

# NEWSLETTER OPEN PARLIAMENT

Parliament of Montenegro

Newsletter on the Parliament of Montenegro Performance ♦ No. 108 ♦ October 2020

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# OPEN PARLIAMENT



Parliament of Montenegro

Newsletter on the Parliament of Montenegro Performance ♦ Electronic format ♦ Release: monthly ♦ Year X ♦ No. 108 ♦ October 2020

## FOREWORD

*Dear readers,*

We present to you the key information on activities of the Parliament of Montenegro in the period from 1 to 31 October, which is, in the form of the monthly newsletter "Open Parliament", prepared by Parliamentary Service.

During October, the second day of the Constituent Sitting of the 27<sup>th</sup> Parliament, and the First meeting of the Administrative Committee of the 27<sup>th</sup> Parliament, took place.

For the first time, the Parliament introduces the possibility of the live broadcast of sittings of the working bodies, whilst also enabling the public to get acquainted with the work and other activities of the working bodies via social networks (Twitter, Instagram). Namely, the First Meeting of the Administrative Committee of the 27<sup>th</sup> Parliament, held on 27 October, was broadcast live via social media.

In the focus of this monthly newsletter is the 2020 European Commission's Report on Montenegro, extended to the President of the Parliament by the Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro.

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

During the second day of the **Constituent Sitting of the 27<sup>th</sup> Parliament**, seven more MP Groups were formed, as follows: "Social Democrats of Montenegro" MP Group, "Democrats - Demos - Peace is Our Nation" MP Group, "Socialist People's Party" MP Group, "Democratic Front - Movement for Changes" MP Group, "Democratic Front - New Serb Democracy, Democratic People's Party, True Montenegro, United Montenegro)" MP Group, "Bosniak Party MP" Group and "Democratic Party of Socialists" MP Group. Also, Montenegrin MPs elected Chairs and members of the Administrative Committee. Milun Zogović was elected Chair of the Administrative Committee, while the following were elected members of the Committee: Radoš Zečević, Vladan Raičević, Dragan Vukić, Momo Koprivica, Vladimir Martinović, Miloš Konatar, Luid Škrelja, Daliborka Pejović, Suzana Pribilović, Damir Šehović, Kenana Strujić-Harbić and Raško Konjević.

### *Other activities of the working bodies*

- At its First Meeting, on 27 October, the Administrative Committee determined the number of members in the standing working bodies of the 27<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Montenegro and launched the procedure for establishing candidate lists for chairs and members of standing working bodies inviting MP groups to submit their nominations by 20 November 2020. They postponed the election of deputy chair of the Committee because the parliamentary opposition failed to submit their nominations. In line with proposals by President of the Parliament, the Committee appointed Neven Gošović, law graduate, and Aleksandar Klarić, a graduate of politology for international relations, as advisors to the President of the Parliament of Montenegro.

## NEWS FROM PARLIAMENT



### *President Bečić speaks at the opening of the Information and Documentation Centre*

President of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksa Bečić opened the Information and Documentation Centre on 5 October, in Podgorica, founded within the partner project with the Youth Initiative for Human Rights “Responsibility for the past”. Bečić emphasised that this event was an exceptional incentive to the reconciliation and cooperation, as values which should be additionally nourished and promoted with the aim of further enhancement of relations in former Yugoslavia but also the overall healing of our divided society. He stressed the importance of informative and educative components of the Information and Documentation Centre, particularly bearing in mind the fact that certain public opinion polls had shown that the citizens of Montenegro have the “low level of knowledge of and interest in the war crimes topic that had occurred during the nineties” as well as that youth have poor knowledge on these topics. He expressed

gratitude to the Youth Initiative for Human Rights for recognising particularly in the Parliament of Montenegro a partner for this project. Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro Oana Kristina Popa also addressed the present. Popa stressed that public institutions have a strong responsibility, and in this context, the opening of this Centre represented an important moment for the political history of Montenegro, in terms of its dealing with the wartime past and its healing. The Information and Documentation Centre Montenegro, the task of which is, inter alia, the gathering of relevant documents relating to war crimes committed on the territory of Montenegro, together with all statements, indictments, judgments and other sources connected to the war past during the 1990’s. The Parliament of Montenegro has undertaken the obligation of conserving the gathered material and making it permanently available to all of the interested parties.

