



FOCUS OF THIS ISSUE

How to prepare for negotiations with EU

INTERVIEW
Editor of the
Albanian "Top
Channel"
television
Mentor Kikia

ANALYSES
Can Montenegro
join EU without
dealing with the
property of
criminals

EU CHALLENGES
Hungary – five
years after EU
accession



DRUGS

Should we allow the institutions of the system, from the Agency for National Security (ANS), to police, prosecution, Directorate for the prevention of money laundering... to do their work and investigate the businesses of the drug boss **Darko Šarić** and persons related to him?

Or, should we simply let these people provide income for hundreds of sportsmen, waiters, barmen, journalists, sailors, bodyguards, party activists, stock market speculators, landlords...

It seems that the peak of the Montenegrin government had no such Hamlet-like dilemmas when it came to the institutions' approach to this already world-famous native of Pljevlja.

The second option in the analysis of relations between Montenegrin institutions and Šarić is that this guy is no security concern for the ANS, police and other law-enforcement organs, although it is estimated that his drug smuggling brought him 4.5 billion dollars only in the last few years (an equivalent of three-yearly budget of the republic of Montenegro).

I don't believe the second possibility, if for no other reason than because of the rumours about Šarić's businesses which by all accounts have reached everybody in this country but **Veselin Veljović** and **Duško Marković**.

The answer is, simply, the lack of political will to fight organised crime.

This chapter of the story on the struggle of our institutions and government against organised crime doesn't fit the usual refrain about a European success story which is constantly broadcasted by the local and often even by some European officials.

This is cruel Latin American reality. **V.Ž.**

Spanish presidency in EU (1 January) – Spain has taken over the helm of EU from Sweden for the next six months. Among the priorities of the presidency listed by Madrid are overcoming the economic crisis, supporting employment and economic growth, but also the promise not to give up on support for further integration of the Western Balkans. Spain also announced that it will organise an EU–West Balkans summit this May in Sarajevo, 10 years after the last meeting in Zagreb.



No shortcuts to Brussels (12 January) – Montenegro is a success story when it comes to EU integration, but neither Montenegro nor any other country can get to the membership by taking shortcuts, announced the candidate for the next European Enlargement Commissioner **Stefan Fule** at a hearing before the European Parliament. He emphasised that there will be no artificial timelines for these countries' accession to EU, but that progress will be continuously monitored.

Preparations for NPI 2010–2014 (13 January) – Commission for European Integrations (CEI) adopted a framework plan for the preparation of National Programme for Integration of Montenegro into European Union (NPI) for 2010–2014, which should be completed in the first half of this year. Minister for European Integrations **Gordana Đurović** presented the CEI members with a framework plan of activities, beginning with seminars, analysis of the database of *acquis communautaire* and division of responsibilities according to future negotiations chapters. She said that the existing NPI for 2008–2012 as well as the past work on the Questionnaire were valuable foundation for the preparation of the new document.

Ivanišević in control of IPA funds (13 January) – Deputy Prime Minister **Igor Lukšić** and president of the Senate of the State Audit Institution (SAI) **Miroslav Ivanišević** signed the agreement establishing a special auditing body that would supervise the usage of the money from EU IPA funds. This is one of the steps towards the so-called EU Decentralised Implementation System (DIS), which is supposed to transfer the responsibility for the management of European funds from EU Delegation to the recipient country.

Italy and UK ratified SAA (15 January) – Parliaments of Italy and the United Kingdom ratified the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between Montenegro and EU. With that, of the 27 EU member states only Greece and Belgium are still to ratify the SAA.

Croatia gives translations (28 January) – The Croatian Government decided to cede the Croatian translations of *acquis communautaire* to Montenegro, Serbia and BiH, if they wish to make use of them. The documents in question consist of about 101 550 pages of *acquis* worth 8 000 000 which Croatia translated between 2003 and late 2009, and contain about 80% of European legislation.

ECOSOC working on a report on civil society (30 January) – Between 28 and 30 January in Podgorica delegation of the Economic and Social Council of European Union presented its draft Opinion on the role of civil society in the relations between Montenegro and EU. The report was prepared by ECOSOC rapporteur **Vladimira Drbalova**, and was commented on by representatives of the civil society and government. In addition to Drbalova, the delegation consisted of **Metka Roksančić** (chair of the Study Group), **Barabas Miklos** (member of the Study Group) and **Daliborka Uljarević**, executive director of CEE who contributed to this report as an expert on the civil society sector.

A VIEW FROM EU

Josipović za Balkan

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The landslide victory of **Ivo Josipović** in the January presidential elections in Croatia bodes well, not just for



by **Ivan Vejvoda**

the country, but also for the Western Balkans as a whole – and not least for the region's hopes for membership in the European Union.

In the campaign, Josipović came across as a voice of reason and moderation. In a region where charisma has often been coupled with other, more unpleasant personality traits, this uncharismatic leader's appeal lies in his determination to grapple with endemic corruption and organized crime and his standing for a renewed sense of justice. His call for dialogue and cooperation in the region also appealed to voters tired of petty divisions.

In Brussels, the same week saw the members of the new EU Commission being grilled by the European Parliament – with special attention to enlargement. **Catherine Ashton**, the new EU foreign and security policy High Representative, said that the future of the Western Balkans, and the region's move toward EU membership, will be one of her priorities. **Stefan Füle**, the designated EU Commissioner for enlargement, also promised to work toward membership for the Balkans. For the Western Balkan countries, that was a very important message.

For, while Croatia is expected to become the EU's 28th member state in 2012 (unless Iceland makes it in before), many of the other countries in this region torn by war only a decade ago have been disturbed by talk of enlargement fatigue and by harsh crit-

icism of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007.

Nonetheless, the Western Balkans have already gained a remarkable amount of momentum on their way toward Euroatlantic integration. The end of 2009 saw several important milestones: visa-free travel for Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia; Serbia put forward its formal request for EU candidate status; Montenegro made a determined step toward achieving candidacy by handing in the answers to the European Commission's questionnaire, and it was approved for a Membership Action Plan by NATO; Albania moved a notch further in the candidacy process by receiving the Commission's questionnaire; and Bosnia and Herzegovina put in a request for its own Membership Action Plan at NATO.

Which is not to say that all is

This uncharismatic leader's appeal lies in his determination to grapple with endemic corruption and organized crime and, to some extent, in the fact that his personality became something of a symbol of a renewed sense of justice

smooth. On the contrary, all of these countries still have serious problems. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, recent U.S. and EU efforts to help create a more self-sustaining political system have stalled. The name dispute between Greece and Macedonia remains intractable. And Kosovo looks likely to need NATO soldiers and EU administrators for a long time.

The Croatian president-elect Josipović, on the other hand, has shown his determination to move forward by saying that he wants to improve bilateral relations significantly with Serbia.

All the governments in the region have clearly stated their commitment to an EU future and to a peaceful, negotiated resolution of all outstanding bilateral and regional disputes. That is why the forward, if sometimes frustratingly slow, movement toward the EU must continue. It is what reinforces the



Ivo Josipović

motivation of the majority of democratically minded citizens and officials to pursue the hard work of reform and change.

Public opinion polls have systematically shown clear majorities over the past ten years for EU integration in all countries, except, paradoxically in Croatia, which seems to follow the

adage that the closer you get, the more qualms you have. But again Josipović's victory seems to confirm that in spite of those qualms the Croatian citizens still stand by European values.

The countries of the Western Balkans are fully aware that there will be no leniency on the way to Brussels. The experiences of Bulgaria and Romania have taught them that judicial reform and the twin scourges of organized crime and corruption must be dealt with swiftly. Rule of law, transparency, and good governance – these are conditions for accession, not projects to be taken up (or not) after entering the EU gates. Regional cooperation efforts will help because they demonstrate that the Balkans have truly chosen the European way.

Ivan Vejvoda directs the Balkan Trust for Democracy in Belgrade

HOW TO PREPARE FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH EU

Proven experts and experienced administrators for best results

Montenegrin Government is at the moment not terribly preoccupied by



by Mirela Rebronja

the question of how and when to establish the team for negotiating with EU and how to form the working groups to prepare for negotiations. Their efforts are still focused on consultations with Brussels regarding the answers to the Questionnaire of the European Commission (EC) and preparation of the new National Plan for Integration (NPI). According to some sources, however, certain plans for the future already exist.

According to the minister for European Integrations Dr **Gordana Đurović**, the deadline for the official selection of the team could be the second half of 2010 at the earliest, given that EC announced its Opinion on Montenegro's application for EU membership by autumn.

"However, bearing in mind that this is indeed a very demanding process, we will prepare the plan of activities well ahead, but its implementation depends on when the EC will set the date to begin negotiations", said Đurović for the *European Pulse*.

Should Montenegro get a positive opinion from EC, probably in

September or October, the next hurdles on the road to EU are getting the candidate status and the date to begin negotiations.

The Government's optimistic expectation is that the Council of EU might grant the candidate status to Montenegro already by the end of the year, immediately setting the date for the opening of negotiations. Should this scenario come true, given the experiences of other countries, formal negotiations between EU and Montenegro could begin already in the first half of 2011.

Accession negotiations will depend to a large extent on the overall political and economic development of Montenegro and they are of great importance for all

of its citizens. This is the kind of work which requires participation of a much larger number of people of different professions than was the case so far.

Negotiating structures, consisting of administration, civil society representatives, business associations and other should first define the negotiating positions of Montenegro that best protect and represent interests of the country. The next step is the formation of the team of negotiators who will defend these interests before EU institutions and member states.

The reason that Montenegro has not began work on the constitution of the negotiating teams is that currently its efforts are still



Gordana Đurović

CROATIA'S EXPERIENCE

European Commission adopted a positive opinion on Croatia's application for membership in the European Union in March 2004 and proposed opening pre-accession negotiations.

In June 2004 the Council of EU accorded this country the status of a candidate for membership, with the conclusion that the date for the beginning of negotiations should be set by December of the same year. The negotiations were to begin in March 2005.

