



FOCUS OF THIS ISSUE

**Does Montenegro
have the sufficient
absorption capacity
to allow for efficient
exploitation of the
available EU funds?**

INTERVIEW

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Director of the
Directorate for
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in the Council of
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**European
Information Centre**





FOREWORD

The pre-election promises ring sweetly to anybody's ears. If they would only bother to support them with some realistic arguments. Some representatives of the ruling party have been trying to convince the public that Montenegro will become an EU candidate already by 2008, to be promoted into full membership already in 2010. Thus, Montenegro should race the road from the beginning of negotiations to final accession to the elite club twice as fast as, say, Slovenia, overtaking Croatia which signed its Stabilisation and Association Agreement already in 2001, but is still under a big question mark for joining the EU-25 by 2010 (or EU-27, provided that Bulgaria and Romania become members by 2008).

Except for the pre-election euphoria, certain government representatives are also displaying unacceptable ignorance of the processes taking place inside EU. How to continue with enlargements while the citizens of the old EU members are still digesting the May 2004 accession of 10 new states? How to handle the raising demands of the public to submit every new enlargement proposal to a public opinion test via referendums in each EU member state? The EU public has been suffering an upheaval of enlargement phobia ever since the failed referendums on the first EU constitution in France and Netherlands, manifesting in general dissatisfaction with the fact that nobody ever asked the citizens what they thought of the accession of Central and East European countries.

It is up to the EU to decide when it shall open its doors to us, but even leaving that issue aside, it is interesting to consider how are those who have been consistently avoiding any real reforms intending to reach the goal so quickly. If this means that they will get serious about it, than be it. Just, bear in mind that they are under a close watch. Both of the EU and or their own public.

N.R.

AFTER MANY PROMISES, MONTENEGRO SIGNS ITS FIRST AGREEMENT WITH ONE OF THE EU MEMBER STATES

Slovakia will aid Montenegro in its journey towards European Union



After the referendum and the proclamation of independence, the government of Montenegro received many promises from the newly accepted European Union members to help its efforts towards European integration. Slovakia is the first country which has officially signed such an agreement. In his recent visit to Montenegro, Slovakian Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr **Ján Kubiš**, signed an agreement on cooperation between Foreign Affairs Ministries envisaging an active role of Slovakia in lobbying and advocacy in EU institutions as well as practical support to Montenegro.

At the meeting with Montenegrin President, Mr **Filip Vujanović**, Kubiš also announced that his country was ready to assist Montenegro in the matters of security, helping the Montenegrin army to join the Partnership for Peace as soon as possible, and to be able to enjoy the issuing benefits.

"We can speak about two basic aspects of assistance. Firstly, there is the political aspect – we will participate in EU and NATO discussions about Montenegrin plans for the future, primarily its orientation

towards EU and NATO. I was informed about your European orientation both by your Prime Minister as well as the head of one of the opposition parties. Now I am able to confirm to our partners in the EU and NATO that we should support such a choice, and that we should react positively to the initiatives coming from Montenegro, for instance to its bid for membership in Partnership for Peace and other processes which are in accordance with the Thessalonica agenda.

Besides, we Slovakia can help Montenegro with practical assistance. Slovakia is a new member of NATO and European Union. We have recently completed the integration process successfully, and we would like to offer and share our experiences with you, as well as our expert assistance, from which you could draw some advantages", said Kubiš in his encounter with journalists.

He repeated that Slovakia is supporting European Union enlargement to the Western Balkans, with the dynamics of accession individually defined for each country, depending on its success in adopting the European standards.

DOES MONTENEGRO HAVE THE SUFFICIENT ABSORPTION CAPACITY TO ALLOW FOR EFFICIENT EXPLOITATION OF THE AVAILABLE EU FUNDS?

Implementation of EU assistance depends on human resources

Travelling through Montenegro, you can barely pass some 30 kilometres without running into a sign announcing that that bridge or this road under your feet have been built or reconstructed with the support of the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR).

Although building the road infrastructure is only a fraction of the overall assistance that Brussels has been giving to Montenegro, it is perhaps the most obvious sign of the huge assets that EU invests into those countries which intend to become full members of the Union. It is also the best way to understand the extent of the Montenegrin absorption capacities, which are going to stand a hard trial in the period to come, especially once the new IPA programme comes into force in the early 2007.

Montenegrin administration will have to pull up its sleeves and to try and attract as much money as possible from IPA, because it will only get those amounts that it is capable of "pulling out" from EU – depending on its ability to compete for and implement projects of high quality.

This opens the question of whether Montenegro has the sufficient

absorption power, in other words – capable, professional administration, able to employ these assets in implementing "good" projects, to match the Brussels' criteria.

This is an issue which deserves considerable attention, as is evident from the experiences of other countries, such as Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Due to incapacities of their administration, these countries managed to use only 30 to 40% of the available EU funds. On average, this figure is about 60%.

Judging by the experiences of EAR, the citizens of Montenegro have reasons for moderate optimism in hoping to receive the benefits of EU assistance.

"In Montenegro, by the end of 2005, out of 109 million euros of the EU assistance funds handled by EAR, 91% has been allocated and contracted, and 79% is already spent and implemented", says the spokesman of EAR, **Dragan Mugoša**. According to him, this would indicate "fairly efficient" implementation of the said assets.

"It would have been impossible for EAR to do its work efficiently in Montenegro if the domestic institutions had not been efficient enough. This is



photo VIJESTI

Dragan Mugoša

not only a success story for EAR, but also for the Montenegrin institutions", Mugoša adds.

The EAR office in Montenegro was founded in March 2001, when it inherited the leftover assets from the previous three years. There were 4 million euros left from 1998, 7.6 million from 1999, and 18 million unspent in 2000. These funds have been distributed and implemented to the last, and so were the new 16 million for the year 2001.

In the following year, EU allocated 12 million euros for Montenegro, of which 98% have been spent, while of another 12 million for 2003, 97% has been implemented. The amount of aid for 2004 reached 16.5 million, of which 96% has been contracted and 72% spent, while for the last year, out of 22.5 million euros, EAR has allocated 58% and implemented 21%.

Mugoša explains that the procedure of exploiting the EU assistance funds consists procedure that includes getting the approval for concrete projects, which depends on how the project in question fits into the process of

CROATIANS KNOW THE WAY

Croatia has raced ahead of all other transition countries and up to date it has attained the level of absorption of EU funds which is close to 97%.

In real numbers, despite of some initial scepticism even among the government authorities with respect to their own administrative capacities, it managed to attract 261 million euros. Absorption levels for the CARDS projects in 2001 and 2002 were between 97 and 99%, and the 2003 and 2004 CARDS programme projects are still in the process of implementation, until December 2008.

European Commission has approved a further seven million euros, on top of the amount of 245 million already received by Croatia for the period 2004–2005, which seems to indicate that this positive trend is going to continue further.



photo VIJESTI

Predrag Bošković

European integrations, whether it is judged to be among the priorities for the moment, and then there is also the question of project documentation, public calls, contracts, and finally implementation.

"Now you tell me if you think Montenegro can do this. Montenegro has made huge progress in this field in the last couple of years, but there is still a lot to be done, especially concerning human resources. We expect that EU will continue helping us in this work, both in the matters of finance and expertise", Mugoša states.

Minister of Economics in the Government of the Republic of Montenegro, **Predrag Bošković**, is an optimist with respect to the Montenegrin absorption capacities.

"Montenegrin experience with EU funds has been only positive until now. We invested these funds into projects that generated economic and democratic development. I believe that in the future, too, we can define such projects which would earn the support of European institutions", Bošković claims.

Asked whether he was worried about corruption interfering in the implementation of these projects, which is not unheard of even in the certain countries which are already EU members or just about to join it, Bošković says that in Montenegro the level of corruption "has been significantly lower, which is also confirmed by the relevant institutions".

"All funds sent by EU have been submitted to control by certain institutions and organs. Experience shows that

up to date there have not been any significant problems", Bošković adds.

In the case of Montenegro, there is the particular advantage in being able to use the experience of other countries, primarily those in the region, which have already had to face the strict requirements of Brussels administration in managing the funds for certain projects.

"Montenegro paid much attention to the exchange of experiences with countries which have already gone through this process, in order to use that knowledge and take advantage of all the positive aspects of EU assistance, minimising the possibility of mistakes which arise in the process of defining a project, as well as in the very act of its

implementation", Bošković says.

He adds that Montenegro has been sending its cadre in the last couple of years to both the EU members as well as to other highly developed countries such as USA, Japan, China, so that they could learn about the functioning of their institutions and administration.

The greatest amount of EU aid to Montenegro so far has come via the European Agency for Reconstruction, which is in effect a part of the Brussels mechanism for the management of assets.

At the moment, EAR is in charge in Montenegro for the implementation of the CARDS programme projects. In the beginning of 2007, however,

MONEY SQUANDERED ON ROMANIA AND BULGARIA

Nearly a half of the 1.9 billion of aid which was given to Romania and Bulgaria ahead of their expected entry into the EU next year has been badly spent.

These are the results published by the London based Financial Times two months ago, which rely upon the official EU sources. The report from the Court of Auditors on the assistance received between 2000 and 2004 says that "in more than a half of all projects, the money was not spent for the fulfilment of the intended goal, or has been only partially used to that end".

Some projects were up to two years late, other were complete failures. The fault lies mainly with the administratively unskilled local authorities and sometimes is the consequence of mistaken decisions on the part of European Commission, which is in charge of the funds. Greater part of the 511 million euros allocated to Bulgaria and 1.4 billions assigned to Romania for the purpose of strengthening their administration to become economically competitive ended up in a "black hole".

The report shows that rebuilding a society from the very foundation is no easy matter, especially in the poverty-stricken former dictatorships. It turned out that Commission approves of the projects which the local authorities find themselves incapable to implement. The 3.1 kilometres long bridge across the river Prut, between Romania and Moldavia, was completed in 2004, but it only came into use recently, as there was previously no road on the Moldavian side.