### *The President met EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations*

President Bečić met on 9 October with EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Olivér Várhelyi, who was paying an official visit to Montenegro to present the Report of the European Commission for 2020 and Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans. Expressing his pleasure at the Várhelyi’s visit, which took place immediately after the parliamentary elections, and also at the fact that that was the first visit of a high official since the formation of the new parliamentary term, Bečić stressed the gratitude with regard to the assistance and support of the EU in fighting coronavirus. Emphasising that this year’s report on Montenegro is a confirmation of good understanding of the overall socio-political developments and continuous monitoring of the situation in our country by the EU, Bečić pointed out that the Report came into the hands of the new pro-European government which would build partner relations with the Union in facing the challenges. Congratulating Bečić on his election at the position of President of the Parliament, the Commissioner said that his visit occurred in a delicate, post-election moment for Montenegro in the run-up to the formation of the new Government that would encounter numerous

challenges. Emphasising the importance of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, Várhelyi pointed out that this type of support aims to be a roadmap to follow in order to achieve a long-term economic recovery of Montenegro and



the region. He pointed out the necessity of regular approach to implementing the plan, which should be followed by the reforms in the rule of law field. Bečić expressed hope that the successful, democratic transition of power, would encounter positive reactions in official Brussels and result in more dynamic adoption of European standards, closing of all negotiating chapters and ultimately, Montenegro’s membership in the EU.

## PARLIAMENTARY GLOSSARY

**Verification of Mandate** is a routine procedure at the beginning of work of the new convocation, which implies that in the first sitting of the parliament it is verified that the procedure defined in the law has been complied with and that the mandate of new MPs can commence. In the first sitting of the Parliament of Montenegro, the chairperson notes that the State Election Commission submitted the report on the conducted elections and declares that in such a way the term of office of the newly elected MPs has commenced. It is followed by the election of the President and Vice-presidents of the Parliament, as well as the President and members of the Administrative Committee. Verification of the term of office of an MP in case of filling a vacant MP seat during one convocation is done after the President of the Parliament declares that the State Election Commission has submitted the report on filling the vacant MP seat.<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 307



# NEWS FROM PARLIAMENT



## *Meetings of working bodies, other activities and work of the Parliament may be followed via social media*



In order to improve transparency of work of the Parliament of Montenegro, as the highest legislative body, meetings of working bodies may be followed via social media as of 27 October. Through this form of communication, the Parliament of Montenegro will especially focus on openness and availability, in order to enable active participation of citizens in parliamentary life. Starting October, activities of the Parliament may be followed via the social networks Twitter and Instagram.

### *MP Branka Bošnjak participates in the Third OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference*

MP Branka Bošnjak participated in the Third OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference, held online on 27-28 October. The conference provided an opportunity to exchange examples of good practice, discuss challenges and limitations in the implementation of the Action Plan, as well as to consider further action. Bošnjak had a speech within the first session "Women's Participation in Political and Public Life". As she said, the fact of the matter was that in the past ten years things had been changing for the better with regard to women's

participation, but this process should go a lot faster, because women make up more than 50% of population in Montenegro. She thinks that this campaign should be led by a man or men, because then it would be heard more and it would be more appealing. Bošnjak said that a so-called Women's Group should be formed in the Parliament, consisting of all female MPs regardless of their party affiliation. Such an MP group would have a mechanism to launch many initiatives with regard to the issue of gender equality and the overall position of women.

### *MP Dragan Krapović takes part in 7th Danube Parliamentary Conference*

MP Dragan Krapović took part in 7th Danube Parliamentary Conference, held on 28 October, organised by the Croatian Parliament within the Croatian Presidency of the EU. Organised in the format of a video conference, it addressed the following topic: "Smart solutions for sustainable development", focusing on stimulating innovative technologies to improve sustainable development. The participants in the conference were parliamentarians from the countries of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). MP Krapović, among other things, pointed out that the Parliament of Montenegro would be fully committed to inter-parliamentary cooperation in order to meet common development goals, especially bearing in mind the new challenges we were all facing. He

also stated that the so-called "Smart solutions" for sustainable development would be significantly supported, inter alia, through the EU's Economic and Investment Plan, which aims to accelerate the green and digital transition and encourage regional cooperation and convergence with the EU. Krapović concluded that the basis for economic and social transformation was the rule of law, and that special attention would be paid to this area in the upcoming period, but also that, in these challenging times, it was necessary to have cooperation of all stakeholders and solidarity among countries. At the end of the conference, it was agreed that the participants would sign a joint statement calling for the improvement of inter-parliamentary cooperation and the exchange of experiences and good practices.

