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INTerview with
Irene Tatažinjskom, Polish Ambassador

Montenegro Closer to Membership Than Ever Before

NATO Activities
On the Right Track

Diaspora
The Third Generation of Montenegrin Highlanders Born in the Valley

Uvodnik: Igor Lukšić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration

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From Vienna to Paris

A year after the Berlin Summit came the Vienna Summit and we can surely say it was a success. However, the global environment is still brimming with challenges. The crisis with refugees from the Middle East, Northern Africa, the Horn of Africa, and many other countries has stirred up the spirits anew. Various debates are taking place.

We can say that the Berlin Summit was a success. The optimism in the region was restored. The economic downturn years, demanding Europe-related reforms, and security crisis surrounding Ukraine were the main factors shaping the global environment. The Munich meeting was definitely not just commemorative. The discussion was not about the past but about the future.

A year after the Berlin Summit came the Vienna Summit and we can surely say it was a success. However, the global environment is still brimming with challenges. The crisis with refugees from the Middle East, Northern Africa, the Horn of Africa, and many other countries has stirred up the spirits anew. Various debates are taking place.

The Summit was also an opportunity for the WB6 countries to sign the Declaration on bilateral disputes with the aim of once again demonstrating commitment to the European perspective of the region, unwanted to raising bilateral disputes with the view to hindering any country’s progress towards the EU. In that context, as a summit overture, Montenegro has signed border agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, acts with which these countries confirmed our maturity and commitment to solve common issues through dialogue. At the same time, if the countries are unable to resolve some issues, bringing them to an international arbiter is also a legitimate option. Montenegro and Croatia have decided to take their bilateral border issue to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

It is therefore all too clear that the bar has been raised pretty high and that the expectations of the Paris Summit are already big. France will host the 2016 meeting and it intends to take a similar approach to the previous meetings. For this reason it is necessary not just to resume the activities and implement what has been agreed, but also to open some new fields. In this sense, the focus must be on eliminating barriers. Better roads do not have much sense if there are barriers on them. That is why the WB6 countries must make progress in that respect. The rule of law and economic freedom are the only combination that gives long term results for sustainable social development. This, however, is possible if and only if a new system of values is ushered in, one that will reward entrepreneurial spirit, which means we need to be committed to reforming the educational system in the broader sense. Mutual recognition of degrees, university rankings, opening up of labour markets, and systematic approach to regional migration is what should be under high scrutiny.

Paris can surely be a great success, but only if the meeting brings something noteworthy.

Igor Lukšić
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
Prime Minister Milo Đukanović at Munich Security Conference

6 February 2015

Prime Minister Milo Đukanović participated at the 51th Munich Security Conference, a top global security forum. This year’s most notable participants were German Chancellor Angela Merkel, US Vice President Joseph Biden, US State Secretary John Kerry, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, and many other high officials. The forum’s main topics were European security in the light of the Ukraine crisis, the situation in the Middle East, and threats posed by terrorism and other contemporary challenges.

Dukčanović – Röttgen: Montenegro’s NATO membership would contribute to regional stability

6 February 2015

Prime Minister Milo Đukanović spoke in Munich with Bundestag’s Committee on Foreign Affairs Chairman Norbert Röttgen. Montenegro has achieved excellent result in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration, Mr Röttgen noted, adding that it has stabilised the state and the economy and improved the rule of law. In this context, he was hopeful that Montenegro would meet all its tasks in the run up to NATO accession, which is of great importance for the fragile stability of the region. Prime Minister Đukanović said he was satisfied with the successful political dialogue between Montenegro and Germany and thanked Germany for its support in integration efforts. “You have a reliable partner in Montenegro, which will continue to promote your values. It is important for international community partners to send a clear message on the continued integration of the Balkans, Mr Đukanović underlined.

Dukanović – Laščak: Munich conference excellent opportunity for Montenegro to enhance its NATO integration prospects

07 February 2015

Prime Minister Milo Đukanović spoke in Munich with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia Miroslav Laščak. Montenegro has been pursuing serious and responsible integration policy, Minister Laščak noted. Provided it fulfils all the requirements from the NATO agenda, the membership invitation will be sent by the end of the year, Minister Laščak emphasised, adding the Munich conference is an excellent opportunity for the country to further enhance its integration prospects, through exchanging views and presenting achievements. The Prime Minister stressed Slovakia’s support for Montenegro’s integration processes, which is significant for the entire region and its stability.

Susret Dukanović – Stoltenberg: NATO strongly supports Montenegro’s reform process

07 February 2015

Prime Minister Milo Đukanović met with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on the sidelines of the 51th Munich Security Conference. NATO strongly supports the reforms Montenegro has been implementing on the path towards its accession to the Alliance, the NATO Secretary General emphasised. Reiterating NATO’s determination to pursue the open door policy, he encouraged Montenegro to remain dedicated to fulfilling its obligations that will result in sending the membership invitation. Prime Minister Đukanović noted that membership to NATO is a key priority of Montenegro foreign policy, adding the country will continue being responsible in achieving the objective. Montenegro makes strong contribution to regional stability, both sides agreed in Munich.

Prime Minister Dukanović meets Bundestag MPs: Montenegro may count on Bundestag’s support in its integration efforts

07 February 2015

Prime Minister Milo Đukanović met in Munich with chairman of the German Bundestag’s committee on European Affairs Gunther Krichbaum and rapporteur on Montenegro for CDU and CSU Peter Beyer. The Bundestag supports Montenegro’s European and Euro-Atlantic integration, the German parliamentarians said, noting that Montenegro is on the right path. Mr Beyer and Mr Krichbaum said that Montenegro may count on the German parliament in its further integration efforts, noting that each step forward is noted. In this context, they expressed readiness to enhance co-operation and provide Bundestag’s expert assistance in the area of rule of law as well as other areas, such as co-operation between the two countries’ business communities.
Montenegro’s pace of accession negotiations with the EU makes it a leader in the region, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom told Prime Minister Milo Đukanović at their meeting at the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference. Sweden strongly supports the enlargement process and encourages Montenegro to keep up the reform and development momentum in all areas, she pointed out. The Prime Minister said the two countries have developed good relations, which can create a good basis for strengthening co-operation in many fields, especially in economy. He confirmed his government’s commitment to implementing reforms, with the aim of improving quality of life of citizens on the path towards EU and NATO structures. Foreign Minister Wallstrom said that, although Sweden has a neutral position in relation to NATO, it respects Montenegro’s commitment in that regard and welcomes its role and the contribution to regional stability.

Montenegro and the United States have established strong relations based on mutual trust and shared values. Montenegro’s Prime Minister Milo Đukanović and US Vice President Joseph Biden agreed at the meeting which was held earlier today on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference. PM Đukanović voiced pleasure with the dynamic dialogue developed between Montenegro and the United States, as well as the attention the US administration and Vice President Biden pay to the Western Balkan’s issue. He also referred to stable democratic and economic development of Montenegro and its full commitment to European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

The Prime Minister said that NATO membership invitation is the country’s key strategic objective in 2015 and thanked Vice President Biden for continued support the United States provide to Montenegro in that regard. US Vice President Joseph Biden underlined that the United States remain stable and honest partner of Montenegro, appreciating its responsible policy that contributes to the stability and prosperity of the region. In that context, he voiced willingness to further support Montenegro’s development and its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, highly assessing the results the country achieved in the accession process. Vice President Biden stressed the United States will assist Montenegro in overcoming challenges in the areas crucial for further democratic progress and full integration, primarily in the rule of law and strengthening public support. Both sides pointed out the importance of NATO enlargement policy and sending of the membership invitation to Montenegro in the context of strengthening regional stability.

Montenegro, albeit small, is a recognised investment destination in the world. The investments thus far have come from over 100 countries. For years we have been at the top of European economy when it comes to FDI per capita... Translated into numbers, the net inflow of foreign investment has been larger than EUR 5 billion, Mr Đukanović highlighted.

The two officials agreed that Montenegro and Baden-Württemberg have excellent prospects to boost economic co-operation
Diplomarius – Borisov meet in Sofia: Montenegro and Bulgaria brought closer by high degree of political dialogue and work towards a more peaceful and prosperous Balkans region

27 March 2015

Prime Minister Milo Đukanović met during his visit to Bulgaria the country’s President Rosen Plevneliev. The two countries share a high degree of political dialogue and a close friendship marked by continued mutual support and joint efforts for a more peaceful and prosperous Balkans region, the meeting concluded. In this context, President Plevneliev said that Bulgaria wants to see Montenegro become a NATO member as soon as possible, and also a member of the EU. We want Montenegro to become part of and integrate into the Euro-Atlantic structures, said he. Mr Đukanović thanked for Bulgaria’s strong continued support to Montenegro’s strategic priorities. “The two countries have well developed relations; long friendship; and diverse co-operation in virtually all areas,” the Prime Minister has said noting that this was an excellent basis for further developing economic cooperation and ties between the two countries.
PM Dukanović meets with HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed

14 April 2015

Prime Minister Milo Đukanović met Monday with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi for talks on bilateral relations and issues of regional importance.

The two officials particularly focused on the possibilities of strengthening economic co-operation between Montenegro and the United Arab Emirates and voiced their governments’ willingness to opt for priority projects to this end.

The meeting was also attended by Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE, and foreign and interior ministers, Sheikh Abdullah and Sheikh Sefi.

Prime Minister Dukanović visits Brussels

14 April 2015

PM Dukanović meets President Juncker. European Commission impressed by Montenegro’s progress in European integration

Prime Minister of Montenegro Milo Đukanović started his official visit to Brussels by meeting with the European Commission’s President Jean-Claude Juncker. During his first meeting with Prime Minister Dukanović ever since he took over the Commission’s reins, President Juncker noted that the European Commission is impressed by the track record Montenegro has developed on its European path, particularly referring to the country’s economic progress and stability of public finance. The meeting also emphasized that Montenegro’s commitment to promoting the rule of law and freedom of the media is encouraging. The Government of Montenegro is devoted to pursuing reforms and conducting negotiations on Montenegro’s accession to the European Union. In that context, he welcomed the European Commission’s commitment to supporting the open door policy for the Western Balkans. Montenegro’s Prime Minister reiterated the importance of developing infrastructure links in the region and with the European Union, as well as the overall economic development for further integration and progress.

Tusk – Dukanović: The EU remains committed to Montenegro’s European future

14 April 2015

President of the European Council Donald Tusk told Prime Minister Milo Đukanović at their meeting at the EU headquarters in Brussels that the EU’s message to Montenegro is simple and strong, and that is that Montenegro’s future lies within the EU, and that this meeting is a “testimony of Montenegro’s ambition to become a member of the European and transatlantic family.”

Montenegrin Prime Minister Đukanović told the press that he welcomes the fact that, as the President of the European Council said, the EU recognises Montenegro’s progress in the field of promotion of European and Euro-Atlantic values in the Western Balkans.

Stoltenberg: NATO welcomes Montenegro’s progress, Dukanović: NATO and EU door should be open to entire region

14 April 2015

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said at a meeting with Montenegro’s Prime Minister Milo Đukanović at the Alliance headquarters in Brussels that NATO maintains its open door policy when it comes to Montenegro. He noted that the reforms implemented by Montenegro are substantial and they represent “real progress towards membership in NATO.”

“You have repeatedly shown that you share our values,” said the Secretary General of NATO at today’s joint press conference with Prime Minister Dukanović.

“Today’s meeting with EU High Representative for Security and Foreign Policy Federica Mogherini is a successful continuation of talks Prime Minister Dukanović had with EU top officials last week in Brussels. Today’s talks gave us encouragement and pledged support for our further efforts towards Montenegro’s full integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures,” Prime Minister Milo Đukanović stressed following his meeting with EU High Representative Federica Mogherini.

Dukancov-Mogherini: High appreciation for Montenegro’s progress in adjusting to EU values

During his visit to Brussels where he participated in the meeting of the Western Balkan Six with EU commissioners, Prime Minister Milo Đukanović met with EU High Representative for Security and Foreign Policy Federica Mogherini.

Ms Mogherini expressed high appreciation for Montenegro’s role in the region and the progress achieved in adjusting to European system of values. At the same time, she praised Montenegro’s compliance in pursuing its foreign and security policy within the EU.

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Brussels: Prime Ministers Dukanović and Rama in favour of shared projects of Adriatic-Ionian motorway and development of Lake Skadar and Bojana River

21 April 2015

Prime Minister of Montenegro Milo Đukanović and his Albanian counterpart Edi Rama met in Brussels for talks on strengthening co-operation related to joint infrastructural projects which are important not only for the two countries, but for the entire region as well.

On the sidelines of the meeting of heads of government of Western Balkan Six in Brussels, the two officials voiced their support to the implementation of the joint project of the Adriatic-Ionian highway aimed at reaching better connectedness and more dynamic economic development of the entire region. The two officials also underlined that Montenegro and Albania are interested in boosting co-operation related to the valorisation of the Skadar Lake and River Bojana.

Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama highlighted that Albania strongly supports Montenegro’s NATO bid, adding that Montenegro’s membership in the Alliance will provide stability and security for the Western Balkans.

The meeting also discussed current integration processes in the region.
Prime Minister Milo Đukanović attended the Vienna Economic Forum, which took place in Tirana as Tirana Taxis. Mr. Đukanović spoke at the panel entitled “From Berlin to Vienna: Restoring geo-political certainty in the Western Balkans,” which was launched by EU High Representative and Commission Vice President Federica Mogherini.

