



FOCUS OF THIS ISSUE

How does the quality of
elections influence
Montenegro's integrations

INTERVIEW

Prof Dr
Filip
Kovačević

ANALYSES

Are
Montenegrin
citizens
ready for
Europe

EU CHALLENGES

European
Commissioners
ahead of
the elections



ABUSE

Four days ahead of the elections, just as I was wondering whether the European bicycle really slowed down on the Montenegrin hills, since March seemed to be the most uneventful month in terms of European integrations, I was struck by the headline on the so called national news – "European Enlargement Commissioner **Olli Rehn** said for our television that the EU leaders agreed to discuss Montenegro's application in April".

With a confused translation, the picture shows a few microphones around Rehn (the national news already rolling – "said for our television" – deceived some taxpayers who are financing him).

My conclusion: someone – either Rehn or the public service – is eager to help the ruling coalition to win the elections.

It wouldn't be the first time either, neither for the Brussels' officials nor (especially) for the public service.

And I feel like asking the Finn Commissionaire what I will have to ask you instead – is the Finnish out for alleged corruption-related arrests a month ahead of the elections, are the president of the Supreme Court and the Director of the Agency for the prevention of money laundering called to sum up their achievements only a week ahead of the elections?

Or is the president of the Supreme Court at least morally responsible to say whether all the "big fish" mysteriously fall into this handful of 30% of cases that were never prosecuted to the end, or is it enough for applause to just say that 70% of the cases were brought to a verdict?

So much for independence of Montenegrin institutions or, if you will, abuse of public institutions for party purposes.

On the very same day, the so called public service announced the fall of the government of the Czech prime minister **Mirek Topolánek**, who promised us just two weeks ago in Podgorica that our application will be considered in April.

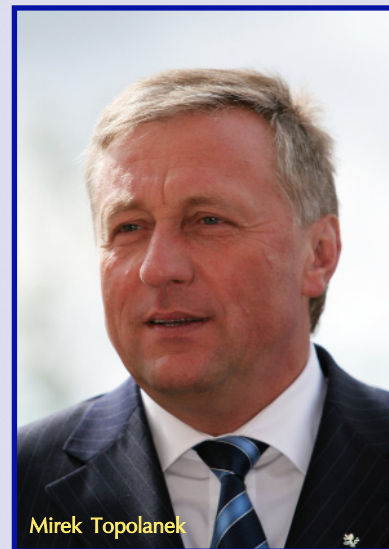
Just hope that on the 30 March European Eurosceptics won't send another message through our national news – sorry guys, Topolánek's and Rehn's promise is off.

V.Ž.

Finland ratified the SAA (5 March) – Finland ratified Montenegro's Stabilisation and Association Agreement with European Union. Finland is the sixteenth EU member state to have ratified Montenegro's SAA.

Rehn: Application is a technical issue (9 March) – Discussion on Montenegro's application is a technical, not substantive issue and I believe it will soon be on the agenda", said EU Enlargement Commissioner **Olli Rehn**. After a meeting with the prime minister **Milo Đukanović** in Brussels, Rehn said the most important thing was not whether the Council of Ministers will submit Montenegro's application to the European Commission in March or April, but that he hopes it will happen soon. Montenegro's application has been blocked by Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and Spain.

Topolánek visits Podgorica (11 March) – The EU ministers will most probably officially consider Montenegro's application for EU membership in April, thus starting the procedure for the acceptance of application, said **Mirek Topolánek**, the prime minister of the Czech Republic, currently presiding over the EU, on his visit to Podgorica.



Mirek Topolánek

Italy and Slovenia urge not to forget the Balkans (12 March) – Foreign Affairs ministers of Slovenia and Italy **Samuel Žbogar** and **Franko Frattini** sent a joint letter to the ministers of foreign affairs of all EU countries, reminding them of the importance of EU's expansion in the Western Balkans. The letter was intended to incite renewed discussion on this topic on the upcoming meetings of EU's foreign affairs ministers. Žbogar and Frattini emphasised the importance of liberalisation of the visa regime with the West Balkan countries and expressed their hopes to see substantial progress in this field before the appointment of the new European Commission

Preparations for the Questionnaire (14 March) – Representatives of public institutions, judiciary and executive met in the Secretariat for European Integrations do discuss preparations for answering the Questionnaire of the European Commission, although it is still unclear when this document may arrive. The meeting was dedicated to the questions in the chapter Political Criteria, which includes democracy and the rule of law, human and minority rights as well as regional cooperation and international obligations.

EU urges fair elections (16 March) – Parliamentary elections in Montenegro must be open and fair, it is important to maintain the freedom of the media as well as to continue fight against organised crime and corruption, said EU Troika after meeting the head of the Montenegrin diplomacy **Milan Ročen**. It was also said that Montenegro, as a "constructive partner to EU" achieved substantial progress in the association process, especially with regard to internal reforms, but that "much remains to be done". The meeting of Ročen in Brussels with the EU Troika – foreign affairs ministers of the Czech Republic, **Karel Schwarzenberg** and Sweden, **Carl Bildt**, and EU enlargement commissioner **Olli Rehn** were organised in the framework of regular political dialogue between Montenegro and EU.

New ratifications (25 March) – According to the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Montenegro, Poland, Sweden and Spain have also ratified Montenegro's Stabilisation and Association Agreement with EU. To date, nineteen EU member states have ratified the Agreement.

A VIEW FROM EU

Balkans in the waiting room



In the last few years, at the beginning of every year we kept saying: "This year we must make big steps to integrate the Bal-



by Hannes Swoboda

kans into European Union".

And at the end of every year we were disappointed. I'm afraid this year will be just the same. We must admit that development in South East Europe has been much slower than our hopes. Perhaps this is good news for some circles in the EU, which do not want another quick round of enlargements that may add to such tendencies in the near neighbourhood and create new fears and disappointments in the regions. This leads to despair and emigration, especially of young people.

This "joint" contribution to the slowing down and perhaps even stalling the enlargement process cannot bring anything good. It can only strengthen the existing conflicts and inspire certain groups and countries to invent or pull out to the surface new disputes. Therefore all countries in the region ought to strive to fulfil their tasks and resolve bilateral issues.

Croatia completed a large part of its homework. It gave a new push to the fight against corruption and organised crime. The record is far from perfect, but it is on the right track to become satisfactory. Two more open questions remain: the first regarding cooperation with ICTY and the second related to the border dispute with Slovenia.

Recent proposals by Commissioner **Olli Rehn** to establish a group of mediators led by **Maarti Ahtisaari** is certainly a right step forward and sends a clear signal to both countries that EU wants a quick resolution. Both aspects ought to be considered carefully – the political one, emphasised by Slovenia, and the legal, championed by Croatia.

The best would be to evaluate both aspects at the same time. The parties to the dispute could agree to delegate resolution of their border issue to an international organ and negotiate a political solution which could

satisfy basic requirements Slovenia's policy regarding Piran Bay and access to the open sea. Should the court rule in the favour of this solution, additional agreements between the countries would be superfluous.

Should the court rule in Croatia's favour, however, Croatia should still offer a voluntary but legally binding agreement with Slovenia to satisfy its basic requirements. In this way, Croatia would receive the confirmation of its legal positions, while Slovenia would score a victory in political negotiations with Croatia.

The group of mediators proposed by the EC could then work out the details of this two-track approach and assist the countries, in addition to the court's ruling, in finding a solution through negotiations. It would be equally acceptable if the countries agreed not to go to the court, but instead rely more actively and directly on the international law in the process of devising a solution to this

If we make an impression in the Western Balkans that we are indifferent to their integration efforts, this will have negative repercussions not only on individual states but on our interests in development and stability in a neighbouring region

cross-border dispute.

According to EC's assessments so far, Macedonia is still not ready to begin accession negotiations. In addition to this, Macedonia's progress towards negotiations can easily be endangered by the name dispute with Greece. We therefore agreed that the European Parliament should "Support the efforts of the mediator **Matthew Nimetz** on behalf of the UN, as envisaged by the Security Council resolutions no. S/RES/817 and S/RES/845 from 1993, which are aimed to resolve disagreements arising over the constitutional name of a state, in order to ensure the agreement between the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece as soon as possible, based on the proposal of 6 October 2008 about the possibility of explaining, on the international level, the difference between regions, belonging to two different states, but sharing a common name – Macedonia. The mediator is aware that both parties have certain reservations regarding this proposal and acknowledging that he has been appointed the new mediator on the Macedonian issue he urged both sides to keep their promise to negotiate and achieve a compromise solution and to make sure that

this issue is no longer an obstacle to the membership of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in international organisations, as envisaged in the 1995 Interim Agreement, which is still in force. Should there be no agreement between the two countries in due course, this could entail greater delay in the accession of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the EU. Bilateral issues on the Balkans should not be an obstacle to the accession process or take precedence over the process of European integrations".

Both candidate countries have specific difficulties: Croatia in opening certain chapters, Macedonia in beginning the negotiations at all. Further progress in this direction is currently obstructed by internal shortcomings and unresolved bilateral issues. It would be more economical to insist that all sides ought to accept a clear procedure for resolving bilateral issues, even before they begin negotiations for EU membership.

In this moment it is impossible to predict the start of negotiations with other Balkan countries. In spite of starting the negotiations (Montenegro) or receiving a candidate status (Albania), these countries will have to face serious problems, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, and consequently also Serbia.

The EU must be patient in order not to lose interest in the integration of this region. We must keep in mind that we cannot just impose from the outside our opinions and attitudes on reform processes. If we leave an impression in the region that we are uninterested or indifferent to their integration efforts, this will have negative repercussions not only on individual states but on our interest in development and stability in a neighbouring region. Especially in these weeks ahead of the elections for European Parliament we ought to avoid populist slogans against EU enlargement to the Balkans. These countries need a clear, positive answer to their efforts to join the EU.

The author is a vice-chairman of EP Delegation for relations with the countries of South-East Europe

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE QUALITY OF ELECTIONS INFLUENCE MONTENEGRO'S EUROPEAN INTEGRATIONS

Free and fair as long as there's no shooting and massive fraud

Is there anybody in all these monitoring missions and European Union institutions who



by Danilo Mihajlović

can explain to the citizens of Montenegro what it means that all elections in the last ten years have been "generally conducted in accordance with the best international practices and standards"?