### *President Bečić takes part in online conference "Balkans Forum against anti-Semitism"*

President of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksa Bečić took part in an online conference "Balkans Forum against anti-Semitism", held on 29 October, organised by the Parliament of the Republic of Albania, in partnership with Combat anti-Semitism Movement (CAM) and the Jewish Agency for Israel. Bečić gave special recognition to the Republic of Albania, which made this important issue topical, thus becoming an initiator of political support to these activities at the parliamentary level, in both national and international context, together with other countries of the region. The President of the Parliament said that the state of Montenegro, which fostered anti-fascism as its heritage, proudly kept its libertarian tradition. He pointed out that Montenegro, as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-confessional community, in the 21st century as well, decisively stepped

towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration, honouring and respecting, as he added, all the abundance of diversity that made our country recognisable in both Europe and the world. He said universal values and heritage of anti-fascism made today's Montenegro - a respectable NATO member and the first next EU member - a country of significant factor of regional stability. Within the conference, speakers, among others, included US State Secretary Michael R. Pompeo and President of the European Parliament David Sassoli. The following also attended: Prime Minister of Albania Edi Rama, President of the Parliament of Albania Gramoz Ruçi, President of the Parliament of Kosovo Vjosa Osmani, President of the Parliament of North Macedonia Talat Džaferi, President of the Israeli Parliament Yariv Levin, numerous high officials, as well as activists in the global fight against anti-Semitism.

## IN FOCUS



### *The 2020 EC's Report on Montenegro handed to the President of the Parliament*

President of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksa Bečić hosted on 7 October Head of the European Union Delegation to Montenegro Oana Cristina Popa, who handed the 2020 EC's Report on Montenegro to him. President Bečić said that he was particularly pleased with the fact that one of the first activities in his capacity of the newly elected President was to receive the Report, which he saw as an encouragement that the new parliament would work hard on the reforms needed to speed up Montenegro's accession process. In this context, he emphasised that the Parliament should be the centre of the social and political developments, recognised as a place of tolerance, dialogue, respect and consensus around key issues for the Montenegrin society. Head of the European Union Delegation to Montenegro Oana Cristina Popa pointed out that the Report contained a number of clear recommendations that need to be fulfilled in order for progress in reforms on the road to the European Union to be faster. The Ambassador said that the existence of inter-party understanding and cooperation was especially important for meeting the strategic goals. In an open dialogue, Ambassador Popa expressed special pleasure with the fact that the focus of the political debate returned to the Parliament of Montenegro after the recent elections. - This is the only way to achieve efficient and responsible legislation, Ambassador

Popa said among other things.

Special emphasis was placed on the expectation that President Bečić will encourage dialogue among political participants, in order to implement comprehensive electoral reforms before the next election cycle.

- It is necessary that we all work together, regardless of our political differences, to effectively implement the recommendations from the said Report. Political differences must become our wealth, and integration towards the EU a consensus to which our narrow party and other interests should be subordinated, because the European future of Montenegro has no alternative, President Bečić emphasised.



## PARLIAMENT OF MONTENEGRO-FROM CATALOGUE OF RECEIVED PRESENTS

Title: Copy of a sculpture by Meštrović  
Country of origin: Croatia  
Extended by: President of the Croatian Sabor  
Recipient: President of the Parliament of Montenegro  
Date of receipt: 7-9 October 2009



Title: Enframed Dragon  
Country of origin: China  
Extended by: Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference  
Recipient: President of the Parliament of Montenegro  
Date of receipt: 28 May 2009



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## 1 October

- President Bečić met with the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Montenegro Artur Dmochowski. Bečić stressed his readiness for further improvement of bilateral relations, while at the same time expressing gratitude for the continuous support that Poland has provided to the fulfilment of Montenegro's strategic foreign policy priorities. Dmochowski conveyed heartfelt congratulations on the election from the Marshal of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, Elżbieta Witek,



and said he expected that Montenegro would continue to pursue its European and Euro-Atlantic path, and that the existing bilateral relations represented a good basis for deepening the cooperation between the two countries through joint NATO and future EU membership. The President expected further strengthening of economic cooperation at mutual interest and expressed special gratitude for the donation of medical devices and equipment, which significantly helped Montenegro and its health workers in the fight against the pandemic. It was jointly stated that parliamentary cooperation at the highest level and within future friendship groups could significantly contribute to strengthening ties between the two countries.