Prime Minister Milo Đukanović meets Albanian, Macedonian, and Kosovo counterparts. Infrastructural connectedness, economic co-operation and dialogue form solid basis for region integration and prosperity. On the sidelines of the Vienna Economic Forum in Tirana, Prime Minister Milo Đukanović met with his Albanian, Macedonian and Kosovo counterparts, Edi Rama, Nikola Gruevski, and Isa Mustafa. Montenegro and Macedonia cherish traditionally good bilateral relations, the two heads of government agreed in Tirana yesterday. Mr. Gruevski informed PM Đukanović about the current situation in Macedonia and efforts which the state is undertaking in order to overcome the crisis in a peaceful manner. Preserving stability of the region through affirming dialogue is the joint interest of the Western Balkan’s countries in order to reach the full-fledged membership in the EU, the two officials highlighted. Following his meeting with the Kosovo Prime Minister Isa Mustafa, PM Đukanović commended the results achieved in the process of border demarcation. The two officials pointed out that it is necessary to continue dialogue at the highest political level in order to boost relations between the two countries. The meetings underlined that boosting infrastructural connectedness, economic co-operation and dialogue will improve better understanding in the region and form a solid basis for further integration process of the Western Balkans. The overall progress of the region will result in overcoming several decades of lagging behind and making improvements in raising the quality of life of its citizens, the officials concluded.

Berlin: We would like to see more examples like Montenegro, German FM Steinmeier told PM Đukanović in Berlin

Prime Minister of Montenegro Milo Đukanović met during his working visit to Berlin with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Relations between Montenegro and Germany are in an excellent and relaxed phase, the meeting concluded.

Foreign Minister Steinmeier said that he considers Montenegro a succes- s story in the region and that he would like to see more examples like Montenegro. He voiced satisfaction with the opportunity to meet with Prime Minister Đukanović, stressing the success of the Montenegro integration process and pledging the German government’s strong support to the country’s strategic foreign policy goals.

Prime Minister Đukanović stressed the importance of continuing the integration process for the entire region and its stability. “Integration is a way of strengthening stability in the region and it is important to remain committed to the open door policy. It is signifi- cant for Europe and the Balkan’s stability,” he pointed out.

The two officials also discussed the situation in the region and deve- lopment of the Berlin process, representing a strong impetus to the development and integration of the region into the EU.

On the sidelines of the GLOBSEC forum in Bratislava, Prime Minister Milo Đukanović met with President of Georgia Giorgi Margvelashvili.

The two officials’ meeting in Bratislava testifies to dynamic political dialogue between the two countries, which have common strate- gic European and Euro-Atlantic goals. PM Đukanović and President Margvelashvili agreed that integration is the only reasonable answer to modern challenges and guarantor of regional stability. In that context, President of Georgia welcomed Montenegro’s progress and success in the process of joining the EU and NATO.

The two officials emphasized the friendly ties established between the two people, which form a sound basis for achieving strategic objec- tives and deepening co-operation. Montenegro and Georgia will en- courage development of economic co-operation and communication between business communities, the meeting concluded. Prime Mini- ster of Montenegro Milo Đukanović spoke earlier today at a special panel discussion titled “Montenegro Knocking on NATO’s Door,” which was held within 10th jubilee GLOBSEC global security forum in Brat- islava, where he presented the reforms, and further plans in anticipati- on of NATO membership invitation by the end of the year.

Dukanović – Townes-Whitley: Ten years of successful co-operation between Montenegro and Microsoft

Prime Minister Milo Đukanović met at the sidelines of the GLOBSEC forum in Bratislava with Toni Townes-Whitley, vice president of Microsoft’s Worldwide Public Sector. Mr. Đukanović and Mr. Townes-Whitley commended the successful 10-year-long co-operation between Montenegro and Microsoft and discussed the possibilities for building on the relationship by la- unching new projects aimed at improving efficiency of the state ad- ministration, education system, and healthcare. Microsoft is keen to support Montenegro in its European and Euro-Atlantic integration process of border demarcation. The two officials pointed out that it is necessary to continue dialogue at the highest political level in order to boost relations between the two countries. The meetings underlined that boosting infrastructural connectedness, economic co-operation and dialogue will improve better understanding in the region and form a solid basis for further integration process of the Western Balkans. The overall progress of the region will result in overcoming several decades of lagging behind and making improvements in raising the quality of life of its citizens, the officials concluded.

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Dukanović – Margvelashvili in Bratislava: Integration the only response to challenges and guarantee of stability

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Hungary fully supports Montenegro’s progress towards NATO and EU accession

13 February 2015

Hungary fully supports Montenegro’s progress towards NATO and EU accession, the meeting between Montenegro’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Igor Lukšić and Hungary’s Head of Government Victor Orbán emphasised Friday in Budapest. Hungarian Prime Minister said that Montenegro has a clear perspective of NATO membership and it will enjoy Hungarian assistance in the next stages of the process. He particularly highlighted the importance of Hungary’s role of NATO contact point embassy in Montenegro, through which it will be able to provide additional aid and support and in the context of current focussed and intensified dialogue.

Deputy Prime Minister Lukšić thanked Prime Minister Orban for Hungary’s continued political and expert support in meeting EU and NATO membership criteria, as well as for its active role in promoting European and Euro-Atlantic perspective of the Western Balkan and Montenegro in particular.

“I am particularly pleased that the Hungarian administration, through the contact point embassy for NATO, will be able to provide additional aid and support and in the context of current focussed and intensified dialogue. Deputy Prime Minister Lukšić thanked Prime Minister Orbán for Hungary’s continued political and expert support in meeting EU and NATO membership criteria, as well as for its active role in promoting European and Euro-Atlantic perspective of the Western Balkan and Montenegro in particular.”

MVPEI

It was agreed that, although the cooperation has been focused on the process of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, the two countries will continue to deepen political, economic and overall relations.

During his visit to Hungary, Deputy Prime Minister Lukšić also met with Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary Laszlo Kover. Mr Kover said that Montenegro’s results in EU and NATO integration process can set example to other Western Balkan’s countries. He added that Montenegro and Hungary have established strong partnership at all levels, including at the parliamentary one.
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić paid an official visit to the Republic of Macedonia. In addition to meeting his host, Foreign Minister Nikola Poposki, Mr Lukšić also met with President Danilo Ivanov and Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski.

During the visit, the two countries signed a Protocol on the collocation of diplomatic and consular representations in Paris at the offices of Macedonia’s Embassy to France, which is the very first example of such co-operation in the region, as well as a pragmatic step towards optimising the two countries’ diplomatic services’ resources. The two head diplomats underlined the need to establish a joint approach to improving economic co-operation and attracting foreign investment. In that context, they underlined the need of establishing a joint committee on economic co-operation in the nearest future, and they also discussed the possibilities for co-operation within regional infrastructure projects, which are a precondition for making use of the two countries’ overall economic potentials. The meeting also discussed the dynamics and developments in light of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Both sides confirmed readiness to continue cooperating closely in this area by exchanging experience at the expert level, in accordance with the agreement signed by the two countries on future co-operation within the EU accession process.

In his talks with Macedonia’s President and Prime Minister, Mr Lukšić and his hosts noted mutual satisfaction with excellent bilateral relations. In that context, Montenegro’s integration progress has been commended.

Mr Lukšić also held a bilateral meeting with Albania’s head diplomat Ditmir Bushati, with whom he discussed further development of bilateral relations and moving towards the remaining SEE countries. In that context, Montenegro’s integration progress has been commended.

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Meeting participants also exchanged opinions on the region’s European perspective and the continuation of EU and NATO enlargement towards the remaining SEE countries. In that context, Montenegro’s integration progress has been commended.

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The meeting focused on issues of further development of regional co-operation, as well as the stability and security in the SEE region. SEECP head diplomats adopted a joint statement in which they strongly condemned rising international terrorism and voiced their readiness to intensify joint activities in this regard, including putting a stop to the recruitment of foreign fighters.

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New York: Deputy Prime Minister Lukšić participates at the UN High-Level Thematic Debate on Advancing Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić participated at the UN High-Level Thematic Debate on Advancing Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls for a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda, which took place at the UN headquarters in New York. Montenegro’s head diplomat also gave a lecture at the International Peace Institute entitled Ensuring Peace and Security through Regional Co-operation - A View from a Small Country. Mr Lukšić and Mr Kutesa exchanged opinions on current global developments and the need for a swift UN action in meeting the contemporary challenges. Mr Lukšić voiced Government of Montenegro’s commitment to contribute and being a reliable partner in global efforts.
New York: Deputy Prime Minister Lukšić talks with Montenegrin emigrants

08 March 2015

During his visit to New York, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić met with Montenegrin emigrants at the event organised by the Consulate General. The event presented Montenegro’s current domestic and foreign policies, and especially its co-operation with the diaspora.

Mr Lukšić underlined the importance of developing the co-operation between the home country and diaspora, and he underlined the Government’s determination to continue pursuing activities aimed at creating a more favourable environment for economic, cultural, educational and other ties with its diaspora. Montenegro’s head diplomat also spoke about the project entitled Montenegrin House in New York, expected to be implemented soon.

New York: DPM Lukšić talks to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

08 March 2015

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić met, during the final day of his New York visit, with the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The two officials welcomed the quality of relations and co-operation between the UN and Montenegro, and the Secretary-General thanked Montenegro’s leadership for its commitment to the world organisation’s efficiency. Secretary-General Ban welcomed the establishment of the Sustainable Development Centre in Podgorica and the launch of the UN Eco Building, which are excellent examples of joint action by the Government and the UN agencies.

Minister Lukšić underlined that Montenegro will continue making a contribution and will remain a reliable partner to the rest of the international community through its multilateral activity. Active contribution and participation by all countries are essential to multilateralism, and the forthcoming conference on financing development, the September post-2015 development agenda summit, and the climate summit are the events of historic importance for shaping the world’s future, the officials have noted.

DPM Lukšić also participated at the opening session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the Security Council’s briefing on the UN co-operation with regional and sub-regional organisations. At the margins of the Security Council meeting, Mr Lukšić met briefly with Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission.

Washington: Deputy Prime minister Lukšić spoke to US Equal Opportunity Employment Commissioner Chai Feldblum

12 March 2015

During his stay in Washington, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić met with the US Equal Opportunity Employment Commissioner Chai Feldblum. Commission Feldblum welcomed Montenegro’s efforts in the area of implementing a comprehensive anti-discrimination policy, encouraged further efforts, and underlined the importance of continued and complete implementation of legislation in this area.

Mr Lukšić underlined the importance of developing the co-operation between the home country and diaspora, and he underlined the Government’s determination to continue pursuing activities aimed at creating a more favourable environment for economic, cultural, educational and other ties with its diaspora. Montenegro’s head diplomat also spoke about the project entitled Montenegrin House in New York, expected to be implemented soon.

Lukšić - Nuland: Montenegro can count on US assistance in the final phase of NATO integration

11 March 2015

During his official visit to the US, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić met Victoria Jane Nuland, the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs at the United States Department of State in Washington. Ms Nuland said that the US stands ready to help Montenegro in the final phase of NATO integration in the sense of meeting the set objectives by the end of this year, and she emphasised the importance of continued implementation of set priorities in key areas.

There is a clear commitment to meet the remaining preconditions so we would receive a membership invitation by the end of 2015. We believe that our prospective membership of NATO is a guarantee of Western Balkans’ stability and also important for the NATO open door policy. Mr Lukšić has said.

It was noted that the only priority for the future should be to improve economic ties in the Western Balkans and to boost investment co-operation through existing regional initiatives and mechanisms.

Washington: Montenegro’s NATO membership important for regional stability and security of the Mediterranean

11 March 2015

During his visit to the US, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić held separate talks with the Foreign Relations Committee member Senator Christopher S. Murphy, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services Senator John McCain, and Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on European and Regional Security Cooperation Senator Ron Johnson.

Deputy Prime Minister Lukšić thanked the senators for the overall US support and especially for the Congress’ support to Montenegro in its efforts to join NATO. He said that the processes of Western Balkans’ European and Euro-Atlantic integration are preconditions for growth and development of region’s countries. Montenegro is pursuing reforms in key areas with unswerving intensity and commitment in order to secure a membership invitation by the end of this year. Mr Lukšić has said.

His hosts noted that Montenegro has made tremendous progress towards NATO membership, and added that this has been confirmed among other things by the decision to launch intensified and focused dialogue with NATO, as well as its consistent contribution to the Alliance’s shared values, and it was encouraged to continue in the same fashion.

Ms Nuland also met with Charles Kupchan, Senior Director for Europe, US National Security Council. Montenegro’s progress was commended in the key areas of intensified dialogue with NATO, as well as its consistent contribution to the Alliance’s shared values, and it was encouraged to continue in the same fashion.
On the second day of his visit to Cyprus, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić and his counterpart Ioannis Kasoulides noted that the agreement is another step in the political process aiming for the reunification of Cyprus, turning the three-way talks into practical cooperation towards the future. Mr Lukšić and Mr Kasoulides concluded at the end of their talks that the opportunity for the two countries’ co-operation also lies in the areas of energy, tourism, and trade. Montenegro and Cyprus can exchange experience with the view to ensuring future development and it was noted that the energy sector is extremely important for both countries.

 operation. Mr Lukšić spoke with Cyprus’s finance minister. It was noted that Montenegro and Cyprus, as two countries similar in size and geographic position who also share a common European outlook, have a strategic interest in strengthening co-operation and an excellent prospect of future progress. It was noted that it is very important to use the potentials and similarities of small countries towards improving economic development, learning in the mind various challenges facing EU members and other countries.

