

# NEWSLETTER OPEN PARLIAMENT



Parliament of Montenegro

Newsletter on the Parliament of Montenegro Performance ♦ No. 101 ♦ February 2020

## CONTENTS

<b>Legislative and oversight activity.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>News from Parliament .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>President's visit to the US on the occasion of the 68th National Prayer Breakfast.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<b>Parliamentary glossary.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>In Focus.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>From the Catalogue of Received Presents.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Calendar.....</b>	<b>6</b>

## IN FOCUS

*The 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the European Union -  
Montenegro Stabilisation and Association  
Parliamentary Committee (SAPC), 25-26 February*

*p.5*



## PARLIAMENTARY GLOSSARY

***Do you know...***  
*what is a Statement of Compliance?*

*p.4*

## PARLIAMENT OF MONTENEGRO - FROM THE CATALOGUE OF RECEIVED PRESENTS

*Presents extended by President of the  
Greek Parliament*

*p.5*

# OPEN PARLIAMENT



Parliament of Montenegro

Newsletter on the Parliament of Montenegro Performance ♦ Electronic format ♦ Release: monthly ♦ Year X ♦ No. 101 ♦ February 2020

## FOREWORD

*Dear readers,*

We present to you the key information on activities of the Parliament of Montenegro in the period from 1 to 29 February, which is, in the form of monthly newsletter "Open Parliament", prepared by Parliamentary Service.

During February, Committees considered 25 proposals for a law, one proposal for a decision and performed other activities within their oversight role.

In focus of this month's newsletter is the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the European Union - Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (SAPC), held on 25-26 February.

The newsletter is published monthly through which the Parliament endeavours to bring its work closer to Montenegrin citizens.

We consider this publication to be very significant as a reliable source of information regarding the work of the Parliament and we hope that you will find it useful.

We remain open to your comments and suggestions, as well as criticism, which can help us bring more quality to our work.

**Respectfully,  
Parliamentary Service**



## LEGISLATIVE AND OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY

*Proposals for law deliberated in committees*

- **Proposal for a Law on Alternative Dispute Resolution** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration and the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Civil Procedure** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration and the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Volunteering** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare.
- **Proposal for a Labour Fund Law** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Family Law** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare and the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a law on Amendments to the Law on Courts** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for Law on Amendments to the Law on State Prosecution Office** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Data Confidentiality** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on the basis of intelligence and security sector in**

**Montenegro** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.

- **Proposal for a Law on Ratification of the Status Agreement between the EU and Montenegro on actions carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Rights of Passenger in Maritime and Inland Waterway Transport** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Air Transport** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Market Organization in Fisheries and Aquaculture** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Tourism, Agriculture, Ecology and Spatial Planning and the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Excise** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Insurance** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget.
- **Proposal for a Law on The Use of Physical Infrastructure to Set Up High-Speed Electronic Communications Networks** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget and the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Maritime Agency Activity** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget and the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on the Protection against Environmental Noise** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Business Companies** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee and the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget.
- **Proposal for a Law on Ratifying the Agreement between Montenegro and Principality of Monaco on Double Taxation Avoidance and Prevention of Income Tax Evasion** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Structural Measures and State Aid in Fisheries and Aquaculture** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Tourism, Agriculture, Ecology and Spatial Planning and the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Compulsory Traffic Insurance** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on**

**Game and Hunting** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.

- **Proposal for a Law on Ratifying the Agreement between Montenegro and the Republic of Macedonia on regulating mutual property and legal relations** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Transport of Hazardous Substances** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.

#### Proposals for other acts deliberated in committees

- **Proposal for a Decision on the Detailed Spatial Plan of the Transmission Line Corridor 2x400 kV Pljevlja 2 - Bajina Bašta for the section on the territory of Montenegro** was considered and supported by the Committee on Tourism, Agriculture, Ecology and Spatial Planning.

#### Other activities of working bodies

- At the 36<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **Committee on European Integration**, held on 19 February, the Committee unanimously adopted the 2019 Performance Report of the Committee and the 2020 Committee Working Plan.
- At the 53<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the **Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms**, held on 12 February, the Report on the protection against discrimination within the scope of the activities of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro covering the period 1 January - 31 July 2019, was considered.
- At the 54<sup>th</sup> meeting of 18 February, there was a consultative hearing of representatives of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, on the topic: "Post-legislative oversight of the Law on the Prevention of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities („Official Gazette of Montenegro“, N<sup>o</sup> 35/15), with the focus on the implementation of Article 21 of the said Law, involving discrimination in the field of upbringing, education and vocational training“.
- At the 55<sup>th</sup> meeting of 28 February, the 2019 Performance Report and the Activity Report on the first quarter of 2020, were adopted.
- At the 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting of 10 February, the **Gender Equality Committee** adopted the 2019 Committee Performance Report.
- At the 75<sup>th</sup> meeting of 10 February, the **Committee on Tourism, Agriculture, Ecology and Spatial Planning** adopted the 2019 Performance Report.
- At the Second Joint Meeting of the **Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare** and the **Committee on Education, Science, Culture and Sports**, on 13 February, the 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey in the field of health, labour and social welfare, was presented.



