

# Weekly Brief

**Weekly Brief is a collection of news and information concerning events that happened in Montenegro published on weekly basis. This publication is free of charge.**

## POLITICS

### **Institute Alternative requests a consultative hearing**

Institute Alternative suggested to the President of Parliamentary Committee for Security and Defense to organize a consultative hearing regarding the Bill on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security and Defense Sector.

This law was supposed to be the first Montenegrin act regulating in details the field of parliamentary oversight and democratic control of the security sector, as well as the role and jurisdiction of Parliamentary committee.

President of the Institute Alternative's (IA) Managing Board Stevo Muk stated that IA is willing to participate in the suggested consultative hearing and give its contribution by assisting members of the Committee for security and Defence concerning particular legislation issues.

Muk believes that representatives of defense and security sector

institutions should take part in the consultative hearing, as well as representatives of DCAF, OEBS, NDI and the EU Delegation in Montenegro.

"Our opinion is that this way we would contribute to transparency of the Law preparing process and public involvement in issues of reform of Security and Defense Sector", says the initiative that has been submitted to the Committee.

Institute Alternative's analysis "Parliamentary oversight of Defense and Security Sector: What next?" states that there is no justification for delaying the adoption of the Law on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security and Defence Sector, among else, because of the fact that "the same political party, or coalition of parties is governing the State, as well as the Defense and Security Sector in the period before and after the pluralization of the political scene."

### **Government reducing public administration**

Montenegrin Government adopted an internal decree concerning the layoff of

budget-funded public servants. According to *Dan*, around 2.5 thousand employees will have to be laid off, since Government is planning on reducing the public administration for 5%. Those who apply voluntarily will receive eight thousand euros, while those that are declared redundant will receive two thousand euros as a severance pay.

Government's decree orders each budgetary consumer unit to conduct an internal survey with employees in order to determine whether there are persons who will voluntarily leave the job.

This examination of possible redundancies does not apply to ministers, judges, members of regulatory agencies, doctors and teachers, but primarily the administrative staff. The main criterion for the Government to reduce the state and municipal administration will be the "Guillotine of regulations", conducted by the Vice Prime Minister Svetozar Marović's Cabinet. This project aims at eliminating unnecessary procedures and, therefore, unnecessary job positions. data, there are 43,891 budget funded state employees. Out of this num-

### **Opposition's election slogan - "Better Montenegro"**

"Better Montenegro" is the slogan under which the united opposition will participate in the local elections in 14 Montenegrin municipalities on 23 May. At the meeting with the Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs Miguel Angel Moratinos leaders of SNP, PzP and NSD presented their electoral program.

SNP leader Srđan Milić said that representatives of all political parties will have the opportunity to demonstrate that the success of EU integration is primarily defined by the fact that "the accession itself is not the goal but in fact a tool for changing the system of values in Montenegro".

Leader of PzP Nebojša Medojević said that the local elections in Montenegro are held under a great influence of state structures and elements of organized crime.

He said that there is a massive abuse of state institutions and public enterprises to ensure the "irregular and unlawful victory of DPS in all elections".

### **Law on Territorial Organization withdrawn**

The government withdrew the Draft Law on Territorial Organization from the procedure after it became clear that it would not have the required parliamentary majority.

MPs filed a number of amendments to the proposed Law, most of which had the support of not only opposition parties but also of the smaller member of the ruling coalition - SDP. The proposed amendments have changed the very concept of the law. Amendments, among other things, entailed the establishing of new municipalities.

### **Electoral legislation harmonization delayed**

Deadline for harmonization of the electoral legislation with the Constitution is extended to the end of the year, which represents the fourth consecutive extension of this deadline.

Previous deadline expires on 30 April, and its re-extension was proposed by deputies of the DPS and SDP Miodrag Vuković and Raško Konjević.

The Parliament also adopted amendments to the Criminal Code, proposed by the Government. Amendments to the Criminal Code were supported by 43 deputies, 24 voted against, while two were restrained. The most important changes relate to the introduction of the institute of extended confiscation of the property acquired through criminal acts, and the further decriminalization of libel.

Laws on energy and energy efficiency were also adopted,

as well as another twenty regulations.

### **President Vujanović for amendments of the national symbols**

Montenegrin President Filip Vujanović indirectly supported the initiative of leader SNP to remove the verses of the Montenegrin national anthem that are believed to be written by a fascist author during the first half of the twentieth century.

In a press statement, President said that the national anthem should not entail content that does not follow the "antifascist thought to Montenegro will forever belong to". President Vujanović believes that this change does not require the Constitution to be amended, but rather an article for the Law on National Symbols.

This statement has caused sharp criticism from the member of the ruling coalition - SDP. MP Raško Konjević assessed President's behaviour as "incomprehensible". Konjević said that it is inconceivable that the President shares views with those who were against the restoration of Montenegrin independence and have not voted for the Law on National Symbols.

nation is 'very present' when it comes to political beliefs.