Construction of the International Congress Centre in the Romanian harbour Konstanz was interrupted in 2004, when the state Council proclaimed the construction licence invalid as a consequence of unexplained technical reasons. The 6.4 million euros worth Centre will probably never be built.

Even the Bulgarian custom officers were sceptical towards using the new jeeps provided by European Union, as they were used to the "old Russian vehicles, whose lifespan is a third shorter, but the spare parts are also a lot cheaper".

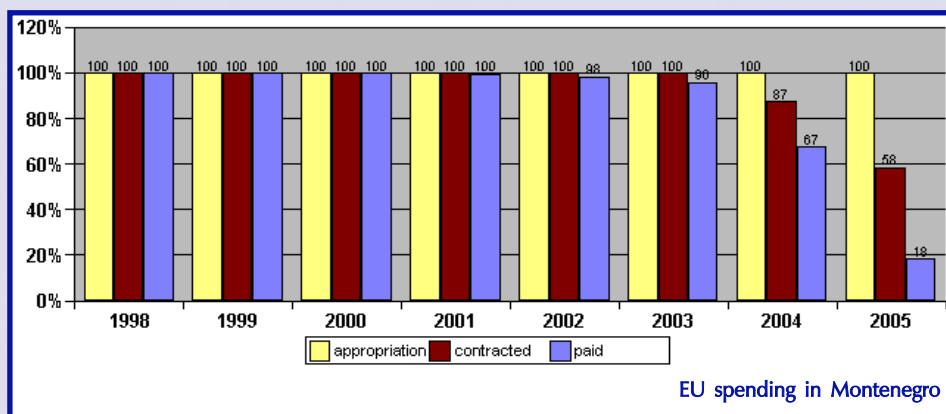
The spokeswoman of the European Commission has reacted to the said report saying that "the Commission has already fixed some of the problems that are mentioned in it". She added that most of the unfinished projects mentioned in the report were finalised in the meantime, and that both Bulgaria and Romania have significantly improved their administrative capacities.

Montenegro will gain access to the IPA programme. IPA is an integrated instrument which will replace the CARDS programme, as well as other pre-accession programmes such as Phare, ISPA and Sapard.

IPA distinguishes between two kinds of states. The first group consists of "potential candidate countries" for European Union membership, such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia.

The second group encompasses those countries which already have the status of EU candidate, such as Croatia, Macedonia, and Turkey.

Unlike the countries from the second group, which are able to use all five components of the IPA programme, Montenegro and other potential candidate states will have access to only two of those, and con-



sequently to a lot less money from EU funds. These two components include assistance for transition and institution building, and cross-border cooperation. Within these two components, Montenegro will have the right to apply for some 30 million euros of EU assistance in the next year.

The other three components of IPA

programme, entailing a lot more money from the EU funds, will be accessible to Montenegro once it gains the status of the EU membership candidate. This, according to the optimistic projections of the Ministry of European Integrations, should occur already by 2008–2009. These three components (for the time being not available) include regional development, development of human resources and rural development.

It should also be said that once Montenegro has become an EU member, in case nothing changes in the current state of affairs, it should also be eligible for assistance from the structural and cohesion fund.

The aim of the structural funds is to create economic and social cohesion throughout the EU, levelling differences between developed and less developed regions and promoting equality in employment of various social groups.

The cohesion fund is a financial instrument of EU supporting economic solidarity in EU. Its role is to support development project of the least developed members of the Union. Before the last EU enlargement in 2004, the assets from this fund were mostly allocated to Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain.

Montenegro has still not signed the Action Programme for 2006, which gives it the right to claim some 18.5 million euros of EU assistance via European Agency for Reconstruction.

The reason for this delay was the referendum. European Commission has not yet sent the document that the Montenegrin government must sign, but they expect everything to be over by the end of September.

Vladan ŽUGIĆ

START TRAINING EARLY

foto VILISTI



Goran Đurović

Mr Goran Đurović, programme director of the Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations, says that 20 participants from the NGO sector and the Ministry for Economic Foreign Relations and European Integrations of the Montenegrin Government were involved in three training modules for the management of EU-funded projects.

"They could learn about and practice various elements of project management, from the analysis of the current situation, using models which enable them to do such analysis, development of logical framework, etc. In short, they were able to practise all segments which are necessary

for drafting a project. The training is not over yet, there are four more working days to go to in order to substantially improve their knowledge on this topic", Đurović stated. He is also one of the lecturers in those seminars dedicated to the management and facilitation of EU-funded projects, in part concerning the methodology of trainers' work. The project has been supported by the Foundation Open Society Institute, Representative Office in Montenegro.

Once they have completed this training, the candidates will work as trainers themselves on improving the capacities of local governments, explained Đurović.

"These 20 people will, from September on, be engaged in transmitting their knowledge to the employees of the local governments", he said.

"I hope there will be enough wisdom to start training the cadre early on for the management of assets from EU funds, in order not to repeat the mistakes of certain other transition countries who managed to use some 30% of the available funds", Đurović warned.

OSMAN TOPČAGIĆ, DIRECTOR OF THE DIRECTORATE FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

We should apply to EU with a project of a road connecting BH to Montenegro

Every nation has its own characteristics and the starting position in negotiations with EU. What is difficult for one of them may not be so difficult for another. The conditions that we had to fulfil concerned the establishment and strengthening of a series of institutions, from ministries to institutes, to directions and agencies... This required transfer of competencies from the entity level to the level of the state administration, which sometimes caused various political disputes, but until now we have always managed to straighten out our differences and I believe that in this period we have achieved a lot of progress, said in the interview for EIC Bulletin Mr **Osman Topčagić**, Director of Directorate for European Integrations in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

● **The Feasibility study for Montenegro warned that the administrative capacity of the civil service may be its weakest point. How is the situation in BH?**



It is not at all surprising. The EU noticed this problem already in 1995, in relation to Central and Eastern European countries, and this is when the Madrid criterion came into force, concerning precisely the adequacy of administrative capacities. At the time, it was applied to the Central and East European countries, but today we are

faced with the same problem. This is certainly a challenge, and if European Commission believes it is an issue for Montenegro, it is just much an issue for BH. Our starting position has been very low. There were very few central institutions in BH, and even those were underdeveloped. This is one of the most important tasks that we have to tackle in the following period.

● **How are you planning to solve this problem?**

First of all, we have professionalized the civil service. The Law on Civil Service and the Agency for Civil Service insist on professionalism, not party affiliation, and they are ensuring the continuous functioning of public administration. That is only one aspect – the other is continuous education.

We have given our contribution, and the European Commission its support, so we can have about 20 places each year for our students in post-graduate Master programmes at universities in Europe.

● **Who is paying for that?**

The European Commission pays. We have a deal with them, and I believe this will be an important contribution to the strengthening of our public administration. This is also the experience of my colleagues from Croatia and Slovenia, who were already sending their employees and civil servants to have additional training abroad, and they claim to have excellent effects. Continuous learning, introducing the best practices... Recently, we also initiated a programme for preparing a strategy for public administration reform.

● **Do you request from your post-graduate students who are going abroad to sign a contract with the Government of BH?**

We have a contract, which says that once they complete their studies they have to spend at least three years working in the civil service. Last year, we welcomed back the first generation of those who graduated from various post-graduate programmes, this year we are expecting the second group and sending out another. The Regional public administration school is certainly going to be another boost for the civil service. A protocol on the establishment of a Regional public administration school was recently signed in Brussels.

THIS IS NO TIME FOR BUILDING BARRIERS

● **What are your projections for the future of accession of Western Balkan countries to EU?**

The process of stabilisation and association has proven its advantages. In 2005, every country made a step forward. Croatia became a candidate and opened up negotiations, Macedonia acquired a candidate status, Serbia, Montenegro and BH began negotiations on the Agreement, Albania signed the Agreement. This is quite some progress, and a success for the EU policy in this region. However, further success of the policy will not be achieved by building new barriers, but rather by insisting on the promotion of this policy. The promises made in Thessalonica and confirmed in Salzburg must be honoured, leaving the perspective open for each country to advance in the process of EU association to the best of its abilities.

EU has to support this process. This is the best guarantee of peace and stability in the region, and thus on the European continent. When we say that the process of EU enlargement cannot be complete until the countries of the Western Balkans join in, it's not just a phrase, it is the essence. The entire EU project, based upon the need to bring the West European countries together in peace, stability and development instead of war, is directly applicable in our case, and there is no better solution, either for us, or for the EU, from bringing this process to a conclusion.

THE JOURNEY TO EU USUALLY TAKES EIGHT TO TEN YEARS

● **An orderly state, rule of law, prosperous economy...these are some of the symbols of EU. When do you think the countries of this region will be able to attain these standards?**

It is usually considered that the journey from the beginning of negotiations on Stabilisation and Association Agreement until the day of accession takes some eight to ten years. This is the opinion of certain colleagues who have already travelled this road, and it turned out to be true in the case of Slovenia. They started negotiating the accession agreement in 1996, and they joined EU in 2004.

Some Central and East European countries made it even faster, but eight to ten years is a reasonable period, during which a lot of things can be done. A lot depends on the state of mind, on the change in the mindset. I believe that these changes come gradually. This must be used and transformed into laws and strong institutions. All of us are watching closely, and that is a big issue, what Croatia is doing in this period, what Slovenia did while preparing. People are talking about it, they are informed, both those working in the industry, as well as trade, public service, in the central bank...

People are aware of that, they know that there will be huge changes and they have already accepted them. At home at least, I don't see much resistance, discussion on "why do we need EU"...Not at all. We know that it will come, and that, until then, a lot of things will change, and at the end it will be good for us, because these are some standards that have already proven to be beneficial in other countries. So they will be good for us too, because they will enable us to make progress. Although the body of legal regulations is getting more cumbersome, although EU itself keeps on developing criteria which must be met, making them ever more complicated, I believe that this work can be done within some eight to ten years. It will, of course, depend, also on the readiness in the EU to support the process, financially and otherwise.

