not just by ISIS.

Unless Europe manages to confront not only the most recent attacks in Paris, but all of challenges facing Europeans with a broad and inclusive debate, the repercussions of the brutal violence of Friday, November 13th, will run very deep. The

future of democratic society, of the tolerance, openness, and inclusiveness that underpin the Western liberal order, is at stake. None of these challenges can be confronted by any one member state alone, and no member state is the sole target. A joint European response, coordinated with allies, is thus necessary and essential. The EU, Europe, the West are all in this together and thus the highest political task of the hour is to work together, strategically and in crisis management, to protect the achievements of the liberal order.

The authors are the director for research and European programme and the vice president of Marshall Memorial Fund.

Source: <http://www.gmfus.org/>



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FAST FORWARD HUMAN RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL 2015

It's wake up time!

NO ENTRANCE FEE

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11. - 15. DECEMBER 2015.

KOTOR / CINEMA "BOKA"
12. - 13. DECEMBER 2015.

BERANE / HALL OF MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY
13. - 14. DECEMBER 2015.

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Vijesti

Encouraging leadership and activist potential of students

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) organised between 5 and 8 November *Student leadership programme* in hotel Residence in Miločer, where a selected group of students attended intensive training consisting of lectures, workshops, panel discussions, film screenings, exercises and simulations. *Student leadership programme* is part of a wider project “*Only knowledge should get the title*”, financed by the EU Delegation to Montenegro, and co-financed by the Heinrich Böll Foundation and the Commission for the allocation of part of revenue from games of chance. The programme consisted of 18 sessions that dealt with issues such as the Bologna declaration, its legislative framework, trends in higher education, quality and achievements in the reform of higher education, recruitment and promotion, double appointments in higher education, mobility of students and researchers, exchange programmes, perception of corruption, as well as the transparency, financing and decision-making in higher education. Special sessions were dedicated to leadership, the importance of communication, rules of effective public speaking, the notions of civil disobedience and academic integrity, academic writing and plagiarism. In addition to this, students discussed the existence of activism in Montenegro in the course of panel discussions with guest speakers, and talked about media and non-governmental organisations as factors of democratisation, and challenges of political marketing and communication in Montenegro. The discussion also emphasised new contexts of activism, such as art and activism. Finally, students had the opportunity to develop actions and campaigns to be implemented in their universities or in the wider society with CCE's help. Lecturers at the *Student leadership programme* were: **dr Mladen Perazić** from the University of Mediterranean; **Vlado Dedović**, director of the legal department in the Centre for monitoring and research (CEMI); **Danilo Marunović**, director; **Boban Batricević**, historian; **mr Mirko Đuković** from the University of Donja Gorica; **mr Janko Ljumović** from the University of Montenegro; **prof. dr Radovan Radonjić**, academic; **Gojko Berkuljan**, director; **Dragana Čomagić**, editor at radio “KRŠ”; **prof. dr Vladimir Pavićević** from the Faculty of political sciences at the University of Belgrade; **Tamara Milić**, psychologist; **Damir Nikoćević**, political analyst; **Petar Komnenić**, the author of TV show «Načisto» and journalist of RFE; **Goran Đurović**, president of MB of the Coalition «Through cooperation to aim» and member of the Council of RTCG; **Daliborka Uljarević**, executive director of CCE; **Snežana Kaluđerović**, coordinator of the programme *Active citizenship*; **Mira Popović**, CCE programme associate; and **Petar Đukanović**, coordinator of the CCE *Human rights programme*. Student leadership programme was attended by 29 students from the University of Montenegro, University of Donja Gorica and Faculty for State and European Studies.

Support and solidarity with French citizens

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) commemorated *the International Day of Tolerance* by expressing solidarity with France and families of victims of terrorist attacks in Paris in an event organised with the participants of XXI generation of Human Rights School. The participants gathered in front of the embassy of the Republic of France in Podgorica on 16 November, together with the CCE activists and interested citizens, and held a minute of silence to commemorate the victims, echoing similar events across the European Union. The participants also signed the book of condolences in the embassy, laid flowers and left their messages of support for French citizens, but also emphasised the importance of preserving the values of tolerance, dialogue, acceptance and understanding against to exclusion, xenophobia and intolerance, which are unfortunately likely to arise in response to events such as the terrorist attack in Paris.

ECAS Regional Conference

Brussels-based NGO ECAS organised a regional conference in Pristina between 25 and 27 November on the development of a regional network for the promotion of free access to information, citizen advice and provision of active legal assistance. The migrant crisis and the role of the civil sector in its management also featured on the list of discussion topics, together with a review of the implementation of pilot projects that were approved for this year. ECAS also presented the plan for organisation of a network for NGO cooperation in advocating the *Triple Action* project. This year the organisation approved pilot projects from Macedonia, Albania, Turkey and Montenegro, one of which is managed by CCE. **Mira Popović**, CCE programme assistant, participated on the behalf of CCE.