The opportunity for the two countries’ co-operation also lies in the areas of energy, tourism, and trade. Mr Lukšić and Mr Kasoulidis concluded at their meeting. They noted that these areas have great potential for both countries further development and closer co-operation. As Mediterranean countries focused on tourism, Montenegro and Cyprus can exchange experience with the view to ensuring future development and it was noted that the energy sector is extremely important for both countries to boost their economic development.

Pristina-WB6: Better infrastructure connectedness will accelerate the Western Balkans’ development

25 March 2015

On the second day of his visit to Cyprus, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić paid an official visit to the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, open to the accession talks. The visit was especially helpful for Montenegro’s EU accession talks, the trilateral meeting between foreign ministers of Montenegro, Cyprus, and Malta has concluded. During the first day of his official visit to Cyprus, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić spoke with Cyprus’s and Malta’s head diplomats about the transfer of experience in EU integration and the possibilities to closely follow the progress of the Western Balkans countries.

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The experience of small countries such as Cyprus and Malta, both in terms of accession negotiations and EU membership, can be extremely helpful for Montenegro’s EU accession talks, the trilateral meeting between foreign ministers of Montenegro, Cyprus, and Malta has concluded. During the first day of his official visit to Cyprus, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić spoke with Cyprus’s and Malta’s head diplomats about the transfer of experience in EU integration and the possibilities to closely follow the progress of the Western Balkans countries.

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Vienna: Montenegro takes chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation

22 April 2015

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić addressed the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) which marked Montenegro taking over the presidency of the body for the next four months. On this occasion, Mr Lukšić presented the programme and priorities of Montenegro’s chairmanship, noting in particular the inclusiveness and transparency of the programme drafting process and the commitment to continuing in the same fashion. He recalled the role of OSCE and especially the FSC in the overall activities aimed at finding a political solution to the Ukraine crisis, which would be based on the respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and independence of Ukraine. He also reiterated Montenegro’s full support to the ongoing diplomatic efforts in that direction. In the context of current security challenges and threats in Europe, Minister Lukšić underlined Montenegro’s commitment to the thematic areas and activities, to the restoration of trust, stability, and security. Mr Lukšić underlined Montenegro’s commitment to the Mediterranean dimension of the OSCE and the activities planned in this regard, which will be implemented in co-operation with Serbia, the OSCE chairman. Mr Lukšić held a separate meeting with the OSCE Secretary-General Lamberto Zannier. Both sides commended the OSCE’s role in maintaining the continuous and fruitful co-operation between Montenegro and the OSCE institutions.

Montenegro opens Embassy in Bern and Honorary Consulate in Zurich

23 April 2015

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić hosted a ceremony to open the Embassy of Montenegro in Bern and the first Honorary consulate of Montenegro in Switzerland, adding that their task would be to reinforce their ties with the home country. He underlined the importance of future co-operation of the consulates and Embassy with the large Montenegrin diaspora living and working in Switzerland, adding that their task would be to reinforce their ties with the home country.

DPM Lukšić attends meeting of foreign ministers within Brdo Process in Ljubljana

23 April 2015

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić participated in a meeting of foreign ministers within the Brdo Process in Ljubljana. The meeting focused on issues related to further strengthening regional cooperation, with emphasis on specific projects, particularly in the context of the Berlin process, as well as to strengthening security and stability in the European neighbourhood. The foreign ministers adopted a joint declaration which strongly confirms that the Western Balkan region remains firmly anchored in the process of EU integration, which further contributes to extensive and continuous co-operation among the countries of the region in various fields. The Western Balkan’s foreign ministers agreed that their further efforts should be concentrated on boosting infrastructural links as a prerequisite for more rapid economic development and, in that context, they discussed future steps towards defining a unified list of priority projects which will result in enhancing connections within the region, as well as with the EU.

Closer economic co-operation and regional connectedness key to economic growth

06 May 2015

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić participated in Brussels at the high level conference on EU enlargement, which was held as part of the Regional Co-operation Days. Closer economic co-operation and better regional connectedness are the best ways to accelerate economic growth, DPM Lukšić has said. He emphasized that especially the countries in the Balkans need to remove business barriers, cut excess regulation, and ensure the existing regulation is clear and simple for implementation as measures intended to attract investors. Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn underlined the importance of regional co-operation and structural connectedness for further growth and EU membership progress. In discussing the individual progress made by countries in the region, Mr Hahn underlined that Montenegro continues to be the leader of the EU integration process and he was hopeful that Montenegro would play an important role in promoting the regional connectedness agenda. Connectedness is the key factor of economic growth, job openings, and attracting new investment, Mr Hahn has explained. DPM Lukšić commended the agreement reached by prime ministers and head diplomats regarding the network of key infrastructure projects to be implemented with the EU’s support. This infrastructure network will connect capital cities, economic centres, and main ports in the region, at the same time connecting the region with the EU. Mr Lukšić has underlined that in that regard, he was hopeful that concrete infrastructure projects would be presented at the Vienna conference in August.
Montenegro’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Igor Lukšić participated today in a sitting of the North Atlantic Council with NATO’s operational partner nations and potential operational partner nations in the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan at the level of foreign ministers.

Deputy Prime Minister Lukšić welcomed the process of political transition and the reform process continuation in Afghanistan, pointing out that, despite current challenges, the process of institutional change continues in a positive direction.

Prior to the event, Deputy Prime Minister Lukšić held a lecture at the Youth Atlantic Summit, which gathered 40 delegates from over 30 NATO and PPP countries.

At the margins of the Antalya meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Igor Lukšić held a bilateral meeting with Estonian Foreign Minister Kert Pentus-Rosimannus. On the occasion, the two officials discussed Montenegro’s EU and NATO integration. Minister Lukšić underlined that Montenegro is fully committed to meeting all the preconditions for NATO membership, and is thus optimistic about the NATO member-states’ ministers’ decision in December. Minister Pentus-Rosimannus highlighted Estonia’s full support for the NATO open-door policy on enlargement and in that respect Montenegro’s ambitions to receive a membership invitation. She has also noted Estonia’s readiness to support Montenegro’s effort in a closely related and complementary process of EU integration.

Mr Lukšić also met with his Bulgarian counterpart Daniel Mitov with whom he exchanged opinions on the current state of affairs in the region and the integration processes. Mr Mitov reiterated his country’s full support to Montenegro’s progress in EU accession talks, with an emphasis on chapters 23 and 24. Minister Koenders underlined the Netherlands’ readiness to support Montenegro in its Euro-Atlantic integration reform and he noted his willingness to pay an official visit to Montenegro.

Montenegro’s Foreign Minister also met with US Assistant Secretary Victoria Nuland and they discussed reforms in Montenegro, especially those related to Euro-Atlantic integration.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić participated at the meeting of SEECP foreign ministers.

At the meeting, the SEECP foreign ministers and the regional cities and counties, discussed future cooperation in the context of EU integration, by virtue of which the two countries state their intention to maintain regular political dialogue with the view to improving integration co-operation and the promotion of European values in bilateral and regional co-operation.

DPM Lukšić, attended the meeting of foreign ministers of South Eastern Europe Co-operation Process (SEECP) which took place in Tiraná. The meeting’s focus is on current developments in the SEE region and the SEECP’s role in strengthening regional co-operation as a precondition for the member-states’ European integration.

DPM Lukšić said that Montenegro has a clear vision of the future, being a responsible partner in the region and part of a democratic and modern Europe. He underlined Montenegro’s commitment to contribute to the constructive dialogue and the improvement of the project-oriented co-operation that would be beneficial for all countries in the region to develop institutional capacity and reform the societies on the basis of shared European and Euro-Atlantic values.

At the meeting sidelines, DPM Lukšić held several bilateral meetings with regional colleagues with whom he discussed regional developments and European and Euro-Atlantic processes. With his Albanian counterpart he signed an agreement on co-operation in the context of EU integration, by virtue of which the two countries state their intention to maintain regular political dialogue with the view to improving integration co-operation and the promotion of European values in bilateral and regional co-operation.

DPM Lukšić participated, at the ministerial working breakfast which was held prior to the meeting and which supported the Joint Declaration on Youth Co-operation, whose aim is to promote youth mobility for better opportunities and contribution to constructive processes in SEE Europe.
Deputy Prime Minister Igor Lukšić participated at the Summit of heads of state and government of SEECP countries

26 May 2015

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić participated at the Summit of heads of state and government of SEECP countries which took place in Tirana. The meeting’s focus on current developments in the SEE region and the SEECP’s role in strengthening regional co-operation as a precondition for the member-states’ European integration. The adoption of the Tirana Declaration, which promotes a shared interest in boosting democracy, rule of law, and peace and security, the participants confirmed the importance of improving action in regional co-operation and neighbourhood co-operation and pursuing shared regional objectives, primarily the project-oriented co-operation. Along those lines, they encouraged the co-operation within WB6 framework in defining and implementing projects of shared strategic importance.

Paris: Montenegro is a key partner in the region

02 June 2015

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Lukšić met in Paris with State Secretary for European Affairs at the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development of France, Harlem Désir. “Montenegro is a key partner in the region,” Mr Désir has said, noting the constructive role of Montenegro and its contribution to improving good neighbourly relations and the overall stability in the Western Balkans. State Secretary Desir welcomed Montenegro’s results in EU-related reforms, with an emphasis on the implementation of commitments in Chapters 23 and 24. He voiced France’s readiness to continue supporting Montenegro in the negotiation process. He underlined the importance of Montenegro’s Euro-Atlantic integration process, and welcomed the progress that has been made at the same time noting that security is the key issue in Europe. Mr Lukšić thanked France for its continued support in EU integration, and especially for its expert assistance in the areas of justice, the interior, and agriculture.

Ohrad: Deputy Prime Minister Lukšić participates at the meeting of foreign ministers of Central European Initiative (CEI) countries

15 June 2015

Deputy Prime Minister Lukšić participated in Ohrid at the meeting of foreign ministers of Central European Initiative (CEI) countries. The meeting discussed the role of CEI as a bridge connecting macro-economies in the context of improved regional co-operation and European integration of the member countries. The participants discussed current political developments in Central and South-Eastern Europe and concrete project-based co-operation especially in the areas of infrastructure, transport, and energy in the Western Balkans through the framework of WB6 and the establishment of a Western Balkans Fund in Tirana. They underlined the important of more frequent contacts with the EU and regional synergy with organisations such as AAI, BSEC, and RCC, participation in EU’s macro-regional strategies for the Danube and the Adriatic-Ionian region, and continued co-operation with the EBRD. Along those lines, the participants adopted a Communiqué which made a positive assessment of the political developments, especially in the area of EU accession. In that sense, Montenegro’s progress in EU accession has been commended, and Montenegro was encouraged to continue in the same fashion.

DPM Lukšić underlined Montenegro’s regional advocacy for the development of democratic, market-oriented, and prosperous societies, cherishing good neighbourly relations, and undertaking joint projects, which would make the region a contributor to European stability and a clearer European future for all CEI countries still outside the EU.

Mr Lukšić attended a working breakfast of the WB6 head diplomats, where they exchanged opinions on the upcoming summit in Vienna. In discussing their co-operation in improving regional stability and economic growth, the ministers adopted a Joint Statement on connectedness and migration. They also discussed finalising the process of establishing the Western Balkans Fund, which should become operational in the nearest future.
Mr Marković visited Pristina to attend a panel conference on the Montenegrin national minority.

Mr Marković met with the Speaker of Kosovo’s Assembly and Minister of the Interior Robert Kaliňák. The meeting concluded. The officials devoted particular attention to the possibility of closing the issue of border soon through a signing of bilateral agreements. Mr Mustafa expressed his official visit to Pristina.

During the meeting with Prime Minister Isa Mustafa, the two governments in the area of information and communications (ICT).

Speaking on the topic of digital economy, DPM Lazović reiterated Montenegro’s eurasian and european aspirations.

Montenegro will continue strongly supporting Kosovo in its regional and international efforts – Deputy Prime Minister Duško Marković noted in his talks with Kosovo officials during his official visit to Pristina.

During the meeting with Prime Minister Isa Mustafa, the two officials welcomed the established co-operation as a sign of good neighbourly and friendly relations. This co-operation should be improved even further through more intensive regional economic ties, especially in the area of infrastructure, education and tourism potentials. Montenegro pavilion, designed by the world famous architect Marko Brajović, covers 375 metres square within the Bio-Mediterranean cluster, and exhibits the country’s natural beauty and organic harmonies. The pavilion, a mix of traditional and modern, presents Montenegro’s typical food and drink, interactive tools and galleries. It is also a chance to promote the country as an attractive tourist destination, advance co-operation with the host country and other countries participating at the exhibition, as well as to inform visitors about successful companies from Montenegro and make their products internationally known.

Mr Lazović attended the ceremony of launching the first digital museum in Albania within the project entitled “Promoting Connectivity of Internet Broadband in Prokletije Mountain Border Area,” which is undertaken within the IPA cross-border co-operation programme for Montenegro and Albania.

Montenegro will get the NATO membership invitation by the end of this year. The two officials also discussed the overall situation in Europe, emphasising the current momentum in the Western Balkans.