● **Who is going to found this school?**

Five countries from the region together with European Commission will found it. It was an agreement made in Thessalonica, and now it will become reality. In the first phase, for a period of two years, the project will be maintained in the form of cooperation and exchange of information and projects among the existing national bodies. In the second phase, we expect to formally define the official seat of the school, which is still unknown. We have already placed our bid.

● **In order to show their readiness to become EU members, the countries in the region must first prove that they are able to cooperate regionally. What is currently happening in this area concerning BH and Montenegro?**

I believe it was for a good reason that EU called this process a "stabilisation and association process". Stabilisation means internal stabilisation of each country, but also stabilisation of their mutual relations. This is where regional cooperation acquires major importance.

We have been cooperating, both bilaterally, with our neighbouring countries, as

these are the most important links, but also within every regional initiative. Regional cooperation is truly a priority of the foreign policy in BH.

● **What is your first association, when you say – regional cooperation, BH and Montenegro?**

Except for the usual projects and agreements on free trade and property relations, protection and promotion of investments, I would like to see a joint project to build a real good road which would connect us and make it easier to travel from Sarajevo to Podgorica. Such projects are frequently supported by EU, and it is only a matter of time when we will become eligible for such initiatives. At the moment, being only "potential candidate countries", we are not yet qualified to apply for such projects, but this time will come.

We have to be getting ready and working on these projects, which will make it easier to travel and meet people, whether on the basis of professional, cultural, educational, cooperation in sports or any other. The roads make everything else possible.

● **When somebody on the street asks you what he or she is going to get from**

signing this Stabilisation and Association Agreement, what do you answer?

These are the questions that I frequently get, and that I have been asking myself, too. In this phase, I am also asking another question: what do we lose if we don't sign this document, at the moment when every other country in the region has either signed the Agreement or is negotiating it? What would it mean if we were left out of this process?

It is true that in the very process, as it has been defined by EU, there are going to be few concrete benefits or obvious signs of progress once we sign the Agreement. There are certain commitments that we are promising to fulfil. However, this is a necessary phase towards the candidate status, and towards liberalisation of the visa regime. This is the first contractual relationship we have with EU and an important step to ensure peace and stability, as well as economic prosperity of which we are in a dire need, especially considering our experiences from the recent past.

● **Do you believe that the prospect of implementation of the Bucharest agreement on the establishment of a free trade area among the South East European countries is realistic?**

We do have a network of bilateral free trade agreements, and I do think that negotiating a multilateral agreement, based on CEFTA model, which would include all of the countries of the region, should be a problem.

If the experts have agreed on the end of this year to complete the agreement, then it should be done by the end of the year. They planned three rounds of negotiations, and considering that the negotiations on the establishment of energy community in South East Europe were completed within a very short period, I really do not think that this one would take much longer. It is, after all, a matter of political will, which was already defined at the Summit.

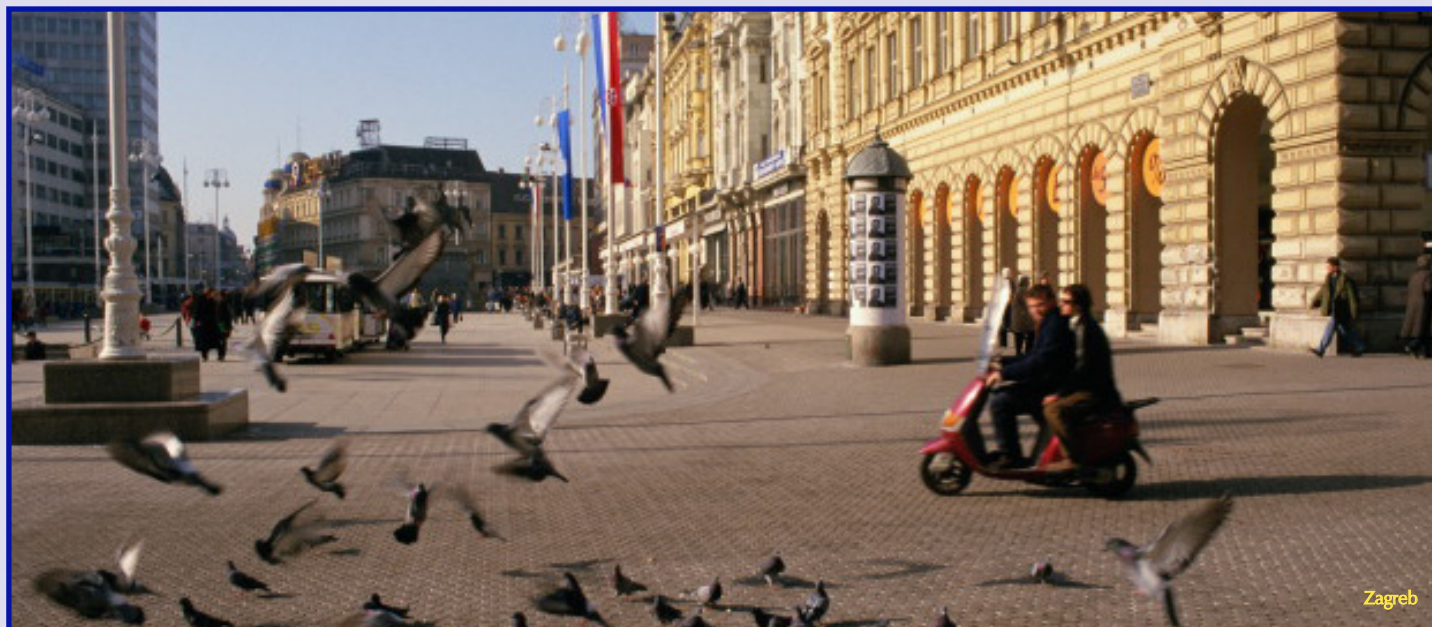
● **Doesn't it appear almost as a return to that old Yugoslavia, at least to the extent that we will not have to carry passports and visas across the borders?**

We already have this situation that we are not asking for passports from the citizens of other countries in the regions, let alone visas. They can travel with their ID cards, and this is just how we travel, to Croatia, to Serbia and to Montenegro. This is how it should be. Our bonds and mutual interests are so strong to allow for some obstacles to movement, it would only hold us back...This is not only about the Free trade agreement, there are many other reasons to support and promote free movement and other bonds.

Nedeljko RUDOVIĆ

THE ROAD TRAVELLED BY THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA TO THE STATUS OF AN EU CANDIDATE COUNTRY

Good students learn from others' mistakes



The relative success of Croatia in its journey towards European Union is not only a success for Croatia, but also for other countries in the region, and also for European Union itself, because it justifies the very process of stabilisation and association, which was announced at the summit in Zagreb, in 2000. Croatia proves that this process does work, that it is capable of producing greater stability in the region, creating new candidate countries and future EU members.

The analysts believe that the countries of the Western Balkans now have greater reason to continue with their reforms based on the EU requirements, because they have a proof that this process will in the end bear results.

Speaking about the lessons that Croatia has learned in the last 6 years, since it has began intensively ploughing its way towards membership, the Croatian politicians say that they believe to have had the advantage of entering into this process late, so that they could learn from those who were already ahead of them and make sure that they do not repeat the same mistakes.

The Croatian government and its ministries who are handling the process of European integrations have already established cooperation with the former candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe, they studied their experiences and they used the acquired knowledge to conduct some of the required reforms rather successfully.

The second thing they learned, so say the representatives or the Croatian government and the Parliament, was that no country can afford to understand the process of European integration as a competition with other countries. It is, indeed, only with themselves that you have to compete, mobilising your best resources to construct a life in a better country.

Another important lesson for Croatia was to understand that, in the final count, the process of accession is a lot more important than the act of accession. The process is what really matters, because this is where all the change happens, the institutions are reformed, the legislation changed, economy, and even the citizens themselves are changed. In Croatia, they

believe this change in people and their mentality to be "the most important, and the most difficult", because Europe begins in the minds of each individual, and "until every individual has understood the advantages and benefits of EU integration and of the reform process which is an inherent part of this model, the process itself cannot be successful".

In the beginning, Croatia was pre-occupied mainly with political issues. The Government of the post-Tuđman era led by Račan and his social democrats was repeatedly told that no country will join the EU until it has fulfilled the political criteria. As a consequence of the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, Croatia indeed had quite a few problems which were a burning priority – the issue of minorities, refugee return, cooperation with the Hague tribunal, reforming the Croatian Television in order to make it a genuine public service, judiciary reform, fight against corruption...Croatia also had to face a special requirement of proving its willingness to cooperate with other countries in the Balkans.

According to the Croatian officials,

FEAR OF LOSING SOVEREIGNTY

In the government of Croatia, they are aware of the need to keep communicating with their own citizens, parallel with maintaining communication with EU, in order to make the public understand the real advantages of integration. In the beginning, there was the idyllic vision of EU solving all of their problems, and more than 80% of the citizens supported the integration then. However, as soon as they began to tackle concrete problems, the public and the civil society began objecting and asking questions. Nowadays the overall level of support for EU accession is below 60%.

In the case of Croatia, there is a prominent worry about the loss of sovereignty once the country joins EU, which is not surprising – Croatia is a young independent state, and, according to some polls, the people are wondering why should they renounce a part of their sovereignty again for the benefit of some supranational community, now that they have finally got their independence.

Objections coming from certain media and politicians included warnings that Croatian independence will be compromised by decisions taken in Brussels, while the Government responded that, even though this may partially be true, it is on the other hand compensated with the possibility of having their voice heard in a larger community, and being able to influence these decisions.

Another big worry in Croatia (and very practical one) is the issue of real estate and foreign buyers. A free movement of capital is one of the basic rules in EU, and the foreigners must be allowed to buy property in Croatia. This could raise prices and place local population in disadvantageous positions.

In order to prevent that, Croatia is seeking to delay the final agreement on free trade in real estate, until the purchasing power of the Croatian citizens becomes comparable to that of other EU citizens. For them, this is the only way to be able to equally compete in this market.

most of these problems, which in the past have caused several interruptions in the negotiation process, have been solved. Currently, the judiciary, corruption and crime are at the very top of the agenda.

