

# European pulse

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European Parliament member,  
Ulrike Lunacek

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Foreword:

## Support



Vladan Žugić

Even before the official results were announced, representatives of some EU member states, as well as European Parliament Members, had offered open or indirect support to the Democratic Party of Socialists and its presidential candidate **Filip Vujanović**. The official institutions are already weak and subject to political influence, and this enthusiasm for the DPS candidate could for the first time lead to a serious drop in the public support for Montenegro's membership of EU. The civil sector and the analysts believe such a drop would be a temporary blip that could not go below 50%, which is how many people support the parties currently in power. Still, it is a fact is that NATO membership has enjoyed low support over many years – 30-35% - much less than the ruling coalition which is its greatest advocate. It is also a fact that in mid-2012 the support for Montenegro's membership of EU declined by a few percentage points, although it remains high at 61%. The reason was the political and economic crisis in EU which is also reflected in Montenegro. Another fact is that the EU had long sown confusion in the ranks of the pro-European public in Montenegro by lavishing undeserved praise on the Government. If the citizens of Montenegro are less and less sure that EU is the promised land of economic prosperity, if they are less convinced that under its influence Montenegro will become a state governed by law, if the citizens have ceased to believe in DPS' assurances that organisations and institutions of the state can be trusted, as they seem to have done at the ballots, than the EU and its enlargement policy in Montenegro will be compromised. Regardless of the fact that the disillusioned MPs of the Democratic Front will eventually "make up" with EU and embrace integrations again. Only by exerting a clear pressure on Montenegrin authorities can the EU keep its credibility in the eyes of citizens.

## Calendar

- 04 April **Opposition with Drobnić on Recordings** / Officials of the Democratic Front (DF) **Nebojša Medojević** and **Andrija Mandić** and the leader of Positive Montenegro **Darko Pajović** met separately with the head of EU Delegation to Montenegro in Podgorica **Mitja Drobnić** about the "Recordings" affair. The meetings were arranged on the initiative of EU Delegation, in order to discuss the reasons for opposition's refusal to participate in the parliamentary hearing on the use of public resources for electoral purposes. The opposition insists on parliamentary investigation and establishment of an Investigative Committee.
- 15 April **Chapter 26 closed temporarily** / Montenegro and EU opened and temporarily closed Chapter 26 – Education and Culture. The specific benefit of closing this chapter will be to allow Montenegrin students to study at universities in EU.
- 16 April **Ashton in Podgorica** / EU High Representative **Catherine Ashton** started her visit to the region in Podgorica, and said Montenegro was an example to the neighbouring countries. However, she also added that a number of shortcomings remain which will require more effort in the future: "I am hoping to see stable progress. Fight against corruption and organised crime is a priority, and I know you are working on the constitutional reforms to ensure your judiciary is completely independent".
- 18 April **EP adopts a resolution on Montenegro** / European Parliament adopted a Resolution on the 2012 Progress Report on Montenegro, in which it notes that Montenegro made "significant" progress, but that certain problems remain, especially with regard to organised crime and high level corruption.
- 22 April **1300 people in the negotiating structure** / Montenegro's Board for EU negotiations stressed that the adoption of constitutional amendments by the Parliament constitutes top priority for further progress towards EU. At meeting chaired by the Prime Minister **Milo Đukanović**, members of the Board summed up the results so far, focusing on the development of Action Plans for chapters 23 and 24. Communication from the meeting noted that the negotiating structure for 33 chapters is now finalized, and includes nearly 1 300 people.
- 29/30 April **Kacin: Serbia could overtake you** / European MP **Jelko Kacin** told Montenegrin authorities that they shouldn't be surprised if Serbia gets ahead of Montenegro in the negotiations on chapters 23 and 24. "Serbia has achieved definite progress, public support for anti-corruption is growing. They boosted their credibility so much with it that they could later afford to sign the agreement with Priština", said Kacin at the meeting of the Parliamentary Committee for Stabilisation and Association in Podgorica. The MEPs also called on the Montenegrin authorities to increase confidence in the electoral process.

## Belgrade–Prishtina agreement a step forward for the whole region



Stefan Lehne

The author is a former director general for political affairs at the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs. Prior to that position, he served in the Council of the European Union as director for the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia

The agreement reached between Serb Prime Minister **Ivica Dačić** and Kosovar Prime Minister **Hashim Thaci** on April 19, is certainly a big deal. It represents an important step toward more normal relations between Serbia and Kosovo and should help to defuse one of the remaining hot spots in the Western Balkans. It also demonstrates that clever diplomacy combined with the power of the prospect of EU enlargement can still deliver significant results. Resolving the region's remaining political and security problems and supporting the Western Balkan countries on their way to the EU are mutually reinforcing processes. The EU must pursue them together. If the people of the region are confident that they will eventually join the European mainstream, they have a good chance of settling their differences. If they lose faith in a better future in the EU, they are likely to preserve their grudges and divisions. As the EU faces enlargement fatigue and prospective members tire of endless reform processes, the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue offers important lessons. What finally brought the prime ministers to Brussels for ten rounds of talks was their strong interest in making progress toward the EU. Belgrade had its sights on the bigger prize: the green light for EU accession negotiations. Kosovo too expected that cooperation in the dialogue would be rewarded by progress toward a Stabilization and Association Agreement and on visa liberalization with the EU. One particular problem is that for most governments, the objective of accession is very far away. Enlargement is getting more difficult all the time. The EU legislation that must be adopted by a new member state has increased to 140,000 pages. Much more emphasis is placed on implementation, and negotiation chapters are only closed if the EU is satisfied that the candidate country is actually capable of implementing the relevant EU legislation correctly. That is part of the reason why Croatia's accession process took ten years. And it is clear now that after Croatia (and potentially Iceland), there will be no further enlargement before 2020. For governments that naturally think in terms of electoral mandates, such a distant objective has limited pull. The crisis has also undermined the attractiveness of the EU's offer in the region itself. The current deep problems of Greece, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Romania shed an entirely new light on the potential consequences of membership. The traditional narrative that equated EU accession with



prosperity and stability has lost its credibility. That the process has not come to a complete halt is partly due to inertia. The EU does not change direction easily, and the European Commission has kept up the momentum as well. The body has the leading role on enlargement and continues to implement its mandate irrespective of the prevailing political climate. However, the member states remain the main decision makers on enlargement, and they are increasingly reluctant to follow the Commission. Yet, in spite of this difficult situation and the overall accession malaise, the fact remains that for the Western Balkan states, there is no plausible alternative strategy to pursuing EU membership. These countries are already very economically close to the EU and surrounded on all sides by member states. Meanwhile, the EU is so heavily invested in the region and so exposed to risks and problems arising from it that there is simply no exit strategy available. Therefore, the real danger is not primarily that the process will stop altogether. Rather, it is that enlargement fatigue in the EU could spill over into reform fatigue in the region. The process could then degenerate into a kind of double bluff in which the EU just pretends to remain open to further accession and the Western Balkan states pretend to reform. This is why the success in negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo should spur the EU to reenergize its engagement in the Western Balkans and adjust its policies to changing regional circumstances. The best way to achieve this would be to initiate accession negotiations with all the remaining countries as soon as possible, ideally within the next two to three years.