Only three days before the start of negotiations presidents of the Croatian parliamentary parties agreed with the then president of Croatian Government **Ivo Sanader** on the names of 13 members of the negotiating team to lead negotiations with EU.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations **Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović** was appointed the head of the negotiating team and **Vladimir Drobniak**, a non-partisan personality and long-term diplomat, the chief negotiator.

"It was strictly their professionalism and expertise, and not party affiliation, that decided the choice of representatives for negotiations with European Union", announced Sanader at the presentation of the Team of Negotiators.

The negotiating team is in charge of the technical level of negotiations with EU institutions and members states with regard to all 35 chapters of negotiations. Team members are in charge, among other, of coordinating various working groups and preparing the negotiating positions for each round of negotiations, which are as many as the chapters – 35.

The composition of the working groups is decided upon by heads of the negotiating team. Working groups participated in the analysis and assessment of harmonisation of the Croatian legislation with that of EU (so-called screening), which is the very first step of the negotiations – which means that the membership of these groups must be known well ahead of the process.

Even more importantly, the working groups participate in and have a large contribution to the drafting of the proposals of negotiating positions of Croatia. Members of the working groups are the representatives of universities, scientific institutes, trade unions, Croatian companies, various associations and councils.

The number of members varies from one group to another. For instance, the Croatian working groups for negotiations on agriculture and rural development had 385 members, but the one on science and research had only 25.

focused on the consultation process for EC Questionnaire and preparation of the new NPI for 2010–2014. That means that *acquis* should be studied very thoroughly and that we should have a realistic assessment of the extent to which our regulations have been harmonised with EU, come up with a clear plan to achieve sufficient harmonisation with EU legislation by 2014 and allocate the people and the funding necessary for this process", Đurović explained.

She added that it was already possible to foresee and define the

next steps.

According to her, "based on the positive experiences with organisation of work for the Questionnaire,

the Government should use the same model to define future negotiating structures".

According to the current plans, the negotiating team will be created by the Government. The plan is to first appoint the head of Montenegrin delegation as well as the chief negotiator, and perhaps also his or her deputies.

According to Đurović, based on the experience so far the teams should consist of experts in the specific fields, most of them from the Government, but possibly also local experts, well established in certain areas of policy.

Đurović noted that, according to some experiences, the negotiating team should not have more than 15 people.

"In addition to this preparatory phase, in order to improve efficiency, we will redefine the composition of seven groups for European integrations which already exist, and which cover the areas of trade, industry, agriculture, transport, economic and financial matters, as well as the sphere of social policy, environment, energy and regional development", Đurović said.

Macedonia, just like Croatia and Slovenia before, organised its negotiating team and working groups after receiving the avis, but they never had a chance to evaluate their choice, as Macedonia has been waiting for the date to begin

NON-PARTISAN PEOPLE IN THE SLOVENIAN TEAM

Slovenian experience is somewhat different. Namely, it is characteristic of the Slovenian approach that one of the preconditions for becoming a member of the negotiating team, apart from expertise, was non-affiliation with any political party.

This country also started to form its negotiating team after it received a positive opinion from EC. Slovenia officially began its negotiations in late March 1998, and became EU member in 2004.

negotiations for more than four years, mostly because of the name-related dispute with Greece.

Former deputy prime minister of Macedonia, now deputy speaker of the Macedonian parliament **Radmila Sekerinska** said in the interview for *European Pulse* that negotiating structures should be created as soon as possible, if there's a chance that the date of negotiations will be announced at the same time as the opinion on the candidate status.

When it comes to the structure and composition of the teams, she explains, the same criteria applied in other countries of the region were used in Macedonia.

"I don't think one needs to worry so much about fulfilling some formal requirements of membership, in the sense that there ought to be representatives of all interested parties, regardless of the quality. The best thing is to have the most competent individuals for each area", Sekerinska said.

She added that while composing the negotiating structures Macedonians took care first of all to involve all the best known and most accomplished representatives for each area.

According to her, the first thing to decide is who will be the main negotiator and minister who will



lead the negotiations, and then let them select the best and the most competent members of the negotiating teams.

In order to lead successful negotiations, it is important to bear in mind that they always take place on two levels.

The first, initial level is the internal one, where the negotiators communicate with the representatives of areas that are currently the subject of negotiations, i.e. with the members of the working groups. Only once they receive the relevant

inputs and suggestions do they continue negotiations on the main, official level, that is, directly in communication with EU representatives.

Sekerinska warns that the internal relations and discussions should be conducted as carefully as those with the official Brussels.

"In Macedonia it was planned that representatives of the civil society, business associations and others should be part of the working groups, to ensure that their interests are taken into account", she said.

Because of the bad experience it had with Bulgaria and Romania, during negotiations with Croatia the EU decided to leave the talks on the most difficult chapters, those on judiciary and human rights, for the very end.

The negotiations thus begin with the "easier" chapters – education and culture, science and research. This probably means that we should already start questioning the quality of our education, harmonisation with EU regulations, possible corruption...

USE THE PEOPLE WHO ALREADY WORKED ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Sekerinska explains that in Macedonia the selection of people who made it into the negotiating team and working groups started well in advance, as their composition is not very different from those that have worked on the answers to the Questionnaire.

That, according to her, is very good practice as these people have already been trained, and they got to know the field though intensive and demanding work of several months.

"In principle, the members of the negotiating teams in Macedonia mostly come from the administration since, as I already said, working groups that worked on the Questionnaire were more or less transformed into negotiating teams", Sekerinska said.

MONTENEGRO'S DILEMMAS ON THE WAY TO THE EUROPEAN CLUB

E viva Buenos Aires

To what extent is Montenegro capable of becoming a candidate for EU membership, let alone a member of the



by Nedeljko Rudović

club, if its citizens, who are heading a cocaine smuggling chain, have to be chased and arrested by Buenos Aires, Washington and Belgrade while the officials in Podgorica blink in blissful ignorance?

The answer is, of course, well known. As is the extent of the political will of the Montenegrin Government, or at least a part of it, to deal with organised criminal networks, which are becoming so powerful that they really don't find it too difficult to control Montenegrin institutions.

Why is there no law in Montenegro, like in Croatia, to allow the state to confiscate all property of the members of underground unless they can prove its legal origins?

How can we measure this political will to fight crime and corruption? Why are we questioning the Government's will to do so?

Apart from the sad fact that nobody who is high enough in the Government has been as much as suspected, let alone convicted on corruption charges, there are some very concrete tests of will, which Đukanović's cabinet has been stubbornly, and even impudently, avoiding. For instance, why is there no law in Montenegro that would allow the state to confiscate the property of the members of underground, unless they can prove its legal origins?

Unlike Montenegro, where the Government ensures the right to property even when acquired through crime, the neighbouring Serbia and Croatia have

provisions for confiscating all illegally acquired property of criminals.

Such a law is in force in Croatia since 1 January 2009, and its purpose is to create some space for more efficient fight against organised crime and corruption. The starting point is the supposition that all property of a person convicted for crime or corruption could have been acquired through illegal means. If the person in question has no means of demonstrating that his or her property has been legally acquired, it has to be confiscated. This applies not only to property related to the crime in question, but to entire possessions of the convict. The Croatian criminal code also introduces a provision preventing the possible circumvention of the above rule by transfer of property to another person. In order to prevent the criminals from transferring millions in cash, real estate or businesses to a third person in order to avoid confiscation, if the prosecutor can prove that transfer did indeed take place, regardless of whether the third person is a family member or someone else the property will be con-

fiscated.

And while Croats are grabbing ahead, harmonising their laws with European practice, prime minister Milo Đukanović said last December that the state of Montenegro cannot possibly take away money from anyone who in the early nineties was involved in cigarette trade because this business, he said, was conducted fully in accordance with the then laws of the country. Besides, the prime minister emphasised that it is not the job of the Government, as given by the Constitution, to evaluate how much property in Montenegro was acquired through criminal means.

"Not only because it is not our duty, but also because our goal is not to chase away, but to attract investors", warned the Prime Minister, adding that "neither the



judiciary nor other state institutions" should "foment this atmosphere of suspicion".

In Croatia, in the meantime, one higher official was convicted for taking bribe amounting to 20 000 euros, and because he could not prove that his property was legally acquired, 400 000 euros worth of property was frozen until the process is completed at a court of higher instance. If the higher court rejects the appeal, the entire property will be confiscated.

Đukanović's message to all who got reach smuggling tobacco not to worry about their money is also a clear political message to the prosecutors and investigators. The numbers, however, show that between 1994 and 2002 Montenegro earned between 300 and 700 million dollars from this business, while part of the money was diverted into the pockets of privileged individuals.

The importance of seeing through the entire process of fight against crime is best illustrated by words of Rupert Vining in his "Analysis of financial investigations", written for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

"Simply convicting the members and leaders of criminal organisations, without undermining their economic power, is not enough to eradicate crime and corruption. Their temporary withdrawal into prisons does not mean the end of the organisation, because their primary motive lays in financial benefits, which serve them to strengthen their organisations, but also to exercise political and economic influence on the society", warns Vining, former UK Prosecutor and advisor to the president of Romania.

MENTOR KIKIA, EDITOR IN THE INFLUENTIAL ALBANIAN TELEVISION
"TOP CHANNEL"

No corruption verdicts for high officials

Chief editor of the news programme in the most popular Albanian television "Top Channel" **Mentor Kikia** said the biggest problems of Albania on its road to European integration were related to the functioning of democracy and the rule of law.

In the interview for the *European Pulse* Kikia added that relations among the political parties often spark crises which represent severe obstacles for stepping up the pace of the integration process, but the biggest problem, in his opinion, is the relationship between the Albanian government and independent institutions such as the judiciary, prosecutors...

"Experiences of the past few years show that the courts were under heavy political influence, which resulted in cancellation or prolongation of several trials whose main actors were high government officials. Another face of this problem is widespread corruption, which is closely connected to the non-functioning of legal institutions. We still don't have a single case of a high official who



Mentor Kikia

ended up in prison on charges of corruption or fraud", Kikia said.