Does this phrase, which concluded almost every post-electoral

report of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its Office for Democracy and Human Rights (ODIHR) mean that in most democratic states there is also abuse of public resources for party purposes and, usually unconfirmed, complaints about coercion and the buying of votes?

Or does this definition of monitoring missions simply mean that everything is fine as long as there are no brawls and shootings at the ballot or mass electoral fraud, as in the cases of Macedonia or Albania?

One of the obstacles on the European roads of these two neighbouring countries is the judgement of the monitoring missions, often quoted by the European Commission, that



their elections are not "free and fair".

Until recently, the EU officials never questioned the status of Montenegro's integrations based on the nature of electoral process.

However, half a month ago the EU Troika, consisting of the Foreign Affairs minister of the presiding EU member, High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy and European Commissioner for EU Foreign and Neighbourhood Policy, suddenly pulled this ace out of the sleeve.

At the meeting with Montenegrin Foreign Affairs Minister **Milan Roćen** his counterparts from the Czech Republic and Sweden, **Karel Schwarzenberg** and **Carl Bildt**, as well as European Enlargement Commissioner **Olli Rehn** warned that the parliamentary elections in Montenegro on 29 March 2009 "ought to be fair and open".

Similarly, head of the Dutch diplomacy **Maxime Verhagen** recent-

ALBANIA AND ELECTIONS

Free and fair elections, together with rule of law and fight against organised crime and corruption, are one of the key preconditions that Brussels has been asking of Albania for several years now.

The parliament in Tirana adopted in November last year the new electoral law which was deemed by both OSCE and the Venice Commission a "good legal ground for the conduct of free and fair elections".

Earlier electoral system was marked by excessive complexity and allowed for extensive manipulation. Experts mostly pointed out the fact that large parties could intentionally strengthen some of the smaller parties in order to make post-election coalition deals that would not reflect the will of the citizens.

Another obstacle to Tirana's road to Brussels is the fact that a very large number of voting age population does not have any identity documents which, according to the new law, are absolutely necessary to confirm a person's identity at the polls, which was not always observed in the past in a number of electoral units.

The issuing of new biometric documents only started in January, and there is a fear that a large percentage of some 3 million voters will not be allowed to the polls.

Albania announced its membership application by June, in spite of opposition from a number of current EU members, who insist that this country should first ensure a quality electoral process.

ly said that the decision of his country on the fate of Montenegro's membership application will depend on the quality of Montenegrin elections. The ministry of foreign affairs of the Netherlands clearly and openly warned that this country expects the upcoming elections to "be absolutely in line with the internationally accepted standards and norm".

The strongest parliamentary party, Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) is not in the least concerned about the statements of the Dutch diplomat.

Head of the Parliamentary Committee for International Relations and European Integrations **Miodrag Vuković** said that those words, "especially when coming from the biggest sceptic in Europe" only mean that Montenegro is on the right track.

"If the Netherlands, which is also creating obstacles for other countries in the process of European integrations tells you not that your elections ought to be in line with international standards, but "be absolutely in line" with European processes, it means you're practically there", Vuković said.

After the parliamentary elections of 10 September 2006, the Progress Report on Montenegro of the European Commission said there were plenty of small shortcomings, mostly regarding the behaviour of the media and the choice of MPs.

"Such issues ought to be resolved", warned the Report.

Relevant international organisations have been pointing out the same problems for years, but it seems that on this 29 March everything will remain the same.

EC and OSCE/ODIHR are already warning that the RTCG public service is obviously favouring the Government and ruling coalition parties.

"In spite of the law...RTCG provided media time free of charge based on proportional, not equal representation", states ODIHR report.

RTCG is again financed from the public budget, but its reporting is miles behind any semblance of equal representation of party points of view.



Although the representatives of international election monitoring missions have been objecting for almost ten years to the fact that the parties decide instead of citizens who will be in the Parliament, parties in the parliament have refused to even comment on, let alone do something about this issue.

The Law on the appointment of MPs stipulates that only a half of the seats won by a party or a coalition

After the parliamentary elections of 10 September 2006, the Progress Report on Montenegro of the European Commission said there were plenty of small shortcomings, mostly regarding the behaviour of the media and the choice of MPs. "Such issues ought to be resolved", warned the Report. Montenegro's political elite simply ignored EC's recommendations

ought to be distributed according to the candidates' ranking on the party list. The other half can be freely distributed by the party to any candidate whose name appears on its list.

"This provision limits transparency and can confuse the voters who are never sure which candidates will get their vote... although the Parliament had almost a decade to correct this problem, the controversial clause has not been removed from the Law", wrote OSCE after the 2006 elections.

The citizens are still not sure who

will get their vote and whether their favourite candidate will end up in the parliament to represent their interests.

At the time, all parties agreed to start tackling this issue as soon as possible. DPS said they were not opposed to the change but that "they cannot act alone, since the change of electoral laws demands two thirds majority".

This year's parliamentary elections follow the well known path – the opposition first objected that the new elections cannot be held under the current legislation, then some parties brought up a number of public companies where the employees were pressured to vote for the ruling coalition, again there were rumours of parties buying IDs...

But the cherry on top of the cake this time round was the public complaint of a teacher in one primary school who said that the director of her school was pressuring her and her colleagues to vote for the Democratic Party of Socialists.

President of the National Council for European Integrations **Srđan Milić** also warned that this year's elections in Montenegro will draw closer attention of international institutions and loom large in the prospects of the

country's rapprochement with EU.

"We have seen this happen already in the case of Macedonia, whose road to EU was blocked because of the controversies during elections. This suggests that Montenegro's case will draw quite some interest of those who are working on Montenegro's Progress Report for 2009", said the leader of the Socialist People's Party (SNP).

Last year's elections in Macedonia were marked by serious incidents, and the international community warned that these will have

direct repercussions on Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic integrations. The incident in question was a shooting between opposed political groups of Macedonia's Albanians.

Recent presidential elections in Macedonia were expected to be a "test" for Macedonia, and the EU said that "free and fair elections were the key precondition for Macedonia's ambitions to become member of EU".

At the start of the campaign, Milić's party asked the Constitutional Court to evaluate the compliance with the Constitution of the Law on appointment of MPs, Decision on the shortening of the Parliament's mandate and Constitutional Law, but the Court refuted all complaints.

"It is obvious that Montenegro suffers from legal banditry, seen that the Constitutional Court is anything but independent. We received contradictory rulings from the Constitutional and Administrative courts of Montenegro", Milić said.

Electoral law ought to have been harmonized with the Constitution by 21 April 2008, but just ahead of the elections parliamentary majority voted to prolong this deadline for two more years.

SNP also warns that the Constitution guarantees the right of minorities to have "authentic representation in the Parliament of Montenegro and in the parliaments of local governments where they are in majority", while the Law guarantees this right only to Albanians.

The Constitutional Court also refuted this complaint of SNP, and **Konrad Olzevski**, deputy head of the



electoral office of ODIHR refused to give a comment on this issue to the media. However, two and a half years ago this organisation warned that the Parliament ought to reconsider the existing system of allocating a number of parliamentary seats based on results in specifically defined electoral units.

"The current system privileges only one national minority in Montenegro", states the report of this institution.

Vuković agrees that the electoral process could have some consequences for the European path of Montenegro, but insists that the consequences cannot be negative if "there are here and there some rumours about pressuring the employees and inventions about the buying of IDs".

"Montenegro is only two steps

away from the EU, two big steps, and I believe we will continue the process successfully and complete this political structure", Vuković said.

Talking about the teacher **Aila Šoškić** who told the media that the director of her school tried to influence political choices of the teachers, Vuković commented: "Then we get some mother courage in the guise of a teacher who, to make things worse, is on the list of an opposition party... raises havoc in the school and in the end it seems her "courage" is more important than 70 signatures of her colleagues who say that her claims are unfounded".

The long term DPS MP suggested that his colleagues from the opposition are usually responsible for spreading such "nonsense".

The way things stand now, election monitoring missions will once again conclude that the parliamentary elections in Montenegro went with "minor shortcomings which, however, did not have a significant impact on the final result".

This definition casts a shadow over citizen's trust in the electoral process, but also on the impartiality of the monitors.

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

VUKOVIĆ: I'M UNDER PRESSURE TOO

I can't live from all sorts of pendants from the Movement for Changes and New Serbian Democracy. Every day I come back from work they are waiting in front of my apartment.

Isn't that pressure? They also litter my doorstep and nobody reacts to the fact that they're ruining my privacy and that I have to clean up their papers with, with all due respect, worthless messages. As if they did not know that I already have a definite political orientation. Their impudence is unlimited" – explains Vuković his trouble with political pressures.

ARE CITIZENS OF MONTENEGRO READY FOR EUROPE

Head in the Sand

Montenegrin officials are unanimous – Montenegro is not heading towards European



by Neđeljko Rudović

Union for the sake of the Union and to please somebody else, Montenegro is doing this for its own sake, for the sake of a better life, more democracy, rule of law... If they submitted the application for EU membership, it must be that they believe we are ready. Quite aside of the fact that many activities on the part of this government rather suggest that the government is simulating reforms and the party interest is always way ahead of the state interest, at the moment the really interesting question is to what extent are the citizen of Montenegro ready to be a part of the "elite society".

Gallup recently published the results of an extensive public opinion poll conducted in all countries of the Western Balkans which asked the citizens to evaluate the situation in their country and future prospects. Montenegro's results spell out several messages.

The first is that the citizens of Montenegro, together with their neighbours from Kosovo, are extremely optimistic about the future, unlike the other countries of the region, especially Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The second is that 71% of Montenegrin population is satisfied with their lives, and 55% evaluates Government's work positively.

The third is that 54% of the

respondents sees a chance to improve their lives if they stay in the country.

The fourth and final observation is that 53% of Montenegrins believe it is perfectly acceptable to use personal connections in order to get what, as taxpaying citizens, they should be naturally entitled to.

How do we interpret these findings?

Firstly, in Montenegro it is still the case that the citizens mostly expect their leaders to sort out all of their problems – to get them a job and take care of their overall welfare. In other words, a lot of Montenegrins still prefer to stick their heads into sand and

If we put together the fact that a majority in Montenegro is optimistic, satisfied with their lives, satisfied with the work of the government and at the same time believes it is perfectly normal to engage in corrupt practices, the natural conclusion is that Montenegro at the moment does not share a European worldview

wait for the storm to pass. Either that or the Government is really so successful that majority of the citizens believe it is leading our country in the right direction and that it did whatever it could or should have done in the past.