*Source: excerpts from the article in Carnegie Europe*

Politicisation and lack of efficiency in some institutions and public administration might slow down European integration of Montenegro

## Subversive passengers on the train to EU



Damir Nikočević

How can we trust the institutions to solve our problems when even the European Commission (EC), in its reports on the progress of Montenegro, keeps repeating that they're too politicised and inefficient? This is a question which no European official has had a chance to answer, when they urged the opposition to rely on the institutions of the system to investigate the "Recordings" affair, evidence of the abuse of public resources for the benefit of the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), and allegations of electoral irregularities. The decision of the Court of Appeals to partly or entirely overthrow the rulings of Higher Courts in "Šarić" and "Zavala" cases; the decision of the Administrative Court, later confirmed by the Higher court to condone political games which effectively reversed the will of the people at the elections in Andrijevica; the "agreement" between the police and prosecutors in Herzeg Novi to withdraw the arrest warrant issued after **Milivoje Krgović**, accused of "buying" ID cards in the local elections in 2010, allowing him to return to the city and appeal against the verdict issued in his absence... To top it all off, there is the fact that businessman **Aco Đukanović**, Prime Minister **Milo Đukanović**'s brother, is about to get some nine million euro in compensation because his brother's Government, or rather one of its police divisions, had failed to vacate the lot it sold to him five years ago; or that the Directorate for the Prevention of Money Laundering did not manage to submit a single complaint last year, but did manage to go after two unnamed NGOs – which is no exception because the financial police, tax administration, labour and other inspectorates seem to have taken a special liking to the critics of the government, while everybody knows which big shots are evading taxes. Finally, the cherry on the cake came with a series of absurd moves by the Prosecution in response to allegations of political corruption, such as investigations of the bank accounts of local MP from Nišić **Drago Đurović** who is

„If we only look at the number of employees and the fact that there is no trace of employment rationalization, and we know that excess employment comes exclusively from the need to provide for party minions, it is hard to believe that we will soon have a functional and fully professional public administration.“  
(Daliborka Uljarević, Center for Civic Education)

suspected of having defected from Pozitivna to DPS as a result of bribe... Taking into account just these few recent events, it is only fair to ask whether a public administration which, according to EC, is highly politicised, cumbersome and has limited administrative capacities, is likely to become an obstacle to country's European integration. Recently the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on Montenegro which *"calls for further measures to create a professional, effective, merit-based and impartial public administration which, in practice, should represent a service for citizens; stresses that this should be done in a financially sustainable manner and with adequate verification mechanisms; welcomes the comprehensive reform of the public sector aimed at rationalisation and modernisation, and calls for its implementation"*. **Daliborka Uljarević**, executive director of Centre for Civic Education (CCE) told *European Pulse*: *"Public administration reform in Montenegro proceeds very slowly, and the main culprit is the high level of politicisation of public bodies. It seems to me that already for the third time Montenegrin authorities are trying to initiate genuine reform through adoption of strategic document, but nothing budges. If we only look at the number of employees and the fact that there is no trace of employment rationalization, and we know that excess employment comes exclusively from the need to provide for party minions, it is hard to believe that we will soon have a functional and fully professional public administration."*

Uljarević adds that in order to fully implement public administration reform, it is necessary to meet two conditions: rationalize the number of employees entirely on the basis of expertise, and centralize all public registers, making them easily available to public institutions and citizens. The latter would radically decrease the duration and costs of official procedures, and at the same time prevent abuse of public registers “by removing the possibility of illegitimate influence and exclusive access.” Montenegro is not the first country to struggle with de-politicisation of institution. All transitional, post-communist societies spent a long time fighting the relics of socialist bureaucracy, and Montenegro is no exception, as evidenced by the recent “Recordings” affair. To protect the interest of their party, employees and their bosses who were themselves appointed along the party lines are ready to sacrifice the interest of the citizens whom they should be serving. **Senada Šelo-Šabić** from the Croatian Institute for Development and International Relations told *European Pulse* that Croatia struggled with the same problems as Montenegro: “*The process of public administration reform in Croatia wasn't always smooth and irreversible, nor is it yet complete. On the one hand the bureaucratic apparatus appears enormous, uncoordinated, inefficient and still highly politicised. On the other hand, there is a lack of adequate staff who could competently deal with the tasks and activities ensuing from the membership of EU.*” According to Šelo-Šabić, the EU does not have a single model of public administration, which also means that it cannot ask the candidate states to adopt any particular model: “*Public administration reform was never a requirement for membership, but on the other hand the EU does demand that some elements of public administration must be functional, and is trying to set some common standards.*” Asked whether European integrations have made the Croatian institutions more independent, Šelo-Šabić insists: “*The answer is yes. Definitely. The whole process aims to strengthen the institutions to act according to the law, stick by the rules and eliminate as much as possible the space for discretion and arbitrary, obscure decisions. However, this process is neither smooth nor is it yet over. In fact, in a democratic society which keeps on changing,*

*and exists in an ever-changing environment, this task is never over.*” According to CCE’s executive director, one crucial step towards the reform of public administration will be to ensure the Supreme State Prosecutor is appointed by a 2/3 majority in the Parliament. This, according to her, would be “*the right introduction to genuine constitutional changes.*” “*If the authorities really want to move faster with the European agenda, they must also be ready to appoint the director of Police in an open dialogue with opposition and the civil sector. This would enable these bodies to become truly independent and begin producing tangible results, bringing back the trust into public authorities.*” In July 2012 Montenegro’s public administration consisted of altogether 51 bodies, including those of the ministries, and according to a report by Institute Alternative a total of 10.511 employees and public servants. This is a huge burden on the public budget, in spite of reforms and attempts to rationalise expenditure, especially since the start of the economic crisis in 2008. The situation is similar in the local governments and their bodies. At the same time, European Commission’s Progress Report on Montenegro for 2012 concludes that Montenegro continued modernisation of its public administration under the leadership of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and Ministry of Finance, but warns that “*The legislative framework and the implementation of the recent legislation need to be improved, in a financially sustainable manner and with adequate verification mechanisms.*” In April 2012 Institute Alternative also conducted a public opinion poll which asked 840 respondents about their opinion on the work of public administration. The citizens rated the quality of public services on the scale from 1 to 10 (10 being the highest mark) and gave an average rating of 4.5. This is lower than the results of the previous polls, suggesting a drop in confidence in public institutions. According to the same study almost 2/3 of the citizens of Montenegro (65%) believe that public institutions are politically influenced, and more than a half think that they are managed in accordance with specific, rather than general interest (56%). Moreover, the lack of financial resources (40%), corruption (38%) and lack of proper organisation (37%) are identified as the key

**Table 1: Number of public administration bodies since the Regulation on the organisation and functioning of public administration of 1993 and 2012**

BODIES	1992	1993	2004	2009	2011	2012 (without ministerial bodies)	2012 (with ministerial bodies)
Ministries	14	17	17	17	16	16	16
Directorates	-	2	16	17	18	5	19
Secretariats	3	3	1	1	1	2	2
Bureaus	6	6	10	10	11	6	6
Departments	2	4	6	6	6	1	5
Agencies	-	2	1	2	2	1	2
Total:	25	34	51	53	54	30	49

factors obstructing the work and performance of public administration. According to Uljarević, such results are only to be expected. *“This is no surprise – the development of expert and democratic capacities of our institution has not kept up with the accession process, and if this continues to be the case, the whole process is likely to stall”*, she said, adding that the citizens are increasingly familiar with the contents of European standards, which sharpens their perception of the performance of public administration. Šelo-Šabić agrees that falling confidence in public institutions is partly a

result of learning: *“When you ‘discover’ your rights as a citizen, when you realise that slow and inefficient bureaucracy need not be the permanent condition of the county, that corruption takes many forms – some of which appeared to be perfectly acceptable until very recently – your assessment of public administration necessarily drops, until its performance raises to the new standards.”* Uljarević pointed out that the recent affairs and scandals negatively affected the citizens’ trust in public institutions: *“Confidence in impartiality and professionalism of the judiciary has always been low, but after the latest verdicts the citizens have the impression that either the decisions were being made elsewhere, suggesting corruption on the highest level, or these bodies suffer from a shocking lack of coordination and competence”*. She adds that nobody can know at present whether the 2/3 majority requirement will indeed increase the level of independence, professionalism and transparency in the judiciary but that *“there is reason to believe that a different approach to top-level appointments would lead to more independence from political interests among the decision-makers in judiciary”*.