According to him, Albania already has a modern legal framework, comparable to those of the most advanced countries of Europe, but warns that the problems come with

implementation.

"Many new laws have been adopted, but they are often blatantly violated, since there is no will to implement them", Kikia added.

● **What is with the fight against organised crime, which is the problem of all Balkan countries?**

Here we have witnessed at least one big step forward.

After 1997, when Albania was sinking into totalitarian chaos which resulted in the collapse of the state, many criminal groups have appeared in the country. Today, nearly all of them have been eliminated and their members put on trial.

Production of narcotic substances has been minimised, as well as drug trade which passes through Albania on its way from the East to the West.

Also, five years ago Albania adopted a law forbidding the usage of large boats, thus finally blocking the trafficking in human beings across Adriatic.

POSITIVE EXAMPLES

● **What is the strategy of Albanian authorities in fighting corruption? Could you describe any positive actions on the part of the government?**

Corruption is still the cancer of the state, in spite of government's initiatives and public announcements of the prime minister that it will be eradicated.

There were a few moves, such as simplifications of the procedure for registering a company, introduction of on-line applications for public tenders which eliminated some corruption linkages.

Similarly, the Albanian prime minister called on the citizens to report all cases of corruption in public administration to a special phone number controlled by his cabinet.

All these moves resulted in some progress in diminishing illegal practices in public administration, but I would emphasise once again that we still don't have a single high official who was convicted in large-scale corruption cases, such as those concerning corruption in assigning contracts for road construction or other investments involving large amounts of money.

● What are the biggest advantages of Albania when it comes to European integrations?

Albanians are a people which has always cherished great human values.

Their willingness to offer shelter and protection to the Jews during the World War II will remain a bright episode in the entire modern history of Europe.

I believe that Albania's advantages lie in its history and geostrategic position. The creation of the state of Kosovo makes Albania an important player in the region, and it facilitated its membership in NATO, which is also an important positive factor.

● Montenegro and Iceland returned their answers to the Questionnaire of the European Commission, Albania is still working on the answers, Serbia is waiting for the opinion on its application, Macedonia is waiting for a date to begin negotiations. Do you believe that Brussels will stick to individual assessment of each country's merit?

Yes. Albania is working on its answers to the Questionnaire, and the government announced that they will be ready for submission to EC by the end of March. We don't know what will be Brussels' opinion on our answers, but that will determine the next steps.

As for a "package" accession of the West Balkan countries to EU, there are many people who suspect, in Tirana as well as in Podgorica, that this will indeed happen. In fact, that would be the best way to do it.

However, if we bear in mind the process of visa liberalisation, were Brussels continues to apply selective methods, I doubt that we will all join EU together. In the cases of Albania and Bosnia, the European officials were very insistent on the fulfilment of each and every criteria from the Roadmap.

However, should Albania get a positive opinion on its answers to the

POLITICIANS DON'T WANT STRONG, INDEPENDENT MEDIA

● What is the relationship between the Albanian authorities and the media? Do public officials often sue the media and journalists for libel or "damage of reputation and honour" as is the case in Montenegro?

I would say that in Albania we have one typically Balkan relationship between the media and authorities. Politicians expect the media to serve them, to be useful tools, and don't want strong and independent media.

As for the court trials, the Albanian government adopted a law prohibiting officials from raising charges against journalists or the media, regardless of what they write. The government announced this as a "historical moment" with regard to freedom of the media.

In the meantime, however, the authorities used another strategy – they bought up the owners of the media, offering them economic privileges, while exerting financial pressure on those owners who did not let themselves be bought up.

This created an unfortunate climate and led to abuse of the role of the media, transforming an important part of it into a tool of politicians, both those in power and those in opposition.

Questionnaire, there is a chance that Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia will proceed simultaneously in this process.

In my opinion Serbia might receive a more privileged treatment and fast-track its integration process, as a consequence of EU's efforts to diminish the Russian influence in the Balkans via Serbia.

A group enlargement now seems to me more like wishful thinking than as a real possibility. Still, I believe that selective integration of some countries of the Balkans could cause more problems in the region, by isolating neighbours who would remain outside of EU borders, and I believe that Brussels would not allow something like that to happen.

● Has NATO integration sped up the process of EU integration in the case of Albania? Advocates of NATO in Montenegro always emphasise that these two processes are almost inseparable.

There's no doubt that NATO has a strong positive influence on European integrations. I don't think that memberships in EU and NATO are inseparable, because sometimes military alliances are more advanced,

complex, and sometimes they are forged without much attention to other factors.

Albania's membership in NATO is a consequence of finalisation of some important geostrategic events that happened in the Balkans in the last decade, and which culminated in the establishment of the state of Kosovo. In this, the decisive factor was the influence of USA which supported the enlargement of NATO to the Balkans, although, let's face it, military potentials of Albania or Macedonia (which is still being held hostage by Greece) were not and are not worthy of a NATO member.

This makes it obvious that on the military front there was a bit of rush, while it doesn't seem that Brussels is in a hurry to take in Albania, Montenegro or any other country of the region, individually or collectively, unless they fulfil all the conditions.

NATO accession is more than a passport for EU. In Albania, it serves as a means of raising the accountability of the political class for the fulfilment of demands coming from Brussels.

V. ŽUGIĆ

FOUNDATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL UNITY

Charlemagne and the Carolingian Renaissance



All great rulers of Europe were obsessed by the idea of brining the entire old conti-



by Miloš Vukanović

nent under the rule of a single crown, nation or ideology – from **Charles V** to **Louis the XIV** and **Napoleon**. In spite of being inspired by different ambitions, plans and ideas, all these conquerors shared the same main motivation for forging together these disparate territories which in the civilisational sense represented "Europe" – a unique cultural space, in spite of all ethnic, religious and linguistic differences, a cultural trademark of what in the modern understanding we refer to simply as Western Europe.

Even with the establishment of colonial empires, encompassing territories hundreds of times greater than the conquering country, territories with an abundance of natural resources which the Europeans could only dream about, the desire to dominate and integrate this single cultural space never subsided.

The roots of Western European culture stem from the civilisational achievements of ancient Greece and Rome, but its core was shaped through symbiosis with the barbarian cultures of Celts and Germans, and under significant influence of the newly formed Arabic cul-

ture and, most of all, the Catholic Church.

It is hard to imagine that the young civilization of the European West, which arose on the ruins of the Roman Empire, would have ever become what it is today had it not been for one crucial factor of its homogenization: Charlemagne (771–814) and the cultural prosperity that his rule brought about.

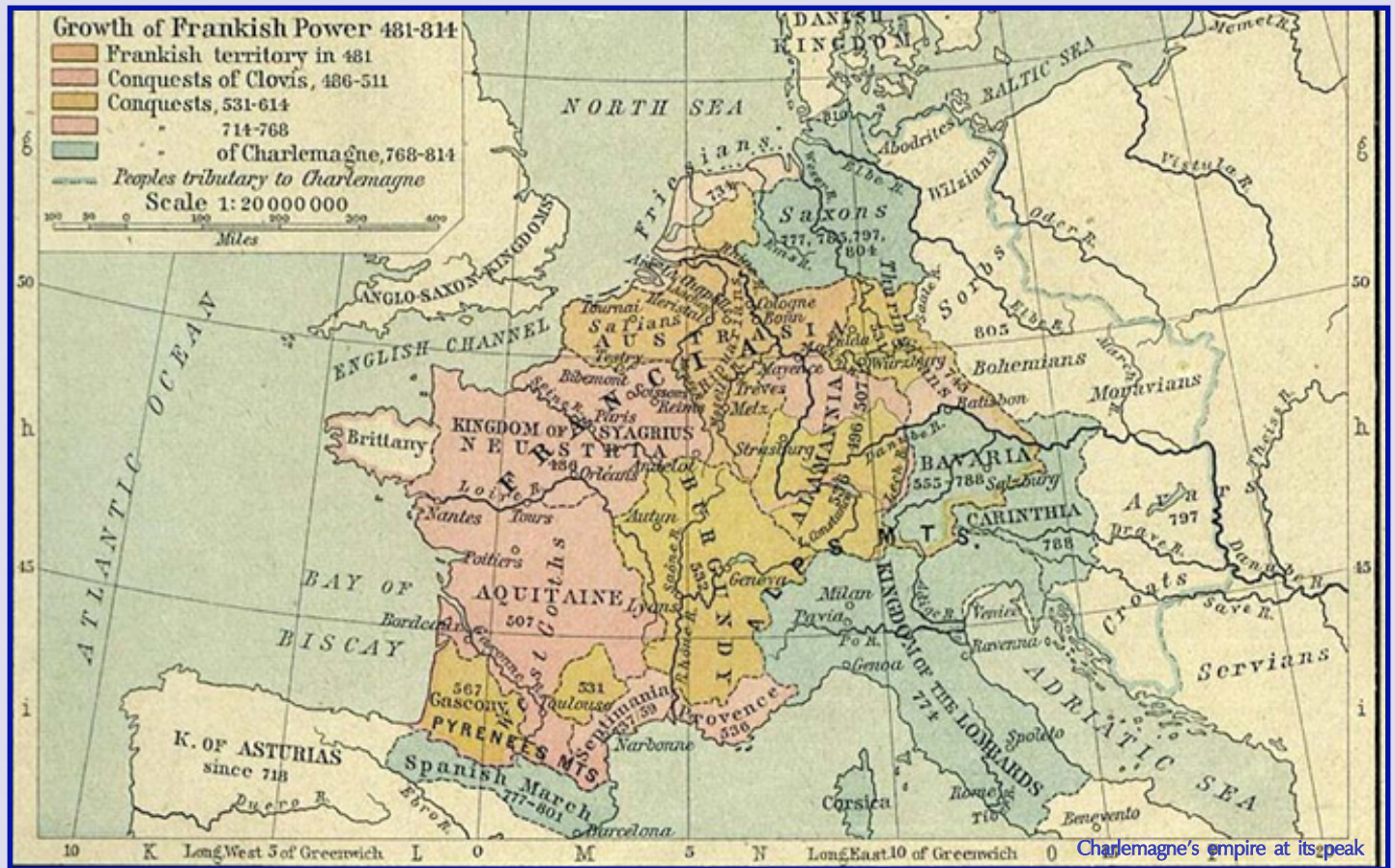
During nearly half a century of his reign, his rule stretched across the entire free territory of the European West where the process of state formation had begun, with the exception of the British Isles. Among the lands that became part of his kingdom (empire from 800) are the territories of today's France (except Bretagne), Benelux countries, Germany until Elbe, Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland, parts of Croatia, northern and central Italy and northern Spain.