If it is really true that a majority in Montenegro is optimistic, satisfied with their lives, satisfied with the work of the government and at the same time believes it is perfectly normal to engage in corrupt practices, the natural conclusion is that Montenegro at the moment does not share a European worldview. And that it is still very far away from the European values which would demand instead an accountable government and self-reflexive citizens.

That, in turn, means that the key characteristic of Montenegro is still obedience and indulgence of the powerful. If a majority still believes in the need to bribe a public notary in

order to get the necessary papers, than it must be "kind" to them. Not to talk about ministers or mayors.

This also shows that the citizens of Montenegro are still not aware that it is them who elect all these mayors, presidents and prime ministers and that their fate is in the hands of these same citizens. Until that kind of mentality, which still cannot understand that ministers and officials are there to serve the citizens and not to look at them down their noses, becomes a minority phenomenon, Montenegro cannot be ready to move forward, and certainly not to join the European club.

At the moment, the biggest problem is that those who are leading Montenegro into European Union are only feeding these perverse attitudes, making every act of assisting some-

body into a great gesture of good will. In a certain town on the coast there is a well known tradition – a high ranking official of the ruling party receives audience on certain mornings in a certain cafe. They tell him their needs, from employment to construction licence, and he tells them whether it can or cannot be done. Usually it can. Then come the elections and the "secret ballot", from which the party of the said official emerges every time stronger. Is this European "solidarity" or naked clientelism with the most blatant abuse of power?

And with such practices, can Montenegro be closer to Europe than its neighbours?

When will Montenegro stop cheating on itself?

If we don't face the mirror and think through this on our own the opinion of the European Commission will be of little help.

PROF DR FILIP KOVAČEVIĆ

We ought to change the conscience

Professor of political psychology at the University of Montenegro Dr Filip Kovačević says we "must not" also democratisation in Montenegro to depend solely on the interests of European Union.

In the interview for the *European Pulse* Kovačević said that Montenegro ought to fight for its place among the democratic state by changing the conscience, the political mentality of its citizens.

● A number of advocates of European integrations believe that Montenegro can only institute genuine rule of law through the process of integrations, i.e. under the pressure from Brussels. Do you agree with them, and do you see any alternative?

Unfortunately, respect for the law and the rule of law that exist in the European Union are still a utopia for Montenegro.

The responsibility for this lies mostly with the political elite.

Montenegro's citizens are tired of suffering and ruin of the last few decades. They see European Union as an answer to all their problems, as a medicine that will cure every illness, some kind of paradise on Earth. Their genuine yearnings are then exploited by political parties to score political points

However, we must not allow democratisation in Montenegro to depend on the interests of European Union. The EU can also have an interest to keep us as we are, on the level of pre-political and pre-democratic political development in order to control and manipulate us more easily.

This is exactly the kind of behaviour we can observe in Javier Solana and Olli Rehn who, cynically and neo-colonially, since they



Filip Kovačević

are very familiar with the dossier of the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), praise the achievements of the current prime minister and his

team.

Montenegro must become a genuinely, profoundly independent country by fighting on its own, through changes in the political

Instead of being the symbol of democratisation and international solidarity, European Union is ever more frequently likened to the former Soviet Union

mentality of its people, for a place among democracies. If we fail to do so, we will forever remain a subject of calculations on the part

of "big" powers and "higher" interests.

● Public opinion polls show that more than 70% of Montenegrin citizens support EU membership. Is this a case of blindly following political leaders, hope that EU membership will improve their living standards or something else?

Montenegro's citizens are tired of suffering and ruin of the last few decades.

They see European Union as an answer to all their problems, as

a medicine that will cure every illness, some kind of paradise on Earth.

Their genuine yearnings are

exploited by political parties who wish to increase their ratings. Representatives of the DPS–SDP (Social–democratic party) coalition are true champions of such manipulations, who even named their coalition "European Montenegro" although, as you can easily see, every political party supports European integrations.

Therefore, there are unfounded illusions about European Union which are exploited by the political class for their own goals.

• You say that Montenegro's citizens are tired of suffering, but a recent Gallup polls shows that 71% of the citizens of Montenegro are satisfied with their lives, 55% has positive things to say about the activities of the Government, and, together with the citizens of Kosovo, our citizens are the most optimistic compared to other countries of the Western Balkans regarding their future. How do you explain this?

With all due caution with

regard to operationalisation of survey questions, one should also bear in mind that this poll was conducted in September and October last year when the ruling machinery in Montenegro and its media suite censored out any mention of the global financial crisis.

At the moment, its findings are quite inapplicable except, of course, as a propaganda tool.

European Union is already witnessing the beginnings of process of decomposition, and I believe this process is likely to continue. Simply put, it is becoming clear that the EU framework does not work well for the interests of large capital (monopolies, banks etc.) who were the main drivers of the establishment of the Common Market and EU in the past

• Do you believe that the EU will overcome its institutional crisis? Advocates of European integrations remind that in the past the EU has emerged stronger from every crisis and that this time it will be the same.

European Union is already witnessing the beginnings of process of decomposition, and I believe

this process is likely to continue.

Simply put, it is becoming clear that the EU framework does not work in the interests of large capital (monopolies, banks etc.) who were the main drivers of the establishment of the Common Market and EU in the past.

This is not entirely bad news, since it opens up the opportunities for the establishment of a different

EU where, for example, the rights and prosperity of common citizens will be a priority.

This is why the creation a pan-European network of alternative social movements, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, independent academic communities etc. is of paramount importance.

To an extent, such a structure already exists within the European Social Forum, but it needs to be strengthened further before it can represent a credible alternative.

• What is the European Social Forum?

European Social Forum is an annual conference held by progressive social movements, non-governmental organisations and individuals and motivated by the idea that "Another Europe is Possible". It represents the European branch of the World Social Forum and advocates the vision of a world ruled by equality and social justice.

You can find more about them at 222.esf2008.org

V. ŽUGIĆ

FREQUENT COMPARISONS BETWEEN EU AND USSR

• Are you a Eurosceptic or you are just projecting this image because of your sharp criticism of European bureaucrats and certain leaders?

The real question is whether the existing EU institutions expand or limit the space for elementary democratic freedoms and rights of the citizens of European Union.

Instead of being the symbol of democratisation and international solidarity, European Union is ever more frequently likened to the former Soviet Union.

Just read recent statements by the Czech President **Vaclave Klaus**. I am sure that Klaus, who spent a good deal of his life under Soviets, knows very well what he means by that. Bureaucracy that is an end in itself – because who can really hold accountable European Commission and its numerous directorates, countless offices – is particularly allergic to the projects of authentic human emancipation, rights of immigrants, workers' rights etc. This is easily observed also in the growing dissatisfaction of the common citizens with "European" initiatives.

European Union has become a fortress not only for the rest of Europe, but increasingly for its own citizens and peoples.

MONTENEGRO'S ACCESSION TO EUROPEAN UNION

What is the Stabilisation and Association Agreement?

Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) is the political and institutional



by Vladimir Pavićević

framework for a long-term EU policy towards the countries of the Western Balkans (Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina), with the goal of associating these countries with the EU, and establishing durable stability and economic prosperity in each of these countries, as well as in the region as a whole.

Stabilisation and Association Process, as well as the status of an "associate" and eventual accession to EU have become important elements of the strategic orientation of reform governments of the five countries in the region, as well as key incentives for and support in the process of transition and modernisation of their economies and overall social relations.

Trade and financial support prescribed as part of SAP have direct effects on the improvement of economic position of these countries. Institutional rapprochement with EU enhances their capacities for regional cooperation (one of the preconditions for EU accession) and the overall improvement of bilateral relations with other countries of the region.

The core of the SAP process is the conclusion of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA).

SAA is an international agreement between European Union and a West Balkan country which prescribes a reform programme that the country must implement in order to become a candidate for EU membership. SAA is based on the values of democracy, human rights, rule of law and market economy. It has a strong focus on political and economic stabilisation of the Western Balkans. Two most important commitments that Montenegro undertook by signing these agreements are the establish-

Stabilisation and Association Agreement is based on the principles of democracy, human rights, rule of law and market economy

ment of a free trade area and harmonisation of Montenegrin legislation with EU laws.

The goals of SAA can be classified into three categories – stabilisation, association and free trade area.

– Stabilisation – full, durable stabilisation of the West Balkan coun-

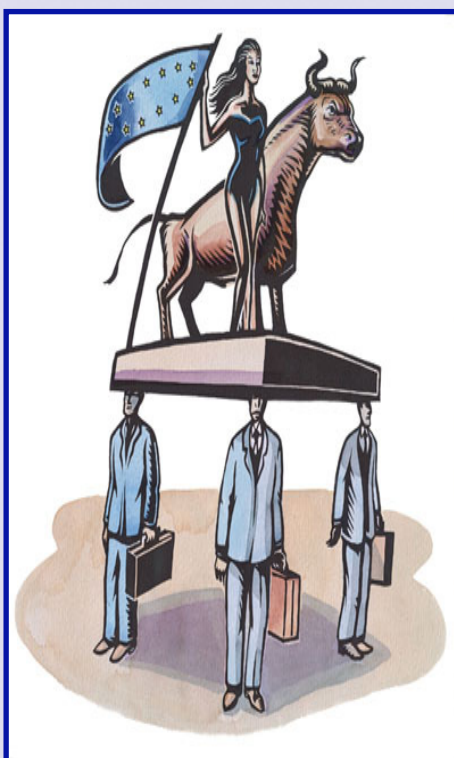
tries, including transformation of the political, socio-economic, institutional, legal and security systems of these countries. The Agreement contributes to the strengthening of regional stability, establishment and maintenance of a stable European order based on European Union as the central pillar;

– Association – establishment of an adequate framework for political dialogue that allows for development of political relations between signatories, support for

implementation of market reforms and development of harmonious economic relations, with the goal instituting a free trade area, and support for regional integration;

– Free Trade Area – once this Agreement comes into force, all tariffs, quotas and similar measures aimed at imports of industrial and agricultural products to EU (excluding certain agricultural, textile and steel products) will be abolished. A number of tariffs on import of sensitive industrial and agricultural products will be gradually phased out until the expiry of the transition period.

Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Montenegro, of the other part, contains a preamble, general principles and nine chapters. Among the general principles are: respect for the democratic principles and human rights, rule of law, international law, as well as the principles of market economy.



The remaining nine chapters cover the following areas: political dialogue; regional cooperation; free movement of goods; free movement of workers; right to establish enterprise and provide capital and services; harmonisation of legislation and its enforcement; competition policy regulations; cooperation in justice and home affairs; cooperation policies; financial cooperation; general and institutional provisions.

In the course of negotiations preceding the Stabilisation and Association Agreement EU and Montenegro agreed on the length of the transition period for the establishment of free trade area with EU, and drafted a provisional timetable for the harmonisation of Montenegrin legislation with *acquis* in some priority areas. Once the negotiations were successfully completed, European Communities and Montenegro signed the Agreement on 15 October 2007. In order for the SAA to come into force, it ought to be ratified by all EU member states. Until SAA becomes operational, trade relations between the Associate and EU are regulated by the Interim Agreement. It is a separate agreement concluded in order to ensure faster implementation of those parts of SAA that are in the competence of European Communities (free movement of goods, i.e. industrial and agricultural products as well as fisheries, current accounts and the movement of



European Communities and their member states and Montenegro came into force in January 2008.

adjustments to the legal, economic and political standards of the EU require individual and joint efforts

Two most important commitments that Montenegro undertook by signing these agreements are the establishment of a free trade area and harmonisation of Montenegrin legislation with EU laws

By concluding the SAA, Montenegro becomes an Associate of European Union and reconfirms its status as a potential candidate for membership in the EU. The Agreement emphasises individual, merit-based approach for assessing Montenegro's rapprochement with EU.

Legal and economic adjustments related to the implementa-

by all citizens and institutions of an associate country. All changes that are dictated by the road to EU are in the interest of Montenegro's development and modernisation.

The role of SAA thus is not solely to regulate the relationship between Montenegro and the EU but primarily to regulate relations within Montenegro, strengthening the effectiveness of the rule of law and enhancing the overall economic and institutional reforms that are necessary for Montenegro to become a modern, developed country.

Reforms and fundamental adjustments to the legal, economic and political standards of the EU require individual and joint efforts by all citizens and institutions of an associate country

capital, competition policy, intellectual, industrial and trade property, and tariffs). Unlike the SAA, the Interim Agreement does not require ratification by EU member states. Interim agreement between

tion of SAA are the first serious step towards overall harmonisation that will come into play with full force once Montenegro becomes an EU membership candidate.

Reforms and fundamental

The author is a lecturer at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade

Minor irregularities and result

by Brano Mandić

The campaign brought us the "Alas, poor Yorick" worries of **Nebojša Medojević** with a skull in his hand, eurovisionary Serbhood of **Andrija Mandić**, reliquary-polygraph socialism of **Srđan Milić** and last but not the least the usual slime of collective orgasms when **Milo Đukanović Duke** shows up in auditoriums from Plav to Bar.

However more modest the comedy seems to be this time round, this is not the main reason that the elections are coming along quietly like a requiem.

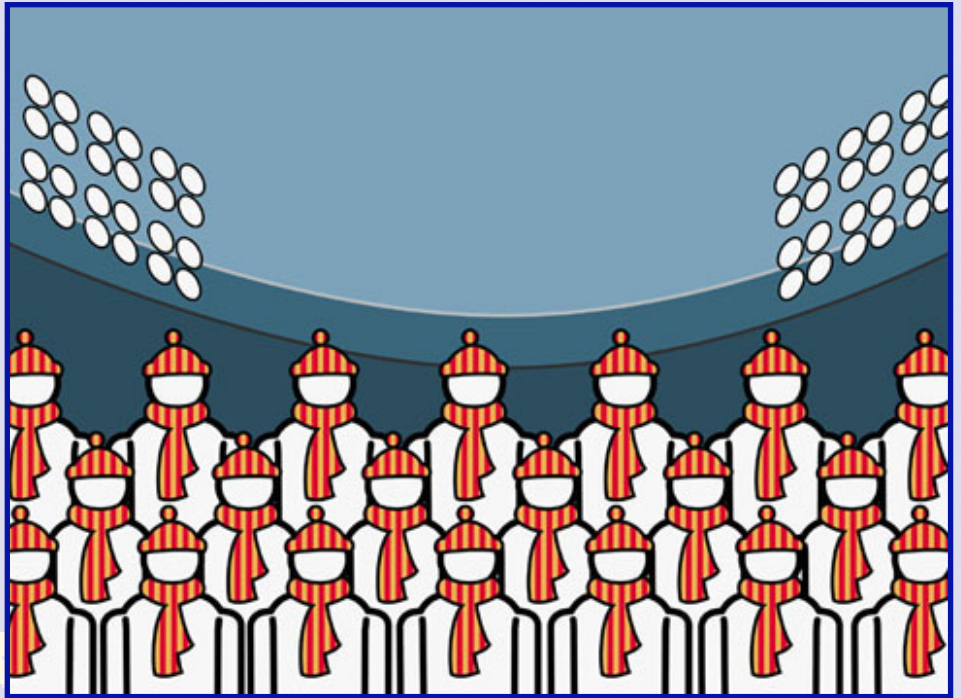
This time, it seems, every last aunt of this country understands that the decisive match is not to be played in politics among the parties, that we are simply acting out a little electoral reality show while the most important decisions are being made at some table, under a table, in empty hotels on the coast, in Abu Dhabi, anywhere except in the Parliament.

Even the biggest parliamentarian of the South Slavs, **Ranko Krivokapić**,

Even the biggest parliamentarian of the South Slavs, Ranko Krivokapić, shrugs his shoulders to say that ministers are running to become MPs – just like that. They will "obviously" not take up these seats, they are put on the party lists simply to attract that same aunt who is expected to be plunged into ecstasy once she realises that half of Milo's cabinet is there waiting for her to circle their names

shrugs his shoulders to say that ministers are running to become MPs – just like that. They will "obviously" not take up these seats, they are put on the party lists simply to attract that same aunt who is expected to be plunged into ecstasy once she realises that half of Milo's cabinet is there waiting for her to circle their names.

When the elections are over, the "riffraff from the bench" will take up their positions and we will once again have a group of citizens in the parliament to adopt pro-European laws



happy to have a job and a paid lunch in the cafeteria in these times of crisis. This, supposedly, is as good as it gets, better cannot be expected from this life. That's at least how I, "Hegel's valet", feel on the 15th of every month.

Dredges are again scouting the

culprit in this crime that's about to be committed in a few days. Everybody is waiting to hear the known results, which is a perverted feeling, like in expectation of a fixed game.

On which note, the world champion Italy arrives just about now to kick around the ball with the brave falcons under Gorica. This will be a great opportunity to sizzle ourselves up with napalm patriotism and show that the ball is round, if not in politics, than at least in sports. The order has arrived from the football federation that no flag is to appear on that day on the stadium except for the Montenegrin and Italian ones.

The idea is the following: take a three-by-three meters European Union drape and head for the game. When the security tells you that's not allowed, call a press conference or, in a more radical variant, burn yourself at the spot singing "all men will become brothers".

Since there's no chance in held I can get hold of a ticket, I'm offering my idea for free to be implemented by any activist of any party that empathises with comrade **Topolanek** and other

streets, sidewalks are being lifted out with filigree precision in every town of the country, "mugićs" replaced on the streets, cement mixed, everything smells of pre-electoral routine which is death to inspiration.

Even the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) recycled the slogan "Sure" from 13 years ago, which is a great reminiscence and a proof: post-modernism crept even into Agit-Prop cabinets ready to revive the history of victories past.

But the Opposition is the main

comrades. The same performance can be staged with an American flag. Then you go up to Ambassador **Moore** and ask for asylum, settle down somewhere in Iowa and breed cattle until the end of your life.

Some ten years ago one late criminal had a fancy bar in the centre of Bar where they wouldn't let you in with your hat on. Take off that cap! (a reggae knitted cap in the colours of rainbow).

The pounding of this last twitch of individualism is nobody's worry. What is way more important is our conduct in the midfield at that historical game in the midst of the pre-election silence.

That would be the key question: do people understand that somebody is depriving them of the fundamental right to wear flags and caps of their choice?

Still, the youth is a little more pumped up, so they're chatting with the vice president of DPS **Svetozar Marović**. One young chatter is asking who will he bring to Jazz next year, and Sveto writes back: **Britney Spears**.

What can we learn from this father-to-son conversation? First of all, the ruling class has been informationally emancipated, they can type keyboards. Second, young people have caught the rhythm: one concert per year. Every f*ing June, heading straight to Jazz. Waiting for one concert for twelve (12) months to dedicate it to the tourists and local congregation. This is one discreet rhythm which does not bother anyone. We'll sit in our leasing-financed cars, put on something casual and twist till dawn. We can also conclude that DPS will never lose the power, since they've taken the marketing-wise turn: go for the young. The young have no visa to get out of the country, but they have a vision how to live in it.

How are the visions without visas? Please refer to the past twenty years. Blooming reform spirits and we're all one little happy incestuous family. We marry each other and exchange juices.



Poisonous juices in a province where the main music manager in town is a warmonger who reads **Marcuse** but "respects the fact that many people like Britney".

That the average wage is half the price of the average consumer basket is irrelevant when compared with the times when we were occupied by the

When the elections are over, the "riffraff from the bench" will take up their positions and we will once again have a group of citizens in the parliament to adopt pro-European laws happy to have a job and a paid lunch in the cafeteria in these times of crisis. This, supposedly, is as good as it gets, better cannot be expected from this life

Ottomans or lived in unequal warring communities of the Balkan peoples.

In translation, that would mean that life has never been better in Montenegro. In a pub in Podgorica, next to the toilet hole somebody wrote "Long live life". Is there a better slogan to disarm all unfulfilled critics? Long live life, we continue in the best of Olympic spirits, without a single institution that would be more trusted by the citizens than the church. It must be ten years now that the church comes victorious out of every opinion poll. The city of God, to quote St **Augustin**, the author of the famous

maxime "Love, and do what you like". Marvellous summary of the Ten Commandments. "Vote, and do what you like" sounds even better when you're a professor in a school in Podgorica and your director is a rotten agitator in the jeep and trip of a national worker.