DPM Marković thanked Mr Kaliňák for Slovakia’s continued support for Montenegro’s Ministry of the Interior in terms of building capacity, with a particular emphasis on the country’s vehicles donation to the Police Directorate of Montenegro Mr Kaliňák will soon visit Montenegro on the occasion of handing over the second part of the donation and talks on strengthening police diplomacy between the two countries. DPM Marković added.

DPM Marković also met with Slovak Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák, who commented hopeful that Montenegro will get the NATO membership invitation by the end of this year.
Fifth session of Montenegro–China joint committee: Montenegro plays significant role in expanding Chinese investment in Central and Eastern Europe

07 June 2015

Fifth session of the Joint Committee for economic and trade co-operation between Montenegro and China was held earlier today in Ningbo, China. On behalf of Montenegro, the session was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Vujica Lazović and Minister of Transport and Maritime Affairs Ivan Bravić.

DPM Lazović informed representatives of the Chinese government in the Joint Committee about the projects that were implemented between the two sessions. Both sides voiced satisfaction over the established co-operation and noted the progress achieved in economic and trade relations between the two countries, primarily related to the project of the Bar-Boljare highway’s priority section, which will be built by the support of the Chinese state and which construction has already begun.

The meeting also addressed purchase of four ships from China that are already placed in service, the interest showed by Chinese ICT companies that have opened their offices in Montenegro and a series of trainings and seminars the Chinese Government funded and sponsored for Montenegrin officials in various fields.

Trade exchange has progressed since 2010, both in Chinese imports and exports. Besides the services, the Chinese state and which construction has already begun, the chinese side supported the proposal to continue economic and trade co-operation, stressing Montenegro’s geo-strategic position and its significance for Central and Eastern Europe. It was noted that possibilities for placement of Montenegrin products in the Chinese market are huge and that direct co-operation between Chinese and Montenegrin entrepreneurs may result in improving trade relations.

DPM Lazović in Brussels: Future of Montenegro is in European Digital Single Market

15 July 2015

Montenegro has reached high level of harmonization with the acquis in the area of Information Society, and its further development will secure our place in digital single market, once Montenegro joins EU - it has been concluded at the meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Information Society and Telecommunications Vujica Lazović and Vice President of the European Commission for Digital Single Market, Andrus Ansip, in Brussels.

During one-day official visit to Brussels, DPM Lazović met with Günther Oettinger, European Commissioner for digital economy and society, and Gertrud Ingestad, Director for Digital Business Solutions at the European commission.

Stressing out the full compatibility of the development of the Information Society in Montenegro with the countries of the European Union, Commissioner Oettinger expressed his confirmation that digital policy may be the first area where Montenegro completely satisfies the standards to become EU member. In that sense, Commissioner regarded the progress achieved in creating the Information Society in Montenegro and pointed out the readiness of the Commission to fully support the realization of the remaining obligations in negotiation process for Chapter 10, as well as the steps Montenegro is about to take in reaching the standards for Digital Single Market.

At the meeting with Director for Digital Business Solutions at the EC, Gertrud Ingestad, the delegation expressed interest of Montenegro to join EU program “Interoperability solutions for European public administration (ISA)”, joining this program, Montenegro will gain access to EU funds for development of informatics solutions that will highly enhance the quality, speed and efficiency of public services.

Financial services

The European Union’s general policy on financial services has been defined in Chapter 9 of the acquis communautaire and its objective is to ensure stable, secure, and efficient financial markets within the EU.

Provisions from Chapter 9 are aimed at securing a balanced and coherent relationship between policies that regulate the functioning of financial markets within various sub-divisions:

1. Banking and financial conglomerates
2. Insurance and pension insurance under the auspices of the employer
3. Securities markets and investment services
4. Financial markets’ infrastructure

Therefore, the full alignment with EU regulations in the area of financial services and the consistent implementation of Montenegrin regulations in the areas of banking, insurance, financial and securities markets’ infrastructure and investment services will ensure a higher degree of stability for the financial system in Montenegro.

Stability of the financial markets has become a priority for the EU, especially since the 2008 crisis, and activities aimed at its maintenance are twofold improving the legislation regulating the EU’s financial sector, and strengthening financial sector oversight.

The biggest challenge for Montenegro in this chapter lies with the fact that the EU’s legislation in this area is being amended and changed at high speed, and the institutions tasked with regulating and controlling the financial markets hold continuous training for their expert, technical, and IT capacities in order to be one step ahead vis-à-vis the providers of financial services whose work they control.

In order to ensure a more efficient control of financial markets, the European Commission initiated in 2009 a series of changes in the oversight structure, establishing a European System of Financial Supervisors, comprising three oversight bodies: The European Banking Authority (EBA) in London, the...
guaranteed deposit per individual is EUR 50,000, whereas in the Montenegro, have been established in such a way that the amount loan guarantees. Even though Montenegrin banking is free of bans shown for the establishment of credit unions, nor for providing institutions operating in Montenegro, and thus far no interest has been the Law on the protection of deposits. the Law on bankruptcy and winding up of banks, amendments to the rules for managing bankrupt banks. Montenegro will adopt a being devoted to the improved deposits guarantee schemes and be able to respond to potential financial and operational risks. In the area of banking, the focus is on meeting the requirements related to the base capital that banks need to set aside in order to be able to respond to potential financial and operational risks. In addition to stricter prudential requirements for banks, attention is being devoted to the improved deposits guarantee schemes and the rules for managing bankrupt banks. Montenegro will adopt a series of laws aimed at strengthening the regulatory and oversight framework for the banking sector. Law on the banks. Law on the additional oversight of financial conglomerates, amendments to the Law on bankruptcy and winding up of banks, amendments to the Law on the protection of deposits.

There currently 12 banks and five micro-credit financial institutions operating in Montenegro, and thus far no interest has been shown for the establishment of credit unions, nor for providing loan guarantees. Even though Montenegro banking is free of bank conglomerates for the time being, likely due to its size, measures for supervising them should nonetheless be adopted, as this is required by EU regulations. The deposit-guarantee schemes in Montenegro have been established in such a way that the amount of guaranteed deposit per individual is EUR 50,000, whereas in the EU it is EUR 40,000 - a target we will slowly be aiming to reach by the time we accede. Following the financial crisis, the EU has particularly underlined the need to break the negative effects of inter-connectedness of banks and member States, who financed their bail-outs with State money. As a result of these efforts, the foundations of the Banking Union have been established in 2013, which includes a single over-sight mechanism for all the banks done by the European Central Bank. In addition to a single control mechanism, a new directive on bank bail-out has envisioned an establishment of a new institution - the Single Bank Resolution Fund. The Banking Union applies to eurozone members, whereas other EU members can be admitted if they wish so.

In the area of insurance and occupational pensions Montenegro is facing a challenge of transposing and applying the Solvency II directive and the so-called IORP directive on insurance and occupa
cional pensions. The Solvency II directive prescribes requirements for taking up business and licensing of insurance companies in the EU's single insurance market. However, many countries have still not started implementing it adequately, which leaves Montenegro with not too many best practice examples. European legislation envisages the existence of a broad palette of insurance types and ensures that the insurance claims are very high and paid efficiently by the insurance providers. Transposing this directing in Montenegro will require two phases: 1. Harmonisation with provisions from Solvency I and adoption amendments to the Law on insurance in the final quarter of 2015 with the start date for implementing some provisions being the date of EU accession, and 2. Gradual move to Solvency II and the adoption of a brand new Law on insurance in the final quarter of 2018. IORP directive deals with oversight of occupational pension providers and provides detailed guidelines on regulating occupational pensions programmes. Its objective is to guarantee the freedom of providing occupational pensions programmes across Europe and the free movement of capital in this sector. The occupational pensions programmes are wide-spread in the majority of the EU member States and they are usually the second pillar of those countries' pension systems. The principle of ensuring the existence of occupational pensions means that the State would require the employer to pay certain funds from the employees' gross wage into a so-called employees' fund, which eliminates the problem of unpaid contributions. It has been envisioned that would start implementing this directive by adopting amendments to the Law on voluntary pension insurance by the end of 2018.

In the area of securities and investment services, as well as the infrastructure of financial markets, Montenegro will adopt by the end of 2015 a new Law on the capital market, which will transpose all the most important EU acquis elements in these areas. These include : acquis requirements on settlement finality in payment and settlement systems, requirements on derivatives through Central Counterparties (CCPs) and trade repositories (even though Montenegro does not have such an infrastructure, the clearing obligation of OTC derivative contracts and the repo
ting obligations on relevant financial institutions such as credit institutions, investment funds, and insurance undertakings. They also include the Directive on markets in financial instruments. Directives on investment companies and Directive on investor compensation schemes.

When it comes to the latest tendencies in the area of EU capital markets, the Commission has launched a project in 2015 of unifying capital markets, with an intention to establish a more integrated capital market in all 28 member States by reducing the fragmen
tation of financial markets, diversification of sources of finance, boosting cross-border capital flows, and improving the conditions for company financing, especially improving transparency of fund s to SMEs. The Capital Markets Union (CMU) is the backbone of Mr. Juncker's Investment Plan for the EU announced in November 2014 when the new Commission was being set up. CMU is hoped to shift the boundaries of the EU single market. Generally speaking, in all areas the emphasis is being put on creating a new provision of all financial services, and for this reason Montenegro must ensure, prior to accession, their unhinde red functioning within its borders as part of the EU single market. Agreement with the acquis in Chapter 9 will have positive effects for the entrepreneurs, investors, and generally speaking all particip ants in the financial market. New kinds services that will be on offer will boost competitiveness and innovation, especially when it comes to insurance companies and banks. Special attention will be devoted to ensuring consumer protection and information provi
ding financial services, such as loans, insurance, investment in securities markets, and investment services.

Montenegro launched negotiations on this Chapter at the inter
governmental conference of 22 June 2015 in Luxembourg, and by the end of accession negotiations it will meet the commitments from its negotiation position and be ready to implement adequa
tely the acquis communautaire from Chapter 9.

Zorka Kordić Secretary of the Working Group

European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) in Paris, and the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EI- GPA) in Frankfurt. Montenegro is facing a challenge of transposing and applying the Solvency II directive and the so-called IORP directive on insurance and occupational pensions. Its objective is to guarantee the freedom of providing occupational pensions programmes across Europe and the free movement of capital in this sector. The occupational pensions programmes are wide-spread in the majority of the EU member States and they are usually the second pillar of those countries' pension systems. The principle of ensuring the existence of occupational pensions means that the State would require the employer to pay certain funds from the employees' gross wage into a so-called employees' fund, which eliminates the problem of unpaid contributions. It has been envisioned that would start implementing this directive by adopting amendments to the Law on voluntary pension insurance by the end of 2018.
Chapter 16.

**Taxation**

The EU acquis in the area of taxation is divided into four sub-chapters: indirect taxation, direct taxation, administrative co-operation and mutual assistance; and operational capacity and computerisation.

The acquis in the area of indirect taxation is primarily related to the harmonised legislation in the area of Value Added Tax (VAT) and excises. The minimal VAT rate in the EU is 15% and this applies to most goods and services. VAT rates vary in different countries from 15% in Luxembourg to 27% in Hungary. In the area of excises, the acquis encompasses harmonised legislation on energy products, tobacco products, and alcoholic beverages. In the area of direct taxation, the acquis deals with certain aspects of profit taxes and the taxation of capital gains. The aim is to eliminate distortions for cross-border economic activities between enterprises within the Union. The EU legislation in the field of administrative co-operation and mutual assistance between Member States’ tax and customs authorities provides tools to share information in order to prevent tax evasion and tax avoidance. It allows, for example, exchanging tax information automatically, spontaneously, or upon request.

**Negotiations in Chapter 9**

Montenegro received the full Screening Report for this Chapter on 23 October 2013, which assessed positively the overall alignment of national legislation with the acquis. The Lithuanian Presidency invited Montenegro on 17 October 2013 to submit its negotiating position. On 12 June 2014 the Government adopted the Negotiating Position and submitted it to the Commission the following day. In the further course of accession talks, Montenegro needs to continue aligning its national legislation with relevant EU provisions, focus on further strengthening of administrative capacities, and establish Central Liaison Office and Excise Liaison Office. As regards computerisation in the field of taxes, Montenegro will require more time to align its legislation in the area of Value Added Tax Information Exchange System (VIES) is the hardest, longest, and most expensive system for the exchange of VAT information. Its development takes around five years and costs around eight million EUR.

**The importance of negotiations in Chapter 9**

Upon accession, benefits from negotiations in this Chapter will be felt by all Montenegrin citizens. The acquis will contribute to a more efficient system of controlling tax collection and also to reducing unemployment. Montenegrin citizens will be allowed to seek jobs elsewhere in the EU and they will enjoy the same tax levies as those countries’ citizens. Given that the EU regulations ensure that healthcare services for EU citizens are exempt from VAT, Montenegrin citizens will have access to cheaper healthcare from the day of accession. In addition, Montenegrin citizens will no longer have to pay VAT for used cars bought in another EU country. When it comes to Montenegrin companies, benefits of doing business within the EU in terms of taxation are manifold lower administrative expenses for entrepreneurs (removal of customs barriers), less bureaucracy (eGovernment, less administrative and statistical tasks for businesses, especially SMEs, etc.), transparent and safe pursuit of business in all member-states (free check-up of VAT ID numbers, etc.).
The chapter on trans-European networks aims at ensuring interconnections and interoperability of transport and energy networks within the EU and the possibility of connecting to third countries. The application of EU acquis in this area ensures financial assistance from EU cohesion and structural funds with the view to upgrading the trans-European transport and energy networks. Due to their practical value and immediate benefits they provide to citizens, the areas of transport and energy are very high on the list of EU priorities, and this chapter enables their full utilisation.