## NEWS FROM PARLIAMENT



### *President's visit to the US on the occasion of the 68<sup>th</sup> National Prayer Breakfast*

On the occasion of marking the 68<sup>th</sup> National Prayer Breakfast, President Brajović met in Washington with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State on European and Eurasian Affairs and Special Representative for the Western Balkans Matthew Palmer. The interlocutors were pleased with the overall relations and cooperation between Montenegro and the US, Montenegro's strategic partner in attaining the foreign policy goals. As to the recently adopted Law on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Legal Status of Religious Communities, they agreed on the importance of dialogue and mitigating tensions in fighting a dangerous campaign of misinformation and propaganda. Palmer affirmed that Montenegro, as a multi-confessional and multicultural country had progressed the most in the region, setting an example for other neighbouring countries. Referring to the current state in Montenegro, Brajović spoke with the US Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Samuel Brownback, explaining that the country sought to regulate the issue democratically, implementing the fundamental principles on religious freedom and equality of all communities in the face of the law, and acknowledging the civic character of the Montenegrin society and its state. Brownback welcomed the Montenegrin authorities initiative of interactive dialogue, emphasising that religion needed to serve as a means of peace, rather than conflict, thus, indicating the high importance of further dialogue. During his talks with Congressman Eliot Engel and Senator Ron Johnson in Congress, Brajović expressed a conviction that the enlargement process was still a priority since the EU was mindful that termination of the enlargement process would be unacceptable. He also spoke at the Senate gathering dedicated to challenges of Southeastern Europe and the role of cyber-security and 5G, organised by the US Senator James Inhofe, emphasising that Montenegro's membership in the NATO had increased its territorial integrity,

independence and progress. He also met with Mike Turner, Congressman, and Chellie Pingree and Doug Lamborn, Co-Chairs of the Montenegro Caucus in the US House of Representatives. He informed his interlocutors on the current political developments in Montenegro and the Western Balkans region, particularly expressing his gratitude for the support and assistance that the US Congress has been constantly providing to our country. He emphasised the importance of further intensification of bilateral relations and strengthening of the strategic partnership between the two friendly countries in all areas of cooperation. Pingree stressed the importance of strategic partnership with Montenegro, especially the cooperation of the two armies. Lamborn said he was proud of the results Montenegro had achieved, as well as the domestic and foreign policies it pursued and informed that he would continue to encourage a stronger presence of US investments, given the great economic potential of our country. In the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Brajović met with Vice-President Heather Conley, then with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the UN Headquarters. Brajović said that Montenegro appreciated the partnership with the UN, the importance of maintaining regional stability and the need for full integration of the Western Balkans into the EU, adding that a stronger UN presence was important, especially in projects aimed at strengthening democratic processes. Guterres emphasised the importance of cooperation between the UN and Montenegro, the latter playing an important role in the region and expressed his belief that 2020 will be successful in terms of enlargement, given that the European officials confirmed that the Western Balkans would be one of the priorities. The visit concluded with the visit to the Montenegrin diaspora, which emphasised the importance of communication with the diaspora, discussing the situation in Montenegro and issues relevant to the diaspora.

## PARLIAMENTARY GLOSSARY

**A Statement of Compliance** or a Table of concordance is a form that has been used with a more or less similar form and content in all the countries in the process of integration into the EU as a tool to assess the level of harmonization of national legislation with the *Acquis Communautaire*. In Montenegro, this type of form with certain changes has been used 2004. The statement of compliance and table of concordance are the instruments for harmonization of Montenegrin legislation with the *Acquis Communautaire* in the process of developing legislation that the Government of Montenegro has introduced due to its obligation to harmonize current legislation in Montenegro with EU Law with a view to assessing the capacities of the state to assume the obligations of EU membership. The statement of compliance and table of concordance are submitted to the Parliament of Montenegro with a proposal of a law, which facilitates the process of monitoring the level of harmonization of the law with EU law that is conducted by the Parliament. In this way, the process of assessing the level of harmonization is facilitated and the institutions are better prepared for the process of negotiations and higher quality monitoring of the level of harmonization of Montenegrin legislation with the *Acquis Communautaire*. The statement of compliance provides the basic information on the proposed law or other act, its connection with the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and many other documents that are important in the accession process. This form includes all primary, secondary and other sources of the EU law that are related to the contents of the proposed item of national legislation as well as its level of harmonization. This form is signed by the relevant minister on behalf of the drafters of the item of legislation and the minister in charge of the European Integration process. If there are sources of EU law that the given piece of legislation is harmonized with, a table of concordance has to be attached to the statement of compliance. This table contains more detailed information about the manner of transposition of certain EU acts into the national legal order (in one or several pieces of national legislation). The table is to be filled in by the drafters, or the entity proposing the law, by first filling in the column stating the full text of all the articles of the appropriate source of EU law and then the text of the articles of the draft, i.e. proposed law. If a Montenegrin act is to be harmonized with several EU acts, a separate table of concordance has to be filled in for each of the sources.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Doc. dr Komar, Olivera, Prof. dr Ivana Jelić, Nataša Komnenić, Irena Mijanović, Jelena Radonjić, Vlatko Šćepanović, *Parlamentarni leksikon*, Podgorica, Skupština Crne Gore 2016, p 297.

## IN FOCUS



### *The 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the European Union - Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (SAPC), 25-26 February*

The first day of the SAPC Meeting, co-chaired by President of the Parliament of Montenegro and Head of the Delegation of the European Parliament Vladimir Bilčik, the SAPC members exchanged opinions on EU accession negotiations and relations between Montenegro and the EU, progress achieved in the field of the rule of law, fundamental rights and freedoms, reforms in the field of the judiciary, the fight against corruption and organised crime, and results and activities toward a better electoral framework preceding and following the 2020 parliamentary elections. The President said that the recent statement by the EU institutions expressing readiness to provide an additional incentive to the enlargement process indicated that Montenegro would retain its role of a leader in the region. He added that Montenegro would continue to be a reliable partner of the EU by further fostering European values in the region. As to the current challenges in the region, he emphasised that Montenegro was best known for its determination in attaining the goals - a modern and successful European country, while also enjoying the support of the majority. The Parliament would continue to strengthen its leading position in the policymaking process, by the means of its legislative, control and consultative role, endeavouring a greater outcome in the European Integration process. Bilčik stated that Montenegro was a leader in the EU negotiation process, hence; it needed to quicken the pace on its EU path, adding that the EP would increase its efforts in terms of closing of respective negotiation chapters. He expressed assurance that Chapter 8 would be opened soon and that the EU welcomed Montenegro's consolidated approach concerning foreign policy. He stated that the challenges relating the fight against corruption, the functioning