Finally, a few permutations for the most persistent. Forecasts suggest that at least four parties can score close to the census limit. In other words, a tiny bit of fraud, of the order of a few thousand votes, can leave several parties out of the parliament. In this case, Mr **Dont** would subtly transfer their votes to you-know-who. Every election until now was teeming with "minor shortcomings that had no significant impact on the final result". This time, the "minor shortcomings" can put a cherry on the top of a large electoral victory.

Whichever way it turns out, the next year will be "full of challenges", says **Lukšić**, the minister of finance. It would not be a good idea to experiment with the change of government now. A victory for DPS will give them

a mandate until 2013, which is 24 years since they took the reins of the government in their teeth and took out the whip of revolution. OK, it makes you feel a little ashamed when you're talking about politics to foreigners, but whoever asked you to talk about stupidities in the first place.

You can tell them about concerts, about **Pamela Anderson**, or, like minister **Ročen**, cite them **Tennyson**, the court poet who wrote about us big time.

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

GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION IN THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATIONS PROCESS

Partners or adversaries?



Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) and European Partnership both singled out cooperation between the government



by Stevo Muk

and non-governmental organisations as an important area with regard to fulfilling the requirements for accession to European Union. This question is clearly defined in the preamble of the SAA, which stipulates the commitment of both parties to contribute as much as is in their power to the political, economic and institutional stabilisation of Montenegro and the entire region through, among other, development of the civil society, democratisation, institution building and public administration reform.

Memorandum on Cooperation bet-

Cooperation requires openness, readiness to provide the partners

ween the Secretariat for European Integrations and twelve non-governmental organisations was signed in May 2008 in Cetinje. It was an event which accompanied public debate on the draft National Plan for Integration of Montenegro into European Union. This Memorandum came to replace the one concluded between the Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations and European Integrations and a number of non-governmental organisations in June 2004.

The new agreement envisages cooperation in the fields of reform necessary for the implementation of the SAA and association with EU; strengthening of administrative capacities of the country in order to harmonise its legislation with EU acquis; implementation of the Communication Strategy to inform the public about the Montenegro's association process with EU; preparations for EU pre-accession funds, development of economic and social cohesion and preservation of natural and cultural heritage, as well as protection of the

environment and sustainable development. The agreement is open to all non-governmental organisations and civic society organisations that wish to join it.

Those NGOs who expressed their interest in the matter were involved in the creation of the Communication Strategy to inform Montenegro public about the EU accession process.

Secretariat for European integrations, in cooperation with NGOs prepares annual action plans, as well as joint reports on implemented activities, and both these documents need to be subsequently endorsed by the Government.

In spite of this, a significant number of non-governmental organisations believe that Montenegro still lacks sufficient and adequate mechanisms for continuous information and participation of NGOs in the process of Montenegro's association with EU, and that these organisations are frequently left out in the process of consultations and agenda setting in the context of programming the implementation of pre-accession funds.

Strategy for cooperation between the

willingness to accept criticism, with the necessary resources

Government of Montenegro and non-governmental organisations, adopted in January 2009, states that "European integrations represent a process which reaches into every segment of the political and social life of a country. Therefore the NGOs have been very active in monitoring and supporting the European integrations process. The process of EU accession can serve as a potential catalyser for the adoption of

Public participation in the development of public policies is aimed at improving these policies, as the involvement of other actors outside of the Government maximises resources available to a society

European principles of good governance and as a solid foundation for the strengthening of the culture of dialogue and establishment of effective cooperation mechanisms between the Government and NGOs. The government will continue to promote permanent public dialogue on the process of association and accession of Montenegro

to EU, on the various aspects of this process, negotiations, reforms and results, as well as on the greater involvement of NGOs in the implementation of the Communication Strategy to inform Montenegrin public about the EU accession process. The Government will also create the conditions for the involvement of NGO representatives in the process of translating certain parts of the acquis, using their expert and professional capacities".

The strategy also states that the Government will make "information and data on the use of EU pre-accession fund available to the NGOs and ensure greater participation of their representatives in setting the priorities to be financed from the said funds. Also, related to the pre-accession funds, the Government will consider the possibility of creating mechanisms for the co-financing of NGO projects that receive EU funding from the revenues received from hazard games. The government will "support NGO's efforts to establish and maintain contacts with the partners from other countries of the region and EU member states, as well as EU institutions, be they representatives of non-governmental or national and EU administrative structures. With regard to the training of public servants and NGO activists in the specific matters of European integrations that can play an important role in informing and preparing the citizens for the adoption of standards in certain areas, the Government and NGOs will pool their capacities".

In spite of this, while the implementation of the Action plan of the Government of Montenegro regarding NATO accession, for instance, received substantial financing from the state budget,

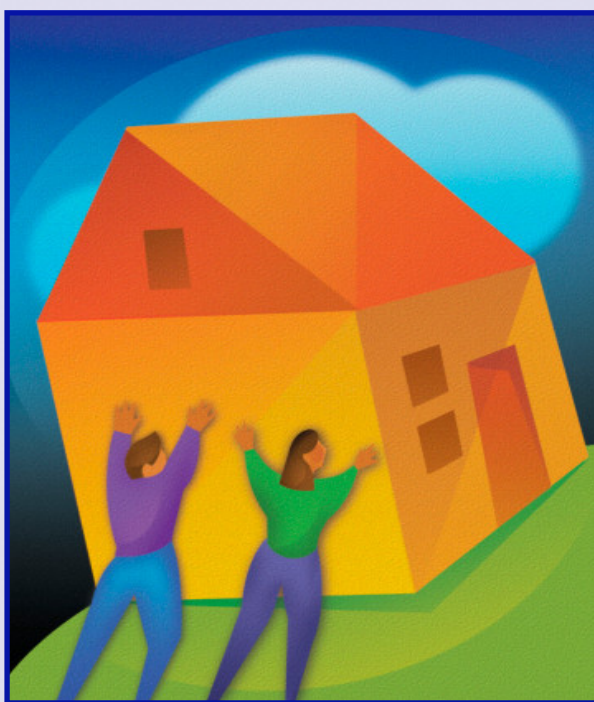
including some financing for the activities of non-governmental organisation, implementation of the Strategy and Action plans in the process of European integrations received no budget financing.

Most NGOs in the country are unanimous in their assessment that enlisting the activities of non-governmental organisations

that have not been financed by the Government but received funding from private donors, international and other foreign organisations and institutions in the Government's reports on the implementation of the Communication Strategy is a bad practice that ought to be immediately discontinued.

For more than a year, Secretariat for European Integrations has been promising a new Strategy for informing the public about Montenegro's association process with European Union. The new strategy ought to be developed with participation of all interested non-governmental organisations, especially those who have signed the memorandum of understanding with SEI. The process has not yet been initialised, however, and in order to create a serious document both sides ought to secure adequate resources.

As for the National Plan for Integration of Montenegro into European Union, Secretariat for European Integrations believes that non-governmental sector can be involved in revising the NPI "in accordance with their programmes and capacities – for example, through direct expert support in various segments of the EU law or securing such support via projects with



outsiders.

The commune states that "the Questionnaire is the property of European Commission, which is not eager to see these questions made public. It should therefore be clearly explained to the national public that the questions and answers can only be published once the process is completed, i.e. once the

years ago, in order to establish a legal basis and identify procedures for the participation of the public, and especially non-governmental organisations, in the development of public policies. The Government insists this would only slow down the legislative process. This is hardly acceptable, because the implementation of this law and the legislative process in general ought to be based on a clear, precise and observed blueprint, but also because democratic procedures are always more demanding in terms of time and other resources than authoritarian individual decisions. Unfortunately, this attitude on the part of the Government testifies to the lack of political will to open up to the public to the extent required by the complexity of European integration process.

Cooperation requires openness, willingness to accept criticism, readiness to provide the partners with necessary resources. Cooperation also requires joint planning and joint implementation when this is in their mutual interests, but also the freedom for non-governmental organisations to act freely and independently, including their right to publicly comment on the quality of work of public officials and institutions.

Public participation in the development of public policies is aimed at improving these policies, as the involvement of other actors outside of the Government maximises resources available to a society. It strengthens democracy, because public participation can only make the Government more transparent and more accountable. It strengthens the trust in the Government, because the public is involved in the planning, contributes to the preparations and thus has a greater sense of ownership over the results of these policies.

If, on the other hand, the goal of cooperation is simply to be able to say in a report sent to some important European address that the Government and NGOs have signed a memorandum on cooperation and are cooperating in some technical matters, the approach is not simply flawed – in the long run, it cannot yield positive results neither for the Government nor for NGOs nor for the society and the state.

This is therefore the right moment for all actors in this cooperation to rethink what they could do to make it substantively and qualitatively different.

The author is the president of the Board of Directors of the Institute Alternative (IA)

If the goal of "cooperation" is simply to be able to say in a report sent to some important European address that the Government and NGOs have signed a memorandum on cooperation and are cooperating in some technical matters, the approach is not simply flawed – in the long run, it cannot yield positive results neither for the Government nor for NGOs nor for the society and the state

foreign non-governmental and other organisations; through joint projects such as compiling glossaries for certain areas; in translating EU regulations and, naturally, by providing proposals, suggestions and comments to the already adopted NPI for 2008–2012".

To date, however, the Government has failed to provide a set of concrete, structured guidelines to possible forms of cooperation in this important work.

While awaiting the positive signal to Montenegro's application for a candidate status for EU membership, non-governmental organisations are also awaiting the invitation to give their contribution to create quality responses to the Questionnaire of the European Commission. In the meantime, in January, the Government circulated a recommendation to all employees in public administration not to give the EC questions or Government's answers to the

European Commission formulates its final opinion". Until then, all information for the public ought to be focused on "general information (the number of questions in total and per chapter, the basic gist of the questions, without citing them)". The answer to the question – how are the non-governmental organisations to be involved in this process – remains unanswered, but the apparent introvert character of this process does not leave much scope for NGO's involvement and cooperation.

Deputy prime minister for European Integrations, as the head of the Commission for fighting corruption and organised crime, stood firmly by the Government's decision not to include the need for the adoption of a law on transparency in preparing and implementing state legislation in the new Action Plan. This document was proposed by the Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CDNGO) two

WHY DO I WANT TO BE A CITIZEN OF EUROPEAN UNION

I believe in European future

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

The unique creation based on the elements of several models as explained by



by **Milja Stanojević**

the professor **Miroslav Prokopijević**, is the definition of European Union that is the closest to my understanding of it.