The chapter is divided into two policies—Trans-European networks for transport (TEN-T) and energy (TEN-E). TEN-T’s objective is to connect capital cities, trade centres, harbours, and airports with distant areas in their countries and the rest of the EU. TEN-E is a network of energy systems across the EU territory which deliver safe and efficient and ecologically sustainable use of such infrastructure. The scheduled deadline for its completion is 31 December 2020. The comprehensive network is supposed to cover the whole of the EU, including distant and remote areas, ensuring accessibility and inter-connectedness to all EU regions. The core network is a subdivision of the comprehensive network, and it contains the strategically most important sections of the comprehensive network. The core network focuses on the parts of TEN-T network with the biggest added value for Europe: cross-border missing transport links, key bottlenecks, and multi-modal hubs. The scheduled deadline for completion is 31 December 2030.

The key document for EU policy towards the Western Balkans is the South East Europe Transport Observatory Memorandum (SEEOTO Mem), which was signed in Luxembourg on 11 June 2004 by the Governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and the European Commission. The aim of the SEEOTO is to promote co-operation on the development of the main and ancillary infrastructure on the multimodal SEEOTO Comprehensive Network and to enhance local capacity for the implementation of investment programmes as well as data collection and analysis on the SEEOTO comprehensive network.

Notable progress within this co-operation framework has been achieved by including the SEEOTO comprehensive network into the prospective enlargement of TENs towards the Western Balkans, enshrined in Regulation 135/2013. This means that even though Montenegro cannot apply the provisions of this chapter until the day of accession, it can already join the comprehensive trans-European transport network and propose projects to be financed from EU funds. The Berlin Process, launched in August 2014 and supported by EU member States, has given a new dimension to this chapter. Over the past year, a series of high-level meetings took place between the European Commission and Western Balkans’ governments with the view to identifying key projects of regional importance and defining the ways for their implementation. The Berlin meeting adopted the final proposal of a new methodology of the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF), as the chief mechanism to be used for EU financial support to the region for seven-year periods. The new methodology gives the beneficiary countries more decision-making power as regards priority projects, and it allows for the use of EU funds during preparation and implementation of infrastructure projects of regional importance.

Within this framework of co-operation and in parallel with submitting the draft negotiating position on Chapter 21 to the EU in April, Montenegro has proposed transport routes that should be part of the trans-European network in Montenegro. As regards road transport, we proposed SEEOTO route 4: Bar-Boljare motorway (border with Serbia) and SEEOTO route 1: Adriatic Ionian corridor (coastal part, along the coast of Montenegro), i.e. the link to Croatia and Albania. When it comes to the rail network, we proposed SEEOTO route 4: Bar-Vlora-Viszanka railroad (border with Serbia) and SEEOTO route 2: Podgorica-Viszanka railroad (link to Albania). The Port of Bar was proposed as the most important commercial harbour, whereas capital cities’ airports are recognised as key points for air traffic.

Montenegro cannot apply the provisions of this chapter until it joins the EU, but it has an obligation to develop a strategic approach to TENs, which means reaching agreement with the EU about the corridors that will be part of the core network. In addition, neighbourly co-operation, which mainly involves defining projects of regional importance and shared action, will be the basis for further progress in accession talks on this chapter. Without a doubt, Montenegro is looking at a process of strengthening administrative and institutional capacities through regular trainings and hiring, as needed.

Chapter 21.

Trans-European networks

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This chapter ensures various benefits and citizens of Montenegro will start fully experiencing them on the day of accession. They are primarily related to the inclusion of our roads into the main network, which will ensure quicker and safer transport of people and goods, removal of bottlenecks, and improved frequency. In addition, energy transport systems will be upgraded, meaning better energy supply. As this chapter touches upon Chapter 14: Transport policy and Chapter 15: Energy, progress in those two chapters will also mean progress in Chapter 21. The biggest significance of TENs can be observed in the possibility to implement important projects with the financial aid of the EU.

In light of the Vienna Summit in August 2015, bringing the Berlin Process further, an expectation is voiced that proposed routes for the core network will be confirmed, and that the talks will continue in coming up with a priority list of infrastructure projects to be implemented by 2030 and to which the EU support is expected through various instruments.

The working group for Chapter 21 was established in April 2013, and it comprises 13 members – 8 from the State institutions and five from the civil society. The chapter was opened at the inter-governmental conference in Luxembourg in 22 June 2015.
External relations

Montenegro launched negotiations on Chapter 30.

Chapter 30.

External relations at the inter-governmental conference of 30 March 2015 in Brussels, which served as an excellent indicator of our commitment to fulfilling the obligations on the European agenda and a recognition for our efforts.

The area of external relations encompasses various aspects of EU international activity, including common trade policy, bilateral agreements with third countries, and development policy and humanitarian aid.

This chapter has great practical value and horizontal influence on other chapters, especially those related to the Customs Union and the four economic freedoms: movement of goods, workers, capital, and services.

The Working Group for Chapter 30 plans to adopt a specialised action plan in order to ensure efficient implementation of the acquis in this area ahead of accession. Experiences from previous enlargement cycles show that the greatest challenges in negotiations on this chapter are in the area of aligning with trade agreements implemented by the EU and the transition from a receiving country to provider of development and humanitarian support. As this chapter is extremely important for Montenegrin economy, in the years ahead we should devote our attention to educating entrepreneurs about the new circumstances for doing business that will arise once we start implementing the common trade policy and numerous trade agreements in force in the EU.

Montenegro will continue aligning its national legislation with the EU acquis and also strengthening the administrative and control capacities in the area of external relations. In this regard, participation in the EU development policy will enable Montenegro entrepreneurs to invest and aid the development of third countries, which will boost the demand for and visibility of Montenegrin products and services in those countries’ markets.

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Given that the area of external relations mainly deals with economic relations between the EU and third countries, it can be stated that all Montenegrin citizens, and especially entrepreneurs, consumers, and workers will enjoy long-term benefits from EU membership. Direct benefits of common trade policy can be observed in the abolition of border control between EU countries, which further means less time spent and less administrative procedures costs for transport and customs for Montenegrin entrepreneurs, which leads to the lowering of prices of goods and services.

In addition, investment opportunities will multiply when trade barriers are removed, so our country will become an even more attractive destination for foreign direct investment. At the same time, new jobs will be opened and GDP will rise, leading to further economic development of the country. Lower prices and greater selection of EU products will be beneficial for Montenegrin consumers, given that due to tougher European competition the citizens of Montenegro will be able to choose from a broader range of products and services from EU member States, and this will also make domestic products cheaper. EU membership will improve the possibility to make joint entry into third markets. Regional cooperation will complement our country’s offer, i.e., the placement of our products and services.

Participation in the EU development policy will enable Montenegrin entrepreneurs to invest and aid the development of third countries, which will boost the demand for and visibility of Montenegrin products and services in those countries’ markets. Winning new markets will promote additional values our country possesses and will define Montenegro as a serious European and global competitor.

EU membership will boost opportunities for export, both in EU- and third countries. More precisely, Montenegro will become part of the internal market, which will make it easier to export Montenegrin products to the single market comprising more than 500 million consumers. From the day of accession, Montenegro will apply trade agreements the EU has already signed or is currently negotiating with third countries. This will provide access for our entrepreneurs to the markets in Central and Latin America, Africa, the Mediterranean, etc. In addition, if the EU concludes trade agreements with the US, China, Japan, and India, Montenegrin producers will also gain access to those markets. According to a joint study by EU and US experts, the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership could bring around EUR 19 billion per year when it enters into force in its entirety. Montenegro will benefit from this agreement once it becomes an EU member, and it will allow our entrepreneurs to do business in the US more easily.

With the aim of attaining Union standards in the area of humanitarian aid, Montenegro has accessed to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism with the view to improving the quality of response to emergencies. The Mechanism allows for the use of human and material resources of other countries in natural, technological, and other hazards. Its importance has recently been confirmed when it was launched during the floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia in May 2014. The joint action of Mechanism signatories provided high-capacity water-pumps, helicopters, motorboats for evacuation, the transport of water, medication, food, and rescue teams. The EU has assigned 800 humanitarian workers to the areas in need.

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Jelena Leković
Secretary of the working group
Recognising the processes

The process of European integration is a clear path and strategic choice for Montenegro which is unquestionable at this moment. I am not viewing this issue solely from the position of Government policy, but from the standpoint of our society as a whole. Opinion polls show that citizens largely support accession to the European Union, and this level of support is even higher than it was in most other countries when they were at similar stages in their EU integration. Add to this the overwhelming political discourse on this topic which is best summed up by noting that all political parties represented in the Parliament are in favour of the EU accession process.

This inevitably creates a sense of ease, but such state of affairs is actually one of the greatest challenges both for the Government, especially its negotiating team, and for the civil society, which needs to make the biggest contribution to the process. The fact that the number of people who said they supported EU accession is a few dozen percent higher than the number of people who said they actually knew what EU membership will mean for our society raises some questions. To what degree are the citizens informed about the process of European integration? What do they know about the Eu over the years and thus also learn about the painful sides of the process and are met with unfilled expectations?

It has often been said that the EU accession is not just a process for the Government, Parliament, and the civil sector, but the society as a whole. This process essentially means reforming the entire social and State system, which often means establishing some new institutions and abolishing or completely transforming some old ones. This process is taking place in two realms — the political and technical/administrative one.

Today, three years after the launch of negotiations, we may give some general conclusions about what we have done so far and what the achievements and shortcomings are. The number of negotiating chapters opened, the meetings, the documents we adopted, all show clearly that the technical dimension of the integration process has been more than good. Facing many challenges, the well-established negotiating structure with modest capacities has achieved some very visible results. However, on the other hand, in the political sphere of the process we have lots of populist rhetoric but no concrete results.

Herein lies the essence of the relationship of citizens and all stakeholders towards the EU integration process. An average citizen does not care what the negotiating position for Chapter 23 was, or what our success indicators for Chapter 24 are. An average citizen wants to feel the change in his daily life, he wishes to know an official has been held accountable both politically and by the court of law for the abuse of office, that the healthcare system will be free of corruption and nepotism, and that he can expect a trial within reasonable time.

The lack of concrete results in the key areas that have been recognised as our priorities, primarily the rule of law, followed closely by economic governance and public administration reform, directly affects citizens’ trust in the process. This is a direct consequence of the lack of political will and the attempts to reduce the EU accession process to mere adoption and harmonisation of legislation, drafting of strategies, etc, while lacking any concrete results. The success achieved in the administrative/technical sphere will be meaningless unless we as a society start making more pressure and investing more efforts into finally tackling the biggest issues we face.

A major role in supporting this process is reserved for the European Commission, and especially the EU Delegation to Montenegro. The EU is a union of values, and here it is often presented as a technical coalition tackling the biggest issues we face.

All the pitfalls of assessing the citizens’ attitude towards the accession process and finding contradictions in opinion polls can be overcome solely through committed and shared work of all the partners in the process, primarily by achieving concrete and tangible results that will produce on the one hand rewards for the effort, sacrifice, and painful moments, and on the other hand timely and adequate information provision to the citizens about what they can expect at each stage of integration.

Programme coordinator
Edin Koljenović

Edin Koljenović
At the height of the NATO campaign, the media have the task to inform citizens objectively, using simple language, and carefully lest they slip into propaganda. Journalists need to be a link connecting national and NATO officials and the citizens. It is extremely important who informs the citizens about this process and in which manner.

NATO has become the hottest topic in Montenegrin media ever since the membership preparations have become really serious. Now we are only four months away from the meeting of NATO foreign ministers which will decide whether our tiny Western Balkans country will receive a membership invitation.

At the height of the public campaign, the media have the task to inform citizens objectively, using simple language, and carefully lest they slip into propaganda.

This means that it is easier to change the style of expression than the way of thinking. The term ‘interoperability’ means next to nothing to citizens if Montenegro. Such language is understandable to servicemen. But, if you tell citizens that a dimension of cooperation within NATO is the possibility to educate young people at foreign military academies and other educational institutions than this has a meaning for them.

Regardless of the past disregard and irreverence towards NATO among the majority of citizens because of the 1999 experience, this topic has managed to find its way to prominence in media reporting, where space was given to exchange of views.

The reporters have the right to ask, and the officials are obliged to respond to the questions and explain what Alliance membership means for Montenegro.

The process of Euro-Atlantic integration has changed Montenegro and continues to do so. We are making adjustments so that we could join, as a small country, a system operating for 66 years.

Even when we receive an invitation the job is not done. It is likely that the citizens will accept our accession to the Alliance and that this topic will no longer be a cause for debate it once was.

We are in the process if intensive and focused dialogue with NATO, as was decided at last year’s Wales Summit. It will be interesting to see whether the Alliance will make a precedent and invite Montenegro prior to a summit. Until the official Podgorica receives an invitation, the task of reporters is to explain the process, and the tasks of officials is to negotiate the terms of accession.

Maja Đurići
Reporter at Daily Pobjeda

Alliance promoters and reporters need to be attuned to the needs of citizens
ON THE RIGHT TRACK

The key result of the public dialogue on Montenegro’s prospective NATO membership, which was launched in late 2013, has been the establishment of a moderate environment for the exchange of arguments on this issue. The dialogue, with a broad general public, including those who oppose Montenegro’s NATO accession or advocate for neutrality, has given additional legitimacy for the policy of NATO integration and has opened up space for gradual intensification and diversification of the media campaign.