Third Copenhagen criterion, which requires a country to be "a functional market economy, capable of handling the pressure of the single market", gave Croatians a lot of trouble before they managed to accomplish the task.

They complained that it is all very well said, but very difficult to realise, as you are always dependent upon the member states' assessment of what it means to be a market economy, or a functional market economy, or how competitive they judge you to be. Croatia had met all the requirements of macroeconomic stability from the very beginning, but it was not enough, because they had to find the way of transforming this stability into growth of the productive sector, in order to improve competitiveness – which

means restructuring the export sector, lowering unemployment, further privatisation.

As far as the legal harmonisation is concerned, in Croatia they have, to date, adopted about a half of all legal acts necessary for complete harmonisation. According to some estimates, candidate countries on average have to adopt up to 400 new laws, and another 1000 to 2000 of other legal acts. In the last six years, Croatia has brought around 200 laws in line with EU standards. That leaves another 200 to be harmonised in the next two and a half years, so that in 2008. Croatia will be ready to join EU. Croatians hope to succeed in this enterprise, but it is a big question whether any country will be able to join EU soon, given the negative attitude towards further enlargement which is apparent in the public opinion of the member states. Although the EU accession has been defined as a priority policy, the Croatian public has been asking questions: Why do they need all that, what

are the real benefits from joining the EU, what are the advantages of membership, and what exactly is going to be so much better in Croatia once they reach the goal? On the other hand, many politicians argue the so-called TINA ("there is no alternative") concept. Alternatives always exist, and the current assessment of the Croatian leadership is that, although the membership may be only one alternative, it is the least costly one.

They decided that being alone, isolated, not having proper access to big markets for their products and not being sufficiently competitive are, indeed, very expensive alternatives, and not quite affordable.

In Croatia, they believe that the advantages from the membership are both economic and political stability, as well as sustainable economic competitiveness, in the long run. Finally, membership in the EU brings the social and legal order that protects both individual and common social interests. This is why they try to forge a special kind of consensus around EU, creating the National Committee in the parliament to supervise accession negotiations. The Committee consists of an equal number of government and opposition representatives, and the President is from the opposition. This is how the parliament was brought into the process. This committee must accept all the basic negotiating positions for every chapter of the agreement. This is how a permanent dialogue was established between the Government and the Parliament regarding crucial issues in the process.

At the moment, the Croatian government and the European Commission representatives are screening the Croatian legislation in order to evaluate the level of harmonisation with *acquis communautaire*. Expert teams from both sides are supposed to decide to what extent are the Croatian laws really in line with the European requirements.

V. ŠČEPANOVIĆ
N. RUDOVIĆ

Pre-election heat on the European road

by Brano Mandić

Everything else was a lie, so welcome back, radicals. A senior student of the Faculty of Philosophy in Nikšić (an establishment widely renown, less for its literary achievements and more for the burning of a rag doll impersonating **Bill Clinton**), an academic, therefore, by the name of **Bojan Strunjaš**, is likely to joint the parliamentary ranks this autumn as the youngest representative and the only radical in the Parliament of the Republic of Montenegro.

A new maverick rearing to leap out of his students' dock straight into some chic tuxedo. The history is repeating itself again, again as a farce.

The most resilient among us remember still the current Prime Minister exchanging overnight his V-collared sweater (sing of victory) for a more elegant version of the fashion of the day, waking up in the *dolce vita* clip which culminated on the historical night of 21 May: the winner of the referendum in a stripped suit paying discreet homage to the Chicago fashion of the 1920s. This is only the envy speaking out, of course.

Well, what is the motive of this treatise on the fashion & styling of our politicians? Seen that the campaign is taking place in August, with the average temperature in Podgorica hovering around 35 degrees, perhaps some of them would dare the voters and face the crowd in their bathing trunks, threaten their opponent with a parasol or a water pistol...

Whatever the case, the decision announced by the President of the Republic and the vice president of DPS, **Filip Vujanović**, for the ballot to be cast in August (while decent Europeans are enjoying their holidays) caused rage in the opposition ranks, or at least as much of it as is possible in such heat.

Party activists are racing from one door to another, using elevators, stuffing their brochures into post boxes whose darkness shelters the nude whiteness of unpaid electricity bills.



There is the usual flood of communiqués, and yet everything is done somehow half-heartedly, as if the political crescendo was spent on the 21 May. So let us swiftly pass the news on to DPS, the Serbian list and the Radio Television of Montenegro: the referendum is over, the flag is flapping on the East River, and the average salary in Montenegro is still 200 euros.

This is, roughly, the message of the Movement for Changes. The Serbian List, however, is still thundering against the unpardonably lax attitude towards minorities, at the same time pleading for the Serbs to become a minority as well... The leader of the Liberal Party, which, in the previous elections, proudly conquered a few percents of votes, is now announcing their absolute victory(!). Returning to the political stage, Dr **Dragan Hajduković** explains how the "green" pro-independence fraction transformed into Greens, which idea is only slightly compromised by its excessive abuse in the early 90's. The fiasco of "the ecological state of Montenegro" project degraded environmental efforts in Montenegro to the level of elementary school "flower friends" clubs. It's sparkling hilarious under the political parasol this summer. Even the faithful Milošević's witness **Momir Bulatović** gave his support to the radicals, which is swiftly dubbed by the government a

red-and-black coalition, elevating by comparison the duo undergraduate Strunjaš – Dr Momir to the axis of the Doctors of crime: **Šešelj** and **Milošević**. Just what we need to raise the standing of their local successors.

Because people like the bad guys. This ancient Hollywood truth worked out astoundingly well for the "yours faithfully" **Milo Đukanović**, beaming placidly at the accusations for all the ten Deadly Sins, except for laziness.

The two opposition currents, lead by **Bulatović** and **Mandić**, used the beginning of August to settle once and for all which one of them is actually on the side of the ruling party? Perhaps both of them? The citizens had seventeen years to consider the puzzle.

And let me remind you: for 6000 days the reins of power in Montenegro have been in the same hands.

In the meantime, we have seen many a European envoy and representative come and go, and the reports being sealed most of them closely resembling the recent Transparency International report which ranks Montenegro by the rate of corruption together with Mozambique, Maldives, Madagascar, Algeria and Argentina.

The result is truly shocking, considering that the outgoing set of Parliament members adopted 208 laws in only four years, at the rate of one per week. Finding yourself in dismay, it

is instructive to reach for the well of ancient wisdoms.

"The more corrupt a state is, the more laws it passes", thus spoke **Tacitus**.

And what spoke a waitress in the Parliamentary restaurant to a journalist who decided to light a Gauloises despite of the legal prohibition, defending his decision by the example of the illustrious MP **Ferhat Dinoša** with his eternal smoking Marlboro?

"Dinoša can smoke, because Dinoša made this law against smoking!", explained the waitress, rightly suspecting that the laws are in fact being passed in a Dionysian trance, so that the half-gods who have already surpassed the census of the required coffees in the Parliament coffee-bar have the right to light the holy smoke, lest the smoky amendment vision should escape, after the fashion of the old shamans poring over a handful of peyote.

Helas, this endless sentence could have been easily abbreviated in the advertisement:

"Marlboro – If Dinoša can do it, you can do it too!".

Yet, considering the coalition of Dinoša's Democratic Union of Albanians with DPS, a cigarette advertisement would be likely to raise the old ghosts of the smuggling affairs, but the Parliament waitress was in no mood for discussion, so she let me smoke too.

It was a small breach of law, but a great victory for a citizen, on that faithful afternoon when in the next room the Law on the Conflict of Interests was rejected, which disappointed the UNDP nearly as much as the proceedings of the previous day grieved the citizens of Cetinje, when MPs refused to grant them the benefits pertaining to a Royal Town. The state decided not to finance the city with regular injections from the national budget, which is so depleted as to lack even the means for the upcoming elections.



How shall we, then, finance the Montenegrin political parties, if the Government refused to pay for their campaign, despite its legal obligation to do so? The non-governmental organisations have filed a complaint to the Supreme Court, suspecting some dark hidden funds. Mysterious are the ways of money, to use the biblical proverb, and let us pray, fellow citizens, for the advent of some research journalism in a country where the Government lives as a tenant, paying rent to the landlord which is no other but its biggest party, whose president is the Prime Minister and the vice president the first man of the Republic.

Such a republic has pledged even to run over the corpses of the past – anything to embark onto the windy marathon towards European Union and NATO alliance. Worst of all is to see the politicians absorb the rhetoric of the Promised Kingdom of Welfare. Getting there is a journey. Linguistically, they insist on the European road, as if we were talking about some utopian exodus. The European idea is customarily presented by the local tribunes as

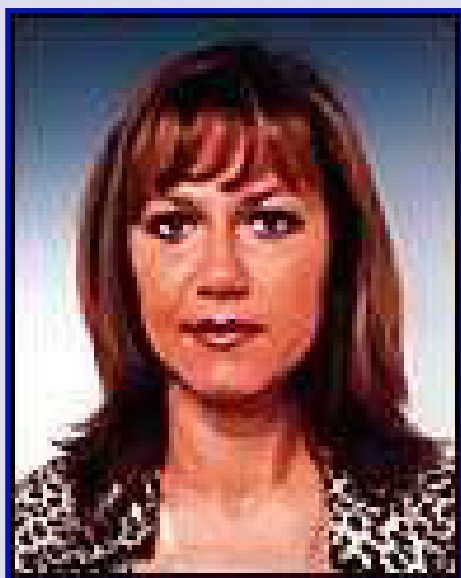
abiding in the Future, the future which is forever disgraced by the grand concepts of the past century, to quote the Russian thinker **Mikhail Epstein**. It is then enough to have another Russian reminding the public through daily "Vijesti" that NATO has built a rocket shield in the Czech Republic ...and the citizens quickly snap to the reality of carrots which are not all so delicious as the politicians would have them.