A group of elite states functioning according to the same rules in the realms of education, political systems and equality.

Diversity of languages and cultural models are what truly inspires me when I think about European Union.

I belong to that majority of students who like learning foreign languages, travelling, meeting people from other cultures and experiencing new things. I believe that for the sake of our better education being citizens of EU would make our plans and goals more easily attainable.

Unfortunately here we are bogged down by obstacles as soon as we start, like the infamous visa regime. I know that the Agreement on Visa Facilitation was signed and came into force in January 2008. I still haven't heard of anybody who got his or her visa smoothly, within the stipulated time frame and without having to collect first a "book" of documents.

I am just preparing to apply for a scholarship in one EU country, hoping to spend one year of my undergraduate studies at one of the renowned universities in Europe. Of

course, there are always two types of applications: for the students from European Union, and for those coming from non-EU countries. I could just physically feel the weight of the "non-EU countries" application, as I carried the pile of application papers with all the accompanying documents. Not an encouraging process for anyone.

I want to spend every semester in another city of European Union, freely and without anxieties, I want to have the same opportunities as those of my colleagues from the "EU countries" category.

I want to learn, gather new experiences and improve my chances.

Is that too much to ask?

Sometimes, when I look through the "Only for students from EU" programmes, I think how privileged these EU students are compared to us. They are so much closer to each other, simply because communication and personal encounters are not a

problem for them, they have the right to decide independently.

Once we become citizens of EU, with time we will also assimilate into this European culture. I am so looking forward to that moment. I will be overjoyed to see people confidently crossing at the zebra, without waiting for a car to take mercy and slow down, i.e. recall the rules and priorities of city traffic. To feel that the laws and rules are really followed. To change people's twisted beliefs that an individual breaking a law is someone to be punished, not to be praised for his or her resourcefulness.

To see respect to each other and politeness in dealing with the elderly, giving up your seat on the bus or in the line at the bank. When I see that those individuals who are different from the rest are not ostracised through prejudices but accepted as a part of the society. We must learn that these differences only makes us richer. These are the things to be resolved on the level of personal beliefs and family upbringing, were all such codes of conduct begin. Once we are through the "reforms" of our conscience, we can safely consider the work half done – construction of the identity of a citizen!

I have always been an optimist. I always believe there is a solution to everything, even for us – "Non EU students".

I believe I will soon become a citizen of European Union and enjoy the benefits of a healthy, prosperous life.

The author is a 11 year student of the Faculty for International Economics, Finance and Business of the University of Donja Gorica (UDG). She attended VIII generation of European Integrations School



New light bulbs good for the wallet

In March, European Commission adopted two regulations envisaging replacement of the traditional light bulbs with energy-saving bulbs to increase energy efficiency of households, offices, streets and in industry.

By implementing these regulations EU should save up to 80 TWh of electricity by 2020, which is equivalent to energy consumption of Belgium, and reduce CO₂ emissions by 32 million tons per year.

Old-fashioned light bulbs will be gradually replaced by the improved version starting with this year. It expected that the replacement process will be completed by 2012.

Households can choose between long-lasting fluorescent light bulbs which are currently the most energy-efficient (spending 75% less than the conventional bulbs) or halogen ones, which are absolutely equivalent to the conventional light bulbs in terms of quality, but spend 25% to 50% of energy consumed by the former.

Depending on the number of light-

bulbs, an average EU household using fluorescent ones could save between 25 and 50 euros per year on their energy bills.

These regulations are only a small part of the package of measures to be adopted by the Commission in the next few years, and will concern a great number of products in electronics, white goods and heating devices.



Up to 10 kilos of meat to EU

European Commission adopted new regulations that forbid individuals to bring in animal products from some third countries to EU. The regulation will come into force on 1 May.

Meat, milk and the related products will not be allowed across the border in the amount exceeding 10 kilograms per passenger coming from Croatia, Faroe Islands, Greenland or Iceland.

Exceptions are baby food, powdered milk for the consumption of children, and food consumed for medical reasons, in the amount not exceeding 2 kilograms.

As for fish, crabs and some shells, the passengers to EU can bring in up to 20 kilograms of these or one fish, if its weight exceeds 20 kg.

The rules are not applied to animal products taken from one EU country to another or for those coming from Andorra, Lichtenstein, Norway, San Marino and Switzerland.

In order to make these rules known to the travelers, the EU initiated a campaign next year, with posters in 35 languages warning passengers in harbours, airports and other entry points about the new regulation.



Crisis changes the menu

In the next few years, Europeans will consume less meat and expensive cheeses, concludes European Commission in its latest forecast for the EU agricultural sector in the period 2008–2015.

Because of recession, in the next two years EU citizens are likely to reduce consumption of expensive beef, lamb and cheese, while chicken and pork meat will fare much better because of lower prices and consumers' choice, predicts the report.

Women paid less

In the EU, women earn on average 17.4% less than men for doing the same job, says the European Commission in a report on gender inequality.

Although "equal pay for equal work" is one of the basic EU principles, EC report show that women are overrepresented in sectors where wages are lower, such as health, education and public administration where 40% of women are employed.

Nevertheless, according to the EC report, 59% of all university educated employed persons are women.

In spite of this, women are still far less represented in economic and political decision-making bodies in the EU. All 27 central banks of the EU members, for instance, are headed by a man.

The number of women in national parliaments of EU member states has increased in the last decade, from 16% in 1997 to 24% in 2008. 31% of the European Parliament MPs are women. On the level of governments, the ratio between women and men ministers is 75:25.

Albania to apply by June

Albania intends to apply for EU membership by the end of June 2009 and its intention has been approved in principle by the Czech presidency, said the Albanian Prime minister Sali Berisha.

European Commission believes that a precondition for application is a fair conduct of parliamentary elections in Albania. Berisha warned that, should there be any obstacle to Albanian application, it may entail a loss of popular support for EU membership which in Albania stands at a high 96%.

Fewer nights in hotels

In the EU, the highest number of hotel nights last year was recorded in Spain (270 million), Italy (247), Germany (219), France (204) and UK (173).

These five countries account for more than 70% of hotel nights spent in the EU.

However, according to the Eurostat, the number of hotel nights in the EU fell by 0.5% last year compared to 2007. The number of hotel nights spent by nationals remained more or less stable, while the number of nights by foreigners decreased by 1.1%.

SELECTION OF THE NEW EUROPEAN COMMISSION A POLITICALLY COMPLEX TASK

Commissioners on party lists

The selection of a new European Commission, never the simplest of political tasks, will this year be more complex than ever.

Politically and institutionally, 2009 contains a whole range of permutations regarding the next EU executive.

At the political level, it remains to be seen how many commissioners will seek a second mandate and how many may instead run in June's European elections.

Meanwhile, on the institutional plane, the Irish must vote again on the Lisbon Treaty. With the result uncertain, it is unclear both when the new Commission will enter into force and exactly how many com-

missioners will feature in the next college.

According to *EurActiv*, the next European Commission may feature as many as twenty new faces, with most of its current members expected to leave the EU executive on their own initiative or as a result of changing national political contexts.

It is relatively common for commissioners to leave their positions during or at the end of their mandates in order to take national office, usually in government. High-profile 'defectors' in 2008 included **Peter Mandelson** and **Franco Frattini**.

Critics often argue that this



weakens the Commission, both in terms of its administrative continuity and general public perception. Indeed, as recently as last month, **Dalia Grybauskaitė**, the EU's commissioner for budget and financial planning, announced that she will leave Brussels to run for the Lithuanian presidency.

Of particular interest this year, however, is the fact that many commissioners intend to put themselves forward for the EU elections in June, as high-profile names on their national party lists. If they choose to return to their home countries to engage in active campaigning, they must leave their positions. However, if they simply attach their name to a party list, they are not required to step down. As a result, a commissioner could, in theory, head an electoral list in their member state and gain many votes due to his/her high profile, then decide to not take up their seat in the Parliament, thus passing their seat to the next person on the list, all the while continuing to work for the EU executive.

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, presi-

THE VACUUM BETWEEN NICE AND LISBON

This year differs from 'business as usual' in one crucial respect: because of the ongoing uncertainty over the Lisbon Treaty and whether it will be ratified in all member states, there is, quite simply, institutional chaos.

The European elections will be held under the Nice Treaty, which as well as reducing the overall number of MEPs, stipulates that the college of commissioners must be reduced by at least one (i.e. up to a maximum of 26). While European leaders have agreed that the new Commission president will be named immediately after the elections, there is as yet no consensus on how and when the new college will take office.

This leaves open the possibility that the term of the current 27 will be extended until Ireland, as is generally expected, holds a second Lisbon referendum in October 2009. The Swedish EU Presidency has already announced it will hold its autumn European Council summit in early November – considerably later than normal – in order to allow for the Irish permutations.

If Ireland votes 'yes', and Lisbon comes into force (it is expected that an Irish 'yes' would lead to definitive ratification in Poland and the Czech Republic), then the new Commission would be reappointed, with one member per country as promised to Ireland after its failed referendum in 2008.

If Ireland votes 'no', the matter becomes more complex. In order to comply with the terms of Nice, the new Commission would have to be reduced by at least one member. That will cause further disputes between member states and most probably end up in another institutional compromise.

Some European politicians, exasperated with the 'Irish problem,' have called for Ireland to lose its commissioner should a second referendum be defeated, thus satisfying the Nice criteria. It is not very likely, however, that such a 'punishment tactic' scenario will materialise.

dent of the Party of European Socialists (PES), told EurActiv that "some commissioners will use their position to promote themselves as candidates. That is wrong, and the president of the Commission should insist that anyone who does so must stand down".

Strongly rebuking this practice, Rasmussen said although "commissioners are party-political," they "need to keep their official duties very separate from their political activities".

"I am not very happy with the idea of commissioners standing down only for the duration of the campaign – as if being a commissioner was an unimportant task that can simply be set aside if the commissioner has something more



Olli Rehn

interesting to do," protested Rasmussen.

As for the place of the president, since he announced in July

2008 his desire to serve a second term as Commission president, **Jose Manuel Barroso's** reappointment is believed by many to be inevitable. However, the onslaught of the financial crisis has dimmed his star somewhat.