## **New web portal of the Government**

The Montenegrin Government has put into operation the new web portal made in .NET 3.5 technology.

This is a brand new solution and design that is structurally and conceptually different from previous arrangement. Functionality is enhanced with segments such as news list for selected user groups, FAQs, newsletter, search engine, photo, audio and video galleries.

Government of Montenegro had published a tender for the making of the web portal, which was won by the SNT Company. The project was worth around 91,500 euros.

## **ECONOMY**

### **IMF: GDP growth of 4.6%**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) improved its prognosis for Montenegro announcing that the Montenegrin economy will this year weaken for 1.7%, rather than the earlier envisaged 2%. IMF predicts a 4.6% growth of the Montenegrin economy in 2011.

Despite the improved forecasts, Montenegro remains the only country in the region whose gross domestic product (GDP) will weaken this year. However, IMF predicts that

Montenegro will be one of the regional leaders concerning the economic growth in 2011.

However, Vice Prime Minister Vujica Lazović announced that the Government stays by its projection of economic growth this year of 0.5%. Lazović said that the forecasts are unreliable in the conditions of crisis and stressed that the IMF has last year changed its projections and forecasts of economic growth several times.

### **Air Traffic in Montenegro normalized**

Air Traffic in Montenegro as is completely normalized, stated the national airline company Montenegro Airlines.

"Traffic is completely normalized, it takes place safely with on schedule flying," said MA statement, adding that the Montenegrin airplanes are flying to Belgrade, Niš, Priština, Skopje, Vienna, London, Frankfurt and Zurich.

Air traffic in Europe was disrupted due to a cloud of dust spawned by the Icelandic volcano.

### **Aktor-HCH's offer**

According to *Vijesti*, Greek-Israeli consortium Aktor-HCH did not lower its initial offer for the construction of the Bar-Boljari highway section from Podgorica to Matešev,

although that was the prime condition put forward by the Government. Instead, Aktor-HCH has offered to include an additional 15 km long section of the highway in the initial offer, worth 1,2 billion euros.

President of the Tender commission Zoran Radonić said that the Government will make the final decision concerning Greek-Israeli offer next week.

## **SOCIETY**

### **Indictment for war crimes against Bosniaks in Pljevlja**

After 17 years, Montenegrin prosecutors filed charges against seven former members of the Yugoslav Army and police for harassment and expulsion of Bosnian Muslims from Bukovica near Pljevlja during the war in 90s.

Charging them with criminal offense of 'crimes against humanity', Montenegrin prosecutors filed an indictment and asked for custody of seven former members of the Yugoslav Army and the Ministry of Interior Affairs charged of violating the rules of international law, systematical abusing and intimidation of the Bosniak Muslim population in the region Bukovica in northern Montenegro, leading them to forced eviction.

The indictment was filed at the High Court in Bijelo Polje

with a request for the arrest and detention of all seven persons indicted. High Court in Bijelo Polje ordered a one-month detention at the request of prosecutors.

Bukovica is an area in the northwest Montenegrin region of Sandžak, and includes 37 villages, with mostly Muslim population. Human rights groups claim that at least eight people were killed and several hundred civilians expelled from the area of Bukovica during the Bosnian war, while hundreds of their houses were destroyed.

### **Morinj war crimes trial verdict in May**

The verdict in the Morinj war crimes trial is expected to be delivered on May 15 in, after the prosecution and the defense delivered their closing statements.

The prosecution and defence gave their closing statements in the front of the High Court in Podgorica on Tuesday. Six former members of Yugoslav People's Army are accused of torture, inhumane treatment of and infliction of bodily harm on 169 Croatian prisoners of war and civilians at the Morinj detention camp, during the war in Croatia.

Around 300 prisoners passed through the Morinj camp, near the coastal town of Kotor, from October 1991 to August 1992. Three died there and 56

died subsequently from the consequences of the beatings and psychological terror.

The six men were indicted by Croatia and handed over to the High Court in Podgorica.

### **Process in Bari**

Preliminary hearing of the suspects of tobacco smuggling in the 1990s have started before the court in Bari, Italy. Among the suspects are Serbian and Montenegrin nationals. The ANSA agency reports that the investigation is conducted against 14 suspects accused of smuggling cigarettes to Montenegro between 1994 and 2002, among them some former close associates of Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Đukanović.

Daily newspaper *Vijesti* reports referring to unofficial sources, that the former Minister of Finance and current President of State Audit Institution Miroslav Ivanišević will be removed from the list of defendants and that they will be tried in Montenegro since the Italian judicial system will submit the case to their Montenegrin counterparts.

ANSA recalls that the investigation against Đukanović was archived because of his diplomatic immunity. Đukanović has repeatedly denied any involvement in the case and said he did not use his immunity before the court in Bari.

### **CRNVO reminded Mugoša of the unrealized activities**

Centre for Development of NGOs (CRNVO) reminded the mayor of Podgorica Miomir Mugoša of the unrealized activities under the Action Plan for combating corruption in local self-government of the capital.