The fact that there are no Eurosceptics in Montenegro ahead of the elections speaks for itself. They are a necessary counterbalance in any sensible political discourse. Otherwise, Europe will remain just a fairytale, a sacral projection, a poster mannequin ready to satisfy desires of a society stuck in political puberty. Montenegro is not on the road to Europe, it is racing towards a hyper-Europe, which exists nowhere but in the August pamphlets of the hastily re-educated Communist Youth.

This is how the Radicals come into play, to take us back to the Middle Ages, where it's safer, and to remind us that "Serbia has grain", and that our youth should better get down with their knees on that grain to pray for Kosovo or whichever is the holy site of the day, instead of drugging themselves senseless at EXIT. This is how we make the false division into progressives and regressives, which will easily become void if DPS extends a friendly hand to SNP, closing the political circle, accomplishing thus a perfect crime of the Fallen Authority towards the thousands of masochists with membership cards.

Should this happen at the elections, the pace of social revival will continue to be dictated by the political elite, for the wont of any other.

The author is a journalist of the daily newspaper "Vijesti".



by Ljiljana Pjerotić

Now that we are about to conclude the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with European Union (EU), it is perhaps the right moment to halt and wonder why we would want to join this organisation in the first place, and whether the EU membership is worth all the effort, trouble and sacrifice.

Among the countries having the most positive image of EU, Montenegro ranks at the very top. According to the latest polls, three out of four Montenegrin citizens consider the EU membership to be advantageous for Montenegro. Economic prosperity, peace and stability, opportunities for travelling and studying abroad, are the main reasons why such great number of Montenegrin citizens (81.2%) supports its accession to the club of European states and peoples. These public opinion poll results are nothing to wonder about: it's a great thing indeed, to live in peace, surrounded by friends (or at least allies), ready to give you a hand, to be respected as "equal among peers", and to find oneself among those whose decisions are shaping the world (instead of being despised, isolated...).

A convenient thing indeed – to

Why do I want to be a citizen of Europe?

belong to that circle of democratic, open minded, economically progressive, well ordered states whose authorities (willingly or not) must worry over the welfare and interest of their citizens, over successes of their companies, protection of the natural riches and beauties, cultural and historical heritage, and are capable of using the EU legal framework and institutions to successfully protect the rights of their own citizens, regardless of their political, religious, national, gender or social standing or affiliation.

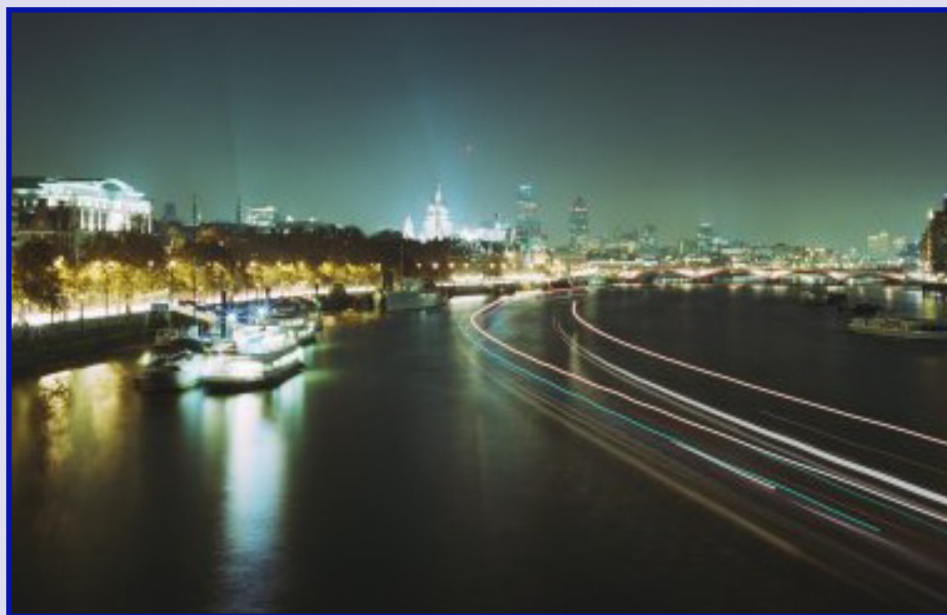
However, few of the Montenegrin citizens could boast any detail insight into what it means to be an EU member, and of the realities of the accession process, and yet so many of us are ready to support the prospect of EU membership. This is hardly surprising, for those who realise that our nation has always been quick to accept, but also equally quick to reject. I hope "Europeanism" will not meet the same fate.

For the citizens of Montenegro, ridden as it is by corruption, criminal and low living standards, joining the EU means salvation, a light-house of hope. Yet, we are forgetting that our problems will not just vanish into thin air. Becoming an EU member is neither easy nor inevitable. However simple and self evident this may appear, it runs against a widespread conviction that took root in this country, where we seem to believe that Montenegrin path of Euro-Atlantic integration is nearly predestined, and so much in the interest of oth-

ers that it ceases to be our own responsibility. Just relax, lay back, and wait for the uproar to pass!

Membership in the EU will not just fall into our lap, and we must realise that our European way must be our own choice and a result of our own work. Assistance from EU is welcome, but the key to the heavy gates of Brussels is in our own hands. It will not be an easy journey, we will have to do some hard work, to give up some of our habits and local eccentricities, to adapt to the European rules and accept as our own even those things which we found alien and laughable just a short while ago. Experiences of those peoples and countries which have already travelled this journey suggest that all efforts and sacrifices are multiply rewarded, for, after all, we will not be forced to renounce the very essence of our beliefs, tradition and customs ("unity in diversity"), and in exchange we will have:

- Peace, security, rule of law, respect from our neighbours and other members of the "European family of nations", and the rest of the world;
- Support and assistance in improving our living standards and the quality of life
- Privileges granted to the members of the single European market, the common customs system and the "Eurozone";
- Chance to participate in European regional and other funds;
- Better control over the protection of the environment;



- Better customer protection;
- Effective advocacy of our interests before the World Trade Organisation and other international organisations;
- Cheaper, yet more reliable and better telecommunication and energy services;
- Cheaper and safer air transport;
- Effective protection of intellectual property;
- Abolishment of borders and visas;
- Opportunities to study anywhere in EU and to receive a diploma which is recognised worldwide;
- Possibility to work anywhere within the Union, under conditions identical to those in our own country;
- Efficient supervision of all products which we use in our everyday lives (safety of food, children's toys etc.);
- A competitive home economy;
- Assistance in development of science and technology (through cooperation programmes among the member states and non-member states), exchange of information, experts, and financial assistance...

The list is, in fact, much longer, and everybody is free to add to it according to his or her own preferences and understanding. Each of the items can, of course, be

accompanied by a "but", because EU is not the ultimate ideal, but for us, it may be the only realistic perspective. Is there really an alternative? It is enough to look around and we can answer it for ourselves. Outside EU are only the very rich countries (Norway, Switzerland) and Byelorussia, trapped in the past, poverty and tyranny. Should we abandon this road, I'm afraid that we might end up like the Little Red Riding-hood, gobbled up by the wolf of globalisation.

Finally, I must not forget the women's rights. EU membership could do at least three things to improve the currently unenviable position of women in Montenegro.

Firstly, through establishment of new laws and institutions – modelled after EU – that would ensure equality of women in various ways. There are many things regarding women in EU which are still left to be improved. It is no compliment to the countries members of this organisation that their female citizens still earn 15% less than men on average, or the fact that they occupy only a third of all management posts, or that there is a lot more unemployed women than men. Each of these parameters, however, is even worse when applied to our own country, proving that the things

in this field must be changed quickly and comprehensively. This is why women in Montenegro need more Europe, and they are aware of that, and this is why they support it with all their might.

Secondly, the courts and the public administration must become more functional and efficient. They are especially important for those vulnerable and sensitive social groups (such as women), because they are those who should take care of righting the everyday wrongs, and of implementing decisions of the representative organs.

Thirdly, the economic discrimination against women could be fought not only by building a better economic system, but also with the help of EU programmes and funds which could be accessible to us to a larger extent than they are today, while we are still sitting in the antechamber of the "potential candidate country" category.

The situation is quite clear. A united Europe, based upon the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy and equality, does not allow for a negative attitude towards it. It is therefore important for Montenegro to join the EU as soon as possible, but it is even more important to first adopt and accept as our own all the values and standards which are the foundation of the EU.

We will not become Europe on the day we join European Union. We will become Europe only once the European values take firm root in Montenegro. That is the real aim of all changes, which we must implement swiftly and decisively.

The author is Senior Adviser for Education and Culture in the Municipality of Budva and associate of the European Movement in Montenegro. She attended II generation of the European Integration School.

TORBJORN SOHLSTROM, REPRESENTATIVE IN KOSOVO OF THE EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

It is impractical to have black spots at the heart of Europe



I believe that EU should continue with the enlargement. We have just been through the "big bang enlargement" – we got 10 new member states on the 1 May 2004, eight of them from Eastern and Central Europe, plus Cyprus and Malta. I believe that, by all objective criteria, this enlargement was a success for everyone. However, I think we all have to realize, that the European Union and its decision making processes are still digesting this enlargement, says Mr **Torbjorn Sohlstrom**, representative of the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy in Kosovo.

"It takes a while to realize, and to get used to the fact that suddenly there are not 15, but 25 members around the table. And when the poor president of the Council has to prepare for the European Council meeting, he has to tour not 15 capitals, but 25. And there are many more small examples of how this shift is making initial problems in the EU functioning", Sohlstrom said.

Reminding that Romania and Bulgaria are set to join the EU in the very near future and that there

is a promise of a clear membership perspective also for the entire Western Balkans region, he warns of the uncertainty regarding the exact number of new states that the EU is counting with.

"When the promise was made in Thessalonica, it meant 6 countries – since 21 May it's already seven, and by the end of the year it may well be 8 – and that is also causing some concern in Brussels. We also have a sense of self-doubt, or skepticism inside the European Union, which is not immediately linked to enlargement, but more to the future of the European Union itself. There are a lot of question marks being raised, and some of these question marks also concern enlargement. I think that sense of frustration or fatigue needs to be taken quite seriously. It is a problem for the EU, and it is – whether you like it or not, also an issue for you", Sohlstrom said.