### Public administration must be able to attract qualified workforce

Minister of Interior Affairs and Public Administration **Raško Konjević** says the Government is planning some concrete steps to erect independent and efficient institutions. Among them are the plans to establish individual responsibility for underperformance and, on the other hand, plans to strengthen capacities and resources of the institutions which are expected to contribute the most to the negotiation process. *“We are about to complete the plan for reorganisation of the public sector whose action plan will lay out the next moves for 2013 and 2014. It is clear that we ought to strengthen capacities in some sectors. It is essential to make public administration attractive for highly qualified people to increase the overall competence”*, Konjević told *European Pulse*. Asked how much progress has been achieved in public administration reform, Konjević said it is a long-term process which will continue for the years to come, throughout the process of membership negotiations. *“De-politicised and professional public administration is the final goal, but we can only get there gradually, by continuing to implement reforms and already adopted laws. The experience of countries which underwent this process before us indicates that this will be one of the key demands of our European partners”*, Konjević said. He did not want to comment on the verdicts on “Šarić” and “Zavala”, or the prosecution’s approach to the “Recordings”, saying these were very specific cases which are still being dealt with by the relevant institutions. *“It is important that all decisions should be in accordance with the law, but also that they should be just and increase public confidence. If the institutions are unable to win the trust of the citizens, those in charge of them must be held responsible. One cannot indefinitely pander to the wishes of the public, but its opinions must be taken into account, because the decisions we make we make in the name of the citizens, and they ought to ensure the rule of law as the basic precondition for further progress on integration”*, Konjević said.



### On trial for renewable energy

The European Commission referred Poland and Cyprus to the Court of Justice for failing to transpose the Renewable Energy Directive. The Directive aims at ensuring a 20% share of renewable energy in the EU by 2020. The Directive had to be transposed by the Member States by 5 December 2010. All countries which failed to do so face fines. For Poland, the Commission proposes a daily penalty of €133 228,80, and for Cyprus €11 404,80. Commission's proposals take into account the duration and the gravity of the infringement, and an "n" factor which varies from one member to another based on the size of their GDP.



### 40% of children born out of wedlock

In the European Union there are ever fewer marriages, more divorces and an increasing share of children born outside marriage. According to Eurostat, the marriage rate in the EU has decreased continuously over the last two decades, and the trend is visible in most member states. In 2011, the highest marriage rates were recorded in Cyprus (7.3 marriages per 1000 persons), Lithuania (6.3) and Malta (6.1), and the lowest in Bulgaria (2.9), Slovenia (3.2), Luxembourg (3.3), Spain, Italy and Portugal (all 3.4 marriages per 1000 persons). The decreasing trend in the number of marriages is also reflected in an increase of children born outside marriage. In 1990, 17% of all live births in the EU were outside marriage, compared with 27% in 2000 and 40% in 2011. The share has grown in all member states, but there are still considerable differences between countries. In 1990, almost half of live births were outside marriage in Sweden and Denmark. In 2011, the highest shares were registered in Estonia (60%) and Slovenia (57%).

### NGOs can influence decision-making

More than seven in ten Europeans believe that NGOs can influence political decisions both on the local and national level, while around half thinks they can also impact EU-level decisions, shows a recent Flash Eurobarometer. Roughly 70% of respondents think that voting in local/regional or national elections is an effective way to influence political decision-making, while around a half think they can do so by joining an NGO. Petitions are the main channels through which the EU citizens try to influence decision making. The share of those who believe NGOs to have the power to influence local decision making is the highest in Sweden (88%) and Finland (87%), and the lowest in Spain (65%). For the national level decision making, Danes are most confident in the ability of NGOs to exercise influence (83%), followed by Swedes (82%), Finns (82%) and Luxembourgers (80%), while the least convinced are the Czechs (55%), Greeks (56%), Hungarians (57%) and Slovenes (58%).



### EU justice scoreboard for economic growth

The European Commission unveiled a new comparative tool to improve justice systems in the European Union – European Justice Scoreboard. The Scoreboard will provide information on the length of trials, rate of solved and unsolved cases, recourse to alternative means of conflict resolution etc. The data on the functioning of the justice systems in the EU's 27 Member States are objective, reliable and comparable and, according to the Commission, will promote effective justice systems in the European Union and thereby reinforce economic growth. According to EC, reliable rule of law also boosts the investors' confidence in economy's prospects.



MEP Ulrike Lunacek thinks there's a good chance that Montenegro will open chapters 23 and 24 this autumn

## This judiciary has to change



MEP Ulrike Lunacek thinks there's a "good chance" that Montenegro will open chapters 23 and 24 this autumn, in spite of the series of controversial decisions of judicial and prosecutorial authorities in Montenegro, recent verdicts of the Court of Appeal on Zavala and Saric cases, the silence of the Supreme State Prosecutor's about "Recording" affair, as well as the failures to investigate and process many of the alleged cases of political corruption. "I think that there is good chance that these chapters can be opened in the fall. It really depends on the preparatory phase – there must be an action plan, and it should be formulated in advance. But I do see good chances that they will be opened in the fall, the latest by the end of this year. Things like the lack of judiciary independence, or at least the widespread view that there is lack of independence of the judiciary – that is something a candidate country has to change.

**» How do you explain the fact that allegations of irregularities in the recent presidential elections caused so little attention in the European Parliament during the discussion on the resolution on Montenegro?**

I think there were two reasons. One is we already had the debate, and had to submit the amendments on the Resolution on Monday after the presidential elections in Montenegro. I tabled a detailed amendment with a lot of criticism, referring to the raised allegations, and requesting that they be clarified. At the debate on Wednesday there was also some criticism by members from other political groups. Unfortunately, during the vote on Thursday, my amendment was not carried out, and it also did not get the support of the rapporteur. The second reason is that OSCE had given a generally positive assessment, although – if you read the intermediary OSCE report you will find quite some problems in there. If our debate had taken place a week later, I think there would have been more criticism. In general, I would say we are all glad that Montenegro is the next

With so many negative emotions towards the enlargement in our countries, we all thought we should give Montenegro a little push forward.

country to negotiate accession with the EU. We will open chapters 23 and 24 and there will be full scrutiny. With so many negative emotions towards the enlargement in our countries, we all thought we should give Montenegro a little push forward. Talking of which, I find the decision of one party – DF – to boycott parliamentary sessions, including the April meeting with MEPs as part of the Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee, completely unacceptable. And I don't say this just as a member of the European Parliament, I say it as the national parliamentarian of an opposition party who has sat in the opposition benches for ten years.

**» Could such restraint on the part of European Union, and even direct support to the DPS and Vujanović by your fellow MEPs, Charles Tannock in the case of irregularities in the presidential elections in Montenegro, diminish support for Montenegro's membership in the Union?**

No, for sure not. Everyone – whether supportive of the government or the opposition or somewhere in between, is supporting Montenegro on its way ahead with the accession negotiations... also because, in comparison with other Western Balkan countries Montenegro is already closer to the EU. However, I do think it is necessary to install a well functioning Investigative committee in the Parliament, with minority rights such as having the president of the committee from the opposition, or the right of the minority to invite and hear witnesses of their choice, in order to fully investigate the "Recording" case.