Among the many activities that are not completed, CRNVO singled out the preparation of amendments to the Decision on the participation of citizens in the exercise of public affairs; production and distribution of informative documents on how to report acts of corruption to the competent authorities; producing Rules on the election of the best employees, according to the criteria of compliance with the Code of Ethics; introducing mechanisms for monitoring employment, promotion and other segments of human resources; activities of the Action Plan concerning developing the capacity of NGOs to influence on the strengthening local government's accountability.

The largest number of these activities should have been implemented in 2009, while the entire Action plan must be completed before the end of 2010.

### **Amendments to the Law on volunteerism rejected**

Law on volunteerism will be

in the Parliamentary procedure once again, in an almost unchanged form since the majority in the Committee on health, labor and social care rejected amendments.

Sponsors of the amendments tried to change what they saw as an act that prevents the development of volunteerism. One of the articles of the proposed law prevents persons younger than 15 years to be engaged as volunteers. A group of 70 NGOs, headed by ADP ZID, wrote addressed the Speaker of the Parliament requesting that the Law is withdrawn from the parliamentary procedure, since its adoption could have long reaching negative consequences on the entire society.

## EU INTEGRATION

**Maurer: We have invested much in you and now we want results**

EU Ambassador in Montenegro Leopold Maurer said that the EU has invested a lot in Montenegro to develop an effective way of fighting corruption and organized crime and that the Government should have some results in the near future concerning this issue.

"We have a very important twinning project, where we have people from Scotland Yard working together with Montenegrin Police Directorate and Ministry of Internal

Affaires", said Maurer. He pointed out that there has still not been action against 'big players' in the organized crime and that the Montenegrin Government must start fighting against high-level corruption.

Recalling the killing and beating of journalists, the EU ambassador said he hopes that this practice is over and that the elites understand that media freedom is an integral part of the overall democratic system.

Maurer stated that the issue of the Government newspaper *Pobjeda* will have to be addressed, since it is not yet privatized, although the law required this to be done seven years ago. Responding to the request to comment *Pobjeda's* ongoing campaign against independent media, Maurer said that they are currently translating *Pobjeda's* articles regarding this matter, to which they will "pay careful attention to and comment on".



**GLOSSARY**

*This glossary contains the most commonly used abbreviations. It is subject to revision.*

<b>ANB</b>	Agency for National Security
<b>ARD</b>	Broadcasting Agency
<b>BS</b>	Bosniak Party
<b>CGO</b>	Centre of Civic Education
<b>CRNVO</b>	Centre for the Development of Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>CFSP</b>	Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU
<b>CoE</b>	Council of Europe
<b>DC</b>	Democratic Centre
<b>DPS</b>	Democratic Party of Socialists
<b>DSCG</b>	Democratic Alliance in Montenegro
<b>DSS</b>	Democratic Serbian Party
<b>DUA</b>	Democratic Union of Albanians
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EMIM</b>	European Movement in Montenegro
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>IA</b>	Institute Alternative
<b>IPA</b>	Instrument Pre-Accession Assistance
<b>LSCG</b>	Liberal Alliance of Montenegro
<b>LP</b>	Liberal Party

<b>MANS</b>	Network for the Affirmation of Non-Profit Sector
<b>MOC</b>	Montenegrin Orthodox Church
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
<b>NS</b>	People's Party
<b>NSD</b>	New Serb Democracy
<b>NSS</b>	People's Socialist Party
<b>PZP</b>	Movement for Change
<b>SAA</b>	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
<b>SDP</b>	Social Democratic Party
<b>SL</b>	Serbian List
<b>SNP</b>	Socialist People's Party
<b>SNS</b>	Serbian National Council
<b>SOC</b>	Serbian Orthodox Church
<b>SRS</b>	Serbian Radical Party
<b>SSR</b>	Party of Serbian Radicals
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>OSCE</b>	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

**DISCLAIMER**

INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS BRIEF COMES FROM LOCAL DAILY NEWSPAPERS (DAN, POBJEDA AND VIJESTI), WEEKLY 'MONITOR', E-ZINE ARTICLES, WEB PORTALS, AND NEWS AGENCIES' BRIEFS, AS CITED THROUGHOUT THE TEXT. THESE INFORMATION ARE SUPPLEMENTED BY INSTITUTE ALTERNATIVA'S OWN ANALYSES AND OPINIONS.

**Institute Alternative**

Founded in September 2007, Institute Alternative is a Montenegrin-based think tank. Founders are prominent individuals with civil society, public administration and business sector background.

IA's mission is to strengthen democratic processes in Montenegro by identifying and analyzing policy options.

IA's strategic objectives are to increase quality of public policy development, to contribute to human rights protection in Montenegro, to contribute to development of democracy and rule of law.

The values we share are commitment, independence, learning, networking, team work.

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