He adds that there is a number of politicians which are raising questions about the future of the enlargement, and voicing alternatives to the full membership also for the Western Balkan countries.

"I believe that these alternatives

would not become real, I believe that the European Union will stick to its promises. I'm convinced that we should go on, and that there are at least three good reasons for this.

One is, because it makes eminent political sense. If you speak to **Javier Solana**, he will tell you that the enlargement is the most value-driven policy of the international community, it is the most original in its methodology, and most successful in terms of the result. If you speak with **Olli Rehn**, the enlargement commissioner, he would tell you that for the EU it's a stark choice: it's either exporting stability or importing instability. It's clear that, politically, also for Brussels, it makes a lot of sense to continue", Sohlstrom emphasised.

According to him the enlargement also makes geographical sense, because, "if you take a map of the continent, you will see everything in blue, except for three black spots: Norway, Switzerland, and the Balkans".

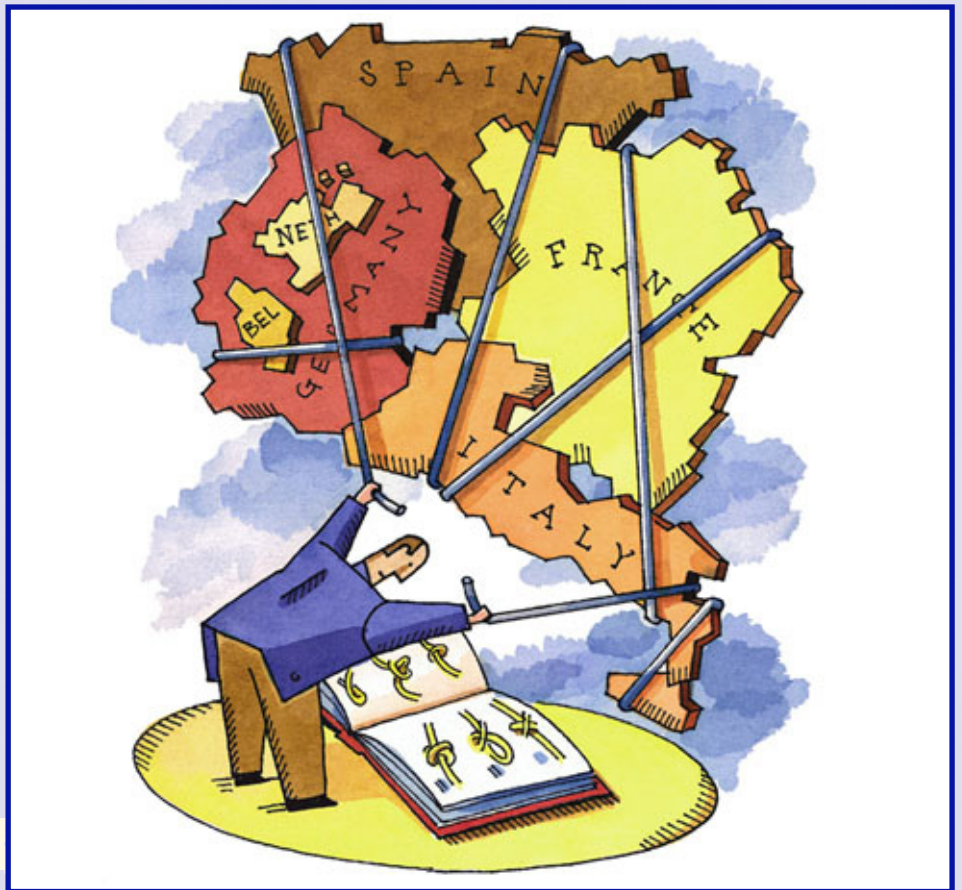
"It is very impractical to have such enclaves in black spots at the heart of Europe, which are not part of the European construction, not part of its politics. And I think it also makes cultural sense. There is a philosopher, **George Steiner**, who has identified the main characteristics of the "European cultural model", and he says there are three: one is our obsession with history – the fact that we always name streets and places after famous historical figures. The second is our fascination with speculative thoughts, with mathematics, music, and the third is the way in which we construct our cities, in

order to make sure that they are open, and that they allow for a lot of cafés, and if there's something I associate with Podgorica, or Prishtina, or Belgrade, it's a lot of speculative thoughts in cafes, about the past.

So, in many ways, if we would take Steiner's definition, the most European capitals of them all are found in the Balkans", says Sohlstrom.

He believes that the EU should go on with deeper integrations, but he admits that these are difficult times for the EU.

"Some even compare EU these days with Yugoslavia in the 1980s. They say there are three features that are very similar – first, the generation that understood the logic behind the union is dying out; secondly, there is the economic decline, or stagnation; thirdly, you have a huge constitutional debate. There are similarities, of course, but I don't think we should be drawing the parallel too far. There are problems in the EU, but the EU has had problems before", Sohlstrom reminds.



According to him, EU has two things to do urgently: first, to restate its case for the new generation in very clear terms; and the EU which has to do that are the national

leaders.

"This is one problem that EU has been facing ever since it became a more democratic environment. In the beginning, the EU was elite-driven in Brussels, and it did not have much popular involvement. Now it is becoming a more democratic project, with more popular involvement, in the electorate, through the referendums. That makes it even more important to restate our case in clear terms. And it cannot be done by Brussels, it has to be done by the national politicians. And it means that we have to get out of the logic where the national politicians will take credit for all the good things and blame Brussels for the things that go wrong. If national politicians are not fair with their electorate and give Brussels and the EU construction credit for what they should get credit for, the EU project will be in deep trouble", claims Sohlstrom.

EU IS NOT TRYING TO STIFLE THE NATION STATE

The nation as such is more and more powerless in dealing with real and perceived issues of globalization. We have a period of a relatively slow economic development. There are many more factors that contribute to the fact that now we have this crisis of politics, or crisis of legitimacy.

Still, I don't think we have a crisis. The EU is doing quite well – it's still one of the best places in the world to live, we are still making economic progress and people are pretty happy. There are even books written to say that the European model is the model for the world and the future. We do have some uncertainties about the future development of this model, there is a period of reflection, but I don't think we should lend ourselves to the kind of dramatic, catastrophic scenarios. One very important thing is to learn not to present, in the debate about the EU, the nation state and the European Union as if in a competition. I think the key reason of the European Union is to help the nation state survive, because in an era of globalization, a single member state, particularly a small member state has very little influence over the things that affect its daily life. And it's only by clubbing together, pooling your resources, dealing with issues together, that you have any kind of chance of actually influencing these big issue of our times. In that sense, the EU does not reduce power of the member states – it gives them a chance to exercise their power.

Vera ŠČEPANOVIĆ

THE EUROPEAN WORRIES – AN OVERVIEW OF THE TYPICAL FUTURE OF EUROPE FORUM DEBATES

A Europe-wide referendum for every new enlargement?

Turkey and the possibility of its accession to European Union seems to be the largest concern for the European public. On the Internet Forum on the Future of Europe, recently launched by the European Commission, this topic attracts most attention and debate.

According to the last summary presented by the organisers of the discussion, many people, including pro-Europeans, are against Turkey joining the EU. The most commonly mentioned reasons include: Turkey is simply not a European country; Turkey is too big, too poor or too different in culture and/or religion; the EU needs to absorb the recent Enlargement and let things settle down before enlarging any further.

Since the launch of the Forum at the end of March 2006, caused



by the public concerns that EU is getting further alienated from its citizens, there have been 12700 comments. Nearly 90% of participants are male, aged 18–44, so statistically it is not representative of the EU population. However, there is a good mix of EU-sceptics and pro-

Europeans taking part which creates divisible lines and makes the debate interesting to follow.

However, the discussions are now becoming difficult to follow. There are three basic themes – Europe's economic and social development, Feeling towards Europe and the Union's tasks, and Europe's borders and its role in the world.

In the thread dealing with Europe's economic and social development, the main topics continue to be the conflict between the "liberal" market model versus the "social" model – protectionism vs. openness and how to deal with globalisation.

A variety of subjects are discussed but focus has been on a rather ideological discussion regarding concepts such as social fairness, capitalism and globalisation. Some contributors believe that the liberal market model is the only way forward for the EU since the "European

A STRONG ESPERANTO LOBBY

It has been suggested that there should be only one 'EU embassy' in each member state and around the world. This should save a lot of money and make coordination easier.

However efficient this would be it is, by some, considered unrealistic since this would imply a deepening of the common foreign policy, which as long as the UK is still a member will never happen. The size of the "EU bureaucracy" is defended by one contributor who points out that it is much smaller than national bureaucracies.

The language issue has attracted many contributors in many language channels. Most of them agree that Europe needs to choose one language as the common second language for all Europeans. English or Esperanto are suggested and there is a strong Esperanto lobby present in the forum. It is argued that a common language is a prerequisite for 'pan European democracy' since the vast majority of people in Europe think in terms of the nation-state, each with its own national debates conducted in their own tongue via a national press or media.

social model" is degenerating ("Cosy welfare systems won't work in the new globalised economy"). Others take the opposite view putting forward the need for European as well as international social fairness and the protection of the European social system.

A large discussion concerns if there should be an "EU minimum wage" and if the EU economies will ever be compatible. There is also fear of a continuing outflow of labour intensive jobs. Connected to this is the discussion linked to the Lisbon strategy where openness is put against protectionism and where there are suggestions that Europe needs to compete not with cheap labour (since the race is already lost) but with innovative ideas and knowledge-based industry.

The Common Agricultural Policy is blamed for consuming a large part of the resources that could be used to create new jobs in Europe.

The internal market for services is touched upon. The discussion concerns its possible consequences for different parts of the European workforce. The 'Polish plumber' will according to some put local service workers out of business whilst others believe that an opening up of the service market is needed for Europe to survive i.e. services will become cheaper and jobs will be

A NEW SILK ROAD

China as an important economic and political partner in the near future is discussed. Most agree that a 'new silk road' will be very important for Europe.