**» How do you see that there has not been any progress in order to shed light on the "Recording" affair in Montenegro? Did you have**

***a chance to learn more about this affair, and what is your opinion on the matter?***

I know about it, and I regretted to hear that the prosecutor had been so quick to dismiss the case, saying that there is nothing left to investigate there. But I heard in the debate during our SAPC meeting in the Parliament that there is also support from the Government side to have a committee inside the Parliament that will have to look into the affair. I hope this will be successful because this issue definitely has to be thoroughly investigated.

***» What is your assessment of the state of affairs in Montenegro when it comes to the protection of the environment? How many challenges must Montenegro tackle in order to meet European standards in that respect?***

There is still lot to be done, unfortunately so, because Montenegro in its constitution refers to itself as an ecological country. Coming from a green party, I definitely like that. But when I look at your beautiful country I also see that a lot of things still have to be done, for example, on the coast. In the EP's report on Montenegro we mention issues like spatial planning to see who is allowed to build what and where. If just anybody can build anywhere, there is a danger of really destroying the beautiful landscape and also the biodiversity in the country. If you do not plan well which hotel

and where to build you will have problems with water management, sewage, waste management... Also, if you want to develop tourism further in your country, you must bear in mind that tourists want a clean environment. They do not want to have problems with pollution or have sewage in the sea where they want to swim. And also in the mountains, in your 'black mountains', there are good chances to really develop good concepts for sustainable tourism projects. A positive step in my eyes has been the stopping of the huge hydro-electric power plant on the Morača river. I think Montenegro can and should look much more into energy efficiency, really cutting down the need for all buildings for heating and air conditioning. This can be done by ecological measures and incentives for builders. It will also take more investments into training and the transfer of know-how, for example in solar energy. You have so much sun here, and it could also help families and households to save money. All this will take investment. The Government as well as the municipalities have to take more care and responsibility for the matters concerning the environment, such as public transport, e.g. building railroads, not just in Montenegro, but throughout the Balkans. This is the kind of infrastructure that will promote ecological development.

## Public figures to support LGBT

***» What will be the biggest challenge for Montenegro when it comes to the position of LGBT population?***

I really find it a positive surprise, the way the Government has been dealing with LGBT issues recently. I think that is very good progress, exemplary for an accession country in the Balkans, as no other country has done that before. So I am very glad that the LGBT strategy has been developed and adopted, and in a very participative manner. The question is, of course, how much it will be implemented. Progress cannot only be measured by the level of implementing laws or implementing strategies. The main problem that LGBT persons face in Montenegro, as in many other countries of the region, is the fear to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. That can be changed by public personalities speaking openly about it, as well as heterosexual people supporting the issue. Gays and lesbians are afraid to be out to their families, at school, on the job, exists because they could be - and they are - ousted from their families, their schools, their jobs when somebody finds out. Of course, there are things that help a lot, such as good films about lesbians and gays. "Parada", for instance, which I really liked, and I think it should be shown everywhere in the Balkans, because it attacks all the prejudices people have against gays and lesbians, as well as those about different ethnic groups that fought wars against each other in this region. So films and stories like that, and public LGBT figures from the worlds of arts, business, politics etc. really help to open minds and hearts!

Every year EU loses more money to tax evasion than has been spent on the bailouts of Greece, Ireland, Cyprus, Spain and Portugal together

## Tax havens and competition



Vera Šćepanović

According to the European Commission, every year the EU governments lose around one trillion euro to tax evasion. One trillion is exactly the amount the EU needs to cover the costs of its entire administration and all of its programmes, including regional development, agriculture and student exchanges, for the next seven years. It is also more than all of the bailout packages put together that have so far been pledged to support Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Cyprus from collapsing under the weight of the debt crises. But while the budget and the bailouts are a matter of fierce disputes on the European level, taxes and the related headaches have so far been left to the member states. Now this is about to change. Tax evasion is almost by definition a transnational problem, and was only made more prominent by tighter integration of the European markets. Liberalization of capital flows allows both companies and individuals to develop strategies to “optimize” taxation, organising their international activities in ways that minimize the tax burden. Some of it is downright illegal, like stashing away funds in secret foreign bank accounts to avoid income taxes. Some strategies, however, are perfectly acceptable, at least under the current regulations in EU. Companies can, for instance, register headquarters in another country which has lower corporate income taxes – Sweden’s legendary furniture maker, IKEA, is officially headquartered in the Netherlands. Alternatively, under the directive guaranteeing free provision of services, Polish truck drivers can be contracted by a Dutch firm through a payroll company registered in Portugal, where social contributions are the lowest. Such practices have often caused a lot of friction among individual member states, drawing accusations of tax dumping and unfair competition. But as the taxes remains in the exclusive jurisdiction of the member states, the EU has so far failed to push through an agenda that would harmonize or at least coordinate taxation policies. Since the onset of the crisis, however, the EU has shown increasing propensity to “meddle” with the tax policies of the countries in trouble. In the

Under the directive guaranteeing free provision of services, Polish truck drivers can be contracted by a Dutch firm through a payroll company registered in Portugal, where social contributions are the lowest.



negotiations for the Irish bailout, Troika asked the country to change its corporate income tax from the current 10% - the lowest in EU – to bolster government revenues. Afraid that higher taxes might undermine its attractiveness for foreign investors, Ireland just barely managed to defend its tax, pledging in turn severe cuts in public spending and wages. Cyprus was similarly badgered for its low taxes, and coaxed into imposing a tax on bank deposits to raise revenues for the bailout. In Greece, government’s inability to collect taxes has long been seen as the key to the poor state of public finances. In order to help the authorities clamp down on rampant tax evasion, in 2010 the Director of the International Monetary Fund **Christine Lagarde** even gave the then Minister of Finance **Papaconstantinou** a CD containing a list of 2000 Greek citizens with bank accounts in the Swiss HSBC bank. But the Greek ministry “lost” the CD, and only found it again recently, after publication of the list by independent Greek media drew angry crowds to the streets of Athens and sparked a parliamentary investigation against the former minister. Among the names on the list are the wives of the former minister of finance **Yannos Papantoniou**, and the former Public

Order Minister **George Voulgarakis**. Similar unorthodox means of fighting tax evasion have become popular in Germany since 2007, when the German tax inspectors bought a CD containing a list of German customers from a former employee of a bank in Lichtenstein, and used it to track hidden income. Several such CDs have appeared since – the latest list, purchased by the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate in early April 2013 at the cost of four million euros promises to help the German authorities recover some half a billion euros in unpaid taxes. But the real breakthrough came early this month, when the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists leaked 2.5 million secret bank accounts of companies and nationals from 170 countries. But enlisting hackers to help the governments keep their finances in check is one thing, but devising a permanent system that would provide a long-term solution to tax evasion is yet another. The EU certainly seems eager to use the wave of public anger stoked by the stories of the rich refusing to pay their fair share to make some breakthroughs in the tax policy. European Commissioner for Taxation, **Algirdas Šemeta** recently urged the member states to raise a common front against tax evasion.