Having in mind the need for continuous provision of additional information, education, and exchange of arguments on this topic, in 2015 we continued the public dialogue with our target audiences, and towards the end of Q1 of 2015 we launched a carefully crafted information campaign in the media.

The information campaign has been launched with the view to bringing NATO membership benefits closer to the citizens, by taking these issues to a personal level, which is intended to boost the sense of belonging of Montenegrin citizens to the world of Western values. Having in mind that the key arguments employed by those supporting Montenegro’s NATO membership are safety, security, and prosperity, we have aimed to present these arguments to the citizens via easily digestible messages and images.

Taking into consideration interests of various target audiences, we placed a special emphasis on the need to maintain security and sovereignty of Montenegro, the fact that no country can be absolutely safe on its own and especially outside NATO, that the European Union and NATO accession or advocate for neutrality, has given additional legitimacy for the policy of NATO integration and has opened up space for gradual intensification and diversification of the media campaign. However, this does not mean that more information were conveyed to the audiences, more thorough coverage of the topic has taken place. It has also shown that one of the key issues in the process is the public opinion and perspectives NATO membership, which was launched in late 2013, has been the establishment of a moderate environment for the exchange of arguments on this issue.

Another important feature of this period is the co-operation with the communication Team and the assessments of NGOs dealing with the agenda of most media outlets in the latest media monitoring. That the younger generations are the key movers and shakers of development processes in the society has also been shown by studies of all universities and faculties in the country who gathered around joint projects related to youth benefits from Euro-Atlantic integration. They hosted debate competitions to exchange arguments on the benefits and shortcomings of the integration process. In this period, for the first time ever the Parliament of Montenegro has called a session devoted solely to the topic of Euro-Atlantic integration. Instead of the MPs, the benches were filled by students who posed questions to Government officials, parliamentarians, and the diplomatic corps.

A series of conferences, workshops, round tables, discussions, and similar events that took place over the course of the past few months have contributed to the establishment of a climate of open dialogue on the issue of NATO accession, where all sides presented their views and information in order to help people form opinions and positions on the issue.

Having in mind the fact that Montenegro is now in the process of intensified and focused dialogue on NATO membership, and that one of the key issues in the process is the public opinion and support for accession, the latest opinion surveys show that we are on the right track.
In the previous six months, we continued pursuing various activities aimed at strengthening economic and cultural diplomacy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, diplomatic network, and network of honorary consulates. In this context, we launched the economic relations department at the Embassy in Skopje, and appointed a trade adviser at the Embassy in Belgrade, and we launched new honorary consulates in business hubs such as Milan, Zurich, and Gaziantep.

The MFAEI has also stepped up the promotion of Montenegro's economic interests abroad, in cooperation with other ministries and institutions, by hosting business forums attended by the Prime Minister, ministers, mayors, the Chamber of Commerce, the business community, etc. We hosted business forums in Paris, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Abu Dhabi, and Munich, we participated at EXPO 2015 in Milan, hosted business forums across Montenegro in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, organised business delegations' visits, reporters' visits, and held other events in cooperation with other ministries and the National Tourism Organisation.

In addition, the MFAEI continues supporting efforts at cultural promotion of Montenegro abroad.

Launch of the economic relations department at the Embassy in Skopje

The upward trend in bilateral relations between Montenegro and Turkey has been further boosted by the launch of Montenegro's Honorary Consulate in Gaziantep on 8 May 2015, and the signing of Memorandum on Understanding between the Chamber of Commerce of Gaziantep and Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro. The Honorary Consulate's activities will be aimed at strengthening economic and cultural cooperation between Montenegro and the South-Eastern region of Turkey, especially in the area of agriculture.

The launch of the Consulate and the signing ceremony were attended by representatives of ministries and local governments, and the opening ceremony, hosted by the Embassy in Ankara and Honorary Consul, was attended by representatives of the Municipality of Gaziantep, businessmen, and honorary consuls of Montenegro in Iskenderun and Izmir.

Launch of the Honorary Consulate in Gaziantep

Montenegro launched the Honorary Consulate in Milan, and appointed Doli Predovic as Honorary Consul. The Consulate was opened by President of Montenegro Filip Vujanovic, and the ceremony was attended by distinguished citizens and businessmen.

More dynamic promotion of Montenegro's economic interests

Montenegro - Poland Business Forum

Business forum for Montenegrin and Polish entrepreneurs was hosted on 22 July 2015 at the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro in cooperation with the Embassy of Poland. The aim of this event was to develop business cooperation in the areas of energy, environmental protection, transport, trade, furniture industry, to present the two countries' economic potentials, and to improve business cooperation through direct encounters. The entrepreneurs were welcomed by Deputy Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Stanko Zlokovic, Director of the Directorate for Economic Relations and Cultural Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Marijana Zivkovic, and the main guest of this important gathering, Katarzyna Kacperczyk, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Poland in charge of economic diplomacy.

The Forum concluded that Poland and Montenegro have an excellent potential to expand co-operation in the areas of energy, mining, and agriculture, as well as SMEs and science and research institutions. It was noted that Poland is a very important political partner for Montenegro, being an EU and NATO member. The participants were hopeful that this business forum would help establish closer economic ties, adding the importance of the Protocol on Co-operation in economic diplomacy signed by the two ministries, which will encourage, among other things, joint promotion at EU and third markets.

The Forum's message was that Polish entrepreneurs active in the EU market are growing more interested in the Balkan markets, and especially Montenegro. According to Ms Kacperczyk, Poland views Montenegro not as a small country, but a future EU member with excellent market potential.

Business Forum in Stuttgart

During the official visit of Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic to the German state of Baden-Württemberg, the Ba-
Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Petar Ivanović and Economy Minister Vladimir Kavarić. Montenegro’s potentials were presented by Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Petar Ivanović and Economy Minister Vladimir Kavarić.

Den-Württemberg International hosted a business forum in Stuttgart which presented Montenegro’s investment potential with the view to attracting German investors from that industrial region. In addition to Prime Minister Duško Marković, Montenegro’s potentials were presented by Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Petar Ivanović and Economy Minister Vladimir Kavarić.

The Chamber of Commerce of Hamburg hosted on 18 February 2015 a presentation of Montenegro’s tourism and economy potentials. Presentations were given by Economy Minister Vladimir Kavarić, Director-General for Tourism Development and Standards at the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism Olivera Đukanović, and Montenegro’s Ambassador to Germany Vera Joličić-Kuliš. Forum participants were Hamburg’s Chamber of Commerce Director Corinna Nienstedt, State Advisor for Economy, Transport, and Innovation at the Government of Hamburg Bernd Egert, presidency member of the Association for Eastern Europe Andrea Bilitewski, and numerous German entrepreneurs. German participants commended Montenegro’s efforts on the road to EU as well as its openness to new standards, which as they said is a good precondition for attracting SME investment from Hamburg. The forum’s main message was that economic co-operation between Montenegro and Germany should be further improved. It was noted that Montenegro as a country could be an excellent destination for German investors, and that energy and industrial production offer good opportunities for investment.

**Montenegro at EXPO MILANO 2015**

Montenegro participates at the global universal EXPO 2015 in Milan. EXPO 2015 took place between 1 May and 31 October, and it is entitled “Feeding the planet, energy for life”, and 147 countries took part. Montenegro is presented within the Bio-Mediterranean Cluster, and the presentation is aimed at promoting the country as a destination worthwhile visiting and investing in. This is Montenegro’s third participation in EXPO events – the first was in 1905 in Liege and the second in Shanghai in 2010.

**Ministerial Meeting on Ionian-Adriatic Pipeline (IAP)**

At the sidelines of the 2BS forum in Budva, MFAEI organised on 5 June 2015 the ministerial meeting of countries participating in the Ionian-Adriatic Pipeline cooperation project – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Montenegro. Foreign and energy/economy ministers took part in the meeting and they signed a Joint Statement giving strong support to intensifying practical co-operation in further implementation of the project, which was noted as very important for energy security and for diversifying energy resources.

**Diplomatic briefing on the occasion of the publication of the Public Call for funds for encouraging direct investment**

MFAEI held a diplomatic briefing on the occasion of the publication of the Public Call for funds for encouraging direct investment, which was launched by the Secretariat for Development Projects of the Government of Montenegro.

Noting the importance of the Government’s Decree on encouraging direct investment for further improvement of the business environment and for generating growth, the briefing highlighted the importance of the Public Call in the context of raising awareness and attracting potential investors from the countries present at the meeting. Montenegro’s investment climate was presented in detail, with a special emphasis on its competitiveness and openness to foreign investment, and the call noted that the funds for encouraging direct investment can be granted for projects worth EUR 500,000 or more and which guarantee at least 20 new jobs over the course of three years from the day of conclusion of the agreement on using the funds. The briefing noted that similar public calls will also be announced in the years to come.

**The exhibition “The Peak of the Eagle’s Rock” in Skopje**

The fifth individual exhibition of renowned Montenegrin artist Milena Mijović Durutović was launched on 13 July 2015 at the City Museum in Skopje, Macedonia assisted by the MFAEI. The exhibition was part of the artist’s project aimed at presenting and promoting contemporary visual arts from Montenegro in the Western Balkan countries, as well as to improve cultural co-operation in the region.

The exhibition is called “Vrh Orlovog krša” (“The Peak of the Eagle’s Rock”). The very title is a symbolic representation of the ambition of contemporary person from Montenegro to find, in times of quick and fundamental change, fulfillment. The search for this goal is torn between the beginning and the end, life and death, good and evil, holy and cursed, spirit and matter – the message delivered by the author through black and white... As in life, so too on the canvasses of Milena Mijović Durutović the answers to these questions require patience, strength, endurance, understanding, sometimes spilled blood, and above all joy and in spite of all culminate through realization... which is hidden by the colour red on the artists’ canvasses,” the critique of the exhibition reads.

The exhibition was launched by the President of the Visual Artists’ Association of Macedonia, Hristijan Sanev, and the Mayor of Skopje, Koče Trajanovski.

Directorate-General for Economic Diplomacy and International Cultural Co-operation
T he Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration’s Di plomatic Academy is in charge of educating diplomats, and its main responsibility is the development of a system of diplo- matic training with the view to improving skills and knowledge required for diplomatic work. The Academy’s activities include coordination, planning, implementation, and evaluation of training programs, cooperation with various national and international partners, as well as specialised trainings for the Ministry’s diplomats.

By recognising the importance of the initiative that was launched by the Montenegrin Association of Political Science Students (MAPSS), the Diplomatic Academy has supported and contributed to the implementation of the Diplomacy Course held between 20 and 30 April 2015 at the Faculty of Economics and Business. The Diplomacy Course is a pilot-project of huge potential importance both for future diplomats and for the general public, and we sincerely hope it will continue in the future and be recognised as an excellent diplomatic education programme.

The Diplomacy Course consisted of a series of lectures, workshops, and simulations, and its objective was to offer students practical knowledge and help them develop their skills both for the purposes of their studies and future professional work. The students with ambitions to work in diplomacy and international co-operation launched this initiative in order to receive practical guidelines and new insights on top of their theoretical knowledge from renowned experts, experienced professors, and seasoned diplomats.

The starting point was the shared belief that there are two important preconditions for working in diplomacy: good personal character and academic knowledge. By adding two more requirements – work experience and investment in professional development – the Diplomatic Academy and MAPSS gathered foreign diplomats in Montenegro, Ministry officials, and students for two weeks in April, enabling them to exchange information and practical experience. This was a unique opportunity for students to meet with experts, experienced professors, and seasoned diplomats and practice negotiating skills with a professional facilitator.

The project was supported by the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro and the diplomatic missions, co-operation with various national and international partners, as well as specialised trainings for the Ministry’s diplomats.

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Project participants’ impressions:

Mr Branko Lukovac, former foreign minister of Montenegro and ambassador of Montenegro to Italy and Croatia, and Head of Montenegro’s Government Mission to the European Union, said he hoped the students would take opportunities such as this one and be active in developing their knowledge of international relations, foreign policy, and Montenegro’s diplomacy, as this would be extremely beneficial for understanding the dynamic global processes and developments in the country, which will be useful for their work and for Montenegro’s progress. Mr Lukovac commended MAPSS’s idea to initiate and host the Diplomacy Course for students to build on their theoretical knowledge through exchange with experts and diplomats. He noted that the initiative requires sincere support by the Diplomatic Academy, and also by the faculties, who in his view should include it as part of their curricula and support similar initiatives by MAPSS and other student organisations.

H.E. Ambassador Aleksandar Andrija Pejović, State Secretary – Chief Negotiator for Montenegro’s EU accessions, said the Diplomacy Course is an excellent way to help students apply their theoretical knowledge in a practical context. She expressed her multidisciplinary topics and the selection of the professors, which were carefully planned. She led a negotiation simulation and found the student participants to be very well-informed and intelligent. She was hopeful that the course would be offered in the future as it is a beneficial learning opportunity for students.

Mr Đeng Rong, Chinese Director, Associate Professor, Confucius Institute, University of Montenegro spoke about the importance of science, culture, and education for national promotion. He noted the value of such a platform for Montenegro’s diplomacy.

H.E. Ambassador Aleksandar Andrija Pejović presented certificates to the students who completed the Diplomacy Course.

Prof. Dr Radoslav Raspopović’s book “The History of Diplomacy of Montenegro” will be further opportunities such as this one to boost the interaction between the Confucius Institute and Montenegrin citizens.