Under his rule Western Europe experienced a period of cultural progress, economic prosperity and relative peace, unparalleled in its history since the fall of the Roman Empire. Although himself illiterate, Charlemagne was a fervent supporter of literacy which started to spread through the influence of newly founded monasteries. Peace, prosperity and growing educational levels brought new breakthroughs in the fields of art, literature and architecture. This period of flourishing culture, known in history as the Carolingian Renaissance, was not only first cultural revival of Western Europe since the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, but it also represented the beginning of cultural homogenization of this area. Political unification of the European space also meant cultural rapprochement, which resulted in strong foundations for future cultural unity, and forged a common identity against the threats that were already looming on the horizon.

Charlemagne built on the good relations with the Papacy, which were already established during the rule of his father, first by destroying the Kingdom of the Lombards which at the time presented the greatest threat to the Pope. Charlemagne relinquished these territories in favour of the Papal States, and in return the Pope pronounced Charlemagne the Emperor. The Holy See benefited in many ways from this act, as it acquired new territories, a powerful ally and a protector, allowing it greater autonomy which in the past was often threatened by the Byzantine Empire (an empire which was



Charlemagne



already in decline but maintained a firm grip on the Balkans and Southern Italy). By freeing the Papacy from the threats of the Lombards and pressures from Byzantium, Charlemagne paved way for absolute domination of Catholicism in the West, not only in spiritual but also, later on, in political terms. This was to be the

It is hard to imagine that the young civilization of the European West, which arose on the ruins of the Roman Empire, would have ever become what it is today had it not been for one crucial factor of its homogenization: Charlemagne (771–814) and the cultural prosperity that his rule brought about

hallmark of European culture all the way until Reformation.

To understand the full significance of this period for Europe today, we must take into consideration the broader context of the old in the ninth century. Beside the Frankish Empire and a few smaller dominions, there was no other significant state formation embodying the Western culture. Spain was ruled by the Moors, on the British Isles, where

many small states still fought for dominance, the influence of paganism contributed to the rise of a distinct variety of Christianity, pagan Slavic and Scandinavian tribes occupied vast expanses of the North, Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, while the hostile Byzantine Empire, although in retreat, still rep-

resented a powerful factor in Eastern Mediterranean. It was within this constellation of external forces that Europe had to face one of the most trying periods of its history – the Viking conquest. Bearing all this in mind, it was the strong cultural and political foundation forged in the period of Charlemagne's reign that allowed Western Europe not only to survive this period and resist the onslaught of Normans, but also to

begin a period of cultural expansion, especially towards Central and Eastern Europe.

The states which were created with dissolution of the Charlemagne's empire are considered to be the beginnings of modern European states, and on their outer frontiers we can also observe newer attempts at state-building (such as Sam's establishment of Greater Moravia).

A close look at contemporary Western Europe clearly reveals the cultural consequences of Charlemagne's rule. The foundations laid down during his rule are the very foundations for development of West European culture.

Cultural unity always inspires economic and political integration, sometimes even by force. After Charlemagne and before EU Europe will only be united in a similar way once more, under Napoleon.

The author is a programme associate in Centre for Civic Education

European elderly on the streets

by Brano Mandić

The fact that we're less and less prone to throwing dynamite for the New Year's and that we gave up on taking carbines to weddings is the greatest civilisational achievement of Montenegro in the last ten years. Greater than the state itself.

Why did Montenegrins leave their weapons behind is a question for sociologists, but these are either hiding in the libraries or foaming at party debates.

I spent the night of 31 December in traditionally well-armed Bar and I could see for myself that people are not shooting any more, and that even the children are less sanguine about firecrackers. Fireworks and signalling rockets from the ships still scarred the skies, but that only scared Žučka, my well fed and simple dog.

On the atomic shelter behind the panel blocks a small group of adolescents set a few torches alight and the



dried figs and guitars, even the citizens of Bar aged 50+ could have enjoyed the party.

It's terribly sad that on those New

European streets are pulsing with life of every generation. You must have seen, at least on the TV, those satisfied grannies charmingly swinging their hips to the rhythm of some polka or waltz, and dreamily watching the fireworks with eyes of grown-up children. It has been said long ago: Europe has the culture of public squares, US the culture of highways. Now it's time to find out what our squares are for and who is welcome to have fun out there

red light revealed tiny balconies on the concrete blocks in the background. All in all, a pleasant visual event with no danger for your hearing. I was content: a disc jockey from London, warm Poire Williams from the brotherly Serbia. On top of it: insanely warm weather, so warm that we left the gas chambers for the streets. Several spontaneous gatherings into groups, especially by the monument in St Vladimir. Girls in short skirts and red heats squeezing guys in fancy coats, and if I hadn't smelled everywhere that Bar specific stuffiness that will remain with me as long as I breathe, I would have thought that we've been somewhat cultivated.

And if anyone remembered to organise a nice little stand with wine,

Years you never see the elderly, whatever that means, come out on the squares. In this country it is a custom to spend the blissful age of menopause seriously considering the shape of your

Older generations of citizens do not participate in the city life, without a chance to join the new mythology of the street. The media are mostly offering infantile regression instead, and the Capital City – shopping mall Delta, or folksong evenings organised by homeland associations

tombstone. Man and women start to slowly bury themselves very early on, following the advice of the media. Just think how many TV presenters aged above 50 have you recently seen on Montenegrin channels.

Generations of our parents were

mostly ran over during the nineties, while the young political elite was still growing up with **Doris Dragović**, cocaine and cheese in olive oil. Relying on the tradition of the Great Trouble which sucked them in at the time, many of our elderly friends have made peace with the idea that squares are only made for drunken adolescents. For all the youngsters for whom an empty wallet isn't such a tragic obstacle not to celebrate the arrival of a new decade.

This is exactly the most remarkable difference between Montenegro and our beloved Europe. European streets are pulsing with life of every generation. You must have seen, at least on the TV, those satisfied grannies charm-

ingly swinging their hips to the rhythm of some polka or waltz, and dreamily watching the fireworks with eyes of grown-up children. It has been said long ago: Europe has the culture of public squares, US the culture of highways. Now it's time to find out what

our squares are for and who is welcome to have fun out there.

Two months ago there was a fair in Podgorica dedicated to honey. I was touched by so many old people inspecting the combs, bargaining over little pumps and other beekeeping trinkets, well-dressed grey ladies buying thistle and wildflower honey and discussing the benefits of propolis. It was all very noble and lively, because people gathered around normal, everyday things, and not for the purposes of meetings, burials or investigations, like they usually do.

Imagine Podgorica without boutiques and cafes and you'll see that cultured people have learned that it's best to stay at home, cut up the French salad and listen to hysterical laughs from the TV set.

Besides, for most of them it's been twenty years that they go to bed and get up in the morning worried about basic things like food and heating, most of them have a phobia of postboxes, electricity bills, voting registration and other demons. And they're also well advised by public authorities on the new year's eve to just stay at home and cut their carrots and pickled cucumbers into small and smaller cubes, since they already failed to save enough to pay for two nights in a Russian hotel. It's difficult even to imagine the many colourful cubes that have been drowned in mayonnaise these days: just remember that the latest census counted some 200 000 citizens with more than half a century of this worldly existence.

We'll probably have to wait for 2030 for our streets to host such cheerful celebrations of the civic spirit which doesn't know age. By that time even my generation will be entering the fifth decade, so let's see whether mid-night degustation of the French salad will still be in fashion. For starters, it's good that we stopped shooting and we should be sincerely proud of that fact...

Last year in Strasbourg there was a



festival of national cuisines and village folklore from all over Europe. I had to pick my way through the smoke from Romanian grills towards the cathedral surrounded by Italians throwing flags. Troupes of French peasant cultural associations and tin orchestras were all over the place. African immigrants were selling hats in the colours of European flags, offering Rolex watches on the

The most tragic thing about European integrations is that they are so slow that the benefits will never come to those who have fought for it. The transitional gap is eating up entire generations, and the biggest losers are those who were in the prime of life when the first shots were fired. Does anybody worry about all the potential that the country is losing with them?

side for 25 euros, and ready to sell them for five. That was an experience of a real crowd which does not offend the senses, in the midst of Alsace where Europe really met itself and confirmed the dream of coexistence of old enemies. Even the authorities of Strasbourg respected human rights and allowed a strange group of homeless people to spend the whole day lying on their leather jackets on the sidewalk by the main square...

And what would we have, think again, if they took away the shops and cafes from Podgorica? It will be a sad place without any particular culture of living. A good way to face empty streets cubical high-rises looking for

purpose. This is no surprise in places where concrete is the main ingredient of progress and the final proof of urbanism. The mayor of Podgorica will say, in full health and sanity, that he's made the city in to a metropolis. Is he serious or is it just a joke?

Older generations of citizens do not participate in the city life, without a chance to join the new mythology of the street. The media are mostly offering infantile regression instead, and the Capital City – shopping mall Delta, or folksong evenings organised by homeland associations.

European culture is based on cultural achievements of its cities, as the key nodes of progress where the experiences of different cultures and generations meet. New Years' celebrations in Montenegro have shown us once again how far we still are from a harmonious society where everybody feels integrated, useful and welcome. This task is beyond all European docu-

ments and regulations. It is not in the Questionnaire. It will take a long time to re-educate a nation which gave up on the normal life for the last twenty years, leaving the brain back in the cupboard. The most tragic thing about European integrations is that they are so slow that the benefits will never come to those who have fought for it. The transitional gap is eating up entire generations, and the biggest losers are those who were in the prime of life when the first shots were fired. Does anybody worry about all the potential that the country is losing with them?