Possible weapons cooperation and trading with China is another hot topic. Some believe that the EU should reap the benefits of such trade whilst others say that we have a moral responsibility to only sell arms to responsible countries (democratic, non-aggressive etc.). The discussion evolves into a discussion comparing Chinese investments in Africa (they are responsible accompanied with social programs and create real jobs for Africans) whilst what Europe does is only to dump agricultural products and then forget about the rest.

created and the 'west' will eventually adapt. For some the Polish plumber is an example to follow since he/she represents "the mobile worker"; immobility being an inherent European problem that needs to be solved. An internal market for goods is for some enough but others are convinced that we also need a "Bosman of services".

The need or not of a common EU id-card or driving licence is also discussed. Most think it is a good idea to create a common card which contains all the necessary information a private person needs in daily life and when travelling (id, insurance, licenses etc.)

Feeling towards Europe and the Union's tasks: The general subjects in this theme are the future of the EU-project, the future of the Constitution and the democratic status of the EU.

Contributors are trying to predict the EU's future: will it survive or disintegrate, does it need to be democratized to survive and will integration be possible without the Constitution.

Some wonder if the EU will end up as a federalist state or if it will "disintegrate" i.e. moving back towards being solely an intergovernmental organisation ("...the EU should stick to just being a free trade area").

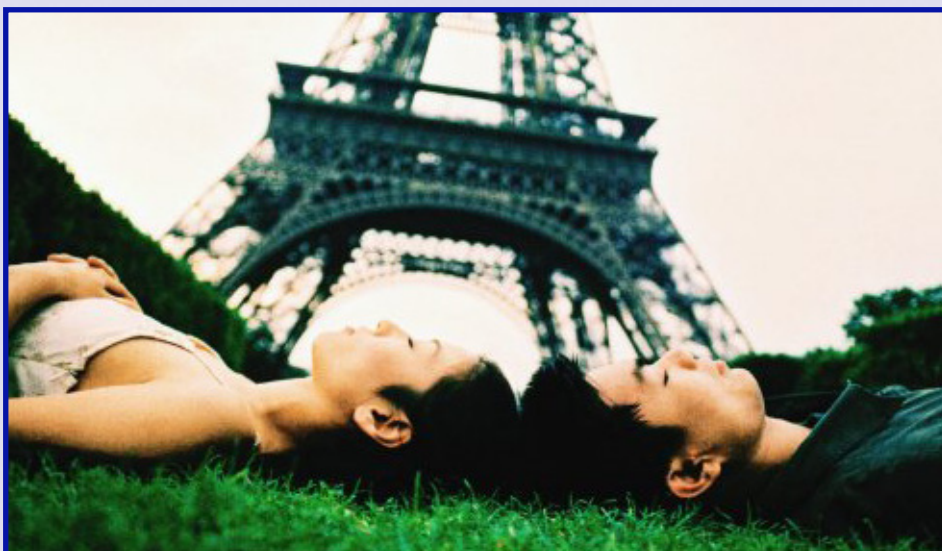
Some stress the importance of EU wide referendums when important decisions are to be taken (e.g. the Constitution, social policy etc.).

The democratic deficit is a hot topic with many contributions. The current EU structure is discussed as well as future possibilities (connected to the future of the Constitution).

Generally, people demand more democracy in the EU and a simpler and more transparent system; some even demand a restart of the Union as such since the current structural deficiencies are difficult to change. A few discuss the debate forum as such and ask if there is anybody really listening?

Others put forward the necessity of further integration as a means to compete, both politically and economically, with the USA and in the near future China & India. Others suggest closer cooperation with the US as the method for creating a "better world".

One thread discusses the secu-



EUROSCEPTICS FEEL LIKE IN THE USSR

In a limited thread the EU sceptics are comparing the EU to the USSR stating that they have the following in common: an unelected and unaccountable elite (politburo/commission), lack of popular support, the self-proclaimed "inevitability" of their project (triumph of communism over capitalism /ever closer union), anti-Americanism...

They are, however, challenged by contributors pointing out the unrealistic claims such a comparison is made up of ("conspiracy theory, nonsense") and that the EU countries have freedom of speech and socio-liberal type economies

Religion and the cultural heritage of Europe (Christian or not) has evolved to be one of the most discussed themes in the debate. There is one camp that stresses the importance of mentioning Christianity in the Constitution's preamble since it is important for the

'Christian/cultural heritage of Europe' i.e. the heritage is important to preserve and it should only be subjected to moderate changes. Others stress the importance of not mixing state and religion and the fact that the EU is there to represent all of Europe, not only the Christian parts/population. A contributor writes that a "European Christian heritage", never existed and will never exist since the European history shows that Europe has always been a "meeting point of religions" with a population that was either religious or not.

ity role of EU – does it actually prevent wars or if it is because of the NATO's security umbrella and the nuclear arsenals of the big member states that Europe had relative stability on the continent for such a long time.

There are some interesting discussions as regards the information flow out of the EU and the Media's coverage of the same. Many agree that the EU is 'faceless', the out-bound information is confusing and that the Media's coverage of EU affairs isn't of best quality ("Many media are at the core of the EU's problems").

The lack of knowledge about EU workings among the general public is recognised. It is stressed that education about the EU needs to get better and this is something everybody could agree on ("Finally something both 'eurosceptics' and 'europhiles' agree on, we need more information!")

The location of the EP is also discussed. Most recognise the effi-

ciency loss (and the waste of money) of not having all institutions in the same city. Others identify the symbolic value of Strasbourg as a location for some of the EP's sessions. However, most agree that the EU should pick one city as the location of its parliament. The ongoing internet petition for the location of the EP in one city (initiative of an MEP) has been advertised on the forum.

Europe's borders and its role in the world: Enlargement is a major theme and specifically Turkey's future accession. Many believe that Turkey is not a European country. Some think it will be difficult to integrate the first Islamic country into the EU whilst others see no problem as long as Turkey fulfils the accession criteria. For some Turkey is seen as a great future market, for others it is a Middle East country with a different, non-secular, culture that does not fit with the European. There are a number of Turks taking part in the discussion who express their willingness to join the EU since

for them membership entails "freedom, getting rid of boundaries, having the chance to be in other places, to work for other countries, to welcome others to work and live in Turkey and enjoy our country".

A contributor is worried about unjust European prejudice against Turkey. He is aware that Turkey may not be ready, because of economic and political reasons, to join yet but that some of the reasons in the debate are racist and full of negative prejudice. He writes:

"You fear us, but you don't know us."

Some contributors propose that for every new accession there should be a Europe-wide referendum i.e. the people should directly decide on the accession of new possible EU member states.

The UK's participation in the EU is discussed as well as its input during the Constitution deliberations. Some believe it's time for the UK to leave the EU since they are seen, together with the French, as being the ones that halt integration. Some contributors write that both the UK and the EU would be better off without the UK participating. Others argue that the EU would be better off without France.

The possible accession of Belarus, Ukraine and the Balkan states is also touched upon. Contributors are trying to define the "essence of Europe" and thereby setting its borders. Transatlantic relations are another hot topic where US military presence in the EU, the Iraq war, NATO and the need or not for a European army is discussed.

A future "European army" has received some attention. Some write that it is a good idea and that it might have prevented the tragedy in Kosovo and Rwanda. For others the idea is outrageous.

N. RUDOVIĆ
V. ŠČEPANOVIĆ

INTRODUCING THE EU INSTITUTIONS

European Court of Justice



European Court of Justice

European Court of Justice (ECJ) was Established in 1952, as one of the key institution in the very foundation of the system of European communities. The Court is responsible for solving disputes among the member states, EU institutions, companies and individuals, and for interpreting the Treaties and laws of European Union, to ensure their uniform application throughout the Union. Throughout the history of EU, in the periods between great institutional reforms, ECJ contributed greatly to the consolidation of the internal relations and the establishment of legal framework for the everyday functioning of EU, and this role has earned it the nickname of the "engine of integration".

The key task of ECJ is to ensure that actions and measures taken by the member states and EU institutions are in harmony with the European law. In a certain way, ECJ plays the role of the Supreme court inside European communities, as it has the power not only to punish the member states for their failure to fulfil the commitments, but also to annul or to require amendments to the existing national laws in order to bring them in line with the European legislation. In its work, ECJ relies upon several sources, primarily the founding Treaties of EU, as well as other legal acts (regulations, directives) issued by the relevant European institutions, but it also takes into consideration its own case law, as well as other legal sources. Consequently, the ECJ not only applies, but also creates European law.

The court discriminates between privileged and non-privileged parties – privileged are the EU institutions, member states, and, to a lesser extent, companies, whereas private persons can only appear before the court in exceptional cases. Most frequently, the European Commission appears in the role of the prosecutor, when it estimates that certain member

state has failed to implement an act of European law. However, the member states may sue the commission if they consider it to have exceeded its authority.

Due to work overload of ECJ, and in order to ensure a more efficient procedure, the Court of First Instance was added to it in 1989, acting as the lower, trial court. This court is fully open to individuals, and it also handled cases of employees of EU institutions suing their employer, until the European Union Civil Service Tribunal was established in 2005.

Both the European Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance have their seats in Luxembourg. ECJ consists of 25 judges, one from each of the member states. The judges elect a President among themselves, appointed for a period of three years. Currently, the President of ECJ is **Vassilios Skouris**, from Greece. Except for the judges, an important role in ECJ is played by eight Advocates General acting as advocates and legal advisors, and are chosen from among renowned legal experts. Five of the eight Advocates General are nominated as of right by the 5 big member states of the European Union: Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain. The other 3 positions rotate in alphabetical order between the 20 smaller member states. Although the judges and the advocates are appointed by their respective member states, their independence must be beyond doubt. While working in ECJ, they may not take part in any other political or economic activity, and they are never assigned cases where their own country appears as an interested party.

ECJ may sit as a full Court, in a Grand Chamber of 13 Judges, or in chambers of three or five Judges. The Grand Chamber upon a request of a party to the proceedings, or in particularly complex or important cases.