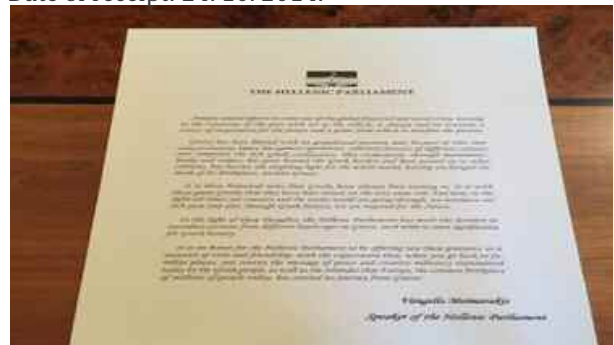
of the media and trafficking in human beings remained. Referring to the adopted Law on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Legal Status of Religious Communities, Bilčik emphasised that every country, including the EU candidate countries, enjoyed the sovereign right to adopt and implement its laws, in line with the democratic principles and without the interference of the international entities. He also conveyed the European Parliament support of the enlargement process and Montenegro's membership in the EU, deemed best for the development and prosperity of the country. Chief Negotiator with the EU emphasised the importance of the Parliament as a primary legislative body, also essential in terms of observing the political criteria and the Rule of law, deemed crucial in the negotiation process. Zdravka Bušić, State Secretary for Political Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia stated that the EU highly regarded Montenegro for its reliable partnership and positive role in the region, as well as its active contribution to regional and European security. Ambassador Orav reminded that earlier that year, the European Commission introduced a new revised methodology concerning the enlargement, endeavouring to upgrade the enlargement process and making it more credible, also involving stronger political leadership, which benefited Montenegro and the entire region. He was pleased with the presence of many representatives of the opposition at the meeting. The meeting concluded with the adoption of a Declaration and several recommendations. The second day proceeded with the MPs discussing issues involving the environmental protection and climate change and the position of the youth in Montenegro, with the focus on educational skills, unemployment and "brain drain".

## PARLIAMENT OF MONTENEGRO-FROM CATALOGUE OF RECEIVED PRESENTS

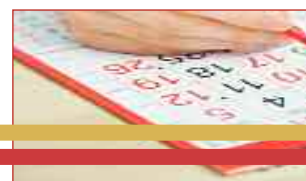
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Recipient: PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENT OF MONTENEGRO  
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# CALENDAR



## 4 February

- Chair of the Gender Equality Committee Nada Drobnjak and MP Momčilo Martinović participated in the Third meeting of the managing board of the Human Rights and Gender Equality Network of Committees in the Western Balkans - HUGEN Network, which took place in Tirana. The meeting was organised by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, within the framework activities of HUGEN, as part of the Programme realised by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, under the auspices of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, covering the period April 2019 - November 2021. The meeting endeavoured to render a more effective implementation and management of the three-month Activity Plan, which entailed the undertaking of specific activities, previously envisaged within the initiated post-legislative process. There were also presentations on the topic: "Post-legislative Scrutiny in Europe - Best Practices and Methodologies", in which event, Senior Governance Adviser at the Westminster Foundation for Democracy Franklin De Vrieze presented the latest studies concerning PLS practice in Europe. The participants were also acquainted with the PLS practices involving certain Eastern Europe countries and EU member states, as follows: Ukraine, Georgia, Germany, Moldova, Italy, Great Britain and France.

## 5 February

- President of the Parliament Ivan Brajović paid a visit to the United States of America, on 5-9 February, in which event, he had several encounters. The *Column News from Parliament* contains further information appertaining the visit.

## 6 February

- Chair of the Gender Equality Committee Nada Drobnjak participated in an OSCE Gender Section Roundtable on the Programme "Women, Peace, and Security", which took place in Tirana. The Roundtable proceeded with the third expert discussion on the monitoring procedure and evaluation of the implementation of national action plans for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. The participants considered the manners of tackling the challenges related to the current national action plans and their implementation and accelerating the implementation of the programme. The discussion endeavoured to place the focus on the assistance provided by international organisations and identifying the best methods of

providing the said assistance. Representatives of the institutions, the civic sector and the international organisations with headquarters in Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Albania, also attended.

## 11 February

- President of the Parliament Ivan Brajović met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. The President stated that the development of parliamentary diplomacy contributed considerably to the development of friendly relations between Montenegro and the Republic of Turkey, and also noted that the cooperation in various fields stemmed on the principle of common interest, and mutual regard and respect. The President stated that his upcoming visit to the Republic of Turkey would signify an opportunity of further specifying models of cooperation between both countries. Brajović promptly accepted the invitation on attending the ceremony marking the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, presented to him

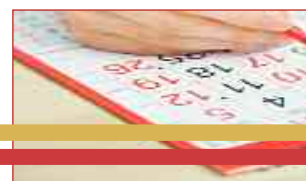


Opština Crne Gore

by the President of the Turkish Parliament Mustafa Şentop. Çavuşoğlu recalled that Turkey highly regarded Montenegro's partnership while Turkey's support throughout all the NATO accession stages attested to the claim, adding that Montenegro embodied peace and stability in the region. Mindful of the excellent political relations, Çavuşoğlu particularly emphasised the importance of cooperation between both parliaments via parliamentary friendship groups and working bodies, since it provided an incentive to the further strengthening of the overall relations. Çavuşoğlu expressed the conviction that the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and other three upcoming presiding countries signified the acceleration of the EU integration process of the Western Balkans.