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

RESULTS OF THE REFORM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Quantity is no supplement for quality



Whenever we talk about reform of higher education, the Bologna Declaration invariably pops up.



by Dr Branka Bošnjak

Unfortunately, most people, including many university professors do not really understand what it means.

Bologna declaration and its accompanying documents were aimed at the strengthening and harmonisation of standards and quality of higher education, mutual recognition of exams and diplomas and mobility of students and faculty within the unified European space of higher education.

In short, the Bologna process is a great idea, which was deeply compromised here through the implementation of "Bologna Montenegrin style". Initially, we were all big enthusiasts and among the first in the region to start the reform. Everything was carried out through employee's dedication, without adequate support of the state, which was supposed to contribute to high-quality reforms through increased financial support for the University of Montenegro (Univerzitet Crne Gore – UCG). While the process

Professors of the University of Montenegro fear that the parents will start sending their children to private schools, where the diploma, that dream of every parent, is much more easily attainable. The strategy is then to push things to the opposite extreme, to enrol an enormous number of students in certain departments

was still "on paper" everything was going well. With implementation we began the stage of improvisations. This is very well illustrated by the fact that in 2005 at the conference in Bergen we were among the best in the regions while only two years later, at a conference in London,

we found ourselves at the very bottom of the list. This year, in Leuven, we again received a lot of criticism.

Implementation of the Bologna process requires adequate standards – in terms of faculty, space and finances. The new study programme requires transformed, engaged professors, who keep up with contemporary trends in education and science. Is that possible? And can we expect it for our faculty, bearing in mind that their salaries are between 500 and 700 euros, that they have no access to contemporary literature nor access to the databases of scientific journals, that the equipment in our laboratories is scarce, outdated and often unusable? Can we expect our faculty to be mobile if most of them do not speak a single foreign language? Can we expect

Montenegrin market for higher education is already overpopulated – currently we have more than 40 such institutions. This is way above the real needs

our students to go on exchange to some of European universities, if they parents cannot afford to finance it? And as for the recognition of diplomas, for time being we will have to be satisfied with them being recognised within Montenegrin borders.

On the other hand, the reform brought the appearance of a great number of private universities. Montenegrin market for higher education is already overpopulated – currently we have more than 40 such institutions. This is way

above the real needs. The future students have a hard time making the right choice. Many young people have opted for getting their diplomas from the "private hands". This should be quite normal, but in Montenegro, where this area is not adequately regulated and monitored,

there is quite some cause for concern.

Namely, the nouveau riches, hungry for profit and prestige, are using their positions and the unjustifiably generous attitude of the Ministry for Science and Education which is all too easily handing out licences to private institutions. The main argument of these founders of private universities is that the market and market relations will bring about quality. Of course, they invoke the examples of the world's most prestigious institutions, which are light years ahead of anything we can offer.

In a small, economically and technologically backward Montenegro, the drive for competition can easily turn into its opposite. Disregard for the existing, already low, standards which regulate establishment of new universities, can

lead to the final result being just a diploma, not an expert. We are right in fearing that such liberal mushrooming of private institutions of higher education will result in chaos, without increasing the quality of education, which was the primary goal of the new Law on higher education. Of course, that does not mean that state universities are by definition of higher quality. The problem is that we don't have the slightest idea about the quality of education and can only guess, since there is still not encompassing assessment of performance that would take into account both the content of the study programmes and the value of students' diplomas on the labour market. Nor have we shown much readiness to allow some accredited international agency which monitors standards and quality in higher education to evaluate our programmes – which was the biggest reproach we got at the ministerial conference in Leuven.

Instead of private institutions raising the level of quality through competition, it seems that the final outcome of this

market race will be a decline in quality of relatively well performing public departments.

Professors of the University of Montenegro fear that the parents will start sending their children to private schools, where the diploma, that dream of every parent, is much more easily attainable. The strategy is then to push things to the opposite extreme, to enrol an enormous number of students in certain departments, which results in impossible working conditions, but also improves the material standing of the institution. The next step is to open up departments in other, smaller cities, while it is nearly impossible to maintain a reasonable level of quality with the existing and, I would say, meagre teaching potential which is supposed to cover the requirements of the curricula.

Another cause for concern is that a number of professors feel under pressure to increase the passing rates at their exams. It is inadmissible to lower the cri-

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teria in order to fulfil the prescribed "reform" quotas and in order to make the department more "attractive"! We cannot allow those programmes which are most easily completed, the exams most easily passed and the professors which require the least knowledge to become the most attractive ones.

We should be especially careful with private universities. Analysing the quality of the faculty in these institutions we can observe that it consists of the same, usually already retired professors of UCG, but also of some other universities in the region. These places typically also hire teachers from among those who have failed to fulfil the criteria to be employed by UCG, as well as retired politicians and public servants from various levels of the government. This way, those who have acquired their PhDs in a shady manner,



unfortunately also from UCG itself, are overnight converted into "renown" university professors.

Montenegro is a tiny market, which cannot handle so many higher education institutions with such similar profiles. If

ties whose quality surpasses those of public institutions would indeed be considered elite universities. This is the case, for instance, with Harvard, Yale or Princeton in the US, but let us not forget that there are also hundreds of private universities in the USA whose diplomas mean almost nothing, as they are no guarantee of quality.

The current Law on higher education foresees this possibility in the Article 68, which states that "a private institutions can receive Government funds for teaching and research purposes which are in public interest, upon proposal by the Council for Higher Education". Since all private universities offer only those courses which are already offered by UCG, the question is: what is the public interest in question, which is not already served by UCG?

All this undermines the already fragile system of higher education in Montenegro. Tiny Montenegro cannot afford the luxury to give up on knowledge. We should therefore urgently do something to preserve the quality of our higher education which the University of Montenegro has been painstakingly building for decades. The loss that Montenegro would suffer with the destruction of one of the most valuable resources in its educational system would be irredeemable.

The author is the scientific councillor in the Rectorate of the University of Montenegro

our goal is to create a society where almost everyone will have the university diploma, while the criteria are being dragged down by "market competition", the results will soon come to haunt us. This form of improvisation does will not bring progress, neither to the university nor to the society.

The chaos will become even worse with the lately fashionable "voucherisation", i.e. the proposal to finance private universities from public funds by awarding each potential student with a voucher which would be valid for any university. There is no similar example anywhere in the region.

Every serious country is trying to step up investments to strengthen public universities, which should be the standard of quality on the market for higher education. In this case, private universi-

WHY DO I WANT TO BE A CITIZEN OF EUROPEAN UNION

EU protects us against our own states

Podgorica, 1992: "Mom, mom, please by me Euro-cream, here, I have plenty of dinars."

Podgorica,



by Anita Brajović

2006: "What will you do with that Faculty of European Studies, dear, where will you work afterwards, here, there's law, economics..."

That's how it all started. There was not too much thinking, instead of Bocconi, University of Zagreb, Sarajevo, Belgrade, the closest to my heard remained – Podgorica. Except for the love I feel for my city, there are a few more reasons, but there's no need to expand on them here. Most people know them very well. The few who never felt these reasons can boast that the country has been like a mother to them. But, as the adage goes, mother to some, stepmother to others, and most of the population of this country has felt its rough hand for years, but the country didn't quite want or dare display itself in this role in full, wrapped up in its provincial mentality, consoling itself with its historical identity, those "Examples of Humanity and Bravery" (the emphasis is on "examples!"). While people "common-sensically" accepted these two faces of the state, they forgot that the state is, as well described by John Locke, the "necessary evil", that it is there to protect the rights of its citizens, and not to play some positive role. Its only positive role should be the protection of individual rights and freedoms, never the existence of fear of the state as such and the possibility that one day it might forget and take away from us what every man acquires by his birth. Well, I don't want that kind of state, I don't want it for myself nor for us.

This is exactly the first and most important thing that drew me towards European Union. In a multilateral world,

where everybody takes up the right place as if on a chessboard, there's also EU. Unlike the other big powers which assimilated the differences of their nations into one, the EU is unique in its motto: "Unity in Diversity".

I too would like to feel great one day, for it is in the nature of the humans to identify with something like that, just at the thought of being present there on the chessboard whose purpose is not to celebrate the victorious side in a war (for there will be no war), but to celebrate the best things in all of us in one place.

Today it is a Union of 27 member states, with 22 official languages, with more than 500 million inhabitants who all share a European citizenship. A citizenship which, in addition to the four basic freedoms (the freedom of movement of labour, goods, services and capital) offers them many more opportunities, chances and privileges.

I want these boundless opportunities for my country and my people, with a reservation – this is no European Union as a structural form which is heaped on us from the TV sets on daily basis. Because in addition to the form, there is also the substance which is contained in the institutions of European Union, and in another special aspect of integrations – the EU law.



The law that every country which joins the family of European states ought to respect, because this law is directly applicable and has precedence over the national law. Although it means another layer of power above our heads, it is the kind of power which can often help us in the best possible way by shielding us against abuses by our own states, and much more than that. This is not only about legal protection, having somebody to punish the state. The very idea of such punishment will create a new awareness in our society, a kind of reality where repression of own citizens will become past, while reminding us that we're living in a better future. A better future which began with visa liberalisation as the first step of full integration of Montenegro and its population into a system of European values.

Eventually, in addition to all the new words – European integrations, membership application, questionnaire, acquis... we will learn a much more important lesson, the undoing of the bad habits.

This time, all bad habits need to be unlearned at once, and knowing the psychology of our people I doubt we are ready to join EU. The moment when odes to EU have calmed down, the moment the level of support for EU membership starts to decline (for they don't want to get rid of their habits), only then will I know that we are ready to join the Union of European countries. Finally, we too live on the European continents, we also deserve the chance which, I hope, the citizens of this beautiful country will know how to use!!!