## 3 October

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro met with Ambassador of Italy to Montenegro Luca Zelioli. President Bečić thanked Ambassador Zelioli for Italy's strong support to Montenegro on its path towards the European Union, voicing his satisfaction with the commitment to the continuous development of the relationship between the two countries. He reminded of the importance of regional cooperation within multiple multilateral mechanisms, with special focus on the Central European Initiative. Ambassador Zelioli emphasised the significance of intensifying bilateral parliamentary relations between Montenegro and Italy and voiced his expectation that the two countries would continue cooperation via their partnership in NATO and future EU membership. On

this occasion, he said that Italy remained available for improvement of cooperation not only in the field of foreign policy, but also in many others. The interlocutors considered opportunities for continuing good quality of parliamentary cooperation, and establishment of regular communication between Montenegrin and Italian parliamentarians via the future friendship group with both chambers of the Parliament of Italy. Bečić thanked the Republic of Italy for its support in combating COVID-19 pandemic, which had significantly helped Montenegro and its healthcare workers. He informed Zelioli about the priorities of the new Parliament and pointed out that he would work on strengthening legislative, oversight and control role, as well as judiciary reform and overall reform of the electoral legislation.

- President Bečić met with the Regional Director of Western Balkans at the Westminster Foundation for Democracy Emil Atanasovski. Bearing in mind long-standing successful cooperation, he emphasised his gratitude for the significant support in building institutional capacities of the Parliament. He especially referred to the Parliamentary Budget Office, founded via the joint project „Strengthening financial oversight of the Parliament of Montenegro“ and voiced his expectation that its work in full capacity would contribute to the strengthening of the control role of the Parliament, which is one of the priorities of the new convocation of the Parliament. Atanasovski congratulated the President on his election to such an important office and emphasised that the Parliamentary Budget Office was aimed at assisting MPs to analyse budget. He said that they were expecting numerous initiatives from the new leadership in order to contribute to the strengthening of financial and parliamentary oversight. The interlocutors showed readiness to further improvement and development of new mechanisms of parliamentary cooperation, with special emphasis on the strengthening of administrative capacities.

## 4 October

- President Bečić met with Rabii Alhantouli, Ambassador of Palestine to Montenegro. President Bečić voiced his satisfaction with the dynamics of the development of relations of the two countries, with expectation that Montenegro and Palestine would cooperate at the bilateral and multilateral level. Alhantouli congratulated President Bečić on his election as the President of the Parliament, and wished him a lot of success, hoping that they would achieve cooperation for the benefit of the citizens of both countries. President Bečić informed the Ambassador about the key priorities of the new convocation, which relate to the judiciary reform and comprehensive reform of the electoral legislation. They noted that the achieved parliamentary cooperation at the highest level and within friendship groups might significantly contribute to the strengthening of ties between the two states. During the



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meeting, special attention was also paid to the developing of friendship between Palestine and Montenegro, with special reference to the strengthening of economic and cultural cooperation.

## 5 October

- President Bečić opened the Information and Documentation Centre in Podgorica.

## 6 October

- President Bečić met with Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Montenegro Meglena Plougtchieva -Aleksandrova. Bečić voiced his gratitude with traditionally good relations between the two friendly countries and pointed to the readiness for further improvement of bilateral relations. He voiced his expectation that they would jointly contribute to deepening the cooperation between the parliaments, in which the future friendship group of the Parliament of Montenegro with the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria would have a special role. Bečić also pointed out the significance of cooperation within numerous multilateral mechanisms and thanked Bulgaria for its support to Montenegro's European and Euro-Atlantic path within the EU. Plougtchieva emphasised that she was convinced in prosperity and stability of Montenegro and voiced her expectation that the two countries would continue cooperation via their partnership in NATO and future EU membership. They exchanged opinions on the significance of improvement of economic cooperation, especially in the fields of tourism, industry, trade and science. Speaking of the priorities of the new parliamentary term, President Bečić stressed that he would work on the strengthening of the legislative, oversight and control role.

