



Parliament of Montenegro

# NEWSLETTER OPEN PARLIAMENT

Newsletter on the Parliament of Montenegro Performance ♦ No. 36 ♦ March 2014

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# OPEN PARLIAMENT



Parliament of Montenegro

Newsletter on the Parliament of Montenegro Performance ♦ Electronic format ♦ Release: monthly ♦ Year IV ♦ No. 36 ♦ March 2014

## FOREWORD

*Dear readers,*

The key information on activities of the Parliament of Montenegro from 1 to 31 March is outlined in the March issue of the monthly newsletter "Open Parliament", prepared by the Parliamentary Service.

In March, the Parliament adopted 14 laws, while Committees considered 26 proposals for a law, nine proposals for a decision and held other activities within their oversight role.

In focus of this month's newsletter is the Eighth Meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee, which took place on 25-26 March in Podgorica.

The newsletter is published monthly as a part of the "Open Parliament" programme, within 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,*

*Service of the Parliament*



## LEGISLATIVE AND OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY

**At the First Sitting of the First Ordinary Session of the Parliament of Montenegro in 2014**, the following laws were adopted: Law on Amendments to the Law on Private International Law, Law on Ratification of the European Convention on the Legal Protection of Services based on, or consisting of, Conditional Access, Law on Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts, Law on Ratification of Amendments to the Agreement for the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area, Law on Ratification of Amendments to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Law on Ratification of the Social Security Agreement between Montenegro and the Republic of Croatia.

Within the session elections and appointments, resignations of MPs Zoran Vukčević and Fatmir Gjeke were noted, as well as the beginning of the term of office for MPs Nikola Gegaj from the election coalition list "European Montenegro – Milo Đukanović" and Nik Gjeloshaj from the election list "Albanian Coalition: Democratic League in Montenegro, Democratic Party and Albanian Alternative - Lidhja Demokratike në Mal të Zi, Partia Demokratike dhe Alternativa Shqiptare".

**At the Second Sitting of the First Ordinary (Spring) Session of the Parliament of Montenegro in 2014**, the following laws were adopted: Law on Amendments to the Law on Data Confidentiality, Law on Amendments to the Law on Inspection Control, Law on Amendments to the Anti-discrimination Law, Law on Amendments to the Trademark Law, Law on Construction Products, Law on

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Amendments to the Law on Plant Protection Products, Law on Combined Transportation of Cargo.

In addition, the Parliament of Montenegro adopted the 2012 Performance Report of the Security and Defence Committee.

Within the item on the agenda "Elections and Appointments", none of the candidates for the election of Supreme State Prosecutor received the necessary majority of votes. Two candidates for the members of Judicial Council Dobrica Šljivančanin and Loro Markič received the necessary majority of votes, while the Parliament will vote on the other two candidates, Vesna Simović-Zvicer and Mladen Vukčević, no sooner than in a month, in accordance with the Constitution of Montenegro.

In addition, the Parliament adopted the following decisions: Decision on the Election of one member of the Gender Equality Committee, Decision on dismissal and Election of one member of the Committee on International Relations and Emigrants, Decision on the Election of one member of the Anti-corruption Committee, Decision on the Election of one member of the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration, Decision on the Election of one member of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget, Decision on the Election of one member of the Committee on European Integration, Decision on the Election of one member of the Anti-corruption Committee and Decision on the Election of one member of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget. Nik Gjeloshaj and Zorica Kovačević were elected members of the Anti - corruption Committee, the MPs Nik Gjeloshaj and Veljko Zarubica were elected members of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget, MP Nikola Gegaj was elected as a member of the Committee on International Relations and Emigrants instead of MP Obrad Mišo Stanišić, and also as a member of the Gender Equality Committee. MP Obrad Mišo Stanišić was elected as a member of the Committee on European Integration, while MP Marta Šćepanović was elected as a member of the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration.

**At the Third Sitting of the First Ordinary (Spring) Session of the Parliament of Montenegro in 2014**, the Law on Amendments to the Law on Election of Councillors and MPs was adopted.

#### Prime Minister's Hour and Parliamentary Questions

**At the Fourth (Special) Sitting of the First Ordinary Session**, within the item on the agenda "Prime Minister's Hour and Parliamentary Questions", MPs questions were answered by Prime Minister of Montenegro Milo Đukanović and ministers in the Government. Six questions were posed to the Prime Minister, while 50 questions and four additional questions were posed to the ministers.

#### Proposals for laws deliberated in committees

- **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 and the Security and Defence Committee.