# CALENDAR



## 12 February

- President of the Parliament received in an inaugural visit the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Montenegro Gilles Beschoor Plug, which concluded with the conviction that his appointment would additionally strengthen the relations between both countries. President Brajović acquainted the Ambassador with the priorities of Montenegro involving European integration, expressing gratitude to the Netherlands for providing its assistance to Montenegro in attaining the strategic foreign policy goals. In this context, Brajović emphasised the importance of parliamentary cooperation especially in terms of strengthening the ties with the Dutch parliamentarians, adding that the excellent political relations fostered by both countries may prove very useful in the field of economic cooperation. Ambassador Gilles Beschoor Plug emphasised that Montenegro's EU membership remained a priority in the context of relations between Montenegro and the Netherlands. The Ambassador added that both the Western Balkans and the European Union were indispensable to each other, recognising Montenegro as a leader in the integration process. The interlocutors agreed that the process of European integration required recognition of individual credits and achievements of every country, accompanied by a high level of enforcement of reforms.
- Vice-President of the Parliament Genci Nimanbegu headed the Montenegrin parliamentary delegation in the *Sobranie* Sitting, devoted to considering the Proposal for Law on Ratification of the North Atlantic Treaty on the Accession of the Republic of North Macedonia. All the present MPs, precisely a total of 114, unanimously adopted the law. Before the Sitting, there was a meeting between the Montenegrin Delegation and the President of *Sobranie* Talat Xhaferi, whereby, President Xhaferi acquainted the Montenegrin Delegation with the ratification procedure. Following the Sitting, MPs and the invitees witnessed the NATO flag-raising ceremony in front of the *Sobranie* building. The Republic of North Macedonia should join the NATO Alliance until May 2020, as the 30th anticipated member of the NATO Alliance.

## 13 February

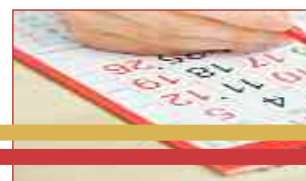
- President of the Parliament participated in the Meeting of the Presidents of Parliaments of the Slavkov format composed of Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Austria. President of the Croatian Sabor Gordan Jandroković, on

the grounds of Croatia's presiding over the Council of the European Union, and the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia Maja Gojković; also attended the meeting. President Brajović expressed satisfaction over the recognition received concerning the excellent results achieved by Montenegro in the process of European integration, and the willingness of the EU member states to recognise its contribution in the fields of regional cooperation and stability. Brajović emphasised the importance of the Economic Plan devised by the European Commission, which is to proceed with the enlargement process and assist in overcoming the existing economic differences. As to the fields of Infrastructure, Energy and Transportation, the Presidents of Parliaments concluded that the said fields required further assistance. The President noted that the renewal of the independence of Montenegro in 2006 resulted in great success, starting with the membership in the NATO Alliance in 2017, followed by its assistance in building a modern, European and civic state. The meeting in Bratislava signified an opportunity of conversing with the President of the National Council of Austria Wolfgang Sobotka and the President of the Representative House of the Czech Republic Radek Vondráček. Sobotka emphasised that the Summit in



Zagreb anticipated a great deal, whereby the European Union needed to convey a clear message to the countries of South-Eastern Europe. Sobotka explained that Austria wished to assume a more active role, and in line with the assumed responsibility, help integrate Montenegro and other aspiring countries into the European Union. Vondráček called for a consensus regarding the enlargement process and the future EU path. Therefore, the Parliament needed to engage more in the debates concerning the future EU path, given Montenegro's aspirations to become a member very soon. The Presidents of Parliaments agreed that a stable,

# CALENDAR



prosperous, and democratic Europe was a common goal, additionally enriched by the membership of the countries of South-Eastern Europe.

- President of the Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms Halil Duković and MPs Branka Tanasijević, Maja Bakrač and Nada Nenezić had a meeting with Lene Poulsen, Zehra Kačapor-Džihic and Lidija Brnović, experts of the Konterra Group, tasked with conducting an independent evaluation of the 2017-2021 Programme Document concerning Montenegro, the basis of cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and the UNICEF. The respective UNICEF Programme was bound to assist Montenegro in its efforts of increasing justice and the level of inclusion of children lacking protection, who were unable to exercise their rights due to poverty and social exclusion. To attain the respective goal and observe the obligatory programme standards, the UNICEF initiated an independent evaluation of the Programme Document involving Montenegro. Chair of the Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms referred to the excellent cooperation between the Committee and the UNICEF Representation Office, which brought forth numerous joint activities and also endeavoured to promote the status of children. Given the aforementioned, MP Tanasijević chiefly referred to the importance of active participation of all relevant entities in the society competent in the field of education, and highlighted the importance of awareness of the risks of extensive use of the internet and its effects on the abilities of children, notwithstanding the relevance of digital literacy in the modern society. Therefore, the mere use of the internet hardly posed a threat, but rather an extensive use of it, potentially leading to an addiction, i.e. internet addiction. The participants noted a high level of cooperation between the relevant institutions which benefited all the related parties, particularly all the children in Montenegro.

## 17 February

- Parliamentary Friendship Group with the Bulgarian Parliament had a meeting with the Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Montenegro Meglena Plugciewa. Noting the traditionally excellent relations between both countries, Ambassador Plugciewa used the opportunity to notify the members of the Group that the quality of bilateral relations between the two would not change throughout the year, referring to the meetings between heads of state and government of both countries.