## 7 October

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksa Bečić met Panagiotis Partos, Ambassador of Greece to Montenegro. Bečić expressed gratitude for the continuous support of Greece and expressed pleasure with the opening of the first honorary consulate of Montenegro in Greece, which would further contribute to the improvement of bilateral relations. Partos congratulated President Bečić for his election as the President of the Parliament and expressed the expectation that Montenegro would continue to build the European and Euro-Atlantic path. Ambassador Partos referred to the recently held elections and expressed pleasure with the environment they were held in. They assessed the Greek support to the integration process as very important, with the expectation of the more intensive cooperation of the two countries within international organisations and regional initiatives. They noted that the achieved parliamentary cooperation at the highest level and within friendship groups might significantly contribute to the strengthening of political, economic and

social ties between the two states.

- President Bečić hosted Head of the European Union Delegation to Montenegro Oana Cristina Popa, who handed the 2020 EC's Report on Montenegro to him.

## 8 October

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksa Bečić hosted the Delegation of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, headed by Maryse Daviet. President Bečić expressed gratitude for the continued good cooperation between the Parliament of Montenegro and the Mission and said that he expected for good relations to continue through future reform processes. Daviet congratulated Bečić on his election as President of the Parliament. She said that the Parliament has been a long-term partner of the Mission, and have worked together since 2006 on the implementation of projects focused on improving the work of parliamentary committees, strengthening the capacity of the staff of the Parliament, providing support to cooperation



between parliaments and promoting gender-sensitive parliament. President Bečić commented on the significant contribution of the OSCE Mission during the work of the Committee on Further Reform of Electoral and Other Legislation and welcomed the OSCE / ODIHR's engagement in monitoring the election process. She concluded stating that the Mission was ready to continue with its support to the Parliament, in close coordination with the President and his associates, in order to ensure needs and priorities of the Parliament have been met, of its committees and the expert Service.

- President Bečić met with Gregor Presker, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to Montenegro. Bečić talked about bilateral relations with the Ambassador Presker, as well as about the continuation of integration process of Montenegro into EU and NATO. He expressed confidence that the intensifying of partnership relations in many areas would continue, primarily in the field of economy and investment. The meeting was, among other things, an opportunity to

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express gratitude to the Republic of Slovenia for its assistance to Montenegro during the coronavirus epidemic. Presker expressed satisfaction with the atmosphere and democratic maturity in which the recent elections had been held, and stressed that Slovenia would continue to support Montenegro on the path of its further European integration process. He referred to the 2020 Report of the European Commission on Montenegro and said that the assessments from the Report represented a good basis for further work of the new Parliament. Presker pointed out that during the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU, one of the priorities would be the enlargement policy, as well as that there existed a lot of room for improving the cooperation between the two countries. Bečić informed the Ambassador about the key priorities of the new Parliament and said he believed that all political entities would demonstrate their commitment to European values.

- President Bečić received a written proposal from the President of Montenegro Milo Đukanović, that the Prime Minister-designate for the composition of Government be the leader of the candidate list For the Future of Montenegro-Zdravko Krivokapić, after holding consultations on the Prime Minister-designate for the composition of Government with the leaders of candidate lists of the following coalitions: For the Future of Montenegro – Zdravko Krivokapić, Peace is Our Nation – Aleksa Bečić and In Black and White – Dritan Abazović.

## 9 October

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro met representatives of the Students' Parliament of University of Montenegro - its President Saša Ročen and student commissioner Aleksandar Šipčić, concerning the Initiative for the adoption of the Law on Amendments to the Law on Higher Education. President Bečić stressed that the Parliament would work on improving the protection of students' interest, which, according to him, was one of the preconditions for the social progress. He informed the students with the dynamics of the work of the Parliament of Montenegro, planned activities and conditions that need to be met in order to bring the process of constituting the 27<sup>th</sup> term to an end, and thus create preconditions for work on the mentioned student initiative. The interlocutors also discussed other topics related to the challenges facing the student population in Montenegro, with special reference to the situation at the University of Montenegro.
- President of the Parliament of Montenegro met with US Ambassador to Montenegro Judy Rising Reinke. President Bečić thanked the Ambassador for her continuous commitment to bilateral relations and voiced his expectation that the two countries would continue their good cooperation via their partnership within the NATO Alliance. Bečić