Lectures were also given by Mr Robert De Groot, Assistant Minis- ter for European Affairs (European External Action Service); Mr Hasan Oztun, Deputy Ambassador and First Counsellor, Turkey’s Embassy; Ms Agnieszka Klaas, Consul, and Ms Monika Dulian, II Secretary, Poland’s Embassy; Mr Hakan Özdemir, Deputy Ambassador and First Counsellor, Turkey’s Embassy; Ms A. Sunshine Ison, Head of British Missions; H.E. Krisztian Posa, Hungary’s Ambassador (The Role of the Diplomatic Corps); Ms Monika Dulian, II Secretary, Poland’s Embassy (Consular Relations); Hakan Özdemir, Deputy Ambassador and First Counsellor, Turkey’s Embassy; H.E. Ferdinand Nagy Romania’s Ambassador (Public Diplomacy); H.E. Vesko Garočić, Ambassador, Acting Director General for NATO and Security Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (European Affairs); Mr Stevan Kandić, Deputy Ambassador for European Affairs; Mr Hakan Özdemir, Deputy Ambassador and First Counsellor, Turkey’s Embassy; H.E. Ambassador Aleksandar Andrija Pejović, State Secretary – Chief Negotiator for Montenegro’s EU Accessions; Mr Dragan Grlović, Head of Diplomatic Protocol at the MFAEI (Diplomatic Protocol); Mr Erk Holmgren, Political Adviser, US Consulate General, Podgorica, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, diplomatic missions in Montenegro, the Rectorate of the University of Montenegro, the Confucius Institute, the “Radosev Ljumovic” National Library, the American Corner, and Hotel Ramada Podgorica.

At the closing ceremony in Hotel Ramada, on behalf of the MFAEI, Ambassador Aleksandar Andrija Pejović presented certificates to the attendees of the Diplomacy Course, and they all received copies of Prof. Dr. Radoslav Raspopović’s book “The History of Diplomacy of Montenegro.”

The award ceremony, which was attended by representatives of the participating diplomatic missions, MFAEI, project sponsors, MAP- SS, and attendees, gave an overview of the project, noting its contribution for gaining useful practical knowledge for further education and future work. The MFAEI team thanked all those who contributed to the project and especially the organising team who made the event possible. Ambassador Aleksandar Andrija Pejović addressed the ceremony on behalf of the Ministry and the Diplomatic Academy and was hopeful that the course will grow into a tradition. He noted it should serve as a place of dialogue on international relations and foreign policy, where young people can exchange with seasoned diplomats from the country and abroad and put their enthusiasm and creativity in the service of developing new ideas and guidelines for strengthening Montenegro’s international position.
Countries that are small in terms of size and population, such as Montenegro, by default also have small diplomacies and cannot compete with larger countries in terms of numbers, funds, or power. This however does not mean that small countries cannot achieve big diplomatic influence, but only that they need to find additional ways of exercising it. Owing to new technology and ease of communication, a whole new field is presenting itself where traditional diplomacy can be complemented by a new kind of diplomacy – open diplomacy, and especially its contemporary sub-genre – digital diplomacy.

The phrase public diplomacy, unlike the traditional Wilsonian concept, is today mainly used to describe those activities undertaken or aided by the State that are aimed directly at foreign audiences with the intention of informing, raising awareness, and exercising influence. Digital diplomacy, as the integral part of public diplomacy, is the use of new information and communication technology for pursuing diplomatic objectives, i.e. promoting one’s country.

These two concepts are rather novel, and especially to our region, which does mean they have not been through a sufficiently long testing period to show all their benefits. Sweden, for example, has a section on its foreign missions’ websites where they invite visitors’ comments on Swedish foreign policy. The Government of Croatia aims to respond to every single query on their social media channels. Many countries use official social media channels to promote their culture, social and political values, and other qualities they possess, thereby strengthening the impact of their ideas and policies. These means of communication are additionally very useful because they require no intermediary and enable for direct targeting of audiences in foreign countries. Montenegro is active in this area to a degree, but not as much as it could be. We adopted Twitter early on as an official communication tool, first for communicating with foreign media and public and than with our domestic audiences. There is also a growing trend and various plans in the State administration to launch more and more social media presence, on networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Vine, etc. These tools are very useful and the costs of using them are negligible compared to potential impact. We also have a comparative advantage in this area – our national web domain ME has already made Montenegro known globally and opens up additional space for promoting our country and boosting its influence.

By adopting this communication approach, which naturally invites the public into the discussion, we would further boost our country’s promotion. In other words, communicating stories, good practices, achievements of the State, society, groups and individuals gets shared and multiplied very quickly by the online community. This sort of real people promotion of personal experience is immeasurably important for any country whose top industry is tourism. For example, no tourist organisation in the world could ever hope to achieve an impact in promoting Montenegro’s natural beauties to the international audience the way Maria Sharapova’s Instagram feed has in July.

Of course, the same applies to negative promotion. If there are issues in Montenegro, social media will amplify awareness, and on the other hand, it generates public input for improving public policies. This further testifies to the truthfulness of the credo that you should communicate what you are doing, not what you would wish to be doing, and that communication alone, no matter how good, if not a product of good policy is little more than propaganda.

In short, the power of modern tools of communication and public diplomacy is that they can amplify whichever message you are sending, i.e. modern communication approaches can amplify the voice of diplomacy by making it heard across the meridians.

Naturally, these new communication tools are just there to aid the classical tools of communication and diplomacy. Never could a person with an iPad and Twitter make as strong an impact as a diplomat in a morning coat and top hat at a tête-à-tête meeting or multilateral forum. However, the person with the iPad will more easily reach like-minded people in the digital sphere, where the language of Tumblr and Reddit, or whatever it is kids these days are using, is better understood than high-brow political talk, and where they feel equally close to the New Zealander who liked the same Guardian article they did on Facebook as they feel to the next-door neighbour with whom they are discussing the last night’s game.

Even in this online world where the borders do not exist, one can make a good impression about one’s country. Everyone on the Internet knows Canadians are too polite, Italians always stick together, and Chinese are good at math. Could we contribute to making Montenegrins famous? Could for instance Instagram make Montenegro a glamorous destination or could Twitter make it a desirable investment hub? Not on their own of course, but these tools can certainly contribute to ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at promoting Montenegro globally.
INTERVIEW

Interview with Irene Tatažinjskom, Polish Ambassador

Montenegro closer to membership than ever before

How realistically, in your opinion, can Montenegro expect to receive a NATO invitation by the end of the year and to have its spot alongside other fully-fledged Alliance members at the Warsaw Summit?

Montenegro is now closer to receiving NATO invitation than ever before. NATO member States have noted with great appreciation progress made by Montenegrin administration and the army. Poland strongly supports the membership of Montenegro in NATO what was clearly confirmed by Foreign Minister Grzegorz Schetyna during his visit together with the Foreign Ministers of Romania, Hungary and Croatia, in Montenegro between 22 and 23 of July this year.

Obviously, the invitation decision must be taken unanimously by all NATO member states and will take into account extent to which membership criteria are met. There is not much time before the decision is made. This is the reason why it is crucial to continue with efforts aimed at reaching standards required to become a fully-fledged member of the Alliance. However, it depends upon aspiring country’s authorities and societies how much they will engage in the process of internal reforms to achieve the best results.

The decision will be taken, after a thorough review of the integration readiness, at the December ministerial meeting. As I said, there is not much time left.

Poland supports our ambitions to join the EU and NATO. Do you, as a representative of a NATO member-State, think Montenegro has met all the conditions necessary to receive an invitation?

Poland has carefully monitored Montenegro’s progress towards Euro-Atlantic accession. We appreciate progress made, particularly when it comes to meeting requirements within the four key areas aimed at strengthening the rule of law, fight against organized crime and corruption, security sector reform process and comprehensive dialog with the public aiming at better understanding for NATO’s goals and policy.

However, some issues still deserve attention. The most important is the effective implementation of mechanisms adopted. This process must not be stopped once Montenegro receives the invitation. There are at least two reasons for that: first, that admitted country should meet its obligations after having joined NATO and add real value to NATO’s collective defense and security. One needs to keep in mind here that every NATO member is in the state of continuous adaptation and transformation for the benefit of the whole Euro-Atlantic community.

Second, once invited, the ratification process is launched which may last a while and is based on progress made and being made at that time. To sum up: the better prepared Montenegro is, the more likely the accession.

There is also one other thing: reforms leading to NATO membership translate not only into a greater chance to receive invitation. They benefit Montenegro itself, making it more modern, transparent and secure for the benefit of its own citizens. Thus the accession process, as in case of all aspiring countries, creates a win-win situation.

What is your assessment of the two countries’ bilateral relations, and what economic areas do you see as most suitable to pursue further improvement of co-operation?

We have excellent bilateral relations, with prospects to further strengthen their political, economic and other dimensions.

The reflection of our enhanced co-operation were the visits of Prime Minister Milorad Dodik to Poland in May 2014 and the visit of Foreign Minister Grzegorz Schetyna to Montenegro between 21st and 23rd of July 2015. We hold regular political consultations and develop practical co-operation aimed at assisting Montenegro on its path to EU and NATO by sharing our expertise and know-how in various fields. During the ministerial visit in July, a Protocol on co-operation in the field of economic diplomacy was signed between the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs. This opens a new area of joint debate and projects aiming at strengthening our economic position in the region and in the world. On the basis of this Protocol, bilateral consultations are planned for Autumn 2015, in Poland. During his last visit, our Minister of Foreign Affairs was accompanied by a number of Polish companies already present on the Montenegrin market or willing to find business partners from Montenegro.

There is an extensive dialogue between our Ministries of Agriculture. This sector is of particular importance for the development of our economies. The recent study visit of the Montenegrin farmers to Poland was an opportunity to learn about the regulatory system, organization as well as EU policies related to small farms. In June 2015 Polish companies and institutional partners participated in meetings aimed at promoting bilateral co-operation in Podgorica and Budva.

Co-operation in the field of education and academic work is another area with good prospects for the future. At this very moment Poland hosts a large group of Montenegrin students who attend Polish lan-
Polish companies have already invested in Montenegro, in mining and IT business, but also in harbor infrastructure. We see growing interest in other fields as well. Montenegro is a country with great potential for FDI. Further modernization and development of new infrastructure in such fields as urban infrastructure, public transport, environment, energy, public utilities opens new fields of co-operation and new opportunities for developing our ties.

On this occasion researchers of the centre for heritage management for preserving and promoting our heritage, which is shown by the relations between the city of Grodzisk Mazowiecki and Danilovgrad. We are also looking into new possibilities of intensifying this cooperation and knowledge exchange.

We seek opportunities for regional co-operation between the two countries. Therefore, a workshop for local administration representatives on best practices as regards EU funds absorption will be held in Montenegro in October.

Do Polish investors see Montenegro as an attractive destination for investment?

Yes indeed. Polish companies have already invested in Montenegro, in mining and IT business, but also in harbor infrastructure. We see growing interest in other fields as well. Montenegro is a country with great potential for FDI. Further modernization and development of new infrastructure in such fields as urban infrastructure, public transport, environment, energy, public utilities opens new fields of cooperation and new opportunities for developing our ties.

Our membership resulted in the need to adapt Polish armed forces to NATO standards. It required professionalization of human resources, modernization of armaments, military equipment, training systems, procedures and exercises. Today the Polish Army capabilities are known and appreciated. It translates into a strong position in the Alliance allowing us to shape its future in line with our expectations. After 2014, NATO is definitely going back to its roots: building capability to defend its own territory.

NATO provides a mechanism to work effectively in partnership with different governments, institutions, and organizations in order to advance mutual security interests. This dimension is particularly important as the challenges we face now require more networking and a comprehensive response.

During our 16 years’ experience in NATO Poland smoothly grew into the Alliances political and military structures, procedures, habits and culture of debate. We intensively modernized our country and military capabilities. We do not consume security. We have proven to be a serious and responsible Ally actively participating in providing security in Europe and beyond its borders.

What needs to be underlined, sixteen years passed and still more that 50 % of Polish citizens declare their support for NATO membership. It is an outstanding result. Our people recognize and appreciate that with our accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, Poland gained effective and credible security guarantees, as well as strengthened its position and role at regional and global level. It helped us to strengthen our economic credibility and to benefit from the NATO Security Investment Program.

To what extent can the terror threat posed by the Islamic State serve as an argument for NATO expansion?

Terrorism deserves to be condemned in any form it can never be tolerated or justified. At the moment it constitutes a disastrous element of international environment we live in. It is a serious point on NATO agenda. The best proof is the recent NAC meeting called at Turkish request to hold consultations under Article 4 of the Washington Treaty.

In my opinion, the threat posed by the Islamic State cannot serve as a direct argument for NATO expansion – at least not at this moment. One Enlargement process is driven with certain political processes and benchmarks. Not least important is the requirement of certain capabilities and standards which must be met for a decision to be made. The scope of possible threats to the Alliance is not a factor here. However, I do not deny that security environment may have a bearing on political decisions made at national level in particular NATO countries. In particular if the enlargement process could – in a way - contribute to general Euro-Atlantic resilience against the terrorist threat.

How do you assess Montenegro’s progress in areas covered by acquis Chapters 23 and 24?

Montenegro has done considerable work in order to fulfill the benchmarks in chapter 23 and 24. Nomination of Special Prosecutor last July can serve as one of the examples of this process. What remains crucial now is the implementation of the legislation already adopted together with other provisions of individual action plans, and building convincing track-recor- ds in all required areas.