Previously, it seemed Barroso enjoyed the support of a healthy majority of Europe's powerful troupe of centre-right leaders – Germany's **Angela Merkel**, France's **Nicolas Sarkozy**, Italy's **Silvio Berlusconi**, Luxembourg's **Jean-Claude Juncker** and European Parliament President **Hans-Gert Pottering** – as well as some centre-left leaders such as Spain's **Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero** and Portugal's **Jose Socrates**.

However, Sarkozy, speaking at the conclusion of an extraordinary EU summit on in March 2009, declined to give unreserved support for the former Portuguese prime minister, recommending instead that EU leaders wait until Ireland takes a second vote on the Lisbon Treaty. Angela Merkel seems to be equally undecided on whether to support Barroso, while she assesses his ongoing handling of the financial crisis.

Despite these recent setbacks, Barroso maintains strong support among many members of the European Council (who appoint the Commission president) and the only conceivable obstacle for his reappointment is the European elections in June. Should European Socialists and other leftist groups defy current polls and win a clear majority in this year's ballot, it could increase popular pressure on European leaders to appoint a centre-left president, given that the Parliament must approve the Council's choice of new commission president by simple majority.

V.Š.-V.Ž.

REHN TO REMAIN

Many expect to see new faces in the next European Commission. While there seems to be no serious alternative to replace current Commission President **Jose Manuel Barroso**, many others are expected to be called back home.

According to *EurActiv*, just five other commissioners are likely to stay for a second term. These include Italian Transport Commissioner **Antonio Tajani**, Estonian **Siim Kallas** (administration and anti-fraud), Finn **Olli Rehn** (enlargement), Luxembourgish **Viviane Reding** (information society) and Bulgarian **Meglena Kuneva** (consumer affairs).

Slovenian **Janez Potočnik** (science and research) and Latvian **Andris Piebalgs** (energy) might also have a chance of being offered a second mandate.

While others may also wish to continue, such as UK Trade Commissioner **Catherine Ashton**, they still lack backing from their own governments.

Over at the European Parliament, Socialist Group leader **Martin Schulz**, a German MEP, may find himself as the EU assembly's next president for two-and-a-half years, followed for another two-and-a-half years by the current chairman of the Parliament's foreign affairs committee, centre-right Polish MEP **Jacek Saryusz-Wolski**, chief negotiator for Poland's EU accession.

According to persistent rumours, **Tony Blair** may be on track to become the first permanent president of Europe, if, that is, the Lisbon Treaty is finally ratified. He is said to have the backing of key EU statesmen, including French President **Nicolas Sarkozy**.

Dutchman **Jaap de Hoop Scheffer**, currently NATO's secretary-general, is being mooted as the first 'High EU Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy'. The post is another of the top jobs introduced under the Lisbon Treaty, and merges the current positions of external relations commissioner (held by **Benita Ferrero-Waldner**) and EU high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, currently held by **Javier Solana**.

INTEGRATION OF MONTENEGRO INTO EU AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

Business from the first grade

EVROPSKI REPORTER

The establishment of the Loan Guarantee Fund (Kreditno-garanti fond – KGF) as the key institution supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and introduction of business education into the educational system from the first grade on are the two most important steps in Montenegro's rapprochement with the EU with regard to development of small and medium enterprises.

This sector constitutes one of the key economic pillars in the EU, and the European Commission has worked out a precise scheme of financial assistance to such companies. European Mutual Guarantee Association (EMGA), European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Investment Fund (EIF) are only some of the institutions whose task is to support development of small and medium businesses, and each of the member states also has its own schemes for strengthening the SMEs.

Director of the Montenegrin Directory for Development of SMEs **Zoran Vukčević** told *European Reporter* that the establishment of KGF was made possible by a Law on Banks adopted in March 2008, in order to complete the institutional structure providing access to financing.

"Our Directorate began this work last year with assistance of EU experts and the KGF was supposed to become operational early this year. Unfortunately, the global crisis prevented our plans. We are now faced with a huge liquidity prob-

lem, while KGF was supposed to provide funds for development projects. Montenegro is a small country and we must use the resources rationally", Vukčević said.

KGF should improve economic position of this sector, contribute to the quicker, more even development on the national, regional and

The sector of small and medium enterprises is one of the key economic pillars of EU, and the European Commission has worked out a precise scheme of financial assistance to such companies

local levels and improve their competitiveness and capacity for innovation.

"The second major step is to introduce business education into the educational system from the first grade of the primary school, which nowadays exists as an optional subject in elementary and secondary schools. Knowledge is

one of the key factors of economic development and the schooling system must provide the foundations for development of entrepreneurship. This needs to be complemented by applied programmes of teaching contemporary business skills in various areas through informal education" Vukčević said.

According to the Progress Report for Montenegro published by the European Commission in

November 2008, the policy of development of small and medium enterprises in the process of European integrations is being successfully implemented and Montenegro is dedicated to implementation of the European Charter of SMEs.

So far, the Government has adopted a National Strategy for



Zoran Vukčević

Development of SMEs, programme to eliminate business barriers, established a Council for the elimination of business barriers, adopted a new Law on Banks which is the precondition for the Loan Guarantee Fund...

There is also the Strategy for Life-long Learning in business, as well as a number of measures to increase export potential of SMEs through loan packages for "export promotion" and "grants to re-fund the costs".

"European Commission found that we are continuously making progress. We are successfully implementing the principles from the Lisbon Charter, but there is certainly room for improvement in many areas. Here I mean primarily the elimination of business barriers on the local level which are often an obstacle to the growth of small and medium enterprises", Vukčević said.

The European Commission found that Montenegro is continuously making progress in developing small and medium enterprises, but there is still room for improvement. This means primarily the elimination of business barriers on the local level, Vukčević said

The crucial barrier on the local level is acquiring the permission to work, which used to take more than a month to be issued. According to the new laws on internal trade and construction, municipalities ought to decide on work permission requests within 15 days. If they fail to respond within



15 days, the permission is considered granted.

"We hope that local authorities will respect the new regulations. Whoever wants to start a business

mation without asking the citizens to provide it", Vukčević announced.

He adds there were some efforts to establish the procedures for on-line registration of companies.

Strategy for Development of SMEs for 2007–2010 envisages adoption of a separate law regulating the sphere of SMEs.

Vukčević says the adoption of this law is still uncertain, since many developed countries also lack a specific law on SMEs, but the field is well regulated by other acts.

"Experiences differ, and we are now studying different options. Things are constantly changing in Montenegro – if we adopt strict regulations and definitions today and the situation changes, it always takes more time to amend the law, and it is not in our interest to keep changing the regulations. For instance, if we would stipulate that we can only finance development projects and suddenly there is a need to provide liquidity loans we would have to change the law", Vukčević explains.

Marija MIRJAČIĆ

TWO THIRDS EMPLOYED BY SMES

Small and medium enterprises are the focus of economic policies of developed countries, and they occupy a central role in the economic structure of EU.

There are some 20 million companies in the EU, 98% of which are small and medium enterprises, and they employ 90 million people. That means two thirds of the total EU labour force.

More than 70% of total turnover in goods and services is due to SMEs, which contribute 60% of EU's GDP.

Vukčević says that up until now Montenegro has 40.544 registered SMEs employing 96 000 workers, which is more than 50% of the total number of employees in the country. Their contribution to GDP is about 60%.

Corruption in education



From conference "Only knowledge should get you the title"

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) and Centre for Monitoring (CEMI), with support of the German Embassy organised in Podgorica on 24 March 2009 a conference titled "Only knowledge should get you the title", to mark the completion of the project "Corruption in Education", which was implemented over the past eleven months.

The project consisted of 7 components: 1) an encompassing research involving CATI, focus groups and in-depth interviews; 2) building capacities in students' organisations to fight against corruption; 3) education of high-school students and teachers as preventive action; 4) analysing the existing legal framework for universities and drafting recommendations; 5) a nation-wide media campaign "May it be a school" which involved four videos broadcasted in the last quarter of 2008 on TV IN, TV Vijesti and RTCG, as well as billboards in Podgorica, Nikšić, Cetinje, Bar and Bijelo Polje, and a series of appearances in the media and other public forums; 6) conference "Only knowledge is a title" and 7) publication on the fight against corruption in education which brings together the results of all previous activities.

The conference was opened by **Daliborka Uljarević**, executive director of CCE who said that CCE and CEMI have for the first time broached the question of corruption in one of the key pillars of the development of Montenegrin society – higher education. She explained that the goal of the conference was to open up a debate on the policies related to establishment of sustainable mechanisms for the prevention of corruption and effective fight against this phenomenon which in Montenegro seems to be already undermining some areas of the educational system.

Zlatko Vujović, the president of CEMI and member of the National Commission for the Fight against Corruption and Organised crime presented a whole package of measures to be proposed to the Commission for a revised Action plan in the domain of education.

Dagmar Schmidt, deputy ambassador of the Republic of Germany expressed her sup-

port for this project and said that corruption in Montenegro cannot leave anyone indifferent, emphasising that "preventing corruption in education is extremely important for the students, parents, teachers and the society as a whole".

Special representative of the Rector of the University of Montenegro, Dr **Miloš Bešić** criticised the methodology of the study and

questioned its findings, not necessarily denying the existence of corruption at the University of Montenegro but doubting the figures presented in the research. He did not suggest any measures or recommendations to decrease corruption although the organisers repeatedly asked for his opinion on this matter.

The conference hosted a number of representatives from the region who were willing to share their experiences with the same problem. Professor Dr **Čedomir Čupić**, member of the anti-corruption agency of the Government of Serbia said that corruption is undermining education, especially higher education, which is a strategic pillar of a society. Čupić emphasised that "it takes two for corruption" but also that "the one who is in office ought to be held responsible".

Zorislav Antun Petrović, president of Transparency International in Croatia spoke about some forms of corruption in education and the measures that have been undertaken in Croatia to combat corruption in this area.

The conference was remarkably dynamic and productive. The organisers announced further activities in this field.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN EUROPEAN UNION



ERASMUS STUDENT NETWORK

Unity in diversity, diversity in the unity!