### Austria obstructs the common front

According to the proposal prepared by the European Commission, a common front against tax evasion should focus on two priority areas. The first demands a common definition and joint stance against tax havens, and the second stresses the urgency of identifying loopholes and dangerous tax practices among the member states themselves. None of them will be easy. A common definition of tax havens means singling out practices which should be deemed unacceptable by all European member states. But a number of the EU's own members make a lot of money by offering lighter financial regulations in their jurisdiction – Luxembourg, Cyprus, Malta, even the UK – so such definitions are likely to remain highly contested. The matter of “loopholes” and harmonisation of tax policies might be even more difficult. Although most European

member states understand that agreeing on a common minimum might prevent harmful competition and loss of revenues, individually all of them stand to gain from offering slightly lower taxes to investors than their neighbours. The result is a kind of competitive erosion of the tax base: as an example, the average corporate income tax rate in the 15 “old” EU member states dropped from 35% in 2000 to 25% in 2011. Nevertheless, the crisis sometimes turns the impossible into likely. Since the beginning of this year, a number of revolutionary steps towards cooperation and tax coordination in Europe have already been taken. The first move was the introduction of the common financial transaction tax in February this year, which was hailed by the European Commissioner for taxation as “a milestone in global tax history”. The tax hopes to reduce volatility of capital flows by introducing a small cost in all financial transactions – 0.1% of the value of transaction for shares and bonds and 0.01% for derivatives. The tax has been in the making for more than a year and was repeatedly blocked by various member states, including UK, Luxembourg, and the Czech Republic. Originally meant to cover the whole of EU, it was decided that it will only be applied to the Eurozone countries. In the end, only 11 Eurozone members decided to proceed with the tax. The second measure is the less formal, but more encompassing commitment of all member states to share information and counter tax invasion. The agreement was struck during the EU Finance Ministers meeting in Dublin this April, and will be put on the agenda of the European summit in May. The information-sharing agreement has an equally long history: three years ago, it was discussed at the G20 meeting of developed nations, where it was blocked by joint action of Switzerland, Luxembourg and Austria. In the meantime, Luxembourg has given in and Austria remains the only EU member which still refuses to share information on bank deposits. It still has a little time to change its mind until the summit on 22 May, where the EU cooperation on taxation issues is expected to feature prominently on the agenda.

Consequences of Croatia's accession for the neighbouring countries

## Unpreparedness in action



With Croatia's accession to European Union on 1 July, Europe will arrive to the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Serbia and Montenegro. Although this will still not be the "hard" Schengen border, there will be higher standards and new travel and transport regulations. The effects of the new map of Europe will be felt most strongly by food and agriculture producers from BiH and Serbia, but even more so in Croatia itself, as its accession to EU will mean an end to its preferential position within CEFTA markets. Croatia has asked the EU to allow BiH citizens to enter Croatia with only their ID cards even after 1 July, but this is not up to Zagreb to decide, said **Ivana Crnić** from the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia. "We are negotiating about a special regime for the citizens of BiH and other neighbouring countries, to allow them entry into Croatia with ID cards, i.e. to grant them the same regime that was granted to the Croatian citizens after the accession of Slovenia and Hungary, and before that of Italy, to the Schengen zone, Crnić explained. With Croatia's entry into the EU's customs zone all customs control of the goods trade between Croatia and other EU members will be abolished, but in turn Croatia will introduce European travel regulations for citizens of third countries. From now on, the value of goods they are allowed to carry across

From now on, the value of goods they are allowed to carry across the Croatian border without being subject to customs and VAT is fixed at 300 euro, 430 for air and sea travel.

the Croatian border without being subject to customs and VAT is fixed at 300 euro, 430 for air and sea travel. Journalist of the Business Daily, **Vladimir Nišević**, says that 1 July won't have a particularly dramatic effect on the citizens and travellers from neighbouring countries. "The control will be stricter for some things, such as cigarettes, because they will become more expensive here, but it won't be anything dramatic. All countries had their adjustment periods, and Croatia will have it too", Nišević said. Citizens living in the border area of Croatia and BiH will get special permits allowing them to cross the border – the depth of the border area should be around 30 km. All this will be regulated by a separate set of rules and an agreement to be signed by the end of June. Employment terms for workers from the neighbouring countries will also change, explains **Ivanka Zlatec** from the Croatian Employment Office. "The plan is to sign bilateral agreement with these countries regulating the access to the labour market", Zlatec said. However, the greatest impact will be felt by agriculture and food producers, confirmed **Zvezdana Blažić**, advisor to the Croatian Minister of Agriculture. "Given the structure of our trade and the strength of Croatian brands and products in the CEFTA markets, higher tariffs will certainly have a sizeable impact. I would say primarily on the Croatian producers, because their prices will be somewhat higher. They might have to forego substantial profits in order to remain competitive. The most affected products will

be cigarettes, as well as some dairy products.” Blažić said that Croatia is trying hard, through the, EC to limit the damage: “We are in the midst of negotiations with all CEFTA countries to extend the benefits Croatia enjoyed in the CEFTA markets to all EU member states. We believe that these negotiations will help the Croatian consumers to survive the first blow more easily.” However, according to some analysts, both Croatia and its neighbours are exaggerating the negative impact. Croatia’s largest companies, such as “Agrokor” already have plants in BiH and Serbia that help them to avoid tariffs within CEFTA. “Dukat”, “Gavrilović” and “Kraš” have also announced investments abroad, which will mean new jobs in the neighbouring countries, but also threatens some 4 500 workplaces in Croatia. BiH, which accounts for 1200 out of a total of 2000 km of Croatia’s non-EU borders, did little so far to prepare for Croatia’s accession to EU. In the last four months, however, some progress is evident. One of the moves was to complete the work on two border crossings, Bijača and Gradiška, which will serve as the main entry points for BiH’s exports. Croatia’s membership in EU is a real challenge for BiH, which will now have to satisfy rigorous EU standards for food products. Marina Kavaz Siručić, port-parole of the Directorate for European Integration in BiH warn that food exports from this country are likely to fall from July onwards, because the preparations started too late. BiH institutions are working hard to extend the list of export products. This week honey from BiH made it onto the list, having fulfilled all relevant standards. But meat, milk and eggs remain a problem. Farmers are complaining that too little has been done to support and protect domestic production, making BiH products uncompetitive on European markets. “The law on agriculture, organic production, cooperatives – we asked for all the possible laws and regulations to make sure we fulfil the requirements and can also enter the EU one day, to have a guarantee this can happen. BiH doesn’t have that. We keep warning them, but our authorities don’t

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do anything”, said **Avdo Muslimović**, president of the Farmers Association of FBiH. Until now, BiH exported on average around 600 million worth of goods to Croatia every year. It is now clear that at least in the first year, this amount will be much lower. In addition to administrative and economic issues which remain between Croatia and BiH, Croatia and Serbia also have a number of unresolved political problems. These are, above all, the question of borders and mutual charges against the International Court of Justice. Croatia’s withdrawal from CEFTA leaves Serbia the leadership role in the markets of the CEFTA member states: Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Moldova, Kosovo and BiH, and with it the highest benefits of the free trade in the Western Balkans. Also, Croatia’s membership in EU should create a better climate for Serbian investments in Croatia. However, given the track record of Croatian investors in Serbia, Professor **Predrag Bjelić** from Department of Economics of the University of Belgrade notes that the space for manoeuvre in Serbia is somewhat limited: “It all depends on the extent to which Croatia managed to transfer production to one of CEFTA members, for instance to BiH or Macedonia, from where it can continue to supply the market on the same terms”.

*Source: Radio Free Europe*

## Chapter 4: Free movement of capital



Nemanja Tepavčević

Once the negotiations on chapter are completed, Montenegrin citizens and entrepreneurs will get a chance to do business with the financial institutions from other EU member states without any limitations. They will also be able to open bank accounts abroad, take out non-residential loans, and take any amount of money in or out of the country. Financial institutions will be obliged to inform the citizens, transparently and free of charge, of all conditions of their services, payment deadlines, compensation, interest rates and other details. Montenegro's position in the EU with regard to the freedom of movement of capital will also depend on the ability of its negotiating team to get some temporary exceptions. Just like Croatia managed to secure a ban on the sale of agricultural land to the citizens of other EU members for a period of seven years from accession, Montenegro could also protect its natural resources in the same way, if it finds this to be in its best interest.