Taulik载体 Marija Jovićević Assistant Chief Editor Pobjeda

Marija Jovićević, September 2015 / Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
common vision, joint promotion of free trade, and integrated economic development. The concept was proposed by China and its President, Xi Jinping, in late 2013 as part of China’s mega-programme of infrastructure investment entitled “One Belt – One Road,” which would span tens of countries, including the Western Balkans as an important region. The New Silk Road concept, connecting a historically, economically, culturally, and demographically diverse and broad area, could be an opportunity to link our region to many distant lands and areas along this 2000km road which could boost the region economically by making it an important stopping point along this global route.

Having in mind the need to strengthen the position of the Western Balkans as a part of this corridor, in addition to China which is the main promoter of the concept and a country clearly showing an interest in the region and Europe as a whole, another important player to look at is Turkey, and especially its vision towards the project. Turkey’s position should be considered in the terms of its ambitions towards the region, its growing presence in the area, as well as that one of the main strands of Turkey’s policy and diplomacy towards the Balkans is the growing economic presence and improving transport links. Turkey has a major stake in foreign direct investment in virtually all the countries in the region – Kosovo, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, tourism, whereas in Montenegro the greatest importance can be ascribed to Turkish capitals entry into the Port of Bar. When it comes to Turkey and the countries of the region, it is especially important to consider them in the context of the possible development of the “Turkish Corridor”, which is intended to ship natural gas through the Western Balkans (according to initial plans of Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia) towards Western Europe.

Since Eurasia is traditionally a significant economic and geopolitical player, China and Turkey are two countries with relatively major strategic perspectives and growing influence (the former in global, the latter in regional terms). In addition, they both seem intent to explore the potentials and benefits of the New Silk Road. Potential benefits for these two countries can also be understood as follows: for China co-operation within this framework would be beneficial to its ambitions to link European and Asian markets and secure placement for its vast production; for Turkey, it would contribute to its aim to become one of world’s top 10 economies by 2023, when it celebrates the centenary of establishing the Republic.

The proposed establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which would be the central fund for financing the New Silk Road’s infrastructure, for which China would secure 50% of overall funds (US$ 100 billion), confirms that China is focused on this project also by proposing important financial mechanisms. The predictions that global trade is making an eastward shift, i.e. towards Asia and its growing middle class, have also been confirmed by signals from the UK, Germany, France, Italy, and other EU member states that they would be willing to join the AIIB, whereas Russia, Australia, South Korea, Turkey, Georgia, and Hong Kong have already announced their candidacy, and Brazil has accepted the invitation to join the group of initial founders.

In this context, an interesting piece of information is that recent research has shown that the ten fastest growing economies in the world (among whom the BRICS countries, Turkey, Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea) will have accumulated more than 50% of world GDP between 2012 and 2022.

The trade exchange between the EU and China has grown by more than 80 times since 1975 (when relations have been established with what was then the European Economic Community). This testifies to the growing interests and potential for strengthening the co-operation between two major global geopolitical players. The EU has become China’s main trading partner, and China has long been EU’s number two just behind the US.

China’s interest in strengthening its presence in our region of South Eastern Europe has been confirmed by now regular annual summits at the level of prime ministers between China and 16 countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as by China’s dear intention to participate in infrastructure development projects in the region. For instance, Montenegro is building the most demanding section of the Bar-Boljare motorway together with Chinese investors and using the loan from the Chinese EXIM bank. In Serbia, Chinese companies are building the motorway towards Belgrade. Chinese funds will be used to reconstruct the Belgrade-Budapest railway. China is also keen on buying the Port of Piraeus in Greece, as a key future corridor into Europe for China’s products.

It is not easy to make estimates on the potential reach and impact of the New Silk Road, bearing in mind that the idea is in its infancy and it is also difficult to predict its further progress. However, the overall international developments, multifaceted economic relations and intertwined economic interests, the crave for new markets, and the need to account for existing spending all spark thinking and lead to a possible conclusion that this subtly named concept has huge potential of exercising positive influence on the development of countries along its route.

The new silk road
The Stanislo Radonić sends a courteous letter on 10 March 1879 to Belgrade, addressed to the Principality of Serbia's Foreign Minister Jo- van Ristić, which reads as follows: “His Majesty, our graceful Prince has pronounced on the eighth of this month the new organisation of our State administration, according to which the Senate, in its historic meaning and form, has ceased to exist, and the powers vested in it thus far have been divided among the three newly formed bodies, the State Council, the Ministry, and the Great Court. Bringing this to your attention, it is my pleasure to inform you that H.E. the Prince has entrusted Božo Petrović to act as the President of the State Council and on myself as the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Montenegrin diplomacy officially declares its existence. In substance it has existed from before, its contours have been given shape by words of wise rulers, such as in the words of Njegoš when he ascended to power: “I pledge before the true god that I shall render myself to my people, that all my deeds shall be eagerly taken to ensure for it respect of foreign nations and at home security and peace.”

The Foreign policy road of Montenegro used to be a narrow, winding dirt road; than better known cobblestone, macadam, and than even a modern lane with sometimes laggard due to objective circumstances, with the Montenegrin envoys abroad; translation and verification of official and private documents, Montenegrin consular representation abroad; guidelines, and rules on its service; passports; implementation and translation of judicial documents; submission of various documents at the request of foreign authorities; official communications, extractions in agreement with the Justice Ministry and implementation of treaties and conferences.

Being even the case at times of presentation of letters of credence, even from the time of Peter II Petrović Njegoš, who after the siege of Monte- negro fled to European paths, sea bonanzas, lights of Trieste, Naples, Kotor, Venice, Rome… drawing inspira- tion from works of great poets and soaking in the incredibly valuable knowledge of foreign languages. His great desire to learn and travel is a cause of great concern for the French consul, who in an attempt to avoid complications regarding the issuance of the passport recommends, to Njegoš to take French lessons from a friend of his in Montenegro. To this, the great from Cetinje Njegos was very tall, calm. I am a free man! I belong neither to Russia, nor Austria, nor Turkey, and I beg to deny me no one. I am an independent, free man, and it would be an utmost abuse of power if you were to choose to deny me my right to travel. Who could pre- vent me to travel out of my own pleasure through the whole of Europe?

Njegoš’s sharp and clear words, visionary ideas, statesmanship, dignified attitude, and desire to breathe European air and bask in the European Sun, his ambition to bring Montenegro into the civilisation circle to which it naturally belongs, and which it aims for again today, have been aptly described by the Ger- man-American linguist and author Therese von Jacob Robinson in 1852, when she wrote the following: “I belie- ve his basic idea was to make Montenegro a member of the great family of Europe without sacrificing any of its freedom and independence.”

Dejan VUKOVIĆ

Author is the Director of the Directorate for Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro
The colonisation of Montenegrins in Vojvodina in Serbia is a process that took place between 1945-1948 in specific post-WWII circumstances following the end of the National Liberation Movement of Resistance of Yugoslav Peoples. The government of the then Democratic Federal Yugoslavia has proposed the Law on the Agrarian Reform and Colonisation, which the Interim National Assembly of the DFe has unanimously adopted on 23 August 1945, on the basis of which the colonisation of Vojvodina was raised to the federal level, and it proposed the transfer of village families from across Yugoslavia. A testament to the labo-
rious and timely account given by the new government to the proposed agrarian policy and colonisation of the huge Yugoslav granary of Vojvodina is that even before the end of the war in Yugoslavia, on 7 March 1945, the Ministry for Colonisation was established, whose first minister was Sre- ten Vukosavljević.

Famed war hero Krsto Popivoda was the president of the Commission for the Agrarian Reform and Colonisa-
tion between 1946 and 1948. Each republic of Yugoslavia was assigned a quota for the profession of colonisation, i.e., the number of families to move to Vojvodina. Montenegro’s quota was 70,000 families. The Law also provided for a land fund for implementing the land reform and colonisation, as well as for establishing large agricultural estates. Around 160,000 hectares of cultivated land was divided among 66,000 colonisers, 70,000 users without property rights, several estates, and other establishments.

After WWII, the sizeable German population of Vojvo-
dina was reduced by roughly 90 percent. According to the 1941 census, there were 318,259 Germans in Vojvodina, and according to the postwar one of 1945 as little as 31,821. The reasons are many and given the point in history un-
derstandable – deaths in combat, running away, expulsion, assimilation, ethnic mimicry…

In terms of percentages, Montenegro suffered greater loss in WWII than any other South Slavic country. Dissipa-
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tenegrin highlanders born in the valley are growing into adulthood. Montenegro’s anti-fascism is an enduring bond between the colonisers and their spawn in Vojvodina and their fatherland of Montenegro. This bond shall remain strong for as long as the new generations remember and honour Negić’s words written on the grandiose monu-
mament to the fallen soldiers in the city centre of Lovćenac: “Blessed is he whose name lives forever. A good reason had he to be alive!”
Since March 2014, the process of European integration in Montenegro has gotten a tad closer and more tangible, as Podgorica became host to an EU Info Centre – space devoted exclusively to the EU integration of Montenegro. The EU Info Centre is a communication project of the EU Delegation to Montenegro, and its location in Podgorica is 19 December St. With this project, the EU Delegation aims to open its doors to everyone and offer information to citizens about European integration, the EU, its values, and standards. It has been designed to be an information hub for all information on the EU, the European integration process, and reforms that are this process’s outcome.

There is a consensus that regardless of the high degree of citizens’ support for EU integration the understanding of this process needs to be improved. For this reason, it is crucial for the citizens to have timely and high-quality information about the EU. Therefore, the key mission of the EU Info centre is to improve the understanding of EU’s functioning, the citizens’ awareness of the accession process, and all the benefits for the society, including by promoting the EU’s financial support to Montenegro.

The EU Info Centre has been launched both for the decision-makers and for the citizens not directly involved in the integration process. Having in mind the complexity of the process, the EU Info Centre aims to explain to citizens in a simple way and without the EU jargon how the EU-related reforms will affect their everyday lives. Each day from 9 to 5 the EU Info Centre offers information to visitors on the EU-related issues and helps them track down relevant information and guidelines for EU funds and programmes.

In the first year of its existence, the EU Info Centre has organised over 100 events and hosted over 4000 visitors. It also established close co-operation with all relevant institutions and organisations in the country, including all three branches of government and the broader civil society. The EU Info Centre hosted diverse profiles of visitors, fishermen, IT experts, to students and sportsmen, judges, policemen, and prosecutors eagerly working on improving the rule of law.

The EU Info Centre is not just a place for ‘serious’ events related to policies, but it also aims to enrich the life of the Montenegrin capital by presenting the cultural diversity of its 28 member States and to become a well-known place on the tourist map of the city. In the EU Info Centre, ambassadors and citizens danced to the tunes of famous European waltzes and other dances, French Embassy and French Institute representatives read Shakespeare while serving the afternoon tea, and all with the EU’s motto "United in Diversity." An important contribution to promoting the EU’s values was given by the EU’s honorary ambassadors in Montenegro, actress Sanja Popović and handball coach Dragan Adžić.

Already a tradition in the country, the most important event for the EU Info Centre is 9 May – Europe Day – when the centre hosts a series of political, cultural, and festive events ending with a major concert in the open. A European Festival was this year’s addition to the celebrations, and citizens were invited to a children’s masquerade ball, mini-EXPO of the EU member-States, a light installation by French artist Jerome Toquer, and a concert by honorary EU ambassador Dragoljub Đurič.

Through specialised themed weeks, the EU Info Centre works to raise awareness about important topics for the society, such as environmental protection, transport infrastructure improvement, or student exchange opportunities. We at the Info Centre are particularly proud of its Open Days, where we hosted hundreds of boys and girls from elementary and high schools, future EU citizens, to talk to them about the large European family.

The EU Info Centre is available on social networks, where we talk directly to citizens about our activities, publish information about developments in the European community, and respond to queries, ask for recommendations, and invite to social events. The EU Info Centre also produces video content, publications, and brochures for informing citizens.

We are proud of our vast network of friends and partners. However, the EU Info Centre’s main partner is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. The EU Info Centre and the Ministry work closely together since the centre’s launch, whether it be media briefings or major public events such as Europe Day celebrations.
The planned Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration 2015 budget was 13,671,052.32 €, whereas the operating budget was 13,661,285.57 €.

Budget execution is a phase in using the budgetary means for implementing policies envisaged by the budget.

The Ministry’s budgetary execution in the first half of 2015 has amounted to 8,070,152.14 €, which is 59.07% of the operating budget.

Table 1 shows budget execution for each programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MFAEI</th>
<th>Planned budget</th>
<th>Operating budget</th>
<th>Execution</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td>1,125,457,94</td>
<td>1,138,058,82</td>
<td>540,236,97</td>
<td>47.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>1,153,489,44</td>
<td>1,159,255,72</td>
<td>695,000,50</td>
<td>59.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic and consular posts</td>
<td>10,338,715,03</td>
<td>10,315,915,03</td>
<td>6,399,751,91</td>
<td>62.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The process of EU integration and accession</td>
<td>929,352,31</td>
<td>924,018,40</td>
<td>430,426,76</td>
<td>46.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directorate for Diaspora</td>
<td>124,037,60</td>
<td>124,037,60</td>
<td>4,736,00</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,671,052,32</td>
<td>13,661,285,57</td>
<td>8,070,152,14</td>
<td>59.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observing the need for full transparency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration will periodically publish reports on budget execution.