For, while the Maastricht Treaty was being signed in 1992, also known as the "Treaty of EU" one child in the Western Balkans was hoping to get her sweets, not understanding why the adults are talking about the collapse of SFRY, war, inflation, economic embargo, isolation...

That is why I want to be in European Union, so that such a scene can never happen again!

The author is a graduate student at the Faculty of Political Science. She attended IX generation of European Integrations School

Every sixth European poor

Every sixth inhabitant of European Union, or 17% of all population lived below the poverty line in 2008, according to the Eurostat.

Poverty is especially pronounced among children and people above 65: 20% of children and 19% of elderly citizens in EU are poor. The highest percentage of poverty-stricken citizens is found in Latvia – 26%, Romania – 23% and Bulgaria – 21%. The situation is similar in Greece, Spain and Lithuania, where every fifth citizen is poor. Czech Republic has the fewest poor – 9%, followed by Slo-

vakia and Netherlands (11%).

The Eurostat classifies as poor those whose income is below 60% of average earnings in the country, but the average varies widely from one country to another.



The half billion mark

The population of EU 27 has for the first time crossed the 500 million mark, announced the French National Statistical Institute (INSEE). According to the data from 1 January 2010, the total number of EU inhabitants was 501.26 million. According to the European statistics institute Eurostat the size of European population in 2009 was 499.7 million.

Germany is the most populous country of EU (81.7 million), ahead of France, which has 65.4 million inhabitants with overseas territories, and 62.8 million without them. United Kingdom comes third with 62 million inhabitants.

In the last decade the population of Ireland (4.45 million) and Spain (46.08 million) increased by 15%, while German population stagnated.

The highest ratio of newborn children per woman is found in France and Ireland, which top the list with two children per woman, slightly ahead United Kingdom.

The increase of European population is due to both immigration and natural growth. In France, most of the growth is judged to be the consequence of an increase in birthrate, whereas in Spain, Portugal and Italy the immigrants account for much of the increase.

Divorce by which law?



EU justice ministers are divided over the plan to "intensify cooperation" in order to introduce common rules for divorce of couples where partners have different citizenships.

The clause on "intensified cooperation" introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 enables a group of at least eight member states to request from the Commission to introduce a regulation specifically for them, if the EU as a whole does not wish to adopt it.

The law that would decide which laws apply when citizens of two member states want to divorce has been requested by Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Spain and Romania, and is being opposed by UK, Finland and Sweden.

Around 350 000 marriages take place annually between EU citizens of different nationalities, and around 170 000 such marriages are divorced every year.

Disagreement on scanner

EU members are divided over whether to install full-body scanners at European airports. The issue took on some urgency after the suicide-bomb attempt on Christmas last year on the flight to Detroit.

Belgian state secretary for transport **Etenne Shouppe** described these more stringent measures as "excessive", while UK and Netherlands already announced preparations to install the scanner.

EU allowed the member states to decide individually whether to use full-body scanners for passenger control on airports.

Cheaper roaming

Thanks to the EU measures to bring down the charges for roaming, the prices of sms messages and calls abroad within Europe fell by 50% since 2007.

However, most of these services (90% of them) still charge the maximum amount set by the European authorities, which became the "standard".

In addition to this, telecommunications companies now increased the roaming charges for countries outside of EU which used to be in the same tariff zone in order to make up for the lost profits. The target countries are Norway, Switzerland and USA, as well as Asian and countries of the Pacific.

Tasty žlikrofi

Slovenian culinary specialty similar to Italian tortellini, but with a sauce which adds parsley, spices, bacon and cracklings to the potato batter has been recently put on the list of EU specialties together with two Czech cheeses and Italian brand "The Peach of Verona".

The specialty is the "Idrian žlikrofi", which in the 19th century the food of simple and poor people, but are today known as a very tasty specialty usually served to dear and important guests.

With this, the Idrian žlikrofi joined the list of almost 900 culinary products with a "guaranteed traditional quality" status granted to them by the European Commission.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EU MEMBERSHIP: HUNGARY, FIVE YEARS AFTER ACCESSION

EU is not a magician

An analysis of the effects of accession to European Union on Hungary ought to tackle several questions



by Dr Tamas Szemler

at once: economic performance, social and regional disparities, foreign policy and attitudes towards the EU, as well as several side issues which can help us acquire a more complete picture of this complex process.

Economic performance

Hungary's GDP per capita in 2007 was 63.5% of the EU27 average. This level means a considerable development compared to the level of one decade before (in 1997 Hungarian GDP was only 51.6% of EU average), but we should bear in mind that this indicator has not changed much since 2003: indeed, since 2006 it has even declined. The forecast for 2008, even before the financial crisis, was lower than the level in 2003. It means that

EU accession in itself did not change the situation regarding social and regional disparities in Hungary. Social inequalities are rather a consequence of other factors, related first of all to domestic policy measures

in the first years of EU membership, instead of acceleration of the catching-up process, the country experienced a decline in its relative development level.

The causes of this negative trend should be sought in the recent low rate of economic growth after 2006: following the average 4–5% real GDP growth per year in the period 1998–

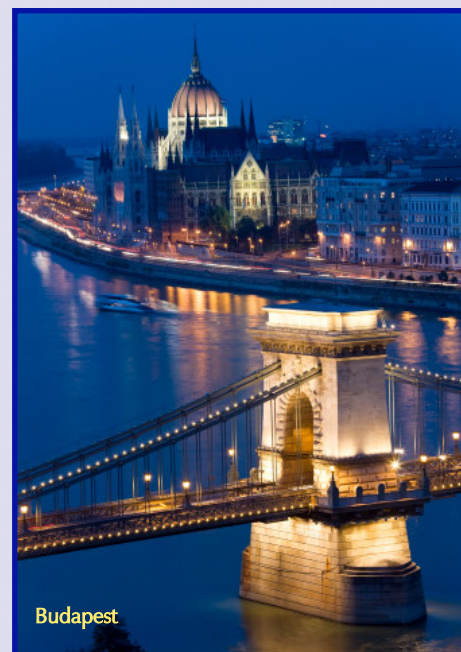
2006, the growth rate fell to 1.1% in 2007. It is estimated to be around 1.9% in 2008. This is a consequence, among other, of the stabilisation measures announced in 2006, when the Government introduced a convergence programme, the main objective being stabilisation of public finances and a decrease in expenditures.

The real causes are not, however, related to EU membership, but are the result of undisciplined domestic economic policy since at least 2002. Fortunately, the duties stemming from EU membership constitute an important control mechanism, and limit the possibilities for irresponsible governance. The most visible and at present most important tool in this respect is the precisely the programme of monetary convergence.

Employment levels in Hungary increased slightly after EU accession (from 56.8% in 2004 to 57.3% in 2007), but is still much below the EU average. The unemployment rate also increased from 6.1% in 2004 to 7.4% in 2007, but this change was mostly due to internal factors (slowdown of growth, changes in labour market and social benefits regulations), and not to EU accession as such.

Unlike most other new member

states, Hungary did not experience mass migration from the country to other member states of the EU. According to estimations, the number of Hungarians in permanent employment in the EU member states after the EU accession of the country does not exceed 15 000, which is very low, especially when compared with other new member state which are often



even smaller than Hungary. The present trends also indicate that most Hungarians return to the country after some years of work abroad.

Social and regional disparities

EU accession in itself did not change the situation regarding social and regional disparities in Hungary. Social inequalities are rather a consequence of other factors, related first of all to domestic policy measures. The only effect of EU membership in this respect can be in principle related to restrictive measures which limit the ability of the government to use fiscal policies to counter the growth of inequality.

As for the regional disparities, access to EU structural fund should in the long run contribute to development of disadvantaged areas. However, although Hungary is one of the best performing new members regarding the absorption of EU funds, for the time being no positive effects can be observed. Perhaps it is already a success that territorial disparities did not increase significantly. This can be seen as a positive result of the changes in Hungarian territorial development policy which have occurred since the second half of the nineties.

EU Funds can also contribute to the overall catching-up process of the country, including modernization of the infrastructure – in this latter respect, much depends on the future implementation of the Lisbon Strategy.

Foreign policy

EU accession did not significantly change the direction of Hungarian foreign policy, except that with the accession one of its main objectives has been fulfilled. In most cases, Hungary's interests are in line with the official EU policies, and disagreements popped up only in a very small number of specific cases. One of such cases was the issue of the recognition Kosovo's independence: for historical reasons, as well as because of the still considerable Hungarian minority living in Serbia, it was not easy to accept the decision of the majority of EU member states to recognize Kosovo.

Russia is another key area which is of high importance for the Hungarian foreign policy, most of all for economic reasons. The Hungarian approach to this matter is quite cautious, and the same can be said about EU's attitude – except that it is very difficult to say whether there is anything like a common European opin-

ion on this issue. The same is true of relations with Ukraine where Hungary, together with Poland and other countries which have a specific interest in this country could play a more important role than in the past.

Attitudes towards the EU

Recent Eurobarometer results show a decline of EU's popularity among Hungarian citizens. By autumn 2007, to the question "Generally speaking, do you think that membership in EU is a good thing for your country?" the share of those who answered "yes" was 40% in Hungary. This was clearly below the EU27 aver-

To a concrete question "Taking everything into account, would you say that your country has benefited from being a member of the European Union?", the share of those who answered yes in Hungary was only 36% in 2008

age (58%). By spring 2008, the situation got worse: the EU27 average declined by 6 percentage points (to 52%), but support for EU membership in Hungary dropped by entire 8% (to 32%). To a more concrete question "Taking everything into account, would you say that your country has on balance benefited from being a member of the European Union?", the share of those who answered "benefited" was 42% by autumn 2007 and 36% by

spring 2008 in Hungary (the EU27 average being 58% and 54%, respectively).

The reason for such high disparities should be sought primarily in the general dissatisfaction with recent developments in domestic politics, as well as in generally superfluous information Hungarian citizens have about EU.

Final remarks

From the above analysis it is clear that one has to be cautious with establishing direct links between EU accession and simultaneous economic, social and political developments.