emphasised that Montenegro remained consistent in its foreign policy commitment, and that it was a policy that had no alternative. Reminding that the US exceptionally appreciated Montenegro's partnership and its Euro-Atlantic direction, the Ambassador emphasised her readiness to provide expert assistance in reforms that await the new Parliament, starting precisely from the recently published European Committee's 2020 Report on Montenegro. Bečić said that the EC's messages in the latest report indicated that the enlargement policy remained high on the agenda of the European Union and, at the same time, it represented an incentive for the new government, in order to continue on its path towards the EU. Ambassador Reinke concluded that the USA would continue to be Montenegro's ally, especially in areas of mutual interest. President Bečić informed the Ambassador about the priorities of the new Parliament and pointed out that he would work on strengthening legislative, oversight and control role, as well as judiciary reform and overall reform of the electoral legislation.

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksa Bečić met with EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Olivér Várhelyi.

## 12 October

- President Bečić met with Ridi Kurtezi, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania to Montenegro. In the talks about bilateral relations, as well as about the European perspective of the two neighbouring and friendly countries, President Bečić said that Montenegro remained committed to its foreign policy course and that it would strengthen its Euro-Atlantic and European path. Conveying greetings from the President of the country, Speaker of the Parliament and Prime Minister, Kurtezi thanked Montenegro for the solidarity and support given after his country had been hit by an earthquake last year. He voiced his satisfaction with excellent relations of the two countries, voicing his conviction that Montenegro and Albania would continue to strengthen cooperation in all fields of mutual interest. The meeting was an opportunity for the interlocutors to exchange opinions on the recently published annual report of the European Commission and the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans. Bečić pointed out Montenegro's readiness to support Albania's European path and share its experiences from the EU negotiation process. The interlocutors agreed that there was significant room for improvement of bilateral relations, to which the two parliaments can contribute via the forming of friendship groups.

## 13 October

- President Bečić met with the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Montenegro Boris Gandel. Bečić expressed satisfaction with the traditionally good relations between the



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two friendly countries and expressed gratitude for Slovakia's contribution to the NATO accession process, as well as the process of joining the European Union. He reminded that in Montenegro there existed a clear goal and consensus on European integration and that the European Commission Report represented an additional encouragement in that regard, whilst the political and expert assistance by Slovakia contributed to the improvement of friendly and partnership relations. Gandel conveyed the congratulatory wishes of the President of the Slovak Parliament and said that Slovakia would continue to support Montenegro on its path to the European Union. Gandel put special emphasis to the parliamentary diplomacy during the meeting, having said he expected the two parliaments would contribute to the deepening of cooperation, with an important role of the future friendship group. The interlocutors agreed that Montenegro had shown democratic maturity and that the messages emerging from the Agreement of the three coalitions had showed that Montenegro remained consistent with its strategic foreign policy commitment.

- President Bečić met with Songül Ozan, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Montenegro. He expressed satisfaction over continuously substantive, friendly and partner relations between both countries, emphasising that there were conditions for intensifying cooperation in the field of economy. He assessed that both countries were mutually characterised by good relations in almost every field and shared mutual values as NATO member states as well. President Bečić stated that the Montenegrin diaspora in Turkey contributed a great deal to the high level of bilateral relations, and, as such, it rendered a potent element in the strengthening of ties between both countries. She congratulated Bečić on his election as President of the Parliament and expressed an expectation that Montenegro would continue to foster multi-confessional and multi-ethnic harmony. She referred to the long tradition and history between both peoples and also expressed satisfaction over the dynamic of development of relations. They noted that parliamentary cooperation at the highest level and within future friendship groups could significantly contribute to the strengthening of political, economic and social ties between the two countries.

## 14 October

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksa Bečić met with Négyesi József, the Ambassador of Hungary to Montenegro. Bečić thanked Hungary for its continuous support to Montenegro in the process of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, emphasising that the process of accession of Montenegro to the European Union remained a priority of the future ruling majority, to which they would be even more committed in the period ahead. Noting that the two friendly countries possess numerous opportunities for deepening

cooperation, President Bečić referred to the successful bilateral communication this far and expressed satisfaction with the fact that the relations between the two countries have been with no open issues. Négyesi said that Montenegro would continue to be provided with friendly and partner support of Hungary on its way to the European Union and expected that Montenegro would be the first following member. Ambassador Négyesi conveyed congratulations on behalf of the President of the Parliament of Hungary to the newly elected President of the Parliament.