Chapter four plays a particularly important role in the European acquis, not only for economic reason, but also as in terms of protection of the principle of the rule of law. In order to ensure free movement of capital, this area of European legislation mandates elimination of all restrictions on capital flows, but also requires effective regulation of cross-border transactions: not only within the EU territory, but also between the member states and third

countries.

Nevertheless, given the potential risks from unsupervised capital flows, this chapter also requires member states to implement thorough identification of activities, with regular reporting on suspicious transactions. In other words, because free movement of capital can be abused to cover illegal transactions, such as narcotics trade or financing of other criminal activities, the relevant authorities must stay alert to all irregularities and take action to prevent such transactions.

This is why the full harmonization of Montenegrin legislative framework with the EU acquis in the area of free movement of capital is essential for the fight against financial crime, money laundering and the financing of terrorism. To ensure free flow of capital, and at the same time prevent the abuse of this principle for illegal ends, this chapter also requires strong administrative capacities and close cooperation between judiciary and law enforcement bodies. Chapter four is also related to a number of key priorities identified in the European Commission's 2010 Opinion on Montenegro: intensified efforts in the fight against corruption and organised crime, and the need to ensure independence of prosecution and judiciary.

Capital can move relatively freely in Montenegro, which had already liberalized its market to cross-border capital flows. However, in 2010 only half of direct foreign investments came from the EU, which is a significant drop from the average of 65% in the previous decade.

Some progress has been made since last year with the Central Bank implementing new measures to ensure secure transfer of money by collecting detailed information on financial transactions, in line with EU standards. With the adoption of the Strategy for counter-terrorism in 2012 Montenegro made the



One prejudice which often comes up when the talk turns to some large European company which is interested in the Montenegrin market is that this will constitute a danger for our own firms and their development. Many believe that EU firms are financially very powerful and capable of destroying Montenegrin companies either by buying them up and reducing production and employment, or by raising competition to a level which the local companies cannot survive.

On the other hand, European capital has been present in the Montenegrin market already for many years, and the domestic companies are still thriving. EU investments are also on the rise: in 2010, half of all foreign direct investment in Montenegro came from the European Union.

first step to prevent abuse of the freedom of movement of capital. The banking sector has also become more active in reporting irregularities in the financial flows, which is a positive example for other actors who should be part of this process.

In accordance with the provisions of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), Montenegro and EU member states agreed to approve all forms of payments and transfers, and implement adequate controls to prevent illegal activities. This also includes allowing direct investment into limited liability companies, as well as equal treatment of EU citizens with regard to acquisition of real estate.

In the provisions regulating this area, SAA stresses the need to establish and improve institutional cooperation between Montenegro

and EU member states in order to prevent money laundering and other forms of illegal economic activities. Particular emphasis is put on early detection of irregular transactions which are used to finance terrorism or drug trade.

As a consequence of poor administrative and monitoring capacities in this area, Montenegro has been grappling with many problems which might slow down negotiations in the area of the freedom of movement of capital. Not only banks, but also other actors will have to become active participants in the system of timely reporting of suspicious transactions, such as unclear origin of funds crossing from one country to another. Until now nobody was convicted in Montenegro for financing terrorism, and the number of convictions in cases of money laundering are extremely low,



which casts doubts on the effectiveness of the Montenegrin financial system to prevent all forms of abuse of the free movement of capital.

Due to the lack of means, professional training of the responsible employees, as well as the improvements to the information and technology system are still in the early phases, and Montenegro would need to make better use of EU funds to cover the necessary investments.

Talking of administrative capacities, Directorate for the prevention of money laundering is also suffering from a shortage of staff. Another problem comes from a very high turnover of employees in this institution, which jeopardises the efficiency of financial reporting on irregular capital flows. The simplest solution for Montenegro in the fight against financial crime would be to find ways to retain already trained staff and invest in their further education.

Supervisory bodies in charge of identifying illegal activities in this field should focus their efforts on larger transactions in order to achieve the desired results. Implementation of all adopted strategies and action plans will be crucial, as well as the adoption of an amended Law on the prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism which is still being reviewed by the Parliament.

Because of the close links between this chapter and the rule of law, in this phase of EU accession it is extremely important to fulfil the requirements related to the strengthening of judiciary. The upcoming amendments to the Constitution ought to ensure complete independence of prosecution and the courts. Moreover, through EU projects and police training, Montenegro should develop a more professional approach to sensitive financial issues which belong to the sphere of the free movement of capital.

*Source: publication "Europe in my town – what are we negotiating and what the negotiations with the EU are bringing to us?", published within the project Europe in my town, which was implemented by the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) during 2011 and 2012, in cooperation with the Centre for Monitoring (CEMI) from Podgorica and Civic Initiatives (CI) from Belgrade, with the support of the EU Delegation in Montenegro*

## EU Info BUS with the youth of Mojkovac, Nikšić and Kolašin

*EU info bus* continued its journey through Montenegro. After Cetinje and Danilovgrad, it headed to Mojkovac, Nikšić and Kolašin.

On 16 April, Centre for Civic Education (CCE), in cooperation with the local partner NGO “Natura”, visited the primary school “Vuksan Đukić” in Mojkovaca. After this, it also paid visits to gymnasium “Stojan Cerović” in Nikšić on 23 April and to secondary school “Braća Selić” in Kolašin on 25 April 2013. During the visits, the team organised numerous activities to inform and educate the students about EU.

The arrival of EU info BUS drew a lot of interest from the young people in these municipalities, who had a chance to visit the info-stands, get brochures and other promotional materials about EU, and participate in a puzzle and test of knowledge about European Union. The winners got special prizes for their knowledge about the EU and the process of European integration in Montenegro.

On the same day, the organisers showed documentary “*Europe in my town*”, directed by Danilo Marunović, which talks about the new rules, system of values, and the new world Montenegro will enter into with the integration into European Union. The documentary shows scenes from various villages and towns of Montenegro, and probes the perceptions, fears, prejudices and hopes Montenegrin citizens hold in relation to European integration. After the screening, the flood of questions and comments coming from the students confirmed the need and the interest of the young people to know more about this process.

**Chiara Iascone**, CCE project associate, shared with the students her experiences of participation in several EU educational programmes. She offered an overview of the existing student exchange programmes, ways to apply and participate in these programmes, as well as other useful information about educational and youth policies in European Union.

The next activity of the project “EU info bus – on the road to EU!” is the celebration of the Day of Europe in three Montenegrin municipalities: Kolašin, Cetinje and Podgorica. In cooperation with numerous partners, and with support of

the EU Delegation to Montenegro, CCE plans to organise a range of events on this special occasion, with a selection of cultural, sports, educational and other activities.

“EU info Bus – on the road to EU” is funded by the communication budget of EU Delegation to Montenegro, and is implemented by the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Foundation and NGO Natura.