Such links surely do exist, but not all changes since 2004 can be seen simply as results of EU accession. There are other factors – global developments on the one hand, domestic processes on the other – that influence development of a country, even an if it's an EU member. Naturally, these processes also impact the public opinion.

Once you are a member of EU, it is always easy to find the reasons for negative developments in European attitudes and policies, which is very clearly observable on the plummeting popularity of EU among Hungarian citizens.

Last but not least, we should also emphasized the impact of the international crisis, which has changed dramatically the image of EU among Hungarian citizens. The crisis demonstrated the advantages, but also the limits of membership, and it seems that it dealt a final blow to all illusions about EU as a magical solution to all problems. At the moment, it is still difficult to tell what consequences will this have for future developments.

The author is Scientific Director at the Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest

TRADE DEFICIT REDUCED

EU membership did not change much the trade patterns of Hungary with the EU15. On the other hand, the spectacular change could be observed in trade relations with those Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU together with and after Hungary. Although the rapid increase of these trade relations was to a certain extent unexpected, there are explanations for it: the former free trade agreement practically never functioned as it was supposed to, free trade of agricultural products became possible only after EU accession, trade in services also developed rapidly, and last, but not least, in the single market, small and medium enterprises also became more active, and the neighbouring or close countries were among their most important new targets.

Hungarian imports from the new member states increased from 4 billion euros in 2003 to 9.7 billion in 2007. At the same time, Hungarian exports to the new member states increased from 4 billion in 2003 to 13.7 billion in 2007. This meant a significant improvement for the overall trade balance of Hungary, reducing the overall trade deficit in 2003–2007 period from 4.2 billion to 309. The positive trends continued in the first half of 2008, and Hungary closed that period with a 453 million trade surplus.

OPINION POLL CONDUCTED BY GALLUP EUROPE FINDS

Gloom in the Balkans

While the overwhelming majority of citizens of West Balkan countries are convinced that new armed conflicts in the region are unlikely, the public's mood in the region is gloomy. With the exception of Kosovars and Albanians, most inhabitants of the Western Balkans are unhappy with their living standards, and few of them believe that situation could get better in the near future.

Those are the findings of the latest opinion poll conducted in the Western Balkans by Gallup Europe in cooperation with the European Fund for the Balkans. The authors warn that such pessimistic mood is not the best environment for democratic reforms and advocate "shock integration", or accelerated rapprochement between these countries and EU in order to revive the trust in development and progress among the citizens of the region.

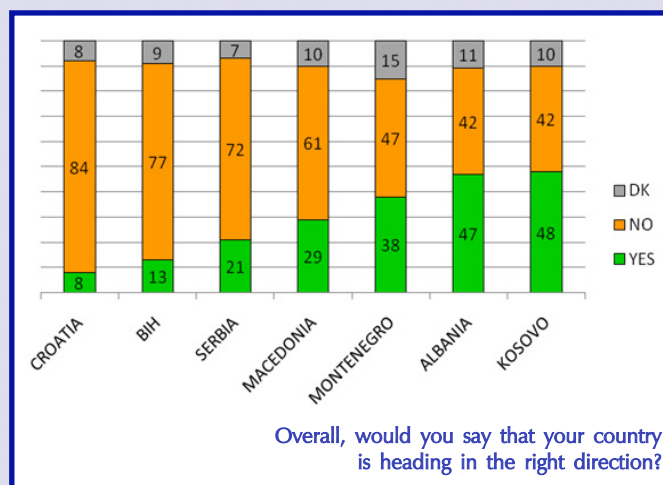
General dissatisfaction is also reflected in the steadily declining trust in national political elites, as well as EU institutions. The majority of citizens have experienced reduced living standards in the last year and a growing number of them believes that better life lies beyond the borders of their own countries. Pessimism is alarmingly high among young people, many of whom believe not to be able to find employment in their own country.

Gallup, which conducts such polls every year, warns that in the last three years the level of satisfaction with the

living standards has not improved. Albanians in Kosovo (67%) and in Albania (54%) were the only groups in which a majority was satisfied with their standard of living in 2009. Among the most dissatisfied are the citizens of Serbia (31%), Montenegro and Macedonia (37% each), where more than 60% of the population is dissatisfied with the personal standard of living. Most of the citizens in the region have a hard time making ends meet: 37% of the respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina and more than 50% in Montenegro, Macedonia and in Kosovo have difficulties paying their utility bills.

Support for EU accession has remained high in all countries of the region except Croatia, where the percentage of those who believe that membership in EU would be good for their country is below 26%. Compared to the previous years, there is also some decline in support among the citizens of Serbia and Macedonia.

As for the national institutions, the attitudes vary from one country to another: more than two fifths of the citizens of Kosovo (52%), Macedonia (45%) and Montenegro (48%) judged their governments' performances to be "good" or "excellent", but the picture is very different in Serbia, Bosnia and



Croatia: as many as 65% of Croatians said their government's performance was "poor". Paradoxically enough, however, those most satisfied with the situation in their country are most likely to emigrate: only 11% of Croatian citizens expressed their wish to move elsewhere, while the number of Albanians who would like to move out stood at 38%.

Overall, the citizens of Montenegro are generally happy with political developments in their country, but many are worried about the economy, shows Gallup poll.

In 2008, the same study showed a generally optimistic outlook, high levels of trust in politicians and overall positive assessment of the life in general. A year later, however, the financial crisis took its toll and the situation is far from bright: while 43% of Montenegrin citizens said they were satisfied with their living standard in 2008, in 2009 the number has dropped to 37%. More than a half of the respondents (54%) have difficulties paying their utility bills, but so far there are no indications of many people wanting to emigrate: only 16% of the respondents in 2009 said they would prefer to live elsewhere, compared to 2006 when their number was 37%.

Most citizens of Montenegro attribute the negative developments to the economic crisis, and not to political factors: 67% of the respondents still believe that membership in the Union would be good for Montenegro.

MONTENEGRINS FOND OF CORRUPTION

Montenegrin government still remains the region's most trusted government: it enjoys support of 70% of the citizens, although 49% believe that corruption is widespread in public institutions (which is still well below the regional average of over 70%).

This is partly explained by the fact that the citizens of Montenegro have higher acceptance (compared to the rest of the region) of certain corruption practices: 21% of the respondents said using bribe was more useful than harmful, and around 20% admitted that in the last year they gave bribe in order to solve some problems more easily.

V.Š.

WHY IS THERE NO DETAILED OVERVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN MONTENEGRO

Where is the Green book?

EVROPSKI REPORTER

by Tatjana Nikolić

It seems that the Green Book, an overview of the state of the environment in the country, will not be published any time soon, in spite of the announcement of the minister **Branimir Gvozdenović** that this capital document will soon be presented to the Montenegrin public.

In order to compile this compass for a coordinated system of environmental protection that would serve as a reference point for harmonisation with EU standards, we would first need adequate regulatory and administrative preconditions, as well as financial support.

As a snapshot of the environment the Green Book should be a response from the government to the public concerns about the state of the environment in Montenegro today. It should contain a register of pollutants, ecological programmes and projects of correcting negative externalities, and investments in the environment encompassing all

ation with Italians.

Director of the Agency for Environmental Protection **Daliborka Pejović** said for the European Reporter that none of the Montenegrin experts has defined a balanced set of objectives with regard to environmental monitoring or summarised the priorities to be integrated in such an important document.

"Department for Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting was established within our Agency only in March 2009, when we officially started working", Pejović explained.

She adds that the Law itself stands in the way of the Green Book, as it provides for some rather awkward alternative solutions: "The Law entrusts the local governments with the task of registering polluters and classifying them, but the capacities of these local administrations are quite disastrous. They have still not recognised the need to deal with the environment at all, nor to strengthen their capacities in order to approach this task adequately".

The entire society will have to face a big challenge of adapting to EU standards of environmental protection, especially if we have in mind the business policy so far, which was mostly formulated as maximum exploitation of the existing equipment and raw materials, as well as labour force, without much investment in modernisation and training

economic subjects – those who are bound by regulation to invest in certain technological adjustments, as well as those specialising primarily in green technologies.

It should also contain deadlines and timelines for the investments planned in the process of harmonisation of the production capacities with the contemporary environmental standards.

The Green Book came onto the agenda with the adoption of the Law on Environmental Protection, which also established the Agency for Environmental Protection in July 2008.

The main reason for not adopting the said Green Book is that the Ministry of Environment since its establishment had drafted only one programme of environmental monitoring, and that last year, in cooper-

Regardless of whether local administrations will succeed in fulfilling their tasks within the given deadlines, Pejović emphasised that the Agency has prepared a comprehensive policy of monitoring and issuing licences, and that it has focused its efforts on large polluters.

The biggest polluters in Montenegro today are the Aluminium Combine (KAP), the Nikšić Steelworks, the power plant in Pljevlja, Bijela Shipyard...

Director of NGO Ozon **Aleksandar Perović** reminds that, in absence of the Green Book, these large polluters will have the hardest time adapting to the new regulations which stipulate that they must adjust their technologies and performance to EU standards.

"Global economic crisis made the posi-



tion of industrial polluters even more difficult, the Government is also to blame, as it ignored environmental problems for years, postponing the adjustment process in order to buy social peace", Perović said.

He explains that economic constraints have proven to be the biggest obstacle in practice, as the adoption of high environmental standards entails huge costs in the short term, and as most of the large industrial polluters have been changing owners very frequently since their privatisation, the entire society will be faced with a big challenge in adjusting to EU standards in this area.

"Especially bearing in mind their business policies so far, which were mostly formulated as maximum exploitation of equipment and raw materials, as well as the labour force, without much investment in modernisation, training or public relations. In my opinion we will face a big challenge just to change the patterns of business thinking, both in the owners and in their workers, who need to realise that the current model is simply unsustainable and that we have to get down to tackling these problems. If don't do it quickly, we will be facing severe consequences", Pejović warns.

Developed countries spend around 1% of their GDP annually on meeting the EU standards of environmental protection.