Members of the Friendship Group expressed gratitude to the Ambassador for the provided support, especially following the incident of Montenegro's flag desecration in Serbia, thus demonstrating increased sensibility towards the risks facing the region. Members of the



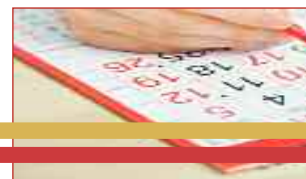
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friendship group referred to the earlier Bulgarian Presidency over the Council of the European Union and its significance for Montenegro and the strong incentive it provided to Montenegro and countries in the region in terms of the prospective EU membership. On behalf of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with the Bulgarian Parliament, the following attended: Andrija Nikolić, Mihailo Anđušić, Maja Bakrač and Andrija Popović.

- Members of the Permanent Delegation of the Parliament to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Miodrag Vuković and Genci Nimanbegu attended five committee meetings. The first day of the Joint Meeting featured a meeting of the members of the Delegation and Ambassador Dubravka Lalović with the permanent representatives of the North-Atlantic Council. The meeting endeavoured to consider the current issues in the field of Security and Defence. At the follow-up, Acting President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Attila Mesterházy and the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi addressed the participants. The importance of firm and strong Trans-Atlantic ties and full commitment to the goals of the Alliance were emphasised, together with the observing of standards and increasing of the cooperation level, aimed at providing a safe environment at the global level. Projecting stability beyond borders of the Alliance, and two other important tasks, diversion and defence, were the highlight of the second day, as well as projecting of stability. As to the second task, the participants emphasised the importance of contributing



# CALENDAR



to stability in different parts of the world, via operations, training programs and strengthening of defence capacities of partner countries. The Joint Meeting ensued with the third session dedicated to activities currently being implemented by the NATO, with the focus on the highest results achieved, current challenges and the planned activities. Miodrag Vuković and Genci Nimanbegu participated in the work of the Joint Meeting of the Defence and Security Committee, Committee on Economics and Security, and the Political Committee. The third day, the Joint Meeting endeavoured to discuss the strategy of strengthening capacities of the South Wing, aimed at procuring timely solutions to the arising challenges. The issue of projecting stability, combatting terrorism, and illegal migration; were also considered.

## 18 February

- Chair of the Committee on European Integration Slaven Radunović met with non-residential Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Montenegro Kristi Karelsohn. The interlocutors discussed the EU accession process and the EU assistance to Montenegrin reforms. MP Radunović commended the activities and efforts invested by the state authorities, in terms of observing the commitments stemming from the negotiation process, however; the political will both at the national and European level was assessed as a crucial denominator in the EU accession process. The interlocutors assessed the rule of law as very important in terms of setting the dynamics of negotiations, with the conviction that a positive incentive by the EU would produce higher results within the 23 and 24 negotiation chapter areas. They also discussed the citizen support to the European integration process, as well as new methodologies for conducting negotiations. The interlocutors also exchanged opinions on the current state of affairs in Montenegro and considered methods of further cooperation. The meeting took place within the frameworks of the official visit of the Estonian Ambassador to Montenegro.
- Chair of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget Predrag Sekulić participated in the “European Parliamentary Week”, organised by the European Parliament and the Croatian Parliament within the frameworks of the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The “European Parliamentary Week” consisted of the European Semester Conference and the Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union. The first day proceeded with

discussion on the topic: “Deepening and widening Economic and Monetary Union: finding the right speed”, followed by three Inter-parliamentary committee meetings. Chair of the Committee Sekulić attended the

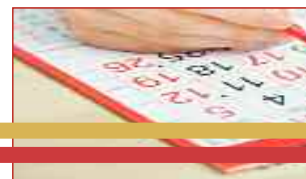


Inter-parliamentary Meeting of the Committee on Budgets. The participants discussed potential methods of compliance of the EU Budget with the new Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2021-2027 aimed at solving the global issues, and the European Parliament Resolution relating to a proposal of the European Commission to maintain the current level of financing in the common EU policies area, further promote the beneficial projects and provide new EU funds aimed at solving the potential challenges. The second day proceeded with two sessions. President of the European Parliament David Maria Sassoli addressed the participants emphasising the importance of cooperation between the European Parliament and the national parliaments and the need of lowering the discrepancies in the region and therefore increase the funds designated for cohesion policy. The issue of climate change and the education system were the subject of discussion, with the assessment that new technologies shaped a modern world requiring greater digital literacy and increased citizen access to continuous education. 116 MPs from 27 national parliaments of EU member states participated in the Conference.

## 19 February

- President of the Parliament paid an official visit to the Republic of Turkey, at the invitation of the President of the Grand National Assembly Mustafa Şentop, in which event he met the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. They jointly noted that the high-level meetings between both countries were frequent and comprehensive, which was a great indicator of excellent relations. Çavuşoğlu noted that Montenegro served as

# CALENDAR



an example for other countries in terms of protection of minority rights and co-existing of different peoples. At the meeting with Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of Parliament of Turkey Volkan Bozkir, the interlocutors emphasised the importance of regional cooperation and fostering of good neighbouring relations. President Brajović noted that parliamentary cooperation, predominantly between working bodies tasked with the realisation of specific projects, served as an excellent model of promotion of relations. Bozkir commended the overall progress achieved by Montenegro in the field of European integration, remaining confident that it would be the next country joining the EU. Brajović congratulated Bozkir on his potential election as President of the UN General Assembly, wishing him great success. The second day ensued with the wreath-laying ceremony at the Atatürk Mausoleum and also a meeting with the President of the Grand National Assembly Mustafa Şentop. Brajović noted that the current mandate contributed to the increase of the level of parliamentary diplomacy and served as a means of promotion of relations in all areas of cooperation, additionally assisted by the intensive efforts of both parliaments. President Şentop noted a high level of bilateral relations between both countries, adding that good political relations also meant greater economic cooperation. Vice-President of the Parliament and Chair of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with Turkey Genci Nimanbegu and MPs Branka Tanasijević and Suad Numanović were part of the Delegation. The visit terminated with a meeting of the President Brajović with the Montenegrin Diaspora Community in Istanbul.