## European Parliament resolution on the 2012 Progress Report on Montenegro

# Significant progress, same old problems

Significant progress has been achieved by Montenegro on the path to EU membership, but shortcomings in the accession process continue to persist, especially with regard to organised crime and corruption at high level. These are the conclusions of the European Parliament (EP) 18 April Resolution on the 2012 Progress Report on Montenegro. The EP welcomes the “peaceful, free and fair” conduct of the early parliamentary elections in October, but notes that the legal framework must be fully in line with the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations that no citizens are subject to undue restrictions. EP also calls on the authorities to further improve the compilation of voter lists and transparency regarding the oversight of campaign finance, and to eliminate all forms of abuse of public resources for political purposes. The Parliament calls on the Montenegrin authorities to conduct a proper review of complaints in order to further increase public confidence in the electoral process. MEPs believe it would be good to open new negotiating chapters with Montenegro as soon as possible, provided that the reform process is sustained and concrete results are delivered; The Parliament notes with satisfaction that assistance provided by the Instrument for Pre Accession Assistance (IPA) works well in Montenegro and encourages both the Montenegrin Government and the Commission to simplify the administration procedure for IPA funding, with the aim of making it more accessible to smaller and non-centralised civil organisations, trade unions and other beneficiaries. Regarding political criteria, the Resolution calls on the Montenegrin Parliament to continue improving its oversight role, especially with regard to the fight against organised crime and corruption, and asks for a more active involvement of the Parliament in the accession negotiations through strategic and political discussions, policy analysis and legislative review in different parliamentary committees to gain a meaningful oversight over the negotiations. EP also urges the Montenegrin Parliament to adopt constitutional provisions to reinforce the legal independence, integrity and accountability of the judiciary. The Resolution also welcomes measures to enhance judicial efficiency, including a reduction in the backlog of cases, but expresses concerns with the length of court procedures and poor infrastructure at many courts. The EP also calls for further measures to create a professional,

### Once again “Article 98” and border issues

EP welcomed Montenegro’s constructive role in regional cooperation. The MEPs commended Montenegro for maintaining good bilateral relations with all neighbouring countries, but expressed regrets that the delimitation of borders with almost all neighbouring countries remains pending.

The Resolution calls on the Commission and the Council to start developing, in accordance with the EU Treaties, a generally applicable arbitration mechanism aimed at solving bilateral issues between enlargement countries and Member States, and notes some remaining problems with regard to international law: “The EP invites Montenegro to align its position on the International Criminal Court with the EU Common Position on the integrity of the Rome Statute”.

effective, merit-based and impartial public administration which should represent a service for citizens. The Resolution also stresses the need to strengthen links between policy-makers and civil society, and welcomes the inclusion of NGOs in the working groups dealing with the accession negotiations. However, the EP stresses that it considers it important that they are equal members of the working groups. The Parliament also urged Montenegro to consider establishing a ‘National Committee’, composed of parliamentarians and civil society representatives, to act as a consultative forum throughout the negotiation period. The European Parliament encourages the Montenegrin Government to step up ambitions in the Social Council and to further strengthen it. It also encourages the Montenegrin authorities to amend the Labour Law in order to bring it into line with the EU acquis. The Resolution further calls on the Government to reinforce the legal framework and strengthen the capacities of law-enforcement bodies in combating organised crime, and calls for extending domestic, regional and international

cooperation, particularly in the field of financial investigations. The document also urges the Montenegrin Parliament to adopt a code of conduct for the prevention of conflict of interest, and to publish information on financial interests of members. The EP notes that the media environment is diverse and divided along political lines, and urges the competent authorities to ensure and promote media pluralism and freedom of expression by means of a media free from political or any other interference, given that the safeguarding of media freedom is a core EU principle. “The Parliament is concerned that police investigations regarding a number of violent attacks against Montenegrin media representatives and facilities have not yet resulted in any final verdict, and stresses the need to bring justice to the victims”, states the Resolution. It also commends Montenegro for being at the vanguard of structural reforms in the Western Balkans and for maintaining macroeconomic and fiscal stability, despite the economic crisis. It notes, however, the rise in public debt. “European Parliament calls on the Montenegrin authorities to maintain the balance between economic development and environmental protection, and calls on the Government to ensure that privatisation of

the national electricity company is conducted in a transparent manner and that the agreed investments are carried out. EP also recalls the need to specifically bring the development of tourism into line with environmental protection, and calls for long-term planning with regard to tourism along the coastline and for the creation of strong mechanisms to prevent the destruction of the environment and corruption in the field of spatial planning and construction”, states the document. EP encourages the authorities in Podgorica to implement the Strategy for Introduction of Business Clusters, adopted in July 2012, in order to improve the competitiveness of the Montenegrin economy by strengthening SMEs and increasing export potential and employment opportunities. In the same chapter, EP expressed concern about the size of the informal economy. The Resolution welcomes the progress in the area of renewable energies, but calls for further measures to enhance energy efficiency and ensure security of energy supply. The EP also encourages further efforts in areas such as the free movement of workers, the free movement of capital, company law, food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy, taxation, enterprise and industrial policy, and financial and budgetary provisions.

### Government to publicly support 2013 Pride in Podgorica

EP welcomes progress in the protection and inclusion of all minorities and persons with disabilities, but acknowledges that the inclusion of, in particular, the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians needs to be improved. EP condemns physical and verbal attacks against members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community and calls on the authorities to do the utmost to prevent such attacks, underlining the responsibility of the Government and of all political parties to take proactive steps to create a climate of tolerance and inclusion. It also welcomes the creation of a shelter for LGBT. EP calls on the Government to work together with NGOs to prevent further attacks and discrimination, and looks forward to closer cooperation in this field. The Resolution also calls on the Montenegrin Government to publicly support plans for a Pride in Podgorica festival in 2013 and to ensure the safety of its participants. The Resolution further warns that only limited progress has been made with regard to women’s rights and gender equality, and stresses that women remain underrepresented in the Montenegrin Parliament and in other top decision-making positions, and on the labour market in general. The EP also notes that their employment rights, including equal pay, are often ignored. “EP encourages the authorities to strengthen governmental and other bodies responsible for gender equality with sufficient human and financial resources”, states the Resolution. The EP also notes that domestic violence against women still prevails in the society, and expresses concern over child poverty. “The EP calls for improved services for children and families at risk, and for reforms to strengthen the relevant social welfare sectors”.

## The state of transitional justice in post-Yugoslav countries

On 10 April 2013, Centre for Civic Education (CCE) in cooperation with the Humanitarian Law Centre (HLC) in Belgrade, presented the report on the state of transitional justice in post-Yugoslav countries. At the presentation, the participants discussed results so far in implementing the transitional justice in the countries of former Yugoslavia, outcomes of the war crimes trials, efforts of the civil society to promote additional mechanisms, as well as the importance of the process of confrontation with the past for the future development of these societies. The report was summarised by **Nataša Kandić**, the founder and member of the executive board of the HLC. Her presentation was followed by a lecture on the concept of transitional justice and its carrier in the post-Yugoslav states by **Dr Žarko Puhovski**, professor at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb. **Daliborka Uljarević**, executive director of CCE spoke about regional approach to the process of confrontation with the past, and development of this process in Montenegro. Due to the absence of a representative of the Supreme State Prosecutor, **Mirela Rebronja**, CCE programme coordinator, spoke about the outcomes of war crime trials before Montenegrin courts in the last three years. Following the introductory presentations, the event turned to an open discussion about the importance of transitional justice, post-war reconstruction and trust, as well as the importance of war crime trials for justice and reconciliation.

## Regional coalition for equality STEP arrives to Montenegro

In the course of April 2013 the project team of the Coalition for equality Step presented the regional project “*Civil society networking on human rights violations in Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo*” in Kolašin (09.04), Ulcinj (10.04), Herceg Novi (10.04), Pljevlja (11.04) and Podgorica (19.04). Coalition for equality – KORAK is a network of NGOs from Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo established with the aim to fight discrimination on the regional level. Members of the coalition are: Committee of Lawyers for Human Rights – YUCOM, Belgrade Human Rights Centre, CHRIS Network and Gay Straight Alliance from Serbia, Centre for Civic Education (CCE) and LGBT Forum Progress from Montenegro, and Human Rights Centre and Youth Initiative from Kosovo. The goal of the project is to contribute to improving the capacities of NGOs and interested individuals to promote and protect, in cooperation with public institutions, rights of LGBT persons, women’s participation in public and political life, and implementation of anti-discrimination policies through monitoring of court processes in all three countries. KORAK offers services to NGOs and individuals by organising thematic trainings, regional conferences, support for regional anti-discrimination networks, and financial support in the form of ten smaller grants for the most successful projects in this field. **Petar Đukanović**, CCE project coordinator, **Tamara Milaš**, CCE project associate and **Zdravko Cimbalević**, executive director of LGBT Forum Progress presented the goals and future activities of the project in five Montenegrin municipalities.

