

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

Committee endorses amendments to the Law on ANB

Parliamentary Committee for Security and Defence has proposed that the Parliament adopts the amended Law on the National Security Agency (ANB). According to opposition, however, proposed amendments represent ANB's request for new competencies with which to impinge on human rights of Montenegrin citizens.

Law on Amendments to the Law on ANB was endorsed by the seven members of the Committee from the ruling coalition, while four MPs from the opposition were against and a representative of the Democratic Alliance abstained.

The most controversial provision of the amendments is the new ANB's competency of indoors monitoring, recording and surveillance.

Andrijević: Alderman quits PzP and considers joining DPS

Member of the Andrijević Local assembly Uroš Čukić decided to leave PzP and is currently negotiation with DPS, announcing that he could join that party. Significance of this event is in the fact that Čukić also left the ruling coalition in Andrijević "Better Andrijević - Better Montenegro". His resignation from PzP creates the opportunity for DPS to have majority if he joins that party, or for new elections to be held if he does not.

President of PzP Nebojša Medojević announced filing criminal charges against Čukić and local DPS Andrijević for the criminal acts of political corruption, if PzP's former alderman joins DPS.

Turčinović: Progress in resolving the border dispute in Prevlaka

Combined Montenegrin-Croatian Commission is supposed to meet sometime in the next month in order to make progress in resolving the border dispute in Prevlaka, announced the Croatian

ambassador in Montenegro Petar Turčinović.

The first meeting of the joint Croatian - Montenegrin Commission was held in January 2009. The Croatian side had submitted its proposal of a special agreement on settling the dispute before the International Tribunal. Montenegrin replied in July 2009 with a response which differs in certain areas. The second meeting of the Commission was supposed to take place in fall 2010 in Montenegro.

First session of the Parliament to be held in Cetinje

Parliament of Montenegro will hold its first meeting of the regular spring session on 08 March in Cetinje. MPs will comment on two conventions - the Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage and the procedure for granting consent to the Prior Notice for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade. On the agenda is also a draft law on foreign investment, as well as selections and appointments.

Prime Minister Igor Lukšić will appear before the MPs for

a “Prime Minister’s Hour” in March, for the first time after his. Two more such occasions and MPs’ question time mechanisms are to be conducted during the spring session of the Parliament.

***Vijesti*: Government no longer hiding its agenda**

The Government has decided to disclose the agenda of its weekly meetings beforehand in order to increase the transparency of its work, writes *Vijesti*.

Until now, the practice was that the media and the public find about the discussed matter after the Government sessions, sometimes even after several days.

The latest decisions of the Prime Minister’s Lukšić cabinet aims to facilitate the work of the media, with technical options for providing the public with an insight into the content of Government’s sessions being considered.

Prime Minister Igor Lukšić's first address to his Facebook friends

Prime Minister Igor Lukšić made his first [video address to his Facebook friends](#) last week.

He replied to a number of comments, talked about living standards, economic situation, European integration, fight

against corruption and organised crime and encouraged open dialogue on public policies.

ECONOMY

Economic-fiscal programme commended

Minister of Finance of Montenegro Milorad Katnić met representatives of the Directorate General of the European Commission for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN) and the Delegation of the EU in Montenegro.

The main topic of the meeting was the macro-economic and fiscal framework and the outlook for the next medium-term period.

EU analysts asserted that particularly good efforts were made regarding structural reforms and commended Montenegro’s Economic and Fiscal Programme for the period from 2011 to 2013.

Preliminary Conclusions of the IMF Mission

“Growth is finally resuming”, states [IMF’s preliminary conclusions on Montenegro](#). IMF officials noted that the industry began to grow in the second half of 2010, and tourism registered a relatively strong

rebound during the summer of 2010. “Going forward, the recovery is projected to gain momentum, supported by high world prices and demand for Montenegro’s industrial exports, new tourism projects, and increased confidence in the financial system. Accordingly, real GDP is projected to grow some 2 percent in 2011 after an estimated 1.1 percent in 2010, while inflation is expected to remain below the level of trading partners”.

Minister of Finances stated during meeting with the IMF officials that the IMF arrangement is always an open option, but decided on indebtedness in the international market with the issuing of Eurobonds instead.