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksa Bečić met Robert Weber, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Montenegro. Bečić thanked the Ambassador for his continued commitment to bilateral relations and support for Montenegro's European integration. He expressed the expectation that during the current German presidency of the Council of the European Union, good cooperation with the countries of the Western Balkans would continue. He also referred to the recent messages of the European Commission contained in the Report on Montenegro and pointed out his satisfaction at the fact that the enlargement policy had remained highly on the list of priorities of the European Union. Weber pointed out that Germany recognised the strong political will of Montenegro to join the European Union and stressed that official Berlin would provide the necessary assistance for our country to become part of the European community as soon as possible. Ambassador Weber also conveyed the congratulations of the President of the Bundestag to the newly elected President. Mutual interest was expressed for the continuation and intensification of parliamentary cooperation at the level of parliamentary working bodies and friendship groups.

## 15 October

- President Bečić met Veselko Grubišić, Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia to Montenegro. President Bečić talked with Grubišić about the long-standing close cooperation between



the two friendly countries, thanking Croatia for its assistance in the process of negotiations with the European Union, which

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was especially emphasised during its presidency in the first half of this year. President Bečić stressed that Montenegro's path to the European Union had no alternative, and that it would cooperate with all countries that can help us on that path with their experience. The meeting represented an opportunity for President Bečić to thank for the assistance that the Republic of Croatia had provided to Montenegro during coronavirus outbreak. Ambassador Grubišić emphasised that Croatia would continue to provide support to Montenegro in the further process of European integration, and that the construction and continuation of Montenegro's European path, as a reliable NATO member, was of great importance for Croatia. Grubišić conveyed the congratulations of the President of the Croatian Parliament to the newly elected President of the Parliament of Montenegro, with the expectation that intensive parliamentary cooperation would continue during the 27<sup>th</sup> term as well.

## 16 October

- President Bečić met with Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Montenegro Vladislav Maslennikov. They exchanged views on the current issues of Montenegrin-Russian relations, and voiced readiness to promote bilateral cooperation, including the interparliamentary dimension. It was noted that open dialogue, with mutual respect and consideration, leads to the improvement of relations. President Bečić informed the Ambassador about the political situation in our country. Ambassador Maslennikov noted that Montenegro and the Russian Federation deserved better inter-state relations, confirming the willingness to work together to strengthen them, in the mutual interest of the citizens of the two countries. The interlocutors exchanged views on the significance of improving economic cooperation, especially in the areas of tourism and investment, while more intensive bilateral cooperation could be significantly helpful.

## 19 October

- President Bečić met with Branimir Jukić, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Montenegro. Bečić talked with Ambassador Jukić about regional cooperation, as well as about the European perspective of the two neighbourly and friendly countries. The President noted that Montenegro would continue to support Bosnia and Herzegovina in its integration processes. Jukić voiced his satisfaction with the fact that the two countries had no open issues and he said that the improvement of road infrastructure was exceptionally important, as a precondition for better connectivity between countries and accelerated development of economies. The meeting especially focused on parliamentary diplomacy, with mutual expectation that the two parliaments would contribute to the deepening of cooperation, in which the future friendship group would have a significant role.

## 21 October

- President Bečić met with Romanian Ambassador to Montenegro Ferdinand Nagy. President Bečić expressed pleasure at traditionally good relations of the two friendly countries and gratitude for the Romanian contribution to Montenegro's accession to NATO as well as regarding EU integration. The President reminded that there was a clear aim and consensus in Montenegro regarding European integration and that the EC's Report was an additional incentive in that sense. Nagy expressed special pleasure at the fact that Montenegro had become a member of the North-Atlantic Alliance during his seven-year term. Bečić said that one of the key aims was the promotion of the Parliament as the central venue of the social and political life, where all political subjects would work jointly on achieving the agreement on issues important for the future of Montenegro.