## 20 February

- Member of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget Boris Mugoša participated in the Conference in Budva, on the topic: “Working with Parliaments to Improve Audit Impact“, organised by the State Audit Institution under the support of SIGMA. Vice-President of the Parliament Gvozdenović initially emphasised the relevance of the State Audit Institution and its work and the importance of external auditing aimed at establishing an efficient state administration system and eliminating all the discrepancies among budgetary spending units and other subjects in conducting their businesses. A letter extended by the President of the Parliament Ivan Brajović addressed the successful collaboration between the State Audit Institution and the Parliament aimed at achieving the common goal of effective budgetary scrutiny, transparency and effective management in the field of public finances. Renowned

international experts in the field presented the experience involving Sweden and Latvia as well as the role of the European Court of Auditors and the German Federal Province Baden-Württemberg in reviewing the reports. MP Mugoša acquainted the participants with

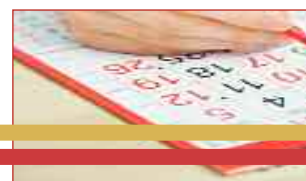


the Committee activities relating to the reviewing of the Audit Report on the Final Budget Account of Montenegro, the Annual Report of the SAI and the provisions of the Protocol governing the cooperation between the SAI and the Parliament. The representatives of state audit institutions of the following countries attended the Conference: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, North Macedonia, Turkey, Kosovo; accompanied by the international experts in the field.

## 23 February

- Addressing the participants at the Assembly of Constituting the Montenegrin Council in Serbia, Chair of the Committee on International Relations and Emigrants Andrija Nikolić affirmed that forming a Montenegrin Council was crucial for the durability of the Montenegrin national community in Serbia. Recalling that the Montenegrin community constituted the largest diaspora community in Serbia, Nikolić expressed regret over the currently undesirable status of the Montenegrin diaspora, noting that the recent actions of certain state officials of Serbia threatened the diligently built quality relations between both countries. Therefore, Nikolić called for a dignified approach deemed best in handling similar attacks and ultimately in defending the interests of the country. Members of the Constituting Assembly adopted the Statute, Cultural Strategy and Programme, and also established the managing bodies of the association. Milenko Perović was elected the President of the Association. Director of the Diaspora Administration Predrag Mitrović, the

# CALENDAR



Ambassador of Montenegro in the Republic of Serbia Tarzan Milošević and General Consul of Montenegro in Sremski Karlovci Dragan Đurović attended the constituting Assembly.

## 24 February

- The first-grade students of the Secondary Vocational school in Rožaje paid a visit to the Parliament of



Opština Crne Gore

Montenegro. During the visit, the students learned about the work of the Parliament, its competencies, functions, history and activities of the working bodies. The students had the opportunity to visit the Parliamentary gallery, the parliamentary archives, the Great Hall and the committee rooms. The visit took place within the frameworks of the programme "Open Parliament", which enables separate and collective visits endeavouring to inform the public with the work of the Parliament.

- President of the Parliament met with the Special Emissary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic responsible for the Western Balkans Janina Hrebickova. President Brajović thanked the Czech Republic for providing its support to Montenegro in attaining its foreign policy priority goals and its expert assistance in the field of Judiciary and Internal Affairs. President Brajović referred to the recently held meetings with the President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic Radek Vondráček, who scheduled an April meeting between presidents of parliaments of the Visegrad Group countries and the countries of South-Eastern Europe and presidents of the French and German Parliament. The April meeting would reaffirm Montenegro's commitment to the European integration path. Hrebickova emphasised that the Czech Republic wished to intensify its support in terms of the European

integration process, singling out Montenegro as the leader in the process. The Czech Republic expressed concern in the event of a stagnating and vague enlargement policy, which would endanger the region and the European Union as well.

- President of the Parliament Ivan Brajović met with the Delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, headed by the Chair of the Committee Mimi Kodheli, who was paying an official visit to Montenegro. The interlocutors noted the traditionally excellent relations between both countries, which contributed to the strengthening of regional stability in the region. President Brajović emphasised the high level of cooperation between both Parliaments, which comprised the following: cooperation between parliamentary bodies, the parliamentary dimension featuring regional and multilateral initiatives and exchanged visits. Kodheli thanked Montenegro for the continuously provided support, particularly in the event of the earthquake which befell Albania on 26 November 2019. Referring to the status of the Albanian community in Montenegro, Kodheli assessed as very significant Montenegro's commitment to the matter. Vice-President of the Parliament and Chair of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with the Albanian Parliament Genci Nimanbegu, Chair of the Committee on International Relations and Emigrants Andrija Nikolić, Chair of the Administrative Committee Luidž Škrelja and Chair of the Security and Defence Committee Branko Čvor; also attended the meeting.
- Chair of the Committee on European Integration Slaven Radunović met with the Special Emissary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic responsible for the Western Balkans Janina Hrebickova. The interlocutors discussed the challenges facing Montenegro and the Western Balkans countries in the European integration process, the feedback involving the new methodology on negotiations, as well as Montenegro and its neighbouring policy. The commitment of the Czech Republic and the support of the EU Institutions and EU member states to the region was deemed essential. The engagement of the regional countries in conducting the key reforms was also necessary toward the final democratisation of Western Balkan countries. Radunović commended state administration efforts and activities in observing the commitments stemming from the negotiation process, which resulted in the opening of several negotiation chapters. Radunović also emphasised that Montenegro



# CALENDAR



was currently facing numerous challenges which demanded political readiness in conducting reforms and successful implementation of legislation.