State to repay KAP’s debt

Hungary’s OTP Bank has asked Montenegro to pay 700,000 euro (\$964,000) debt the bank is owed by Aluminium Plant Podgorica (KAP).

OTP Bank has called on the state guarantee on KAP’s outstanding payment of a 700,000 euro loan instalment, requesting that payment is made within the next 10 days.

Minister of Finance of Montenegro Milorad Katnić confirmed that the Government would settle KAP’s unpaid loans to OTP bank, in the amount of around €700,000, on the basis of the warranty given by the state.

Katnić however said that the Government would also re-examine the complete contract with the majority owner. Although it is still early to talk about the termination of the contract, Minister Katnić announced that the state will initiate a procedure to protect its interests, demand the resignation of KAP's executive director and Board of Director's president.

Speaker of the Parliament and President of SDP Ranko Krivokapić recalled that SDP opted for a different attitude towards the KAP's privatization from the beginning. He however noted that the Government's concept of government should be given a chance, "because a lot of time and a lot of money was invested in it".

Regional development on parliamentary agenda

Parliamentary Committee for Economy, Budget and Finances approved the bill on regional development and the takeover of joint stock companies. Opposition MPs voted against or were abstained, while even the MPs from the ruling coalition announced amendments. Damir Šehović (SDP) said that the seriousness of the situation is confirmed by the fact that the budget of the most undeveloped municipality is 67 times smaller than that of the most developed one.

Agency for regional development will not be established because of the restrictive budget frame. The suggestion to turn the Directorate for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises into an agency that would take over the jobs of regional development was assessed negatively by the Ministry of Economy.

Every fifth employee redundant

According to the data of the local administrations of Montenegro, 1,868 out of 10,370 permanently employed in the municipal administration, public institutions and companies are redundant.

The Government ensured a certain amount of money for the redundant in the administration and financing of infrastructural projects. The aid of the Government for resolving the technical redundancies will amount to €1,960 per severance at most. Ministry of Finance states that the total amount of unpaid obligations for 14 Montenegrin municipalities, which have published the data so far, is EUR 35.3m.

Official data: 1.26 million tourists in 2010

According to official the data from Monstat, around 1.26 million tourists visited Mon-

tenegro in 2010, 5% more than the 2009. Out of the total number, 86% were foreign guests.

The total number of overnight stays amounted to 7.96 million, 5.4% higher than in 2009. Most tourist came from Serbia, Russia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Increase in the number of tourist from United States, Canada, UK, Germany, France, Slovenia, Norway, Austria and Belgium was also recorded.

Banking system sustainable with certain weaknesses

During the 9th session of the Council of the Central Bank of Montenegro (CBCG), it was concluded that the banking system in Montenegro is sustainable with certain weaknesses.

The progress in consolidation of the banking system was presented in the session, as well as the encouraging perspective regarding the stability, liquidity and solvency of the banking system. The deposits of citizens have increased, which is an indicator of the credibility of the banking system, while the loans with delayed repayment have been reduced. Assets of bad quality grew, the level of approved loans fell and the amount of assets of banks was reduced.

Montenegro offers concessions for offshore exploration

Government's press release states that 15 international companies and consortia showed interest in a 30-year concession for the production of hydrocarbons and a two-year concession for offshore exploration.

Most of the territory subject to the award of the concession contracts is located in an area where the depth of the sea ranges from zero to 200 metres.

The production concession contract is extendable and covers exploration, verification, development and production. The exploration concession contract provides for any type of geological and geophysical exploration, except for drilling.

Montenegro to host opening of 2011 Web Fest

The .ME Registry announced that Montenegro will host the opening of the 2011 Web Fest, Eastern Europe's largest Internet conference. The event, sponsored this year by the .ME Registry, opens 22 September and remains open through November. The annual festival and conference is the region's effort at raising public awareness about the widespread value of Web technology, breakthroughs, communication and the ef-

forts of Internet entrepreneurs. The dot-ME Registry is a leading domain company in South-eastern Europe.

SOCIETY

Remembering Štrpci

On 27 February 18 years ago, the paramilitary units of Republika Srpska kidnapped 19 civilians from a train, in Štrpci, brutally murdering them afterwards.