FAST FORWARD Human Rights Film Festival continues cooperation between RTCG, Vijesti and CCE

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) and Radio Television of Montenegro signed a cooperation agreement 12 November regarding realization of the sixth Human Rights Film Festival “Fast Forward 2015”, to be organised in the Montenegrin national theatre (CNP) in Podgorica from 11 to 15 November 2015 (five days), in Kotor from 12 to 13 November 2015 (two days) and in Berane from 13 to 14 November 2015 (two days). The agreement was signed by **Rade Vojvodić**, general director of RTCG and **Daliborka Uljarević**, executive director of CCE. This is a continuation of five-year long cooperation between CCE and RTCG in the realisation of “Fast Forward” Human Rights Film Festival, the only festival of its kind in Montenegro, which, in addition to Podgorica, now includes Kotor and Berane among the cities in the region that cultivate this kind of festival event. According to the agreement, RTCG will provide full media coverage and secure representation of the Festival in its regular broadcasting on info and current events, produce a festival chronicle, broadcast the promotional video, participate in the work of the Festival's Council through its representatives and help with other activities necessary for the organisation of this unique event in Montenegro. CCE, in turn, will include RTCG in all promotional material published for the Festival, and give RTCG priority rights for interviews with the guests of the Festival and TV rights for five films of recent production that had gathered countless nominations, recognitions and awards throughout the world. Recognising the importance of this Festival, daily Vijesti also decided to again contribute to its realisation. A cooperation agreement was therefore signed between Daliborka Uljarević, executive director of CCE and **Željko Ivanović**, executive director of ID *Vijesti*, declaring the agreement of both parties to foster the culture of human rights and promote communication and cooperation between media and non-governmental organisations. According to the agreement, *Vijesti* will ensure full media attention and coverage of the Festival in its info pages, publish promotional materials, and participate in the work of the Council of Festival through their representative. The CCE will include *Vijesti* in the promotional material published for the Festival, and give *Vijesti* the priority right for interviews with the guests of the Festival *Vijesti*, as the main sponsor of the Festival among the print media.

Visit to institutions and award of diplomas for XXI Human Rights School

Participants of XXI generation of School of Human Rights organised by the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) paid visits to PI “Komanski most”, the Police department and the British Embassy in Podgorica. Human Rights School is one of the activities within the *Youth build Montenegro* project, supported by the British Embassy. During the course of the school the participants had the opportunity to learn about the contemporary concept of human rights, and institutional and legal mechanisms available to the citizens in the protection of human rights and protection from discrimination. They also discussed the preconditions necessary for the development of a human rights culture, possibilities of overcoming prejudices and stereotypes, strategies of peaceful resolution of conflicts, values such as tolerance and solidarity, and processes of importance for human rights such as the European integration, confrontation with the past and transitional justice, reflection on global developments, and the human rights crisis at the local level. As a result of practical work during the School, the participants designed several actions, one of which was focused on the promotion of volunteering and humanitarian work and culminated in the visit to PI “Komanski most”, which provides care, education, occupational activity and healthcare to its protégées. **Vaselj Dušaj**, director of this institution, talked to participants of the Human Rights School about the activities of the institution, including those aimed at supporting their protégées outside the confines of the institution. During the visit to Police department, participants of the XXI generation of Human Rights School were received by **Sveto Čović**, representative of Security Centre Podgorica, **Mladen Marković**, manager of Operative-communicational centre and **Svetozar Tošković**, manager of Criminal techniques unit at SC Podgorica, who tried to answer their numerous questions about the functioning of the Police department and its organisational units.

Finally, **Lyndon Radnedge**, Charge d'affaires in the British Embassy, welcomed the participants of the XXI generation of Human Rights School, and awarded diplomas for successful participation together with Daliborka Uljarević, CCE executive director of CCE and Petar Đukanović, programme coordinator. Diplomas for successful participation in the Human Rights School were awarded to 23 high school students from Montenegro: **Abid Šabanović**, **Amer Hadžimušović**, **Amra Kalač**, **Bobana Glavičanin**, **Damir Suljević**, **Danilo Banović**, **Đorđe Vujačić**, **Erdan Kujević**, **Irena Mudresa**, **Isidora Vlaović**, **Jana Obradović**, **Jelka Vilotijević**, **Katarina Đonović**, **Mia Zeković**, **Milena Nenezic**, **Milica Bulatović**, **Miloš Danilović**, **Nikoleta Lazarević**, **Orhan Mujević**, **Rialda Markišić**, **Sunčica Obradović**, **Teodora Turović** and **Veliša Seferović**.