- A meeting took place between the Delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, headed by the Chair of the Committee Mimi Kodheli and the Committee in International Relations and Emigrants. Chair of the Committee on International Relations and Emigrants Andrija Nikolić assessed during the meeting that Montenegro and Albania served as a great example of excellent neighbouring relations, contributing significantly to the strengthening of regional stability. Kodheli congratulated Montenegro on its achievements, which had earned her membership in the Alliance, noting that the Adriatic coast had never been safer, given that the entire coast was under the protection of the NATO. Referring to the common foreign policy goals, Nikolić expressed concern over the fact that Albania hadn't received a date for commencing negotiations with the EU, expressing assurance that Albania could count on Montenegro's further support. Nikolić referred to the first joint meeting between the governments of Albania and Montenegro and the commitment to implement the eight documents jointly signed at the meeting. Given that the minority groups represented the core of relations between both countries, the meeting discussed possible methods of promoting the status of the minority groups. Members of the Committee Luid Škrelja, Nada Drobnjak, Dragutin Papović, Nela Savković Vukčević, Ervin Ibrahimović and Miodrag Lekić also attended the meeting, together with the member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania Ediola Braha and the Ambassador of the Republic of Albania to Montenegro Ridi Kurtezi.
- The Parliament organised an informative presentation and the presentation of an MP Guidebook on sustainable urban mobility providing essential information on sustainable urban mobility. The Guidebook presentation unfolded with the devising of a Plan intended for MPs to familiarise them with the model of sustainable transportation planning involving the urban areas. The Guidebook and the provided Slovenian experience of policy-making in the said area endeavoured to familiarise the MPs with the said concept in the course of adopting of legislation in the respective field, which had proven vital in tackling the contemporary challenges related to urban living standards. Slovenian experience and the state's assistance in the implementation of the plans, potential impediments and challenges were also explained. The meeting took place within the frameworks of the cooperation of the

Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH and Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Energy Efficiency and the School of Political Studies.

## 25 February

- The 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the European Union - Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (SAPC) took place.
- President of the Parliament of Montenegro met with the Delegation of the European Parliament, headed by the Member of the European Parliament Vladimir Bilčik, Co-Chair of the Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee. President Brajović emphasised that the meeting meant an opportunity to openly exchange views with the newly elected members of the European Parliament on Montenegro's achievements and the upcoming challenges in the European integration path. Brajović also referred to the previous results achieved by the Parliament and also referred to the vital role of the Committee on Further Reform of Electoral and Other Legislation. Praising Montenegro as a multi-ethnic and civic state, the President emphasised that through its endeavours, the Parliament sought to rightfully earn the assistance of the EU institutions in the European integration process. MEP Bilčik emphasised that the European Parliament would continue to support the enlargement process and the accession of Montenegro in the EU, given its contribution to the stability of the region. He also expressed the readiness of the European parliamentarians to further assist the Montenegrin parliamentarians in the European integration path and in attaining the required European standards. With high regard of the integrity of Montenegro to govern its religious matters, Bilčik gladly anticipated the implementation of the adopted legislative solutions. The interlocutors agreed that the enlargement process should remain a high priority of the EU and the new composition of its institutions. They also presented their views on the envisaged EU policy and discussed further models of cooperation aimed at accelerating the integration process of Montenegro. Vice-President of the Parliament Branimir Gvozdenović also attended the meeting.
- Committee on Tourism, Agriculture, Ecology and Spatial Planning paid a visit to Ulcinj to oversee the status of the Olive grove and the Cove of Valdanos and also to meet with the managing bodies of the Municipality of Ulcinj. The interlocutors discussed the current issues involving the cultivation and protection of olives, the management

of waters and wastewaters, the Port Milena, the safeguarding of nature, particularly the subject of the Ulcinj Solana and its future management by the Municipality of Ulcinj. The oversight activities unfolded with the visit to the Olive grove and Cove of Valdanos and the burnt area of Bašbuljuk endeavouring to acquire an efficient model of revitalisation and protection of the Olive grove and Cove of Valdanos. They also considered the feasibility of implementation of measures contained in the "Study involving the current status of the Olive grove of Valdanos". Representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism also joined them on the event. Chair of the Committee on Tourism, Agriculture, Ecology and Spatial Planning Petar Ivanović and members Genci Nimanbegu, Mirsad Murić, Sanja Pavičević, Ana Nikolić and Nela Savković Vukčević suggested a set of activities to be undertaken and also paid a visit to the former hotels "Lido", "Galeb" and "Jadran" and the actual Port Milena.

### 26 February

- Chair of the Constitutional Committee Miodrag Vuković and members of the Committee Nada Drobnjak, Milorad Vuletić and Adrijan Vuksanović met with the European Parliamentarians and members of the Constitutional Affairs Committee Paulo Rangel and Domènec Ruiz Devesa. Members of the Delegation assessed that notwithstanding the political disagreements, Montenegro was a multi-confessional and multicultural state where everyone co-existed in harmony and whose model should serve as an example to other countries in the region. They also addressed the role of the Parliament in the European integration process, respectively Article 15 of the Constitution which stipulated that *The Parliament shall decide on the manner of accession to the European Union.*

### 27 February

- Ahead of the First Ordinary Session, the Parliament of Montenegro organised a meeting with ambassadors of EU and NATO member states and Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro. The meeting was also attended by members of the Montenegrin Parliament, who are heads of permanent delegations to international organisations and regional initiatives. The following delivered opening remarks: President of the Parliament of Montenegro Ivan Brajović, Chair of the Committee on International Relations and Emigrants Andrija Nikolić and Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro Aivo Orav. President Brajović welcomed the return of the enlargement policy into the focus and the intention for opening up more space for parliaments and parliamentarians, and therefore for our citizens, in a more credible, trustworthy and clear way. He reminded that the messages of support that Montenegro received

during all the international meetings this year, including by the SAPC in the previous two days, encourage it to keep a leadership role in the integration process. Speaking about the current political and social environment, President Brajović stated that the adoption of the Law on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Legal Status of Religious Communities was a natural sequence in the rounding up of the national and state identity of Montenegro. Ambassador Orav addressed the attendees, stressing that during the previous period it was repeatedly confirmed that the enlargement policy would remain high on the agenda of the new composition of the European Commission and stated that the new enlargement methodology represented an opportunity for the region, as well as an incentive for Montenegro. He thanked Montenegro for being a significant partner of the European Union and praised its efforts internationally and in aligning its foreign policy with the European Union's foreign policy. With gratitude for the continued support of the European Union in achieving the strategic goals of Montenegro, MP Nikolić emphasised that enlargement policy should remain high on the list of priorities of the European Union new institutions.