## 22 October

- President Bečić met Ambassador of Austria to Montenegro Anna Janković. The conversation was an opportunity for the interlocutors to share their views on the rich cooperation of the two parliaments, with mutual expectation that they would continue to intensify partner relations. Referring to affirmative messages of Austria during its presidency of the Council of the EU, Bečić expressed his confidence that Austria would continue to support Montenegro's integration to the EU. He informed the Ambassador about foreign policy orientation of the new parliamentary majority, stressing that the commitment to the European values had no alternative. Janković emphasised that Austria would continue to provide support to Montenegro in its further process of European integration and reiterated the assessment that the European Union would not be complete without the countries of the Western Balkans. They also spoke on the continuation and significance of "Barbara Prammer" workshops as well as professional training of the Parliament of Montenegro's staff at the Austrian Parliament.

## 23 October

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksa Bečić met Director Executive of the "Parents" Association Kristina Mihailović and Programme Coordinator Lepa Žunjić. New education model caused by Covid-19 outbreak was an immediate reason for the President's meeting with representatives of the Association. Representatives of the Association informed the President on the activities of their organisation and expressed openness to cooperate with the Parliament through future initiatives. Bečić expressed expectation that the responsible parliamentary working bodies, with an adequate participation of the civil sector representatives, would contribute to considering and

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addressing socially important issues. The interlocutors agreed that the parliamentary support was of the key importance so that the numerous issues and initiatives by the civil sector would be adequately recognised.

## 26 October

- President Bečić met with Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Montenegro Karel Urban. While expressing gratitude for congratulations sent by Speaker of the Czech Chamber of Deputies and President of the Czech Senate on his election for the President of the Parliament, Bečić expressed pleasure at continuously good relations of the two countries. The interlocutors shared their views on the importance of parliamentary cooperation, with mutual expectation that partner relations would be further intensified. Speaking on the current developments in Montenegro, Bečić emphasised that the new parliamentary majority cherished European system of values and expressed assurance that Czechia would continue to support Montenegro's integration in the EU. Assessing that there were no open issues between the two countries, Ambassador Urban expressed readiness for providing further support to Montenegro in its European integration process. He emphasised that the existing bilateral relations would be a good foundation for improving the cooperation between the two countries through joint NATO and future EU membership. They concluded that there was room for enhancing interstate cooperation in a number of fields, primarily in tourism and the economy.

## 27 October

- President Bečić met with heads of UN resident agencies in Montenegro Daniela Gašparíková, Juan Santander, Dušica Živković, and Mina Brajović. Congratulating them on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, Bečić emphasised that Montenegro remained committed to the fundamental values of the UN, promotion of effective multilateralism, open cooperation and strengthening its partnership with the UN. He voiced his gratitude on their continuous support to our country



and engagement of the entire UN system in Montenegro in the response to the consequences caused by the pandemic. The President pointed to the openness of the national Parliament for continuation of cooperation committed to SDGs. UN agencies representatives informed Bečić about their key priorities in the upcoming period and voiced their readiness to continue cooperation via future initiatives with the Parliament and its responsible working bodies. Gašparíková wished the President of the Parliament a successful upcoming mandate for the new convocation of the legislative body. She expressed belief that the Parliament would carry out its role in shaping future democratic reform processes via engagement of a broad spectrum of governmental and non-governmental partners, dealing with issues of vulnerable groups.

- In order to improve transparency of work of the Parliament of Montenegro, as the highest legislative body, meetings of working bodies and the parliamentary activities may be followed via social media starting October.
- MP Branka Bošnjak participated in the Third OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference, held online.

## 28 October

- MP Dragan Krapović took part in 7<sup>th</sup> Danube Parliamentary Conference, organised by the Croatian Parliament within the Croatian Presidency of the EU.
- President met with Nabila Alshamsi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Montenegro. Bečić voiced his satisfaction with the friendly relations of the two countries, estimating that there were conditions for intensifying cooperation in numerous areas of mutual interest. He emphasised that the economy represented a fundamental sphere where it would be possible to improve good partner relations. Alshamsi congratulated Bečić on his election as President of the Parliament and emphasised that Montenegro was not only a friend, but also a strategic partner of the UAE. The interlocutors assessed that parliamentary cooperation could significantly contribute to the strengthening of political, economic and social ties.

## 29 October

- President Bečić took part in an online conference "Balkans Forum against anti-Semitism", organised by the Parliament of the Republic of Albania, in partnership with Combat anti-Semitism Movement and the Jewish Agency for Israel.

## 31 October

- Bečić laid wreath on the catafalque of His Eminence Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral, in the crypt of the Church Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Podgorica.