18 Bosniaks and one Croat were taken from the Belgrade-Bar train at Štrpci station, near Priboj in Serbia but outside Serbian territory, on 27 February 1993. Passengers were taken off the train, tortured and killed.

Most of those killed were from Priboj, Belgrade and Podgorica. So far, remains of three passengers have been identified.

Of approximately 30 suspects for this crime, the only individual convicted for his role is Nebojša Ranisavljević who was sentenced by the Court in Bijelo Polje in 2002 to 15 years imprisonment.

Dinoša to provide information on the position of LGBT population

Parliamentary Committee for human rights and freedoms

has requested that the Minister for Human and Minority Rights Ferhat Dinoša delivers an information on the status of LGBT population in Montenegro.

After obtaining the information, the Committee announced organizing a session with Dinoša, Protector of human rights and freedoms Šučko Baković and representatives of nongovernmental organizations that are seeking Dinoša's resignation because of his statements about the LGBT population.

Deputy Chairman of the Committee Budimir Aleksić said that that the reason for seeking information from Dinoša is the initiative of 17 NGOs dealing with human rights, who called for Dinoša's resignation. NGOs claim that Dinoša denies the existence of the homosexual population in Montenegro, spreading homophobia and showing no willingness to protect this population from discrimination.

EMiM's project on Gender pay and income gap

European movement in Montenegro organized a round table in order to present the findings of the research conducted within the first phase of the project „Gender pay and income gap“.

The project is co-funded by European Union through European instrument for democ-

The project is co-funded by European Union through European instrument for democracy and human rights (EIDHR) and managed by Delegation of European Union to Montenegro.

EMiM aimed to bring gender equality into the centre of economic analysis of strategic processes and policies with the aim to define how they can remove barriers to economic empowerment of women. Rating overall size, shape and development of gender differences in personal income and earnings in the Montenegrin economy, which is in the process of change, is hoped to provide empirical evidence of the level and development of gender imbalance in the labour market.

Human Rights Action: Journalist must be protected

NGO Human Rights Action demanded that the journalist are legally granted the status of officials and according protection.

HRA welcomed the announcement of the Supreme Court President, Supreme State Prosecutor and Head of the Police Directorate to develop a report on investigations of cases of violence against journalists.

They expect that this report should include death threats to the human rights violations

researcher Aleksandar Zeković as well as the attack on the writer Jevrem Brković and murder of his bodyguard Srđan Vojičić. HRA states that these cases were clearly in connection with the freedom of speech, stressing they have not been effectively investigated.

Help for young Roma

Office of National Coordinator for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and the international NGO FAIR Fund will conduct a research into phenomenon of trafficking among Roma children and their families.

Capacity Building Project for Montenegro to better identify and assist young Roma population victims of trafficking is supported by the U.S. State Department.

This research will serve as a basis for the preparation of training materials to be used in trainings throughout Montenegro. Their aim will be to strengthen the capacity of the state and social services in education, identifying and assisting young Roma population, recognized as a vulnerable category of relation to the phenomenon of human trafficking.

EU INTEGRATION

IA: Does NCEI have the capacity to be a strategic consultative body within the European integration process?

Institute Alternative's Senior Researcher Jovana Marović warned that the National council for European integration (NSEI) still shows unreadiness to assume an active role within the European integration process. "This impression stems from the discussion during the first NSEI's session in 2011, together with statements from that session. It is evident that there was a lack of constructive debate about the most important issues for NSEI's functioning – mechanisms for improvement of its capacities. This improvement should ensure that NSEI can take over one of the crucial positions within the EU integration process. Therefore, the NSEI constantly fails to initiate recommendations for overcoming some of the central obstacles in its functioning."

Read the whole press statement [here](#).

Maurer: Political stability is an advantage of Montenegro

Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro Leopold Maurer

Leopold Maurer said that the political stability is the biggest advantage of the country, which is why Montenegro received the status of candidate for membership and Albania did not.

Montenegro accomplished a considerable progress in the EU accession, said Maurer, pointing out that the EU is firmly convinced that Montenegro can become an example to other countries in the region if it continues with the necessary reforms. Maurer said that the fight against organised crime and corruption will be one of the biggest challenges for Montenegro, but stressed that all areas are equally important.