- Chair of the Gender Equality Committee Nada Drobnjak spoke at the opening of the Regional Conference "Days of Dialogue" in Budva, organised within the regional initiative „Dialogue for the Future“, jointly implemented by UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO and competent institutions in Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia. Chair Drobnjak addressed the importance of regional cooperation and the exchange of experience in the field of gender equality, also indicating on the gender equality index newly introduced in Montenegro, with the focus on the influence of women. The project sought to promote dialogue and social cohesion among countries participants in the project, providing a platform for promoting positive examples of contribution of women to social cohesion. It also endeavoured to enable discussion on the pending subjects of promotion and strengthening of the role of women in social progress and cohesion.
- President Brajović received non-residential Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to Montenegro Jan Lundin. President Brajović expressed satisfaction over the cooperation between both countries, which fostered an increasingly comprehensive parliamentary cooperation. Referring to the activities at the national and international level, Brajović was pleased with the engagement of the Parliament in all of the activities of promoting the negotiation process endeavouring to retain the enlargement process a high priority of the EU institutions. Lundin reiterated the willingness of the Swedish Parliament to intensify the cooperation with the Montenegrin Parliament as one of the leading institutions in the decision-making process. Lundin

announced a visit of the Delegation of the Swedish Parliament, to be headed by Vice-President Kerstin Lundgren. The interlocutors discussed the current state of affairs in Montenegro and the challenges involving the region.

### 28 February

- Vice-President of the Parliament and Chair of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with the Czech Parliament Branimir Gvozdenović met with the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Montenegro Karel Urban. The interlocutors discussed the relations between both countries and the current state of affairs in Montenegro and the region. They were mutually pleased that the Western Balkans integration remained a Czech Republic's foreign policy goal anticipating that the current Presidency of the Czech Republic over the Visegrad Group - V4 would accelerate the integration process of the region. The interlocutors noted that the quality level of policy relations entailed an even stronger economic development. In this context, greater engagement of the Czech businesses was needed together with a higher promotion of investment potentials in Montenegro.
- President Brajović hosted a delegation of the ALDE Group of the European Parliament, led by the President of the Group, Hans van Baalen, expressing satisfaction with the meeting with members of the ALDE Group, which became the third strongest group in the European Parliament after the last election. Hans van Baalen stressed that the visit was a confirmation of continued support for Montenegro's European path. He welcomed the notable results that Montenegro had achieved in reform activities, good neighbourly cooperation and strengthening of the democratisation of society. The interlocutors agreed on the importance of active participation of all actors in the political scene in further improving the legislation and democratisation of society. The meeting was attended by the Chair of the Liberal South East European Network (LIBSEEN), Roman Jakič, Secretary-General of the LIBSEEN from Croatia, Goran Neralić and the Vice President of the Liberal International from Northern Macedonia, Emil Kirijaš, Member of the Parliament of Montenegro from the Liberal Party, Andrija Popović and the Vice President of the Liberal Party, Dubravka Vujičić.
- A panel debate took place in Podgorica on the topic: "A new methodology involving the EU accession: pros and cons", organised by the Secretariat-General of the Government of Montenegro. Chair of the Committee on European Integration Slaven Radunović, Chief Negotiator Aleksandar Drljević, President of the Paneuropean Union Gordana Đurović and Executive Director of the NGO Center for Civic Education Daliborka Uljarević spoke at the panel debate. The debate enabled the participants to discuss all aspects of the new

negotiations methodology devised by the European Commission and the feasibility of Montenegro's consent to the new accession negotiations methodology. The participants generally noted that the new methodology came about as a solution to the previous enlargement processes. Chair of the Committee on European Integration Slaven Radunović affirmed that the new approach signified an opportunity for the Western Balkans countries. It also benefited Montenegro in terms of the acquired standards contained in the negotiation chapters enabling the country to get acquainted more quickly with the manner of the functioning of the EU and its policies, also gaining access to the EU funds. Chair Radunović emphasised that the political readiness together with the measurable results in the field of the Rule of Law, and the negotiation Chapters 23 and 24 were the key indicators of progress in the EU accession process.

- Chair of the Legislative Committee Jovanka Laličić participated in the Roundtable: "Enforcement of judgements of the European Court for Human Rights involving Montenegro", organised by the Supreme Court of Montenegro and the AIRE Centre. Chair of the Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms Halil Duković could not attend due to urgent business matters. The Roundtable featured the Analysis resulting as cooperation between the Supreme Court and the Office of Montenegro's Representative to the European Court of Human Rights, under the auspices of the AIRE Centre. A Supreme Court Judge Miraš Radović stated that the authors endeavoured to promote dialogue at the national level and dialogue with courts of Council of Europe countries as well as the European Court for Human Rights. The Analysis also served as a method of devising training programs intended for persons performing a judiciary function and for other subjects engaged in the field of protection of human rights. Deputy President of the Government of Montenegro and Minister of Justice Zoran Pažin, President of the Supreme Court Vesna Medenica, the British Ambassador to Montenegro Alison Kemp, and the President of the European Court of Human Rights Linos-Alexandre Sicilianos also attended.