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is one of the biggest student associations in Europe. It was founded in 1990 for supporting and developing student exchange. The first ESN office was established in Utrecht, Netherlands, and was followed by the foundation of ESN offices in a great number of universities throughout Europe. Erasmus Student Network International was established officially in October 1990, in Copenhagen, with financial support of the European Commission.

Today, nineteen years after its foundation, ESN international has more than 280 local offices in 32 European countries and Azerbaijan. The headquarters of ESN International are in Brussels.

The mission of ESN is to foster student mobility in Higher Education under the principle of SHS – Students Helping Students. Its vision is a society based upon mutual knowledge, respect, trust as important guarantees of peace.

ESN is part of the European Youth Forum, an international organisation established by national youth councils and international non-governmental youth organisations in Europe. Like ESN, it endeavours to serve the interests of young people from all over Europe, promoting their active participation in the construction of a common Europe. To that end, ESN assists students interested in going abroad in choosing the destination that best meets their interests.

Study abroad can leave a lasting impression in the course of development of young people and such programmes should therefore pose adequate quality. Student exchange is thus the key focus of interest of the Erasmus Student Network. Students are assisted in academic, social and practical matters during their integration in the new environment. Local offices of ESN prepare a range of programmes for exchange students to make their stay enjoyable. Film screenings, experience of national cuisine, language courses, travels and parties are some of the prominent features of these programmes which aim at fostering social integration of exchange students.

ESN also takes care of the "homecoming students". The students who are returning from exchange are being supported in reintegration process in their home countries by keeping contact with an international environment.

Students' interest in exchange programmes abroad is constantly on the rise, and organisations such as the Erasmus Student Network fulfil a very important role in supporting student mobility and ensuring quality of exchange programmes.

More about the organisation and its activities can be found at www.esn.org

Prepared by: **Jakov MILATOVIĆ**

PROMOTION OF THE FIRST NOVEL OF DR MILAN POPOVIĆ

"Armour" for Montenegro?

On 24 March 2009 in Podgorica Centre for Civic Education (CCE) and daily Vijesti organised a book launch of "Oklop", the first novel of Milan Popović.

The novel was published on the 19 March and caused quite some excitement, which is confirmed by the fact that the entire first edition was sold out in a few hours, so the publisher had to print the second edition immediately, which is in the bookstores since 26 March.

The book was presented and discussed at the launch by writer **Balša Brković**, journalist **Milka Tadić-Mijović**, publisher **Željko Ivanović** and author himself, and the discussion was moderated by **Daliborka Uljarević**.

Brković called Popović's novel the most important and most interesting testimony of our times, and said that he therefore does not expect the politicians to understand it.

Tadić-Mijović explained that the cur-



Ivanović, Popović, Uljarević, Tadić-Mijović, Brković

rent relevance of the novel owes its authenticity to reality itself which, in this case, did a better job than could any master of marketing. "The fear with which we buy and read this novel speaks more than any political analysis about the state of the Montenegrin society today". She added that "we have returned to where it all began – to those difficult times when most citizens feared even their own shadow".

Speaking about his first literary achievement Popović said he regrets having to use daily political material for his books, giving extra publicity to those who

do not even deserve negative exposure. He described his own novel as a collage-based technique combining realistic components with fictional aspects.

The novel predicts the overthrow of the current government, not in elections but through a combination of circumstances that force Primus, as Popović refers to prime minister **Đukanović** in his novel, to leave to Russia with his family, while opposition takes over. Popović said he was inspired to choose this outcome on the basis of a combination of his own intimate civic and political orientations – anarchosocialism and social democracy.

Montenegro - a land of opportunities?

On the 23 March in Podgorica European Movement in Montenegro and European Fund for the Balkans organised a panel discussion on the topic "Montenegro – a land of opportunities?" with the goal of introducing to the wider public a recent study by the Gallup Balkan Monitor which offers insights into attitudes and perceptions of the citizens of West Balkan countries on the issues related to EU integration process.

Speakers at the panel were: **Gordana Đurović**, deputy prime minister of Montenegro, **Stevo Muk**, president of the managing board of Institute Alternative, **Zlatko Vujović**, president of the board of managers of CEMI, **Neđeljko Rudović**, journalist of the daily Vijesti, **Miloš Bešić**, analyst for CEDEM, **Robert Mancin**, director of Gallup for Central and Eastern Europe. Hedvig Morvai Horvat, executive director of the European Fund for Balkans introduced

the discussion which was moderated by **Momčilo Radulović**, Secretary General of the European Movement for Montenegro.

Results of the poll have shown that most citizens believe that Montenegro is really a land of opportunities and that there are fewer and fewer people who want to leave Montenegro. At the same time, Montenegrin citizens have been ranked as the most tolerant toward corruption compared to every other country in the region.

Mancin emphasised that the poll was conducted before the onslaught of the economic crisis, and that the results would probably be different now.

Other participants analysed the results each from their own point of view and drew very different conclusions, but all agreed on one point: all efforts should be directed to continue the positive trend of association with EU.

Women rights in Montenegro

On 26 March, in Podgorica, NGO Anima from Kotor, Centre for Women and Peace Education, organised round table presenting findings of the research "Assessment of the Women Rights in Montenegro – how are these seen by women and men?" supported by Foundation Open Society Institute, Representative Office in Montenegro.

This is a comprehensive research encompassing several fields. Special focus of the research has been put on attitudes of the citizens on women's participation in political life, taking into the account the importance of this topic and parliamentary elections of 2009.

On behalf of the Centre for Civic Education **Dragana Otašević**, programme associate took part at the event.

FOR THIS ISSUE WE RECOMMEND:

LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME

In an effort to support the integration process in Southeast Europe (SEE), the fourth SEE and the EU Leadership Development Programme supports 30 young people from the countries of SEE as well as broader Europe.

The programme was initiated in 2006 by the TRANSFUSE Association, Berlin, and the College of Europe, Bruges. Starting from 2008, the European Fund for the Balkans in Belgrade has joined the initiative and generously supports the programme.

The Programme will consist of the following activities:

Two-week Summer Academy in Germany (Berlin/Schloss Neuhausen)

29 August – 12 September 2009

The curriculum will include topics related to the EU and the development of its relations with SEE as well as wider issues of international and economic relations. Practical training components focusing on negotiations, project management and presentation skills will provide participants with essential leadership qualities.

Joint Projects in SEE

between November 2009 and March 2010

The participants will work together in small multicultural groups to develop and implement a joint activity in SEE.

Five-day Seminar in Belgium (Brussels/Bruges)

April 2010 — The Final Seminar offers visits to the EU institutions and NATO in Brussels and to the Campus of the College of Europe in Bruges. The Programme will be led by an Academic Dean, who will guide the participants through the different aspects of the Programme. The working language of the Programme is English. The participants are expected to be available during the overall period of the Programme (July 2009 – April 2010) and to attend each planned activity.

Only 30 selected applicants will be invited to participate. Their participation in the Programme will be sponsored by the European Fund for the Balkans, an initiative by the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the King Baudouin Foundation, the Campagna di San Paolo and the ERSTE Foundation, hosted by the Network of European Foundations.

Apply online: www.seeyoungleaders.org

Deadline for Application is Europe's Day: 9 May 2009.

MASTER OF ARTS IN
INTERDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH AND STUDIES
ON EASTERN EUROPE
(MIREES)

This program was launched some years ago by the University of Bologna, Italy; it is taught entirely in English (120 ECTS) and provides a joint diploma of the Universities of Bologna, Ljubljana, Vytautas Magnus University at Kaunas, Corvinus University of Budapest and, from the next Academic Year 2009–2010, the State University of St Petersburg. MIREES students will spend the first year in Forlì (one of the five campuses of the University of Bologna), while in the second year a minimum of 5 months will be spent at Partner Universities and, in particular cases, at MIREES Associated Universities in the Balkans. A mobility grant is offered to all enrolled students.

More detailed information on the teaching plan and the Faculty, together with the application form, can be found at our web site: <http://www.mirees.unibo.it/>. The next deadline for applications is **May 15th, 2009**.

The program is especially recommended for prospective PhD students. Moreover, the program is designed to forge analysts, area experts, consultants and mediators, to meet the needs of research institutes, the EC, international agencies, voluntary organizations and NGO's, public administration, managers, corporations and banks located in East-Central Europe and the Balkans or promoting investments in these regions.

The MIREES program offers specialized, in-depth knowledge of the post-socialist countries in transition, the new EU member states, and the new East-European neighbour countries to students with a BA in Economics, Politics,

International Relations, History, Languages (and Slavic languages in particular), agricultural studies and cultural studies generally.

The program aims also at developing language skills. MIREES offers courses in Bosnian–Croatian–Serbian, Bulgarian, basic and advanced Russian, and Slovak (Hungarian and Lithuanian are also available in the 2nd year) as well as Italian for foreigners as an additional option. The curriculum stresses interdisciplinary studies in the economics of transition; politics and international relations; media studies; and history and cultural studies focused on Central, Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Thirdly, the international dimension of the program is enhanced through student mobility, by an international faculty composed of prominent scholars of international repute, and a genuinely international student body.

For further information, contact the Tutor of the course at facscpol-fo.tutormirees@unibo.it or the Faculty Student Office (info.spfo@unibo.it, phone +39.0543.374145).

FULLY FUNDED PHD
STUDENTSHIPS – THE
POLITICS OF ETHNIC
DIVERSITY – INSTITUTE
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

The Institute for Social Change has three fully funded PhD studentships commencing in 2009, covering fees and an annual maintenance stipend of 11,800 pounds.

The Institute for Social Change is an interdisciplinary research centre in the School of Social Sciences that offers an outstanding environment in which to study for a PhD. Sociological research at the University of Manchester was ranked joint first in the 2008 UK Research Assessment Exercise, producing the highest proportion of 'world leading' research of any UK institution. PhD students will have the opportunity to apply for places on the prestigious Harvard–Manchester graduate summer programme, and may be able to spend time at Harvard in the course of their research project. You can apply online at

www.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate/howtoapply
For information on how to apply contact Vicky Barnes (vicky.barnes@manchester.ac.uk).

The deadline for applications is **11th May 2009**.
Website:

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/socialchange/>

**EIC Bulletin – European pulse is electronic magazine established within EIC programme, with the support of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
The publisher is Centre for Civic Education.**

EIC Bulletin – European pulse is registered with the Ministry for Culture and Media as item No. 578

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