Last «European café» of 2015 with the minister of justice

As part of its *“European café”* project, Centre for Civic Education (CCE) in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) organised a meeting between representatives of non-governmental organisations and **Zoran Pažin**, minister of justice in the Government of Montenegro). The meeting was based on the principle of *World Café* method, and the topic of discussion was *“Rule of law in Montenegro – achievements and future challenges”*. **Daliborka Uljarević** opened the *European café* with a review of the European Commission's Progress Report for Montenegro for 2015. She reminded that *«each year, all interested parties in Montenegrin society interpret this report in a different manner, but they all agree on one thing: the more Montenegro makes progress on its path to Europe, the more deeply the EC's «scanner» analyses the Montenegrin society»*. In his introductory address, **Zoran Pažin**, minister of justice, reflected on the concept of the rule of law, highlighting the importance of adequate interpretation of legal norms and education of lawyers, as well as adherence to the case law of the European court in Strasbourg. “I see non-governmental organisations as partners in the process of establishing the rule of law”, Pažin said. He then talked to the representatives of non-governmental organisations about issues concerning sanctions against domestic violence, advances in the fight against the corruption and organised crime, and other issues relevant to the protection of human rights. *European café* on the subject of *“Rule of law in Montenegro – achievements and future challenges”* was the final event of this kind in 2015. The café is organised quarterly by CCE with representatives of Montenegrin institutions, negotiation structures, EU institutions and diplomatic corps. The guests of previous three meetings were: Ambassador **Mitja Drobnič**, head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro, **Aleksandar Andrija Pejović**, chief negotiator for Montenegro in the membership talks with the EU, and **Gudrun Elisabeth Steinacker**, Ambassador of Germany in Montenegro.

A volunteer support group for the 2015 FAST FORWARD Human Rights Film Festival

As part of the preparations for the sixth *FAST FORWARD Human Rights Film Festival 2015*, Centre for Civic Education (CCE) organised a group of volunteers to provide logistic support, and help with the organisation and promotional activities before and during the Festival, both in Podgorica, and in the abridged festival versions in Kotor and Berane. The CCE selected 25 young people out of more than sixty applicants, for their dedication to the importance of human rights as well as for their passion for films, and their desire to contribute in bringing the sixth edition of the Festival to their peers, as well as to numerous other citizens. The volunteers will be a part of organisational and creative team of CCE, and will have the opportunity to learn and experience first-hand the challenges of campaigning for equality and justice on a daily basis, as well as to attend screenings of some of the best recent films that could inspire them to fight for human rights. During the meeting with the volunteer group, the coordinators presented the festival programme, as well as the visual identity and logo of this years' edition of the *FAST FORWARD* festival.

A.V

Open Society Fellowship

Fellows are expected to take full advantage of the foundations' expansive reach and work to bring new people and fresh ideas into the organization's ambit. Successful projects should push the boundaries of current thinking and carry lessons that can be applied to a variety of settings. Fellows may produce a variety of work products, including publications such as books, reports, or blogs; innovative public-education projects; or the launch of new campaigns or organizations. They may also engage in activities such as hosting panel discussions, traveling to conferences, participating in policy debates, and aggressively promoting their ideas in public venues.

The Open Society Fellowship accepts proposals from anywhere in the world. Applicants should possess a deep understanding of their chosen subject and a track record of professional accomplishment. Past and current fellows have included journalists, activists, academics, and practitioners in a variety of fields. Ideal fellows are specialists who can see beyond the parochialisms of their field and possess the tenacity to complete a project of exceptional merit. Proficiency in spoken English is required.

Deadline: 4 January 2016

More information at: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/open-society-fellowship>

Published by: Centre for Civic Education (CCE)

EIC Bulletin - European Pulse - is an electronic magazine which comes out with the support from Friedrich Ebert Foundation since 2005. It is publicised by the Centre for Civic Education (CCE). It is filed in Ministry of culture under number 578.

Editor-in-chief: Vladan Žugić

Editorial board: Vera Šćepanović, Daliborka Uljarević, Svetlana Pešić, Ana Vujošević, Vladimir Vučković

Translation and proofreading: CGO

Design and illustrations: Dragana Koprivica

Production: Centre for Civic Education (CCE)

Address: Njegoševa 36/I Tel/fax: +382 20 665 112, 665 327 ep@cgo-cce.org, info@cgo-cce.org

You can download *European Pulse* at www.cgo-cce.org

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