## Lecture series on Alexandre Kojève

In the framework of the sub-programme “*Contemporary tendencies in critical thought*”, on April 10 Centre for Civic Education (CCE) organised the first event in a series of lectures on the contemporary French philosopher and Russian-born diplomat, **Alexandre Kojève**. Kojève is best known for his interpretations of Hegel, and as a populariser of terms “the end of history”, “death of man”, and for being one of the founders of European Union. CCE had already organised similar lecture series on Lacan, Marcuse and Onfray. The leader of the series is Prof. Dr **Filip Kovačević**.

## Second meeting of the local committee of the coalition “Through Cooperation to the Aim”

Second meeting of the local committee of the Coalition “Through Cooperation to the Aim” was organised in Podgorica on 12 April 2013. Members of the committee discussed and adopted the draft Action plan of the local committee in Podgorica for 2013, and elected a deputy coordinator of the coalition. Among the activities of the action plan is the submission of two civic initiatives, one to establish a Council for cooperation between local authorities and NGOs in accordance with the model Decision prepared by the Union of Municipalities, CDNGO and Ministry of Interior, and the other to amend the Decision on criteria, methods and procedure for distribution of NGO funding, also in accordance with the above model. Moreover, one of the key activities in the upcoming

period will be to submit joint comments on the Draft Action Plan for Anti-Corruption in Podgorica. The meeting was attended by 15 representatives of NGOs members of the Coalition on the local level. **Nikola Đonović**, CCE programme coordinator represented CCE at the meeting.

## Conference on European integration of Montenegro

On 12 April, European Movement in Montenegro (EMiM) and the Slovak Association for Foreign Policy organised a plenary Conference in the Parliament of Montenegro as part of the project “*National Convention on European Integration of Montenegro 2013-2014*”, implemented with support of the EU Delegation to Montenegro and with participation of the Government and Parliament of Montenegro. The conference was opened by the President of the Parliament of Montenegro **Ranko Krivokapić**, Prime Minister **Milo Đukanović** and the head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro **Mitja Drobnič**. President of EMiM, **Momčilo Radulović**, presented the work and the future goals of the *National Convention on European Integration* for 2013. Six working groups were presented: *Judiciary and Fundamental Rights; Justice, Freedom and Security; Agriculture, food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary policy and fisheries; Environment; Competition; and Consumer and Health Protection*. The event was attended by numerous representatives of public institutions, diplomatic corps and NGOs. CCE was represented by **Boris Marić**, senior legal advisor and **Snežana Kaluđerović**, programme coordinator.

## Transformation of the civil society on the road to EU

Between 17 and 19 April 2013, TACSO office in Croatia organised in Zagreb the international conference “*Civil society transformation on the road to EU*”. The goal of the conference was to identify key challenges facing civil society organisation (CSOs) in the context of EU enlargement process, and present the changes undergone by CSOs and other actors in the course of this process in Croatia, as the possible model for other IPA states. The conference was opened by **Zrinka Vrabec-Mojšes**, advisor of the Croatian President for social affairs, **Vesna Batistić-Kos**, deputy Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, **Paolo Berizzi**, head of political, economic, trade and media affairs in EU Delegation to Croatia, and **Nicola Bertolini**, head of the unit for regional cooperation and programming in DG Enlargement. **Damir Nikočević**, CCE PR/programme associated, attended the conference on behalf of CCE.

## Memory of wars or memory wars?

Regional forum on memory culture: “Memory of wars or memory wars?” took place in Vukovar between 11 and 13 April 2013, with the aim to open a debate about the way post-Yugoslav societies remember the wars which took place on their territories, and to identify new approaches and channels for cooperation between countries to make sure they never forget their bloody past. After the introductory notes, came the first panel, titled “*Wars in former Yugoslavia through art: can film and theatre help to initiate confrontation with the past?*”, with presentations by Croatian artists **Slaven Tolj** and **Barbara Blasin**, director of the Theatre festival MESS in Sarajevo **Dino Mustafić**, director of the Sarajevo War Theatre **Nihad Kreševljaković**, director of the Centre for Cultural Decontamination **Borka Pavićević** and film director **Stevan Bodroža** from Belgrade. On the second day the participants visited the sites of memory and tragedy in Vukovar – the hospital, memorial house Ovčara and the Memorial Cemetery. The second panel discussed memory as official practice, with contributions from **Andrea Smetko** and **Ivica Neveščanin** from the Croatian Historical Museum, **Azir Osmanović** from the Memorial Centre Potočari and **Eli Gashi** from *Alter Habitus* in Prishtina. After the wars, each country of the region created initiatives to mark the sites of tragedy. Their transformation into sites of remembrance, and its contested nature – *who has the right to remember* – was analysed by representatives of the Association of Victims of BiH and Croatia, **Edina Ramulić** of the Association of the Women of Prijedor “Izvor” and **Marica Šeatović** from the association “Against Oblivion”. The third day of the Forum was dedicated to regional cooperation in establishment of the memory culture. The panel *Regional support to initiatives for memorial sites* was introduced by **Mirela Rebronja**, CCE programme coordinator, who spoke about the monument to all victims of the wars recently erected in Podgorica, as well as about the general importance of regional cooperation and establishment of memorial sites. The second working group spoke about regional study visits to memorial sites and opportunities for future cooperation in this area. The Forum, which brought together 40 participants from all countries of former Yugoslavia, was organised by the Centre for Reconciliation with the Past *Documenta* from Zagreb, with support of Open Society Institute.

## Traineeships at the European Parliament for people with disabilities

The European Parliament is offering paid traineeships to people with disabilities. These traineeships are open both to graduates of universities or equivalent institutions and to people whose qualifications are below university level. The programme offers five-month paid traineeships to disabled candidates, and is run in addition to the other options for traineeships and study visits in the Secretariat of the European Parliament. Its main purpose is to offer a number of persons with disabilities a meaningful work experience as a trainee in the EP, giving them an opportunity to familiarise themselves with its activities. The closest deadline for applying is 15 May (for traineeships starting 1 October). Applicants for this programme of paid traineeship must: *be nationals of a Member State of the EU or of an applicant country; be over 18 years of age; have thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the EU and good knowledge of a second; not have been awarded any other paid traineeship, or have been in paid employment for more than four consecutive weeks, with a European institution or a Member or political group of the EP; certify that they have a disability.* The monthly allowance for trainees is EUR 1130.56. Trainees' additional costs directly related to the disability may be covered up to a maximum of 50% of the amount of the monthly scholarship. If need be, trainees will be provided with reasonable accommodation at work to enable them to carry out the essential functions of the job to which they are assigned. Candidates can only apply using the online application form for the traineeship for persons with disabilities (<https://www.secure.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/public/traineeship/secured/hRequest.do?tab=1&styp=pa id&styp=pilot&language=en>)

## Young Women and Gender Equality in post-Yugoslav Societies

Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb and Human Rights Center, University of Sarajevo invite you to submit contributions to the international scientific conference Young Women and Gender Equality in post-Yugoslav Societies: Research, Practice and Policy. The conference will be held in Zagreb on 26-27 November 2013, as a part of UNESCO's Participation Programme 2012-2013. Conference is open to scientists and researchers involved in scientific research related to these sub-topics, and experts from the public and civil institutions and organizations involved in relevant policies and practices. Participants can register via website (<http://www.idi.hr/ywage/en/registracija/>). The application deadline is 15 May 2013 (Read more: <http://www.idi.hr/ywage/en>)

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