Parliament ready for the realisation of recommendations of the EU

Through timely reaching of the action plan for strengthening the legislative and control function, the Parliament of Montenegro showed readiness to be in the function of fulfilment of the European obligations through the realisation of a series of activities.

This was assessed in the meeting of President of the Parliament of Montenegro Ranko Krivokapić and head of the EU delegation in Montenegro Leopold Maurer. It was also stated that the adoption of the electoral law needs to be a priority in the Parliament, because the end of this

job has been postponed several times and this is one of the important European recommendations.

Visa-free regime abused by Balkan countries

EU's Justice and Home Affairs Council is considering an emergency mechanism that will allow the temporary reintroduction of visas for Balkan countries if their citizens continue to head in large numbers to EU member states.

This mechanism is envisaged to serve as an early warning system for EU member states in case of a massive influx of asylum applicants from Western Balkan. This move comes after several EU states complained about too many asylum-seekers arriving from Balkan countries. Most were ethnic minority residents of impoverished areas of Serbia and Macedonia and people from Kosovo.

Member of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs Jelko Kacin said that visa regime with Montenegro will not be altered, since no serious violations in the past fourteen months have been registered.

The EU lifted visa requirements for Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro in 2009. The same privilege was extended to Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010.

TACSO Project Organises Second Regional Conference

The Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) project has organized a conference "Cooperation between Local Self-Governments and Civil Society Organisations in the Western Balkans and Turkey" last week in Bečići.

The Regional Conference brought together representatives of civil society organisations and governmental institutions responsible for cooperation with the civil society sector, as well as the media. These representatives came from the IPA countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

The purpose of the Conference was to provide a forum to share topic related knowledge, information and experience among the stakeholders from the IPA countries. It was organised by TACSO offices in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the TACSO Regional Office.

Montenegro and EU sign agreement on crisis management

Montenegro and EU concluded an agreement which establishes a framework for the participation of Podgorica in EU crisis management op-

erations. It will serve as a basis for Montenegro's involvement in military, police, judicial and other EU missions world-wide.

It was underlined that this legal framework, together with the recently signed agreement on security procedures for exchanging and protecting classified information, will significantly improve cooperation between Montenegro and the EU in the area of foreign and security policy.

This document was last year offered to the governments of 17 countries that are not EU members by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, Catherine Ashton. Montenegro is the first of the group of 17 states that has completed all required procedures for concluding this agreement.

Consultative hearing on judicial reform to be held

Parliamentary Committee for political system, judiciary and administration of supported the initiative of SDP to hold a consultative hearing (discussion) on the topic of reform of the judicial system in Montenegro in the context of the recommendations in the opinion of the EC.

Some of the themes to be discussed are the amendments to the Constitution in provisions relating to the judiciary and

state prosecution. Namely, the election of the Supreme Court's president, the position Judicial and Prosecutorial Council and the election of state prosecutors.

Invited participants of the consultative hearing are Minister of Justice, President of the Constitutional Court, President of the Supreme Court and the Judicial Council, Supreme State Prosecutor and the President of the Prosecutorial Council, President of the Bar Association of Montenegro as well as representatives of international organizations, NGOs and University of Montenegro.

EIB: Additional 700 million euros for the Western Balkans

European Investment Bank (EIB) should allocate an additional 700 million euros of funds for financing projects in the candidate and potential candidate countries for the EU membership. This increase in borrowing should be approved by the European Parliament and is primarily intended for projects concerned with protection against harmful climate change.

Croatia could last year benefit 511 million of EIB loan, Bosnia and Herzegovina 72 million, Macedonia 52 million, Montenegro 49 million and Albania 50 million. During the last year, EIB allocated more than nine billion euros to fi-

nance ventures in countries outside the EU.

The Government of Montenegro adopted the Action Plan for Monitoring Implementation of Recommendations given in the European Commission's Opinion on its session on 17 February, 2011. It has been translated to English and published at the [website of the Government](#).

We hope that you found the contents of our Weekly Brief useful. Any suggestions, comments, remarks or opinions regarding the design and contents of this free newsletter are welcome.

Please note that the previous editions of Weekly Brief are available at IA's website.

Editorial team

GLOSSARY

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

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

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

DISCLAIMER

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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 and team work.

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