In Montenegro, however, one percent is hardly a big enough sum to meet the same standards, although the current state of the economy does not allow for larger investments.

CCE and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung publicise AN ADVERTISEMENT for participants of XV generation of



DEMOCRACY SCHOOL



– school for learning democracy from theory to practice –

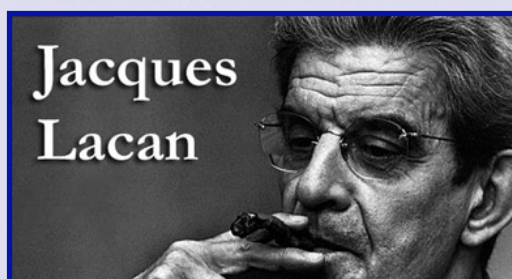
School comprises 5 modules lasting totally four months. The courses will be held once or twice a week for 2 hours. All expenses are covered by the foundation Friedrich Ebert and Centre for Civic Education, with obligation of the participants to attend not less than 80% of the programme. Upon finishing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

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

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

All interested candidates may submit their application with short biography not later than **15 February 2010**, on the address:

Centre for Civic Education
(for "Škola demokratije")
Njegoševa 36, I sprat, 81 000 Podgorica
Tel/Fax: 020 / 665 327
E-mail: info@cgo-cce.org
www.cgo-cce.org



In the framework of the new educational programme
"Contemporary tendencies of critical thought"
Centre for Civic Education organises a cycle of

Lectures on Jacques Lacan

one of intellectual icons of the 20th century, psychoanalyst, psychiatrist and philosopher.

The author and moderator of the seminars will be Dr **Filip Kovačević**.

Lectures and discussions will take place on CCE's premises, every Thursday from 7 p.m. Interested candidates should send a short CV to info@cgo-cce.org no later than **February 12, 2010 at 5 p.m.**

Due to the limited number of available places, please respect the application deadlines.

NEVLADINE ORGANIZACIJE U
EVROPSKOJ UNIJI



The International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN)

The International Planned Parenthood Federation is an European wide network working on issues of planned parenthood, reproductive and sexual health. It was founded in 1952. Today it is recognized across whole world.

Mission of the organisation is to improve sexual and reproductive health and the right to plan the parenthod such is right to abortion in certain situation.

Network includes 41 member NGOs, mostly from Europe and central Asia. Region office is based in Brussels.

Organisation has a consultative status within Council of Europe and special status within UN economic and social council. IPPFEN cooperates with European institutions, UN agencies, UNICEF, OECD, and many other international institutions.

NGO is a member of civil sector networks such European alliences for public health, European platform of social NGOs, Concord etc.

Organisation strongly believes that sexual and reproductive health is key factor for psychological and social well-being of people. Planning parenthood is right of every individual and mission of the NGO is promotion of the right.

Through its work organisation strives to enable to individuals the right to dignity, sexual autonomy and body integrity and also the accession to the most quality sexual health services.

Special focus of the IPPFEN work are socially excluded groups especially sexual minorities.

Detailed information on IPPFEN are available at the site: www.ippfen.org

Prepared by: **Petar ĐUKANOVIĆ**

Strengthening capacities of NGOs

From 36 to 28 January 2010 Centre for Monitoring (CEMI) organised a training seminar "Writing EU Projects" in the framework of its project "Strengthening administrative capacities in drafting and advocating public policies of the coalitions of non-governmental organisations targeting poverty and social exclusion", financed by EU through EU Delegation in Montenegro.

The training is one of the four planned activities of this kind to be organised in the upcoming months in order to train representatives of a coalition of non-governmental organisation in the ways of approaching poverty and social exclusion.

The Coalition is open to all interested participants who are working, in different ways, on the issues of social exclusion and whose activities may contribute to poverty reduction in Montenegro. The organisations which signed the Memorandum on Cooperation to date are: Centre for Civic Education (CCE), Montenegrin Society for Fighting Cancer, Educational Centre, AD Ekvista, Roma Scholarship Foundation, Association of Parents of Children with Special Needs, CAZAS, JUVENTAS and CEMI.

Ana Vujošević and **Mirela Rebronja** participated in the training on behalf of Centre for Civic Education.

Parliament's control functions under scrutiny

On 27.01.2010 Institute Alternative (IA) organised a round table where the MPs of the Parliament of Montenegro, employees of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and Public Administration and Agency for National Security, as well as representatives of non-governmental organisation and the media discussed the draft of "Analysis of the Legal Framework and Implementation of some Control Functions of the Parliament (control hearings, consultative hearings, parliamentary investigation)".

The meeting was opened by **Stevó Muk**, president of the board of direc-

tors of Institute Alternative, who presented the main findings and recommendations of the preliminary version of the study, and called on the participants to contribute their comments and suggestions for the final version of the analysis.

The project is supported by the Commission for distribution of funding to NGOs of the Parliament of Montenegro and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Daliborka Uljarević, executive director of Centre for Civic Education and **Miloš Vukanović**, programme

Planning for success

Strategic planning of the Coalition for RECOM took place in Belgrade from 3 to 5 January 2010, bringing together members of the Coordination Council, Secretariat, but also some of the most active representatives of the Coalition. Intensive three-day work resulted in an operative plan of local and regional consultations for 2010, and a separate session was dedicated to the planning of a media campaign to collect 1 000 000 signatures of support for the establishment of the Regional commission for truth seeking and truth telling about war crimes and other human rights violations on the territory of former SFRY (RECOM).

Participants from Montenegro at the strategic planning meeting were **Daliborka Uljarević**, executive director of CCE and member of the Coordination Council of CORECOM, **Sonja Radošević**, a free lance journalist and member of the Coordination Council of CORECOM and **Dragoljub Duško Vuković**, member of the Coalition and editor of news portal PCNEN.

associate, represented CCE at the meeting.

Fighting corruption on the local level

On 28.01.2010, with support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CDNGO) organised a working meeting on the "Action plan for fight against corruption".

The meeting is part of the larger project "NGOs and citizens against corruption", which is based on the model of the Programme and Action Plan for the Fight against Corruption in the Capital City of Podgorica. The aim of the meeting, and of the project

more generally, was to raise awareness among the citizens, NGOs and members of the city council about the need to enhance communication and cooperation among them in order to improve the situation within the local community, especially with regard to corruption.

The meeting was opened by the executive director of CDNGO **Ana Novaković**, followed by a presentation by the coordinator of the Working Group in charge of drafting the Action Plan and Programme for Fighting

Corruption in the Capital City **Mirjana Barović**, who recounted the experiences of Podgorica in drafting, adopting and implementing this strategic document and **Marina Vuković** from CDNGO, also a member of the working group. Other presenters at the meeting were **Jovanka Laličić**, advisor to the mayor of Tivat, who shared Tivat's experiences in this field. **Snežana Kaluđerović**, legal advisor in the Centre for Civic Education participated in the meeting on behalf of CCE.

FOR THIS ISSUE WE RECOMMEND:

12TH ANNUAL MEDIA POLICY SUMMER SCHOOL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

The Center for Global Communication Studies at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania and the Programme of Communication Law and Policy at the University of Oxford (PCMLP) are pleased to announce acceptance of applications for the 12th annual Media Policy Summer School, to be held from July 5 – 16, 2010 at the University of Oxford.

The annual Institute brings together young scholars and regulators from around the world to discuss important recent trends in technology, international politics and development and its influence on media policy.

The seminar brings a wide range of participants from around the globe together and provides them with an environment in which significant policy issues are seriously discussed. The richness of the experience comes from exposure to a variety of speakers and from the discussions among participants themselves.

Applications for the 2010 program will be accepted on a rolling basis and must be received via email (to cgcs@asc.upenn.edu) by March 31, 2010.

You can find our website, including the application form, at <http://global.asc.upenn.edu/cgi-bin/projects.cgi?id=44>.

If you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact cgcs@asc.upenn.edu.

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS AT LSE

2 million GBP is available annually for taught master's students from the Graduate Support Scheme (GSS). This scheme is designed to help students who do not have the necessary funds to meet



all their costs of study and awards range from 3,000 to 10,000 GBP.

One Francesca Swirski scholarship is available worth 10,000 GBP. Applications must be received at the School by the end of April 2010.

Two Central European MSc scholarships of 12,500 GBP are available to students on one year taught master's courses in any subject. Applications must be received at the School by the end of April 2010.

All MRes/MPhil/PhD students are eligible to apply for the LSE Research Studentship Scheme. The level of assistance given is determined by each academic department and is most usually a contribution towards fees. Applications must be received at the School by 11 June 2010. The School also offers a wide range of Programme Related and LSE Named Awards for taught master's and research students. Award values vary.

For details of all the latest scholarships and information on how to apply see <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/studentServicesCentre/financialSupportOffice/>

Applicants are encouraged to apply online as early as possible for all LSE funding.

BALKAN FELLOWSHIP FOR JOURNALISTIC EXCELLENCE

The Robert Bosch Stiftung and ERSTE Foundation, in cooperation with the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, BIRN, announce the launch of the fourth year of their prestigious fellowship programme for journalists in the Balkans.

Journalists from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania or Serbia, are encouraged to submit research proposals on 2010's theme – TABOO.

Each year ten journalists are chosen, through an open competition, to receive funding and professional support to research and report on a topic of regional and European importance.

Participating fellows will receive:

- o A bursary of €2,000, a travel allowance of up to €2,000 and a chance to participate in a seven-month programme of professional development.

- o The opportunity to travel across the region to produce an in depth report with a regional and European dimension.
- o Training from internationally recognised journalists and experts.

- o The opportunity to have their work published Europe-wide and to become a member of a growing network for journalistic excellence in the Balkans.

In addition, the independent Selection Committee will award bursaries of €4,000, €3,000 and €1,000 for further professional development to the authors of the three winning articles.

For detailed information on eligibility for the fellowship programme, application and the selection procedure, please visit <http://fellowship.birn.eu.com/en/main/programme2010/>

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EIC Bulletin – European pulse can be downloaded at the www.cgo-cce.org