Every year, the European Court of Justice offers a limited number of paid traineeships, of a maximum duration of five months. Deadline for applications for the period 1 March–31 July 2007 is 1 October. More information can be found at

www.curia.europa.eu/en/infosprat/stage.htm

The official webpage of ECJ is www.curia.europa.eu

V. ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

NON – GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN EUROPEAN UNION

EUROPEAN FOUNDATION CENTRE



European Foundation Centre (EFC) is an international association gathering independent funders active in and with Europe. Established in 1989 by seven of Europe's leading foundations, the EFC today serves a core membership of more than 200 members, associates and subscribers; 350 community philanthropy initiatives; as well as a further 50,000 organisations linked through a network of 58 information and support centres worldwide.

The goal of EFC is to create a community of informed, inspired, committed, independent funders engaged in seeking solutions to challenges facing humanity in Europe and Internationally.

The EFC is a knowledge-based membership association dedicated to strengthening organised philanthropy, which is embedded in and supports civil society, addressing the following priorities:

- Representation and monitoring at European institutions, World Bank and United Nations Institutions, and providing its members with critical legal and fiscal guidance and knowledge.
- Networks and conventions, and consultancy on legal and fiscal issues and expansion of professional development opportunities in the area of philanthropy
- Public Record and Public Information Service on foundations and corporate funders active in and with Europe

EFC seeks to establish partnerships with other grantmaker associations, including European national associations of donors, consortia of funders, public authorities, multilateral institutions and individual donors in Europe and the world.

EFC itself does not offer any funds, but it does help individual grantseekers to find suitable grants in their particular field. They provide a public record and public information service that collects, processes and disseminates information and knowledge on independent funders active in and with Europe.

Within EFC exists the Grantmakers East Group, which seeks to promote the development of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe by providing funders with a platform to increase the effectiveness of their grantmaking efforts and to encourage new donor activity in the region. On 19 and 20 October, GAG will organise its annual meeting in Belgrade, which is conceived as a forum for exchange of practical experience and an opportunity to discuss issues important to grantmakers working in CEE.

Website: www.efc.be

E-mail: eu@efc.be



Centre for Civic Education, Centre for Development of non-governmental organisations and European Movement in Montenegro with the support of Foundation Open Society Institute – Representative Office in Montenegro, are publicising an

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for participants of V generation of

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION SCHOOL

and for participants of II generation of

REGIONAL EUROPEAN INTEGRATION SCHOOL FOR THE NORTH OF MONTENEGRO

School of European Integrations is composed of 7 modules totally lasting four months, and it comprises a wide spectrum of theoretical and practical knowledge from the field of European Integrations.

The lectures are held two times per week, and each lecture lasts for 2 hours (with the possibility of additional lectures), as well as through the topic oriented seminars.

Prominent domestic and foreign lecturers and experts, representatives of diplomatic corps in our country and other guests will familiarize the participants of the School with the history, development and functioning of integrative processes, contemporary status of European institutions, their influence on our society and perspectives for cooperation in this field.

The right to participate have the candidates whose priority is to gain new knowledge in above-mentioned fields and to contribute to the affirmation of ideas, meaning and standards of European integrations in Montenegro. All candidates are welcome regardless of their age, gender, nationality, religion or personal beliefs, indicating that the priority have all candidates who show high level of social activism in governmental, non-governmental, party, trade-union, commercial, scientific and cultural framework.

Expenses for the School are covered by FOSI, CCE, EMiM and CDNGO, with the obligation of the participants to attend at least 80% of the programme.

Upon completion of the School participants receive a diploma and gain right for further professional training. Application with short CV should be sent until **17 September 2006**, on the contact address:

Centre for Civic Education
(for "Study visit to the EU")
Njegoševa 36, 81 000 Podgorica
By fax: 081 / 665 112 or via e-mail: cgo@cg.yu

CCE – Centre for Civic Education is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to the alternative education in the field of democracy, civic society, human rights and European integrations.

CDNGO – Centre for Development of non-governmental organisations offers support to the development of non-governmental organisations in Montenegro and contributes to the creation of adequate framework for participation of citizens and non-governmental organisations within public policy issues and development of civil society.

EMiM – European Movement in Montenegro is a non-governmental organisation focused on the promotion of European values, standards and principles in Montenegro.



CCE and FES publicise an
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for participants of VIII generation of
DEMOCRACY SCHOOL

– School for learning democracy from theory to praxis –

School comprises 5 modules lasting totally four months. The courses will be held once or twice a week for 2 hours. All expenses are covered by the foundation Friedrich Ebert and Centre for Civic Education, with obligation of the participants to attend not less than 80% of the programme.

Upon finishing of the School the participants shall receive a certificate and be eligible for further educational development.

The right to participate have candidates who want to contribute to development of democracy and civic society in Montenegro. All candidates are welcome, regardless of age, gender, nationality, religion or personal convictions, with the indication that advantage have activists of the political parties and non-governmental organisations and all individuals who are showing high level of social activism.

Moderator of the School is professor Radovan Radonjić, PhD, and beside him eminent domestic and foreign lecturers will be working with participants.

All interested candidates may submit their application with short biography not later than 15 September 2006, on the address:

Centar za građansko obrazovanje (for "Škola demokratije")
Njegoševa 36 I sprat, 81 000 Podgorica; Fax: 081 / 665 112 Tel: 081 / 665 327; E-mail: cgo@cg.yu



CCE and Royal Netherlands Embassy are publishing an

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for participants of IV generation of the



HUMAN RIGHTS AND MINORITY RIGHTS SCHOOL

– School for human rights education from theory to practice –

School comprises 4 modules lasting totally four months. The courses will be held twice a week for 2 hours. All expenses are covered by the Royal Netherlands Embassy and Centre for Civic Education, with obligation of the participants to attend not less than 80% of the programme.

The aim of the School is to develop alternative education on human and minority rights, along with raising of public awareness about importance of being familiarized with the human rights; as well as promotion of values, European standards, principles and mechanisms that will lead to better interethnic relations in Montenegro.

Upon finishing of the School the participants shall receive a certificate and be eligible for further educational development.

The right of participation have candidates who want to contribute to respect of human rights in Montenegro. All candidates are welcome, regardless of age, gender, nationality, religion or personal convictions, with the indication that advantage have activists of the political parties and non-governmental organisations, media professionals, lawyers, young leaders, students and all individuals who are showing high level of social activism.

Programme comprises the participation of immense number of eminent domestic and foreign lecturers/ university professors, judges, lawyers, researchers, public officials/.

All interested candidates may submit their application with short biography not later than 15 September 2006, on the address:

Centar za građansko obrazovanje (for "Škola ljudskih i manjinskih prava")
Njegoševa 36 I sprat, 81 000 Podgorica; Fax: 081 / 665 112; Tel: 081 / 665 327; E-mail: cgo@cg.yu

FOR THIS ISSUE WE RECOMMEND:

**STAGIAIRE CONSULTANT
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM**

Scholarship / Financial aid: undefined
Date: please visit the official website for more details

Deadline: please visit the official website for more details

Open to:

- Young graduate or last year student in Law, Political Sciences or Business studies
- Self starter with autonomy, curiosity and analytical skills
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He/she will contribute in areas such as:

- Research EU policies of interest to Kellen Europe and/or its clients, monitoring and reporting
- Participate in membership development and telemarketing activities
- Research on and evaluation of mem-

bership potential in given countries/regions

- Updating of association databases (media, members, EU institution network)
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- Promotion (calling/emails) of Association activities to potential members, participants and media

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Bénédicte Lambert (ref: vacancy):
recruitment@kelleneurope.com

Website: www.kellencompany.com

**AKADEMIE SCHLOSS
SOLITUDE RESIDENCY
PROGRAM, STUTTGART**

At July 1st, 2006, the new application round started of the Akademie Schloss Solitude, located in Stuttgart, Germany. For the first time, the art, science & business program will be fully integrated into the Akademie's work.

Three jurors will select the program's fellows for a residence fellowship of six to twelve months in duration from the following disciplines: economics, humanities, and engineering sciences. Furthermore, the current jury chair Professor Dr. Philip Ursprung has initiated the topic "Dealing with Fear" for an interdisciplinary dialogue in the years 2007–2009.

Young scholars, scientists and people



from the business world can apply (individually or suggested by a business) with individual work topics or a project related to this central theme.

Already for the eleventh time, the Akademie is granting fellowships for artists from the following disciplines: architecture, visual arts, performing arts, video/film/new media, design, literature and music/sound.

Deadline: OCT 1 2006

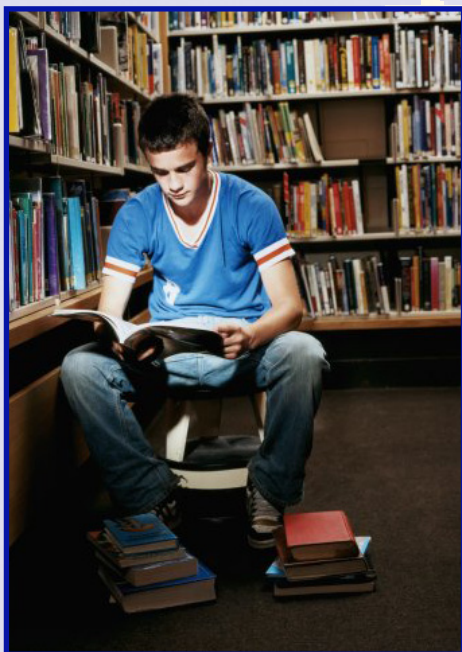
www.h-net.org/jobs/display_job.php

**INTERNSHIP WITH
EUROPEAN PLATFORM
FOR REHABILITATION**

The European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) – the network of leading providers of rehabilitation services to people with disabilities and others who are disadvantaged is looking for stagiaire to join the secretariat for a period of 4–6 months starting **11 September 2006**.

For full job description and how to apply see

www.epr.be/downloads/Advert.pdf.



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