- **Proposal for a Law on Construction Products** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on National Parks** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee and the Committee on Tourism, Agriculture, Ecology and Spatial Planning.
- **Proposal for a Law on Responsibility for Environmental Damage** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee and the Committee on Tourism, Agriculture, Ecology and Spatial Planning.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Trademark Law** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Anti-discrimination Law** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Inspection Control** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Misdemeanours** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Witness Protection** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Sea Protection from Pollution from Vessels** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Transportation in Road Traffic** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Private International Law** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee and the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Enforcement and Security** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee. The proposal was also considered by the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration, but it didn't obtain the required majority.
- **Proposal for a Law on Ratification of Amendments to the Agreement between the Government of Montenegro and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Enhancing Cooperation in Infrastructure Construction** was considered and



proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee and the Committee on International Relations and Emigrants.

- **Proposal for a Law on Taxation of Hydrocarbons** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget.
- **Proposal for the Law on Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code** was considered by the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration, but it didn't obtain the required majority.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code** was considered by the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration, but it didn't obtain the required majority.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Election of Councillors and MPs** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee and the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration.
- **Proposal for a Law on Basic Principles of Intelligence and Security Sector of Montenegro** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Security and Defence Committee and the Legislative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Labour Fund** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Legislative Committee. The proposal was also considered by the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare, which decided to propose to the Parliament not to adopt it.
- **Proposal for a Law on Health Protection and Safety at Work** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare.
- **Proposal for a Law on Removal and Transplantation of Human Organs for Therapeutic Purposes** was considered by the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare, as interested committee, which proposed to the Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms, as the lead committee, to propose it to the Parliament for adoption.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms.
- **Proposal for a Law on Amendments to the Law on Games of Chance** 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 Amendments to the Law on Personal Income Tax** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget. The proposal was also considered by the Legislative Committee; however, it did not obtain the required majority.
- **Proposal for a Law on Supplements to the Law on**

**Value Added Tax** was considered and proposed to the Parliament for adoption by the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget. It was also considered by the Legislative Committee, but it did not obtain the required majority.

#### *Proposals for other acts deliberated in committees*

- **Proposal for a Decision on the Election of one member of the Gender Equality Committee** was determined by the Administrative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Decision on dismissal and Election of one member of the Committee on International Relations and Emigrants** was determined by the Administrative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Decision on the Election of one member of the Anti-corruption Committee** was determined by the Administrative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Decision on the Election of one member of the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration** was determined by the Administrative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Decision on the Election of one member of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget** was determined by the Administrative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Decision on the Election of one member of the Committee on European Integration** was determined by the Administrative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Decision on the Election of one member of the Anti-corruption Committee** was determined by the Administrative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Decision on the Election of one member of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget** was determined by the Administrative Committee.
- **Proposal for a Decision on control hearing of Minister of Economy Vladimir Kavarić and Chair of the Board of Directors of Electric Power Plant of Montenegro JSC Nikšić** did not obtain the required majority from members of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget.

#### *Other activities of working bodies*

- At the 56<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **Legislative Committee** held on 3 March, the Committee decided not to consider the requests for constitutional review of the laws and constitutional review of other regulations and general acts of the Parliament.



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- At its 44<sup>th</sup> meeting on 10 March, the **Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration** held a consultative hearing of candidates that have met the legal requirements to be elected as the Supreme Public Prosecutor of Montenegro.

At its 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting held on 13 March, the Committee adopted Amendments to the Rulebook on the procedure for establishing a proposal for the election of four members of the Judicial Council from among the respectable jurists and determined the Proposal for the Election of four members of the Judicial Council from among respectable jurists, which was forwarded to the Parliament for further address.

At its 48<sup>th</sup> meeting, which took place on 17 March, the Committee discussed and unanimously supported the initiative of the Collegium of the President of the Parliament of Montenegro to hold a control hearing of the director and members of the Council for Electronic Media on the topic: "Program standards in the electronic media - the consistent application of the Electronic Media Law".



- **Committee on International Relations and Emigrants** held its 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting on 14 March, during which it provided a positive opinion on Tamara Mugoša, the candidate for the position of the Ambassador of Montenegro to Israel, on a non-residential basis, based in Podgorica.
- At its 46<sup>th</sup> meeting, which took place on 10 March, **Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget** held a consultative hearing on the topic: "Housing loans indexed in CHF (Swiss Francs) and Implementation of Foreign Currency Clause in the Loan Contracts – Legal Regulation". The representatives of the following: Central Bank of Montenegro (CBCG), Banking Ombudsman, Association of Banks, NGO Consumer Protection Center (CEZAP), Hypo Alpe Adria Bank and Ministry of Finance informed the Committee members on various aspects of the problem relating to housing loans indexed in CHF (Swiss Francs).

At its 47<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 13 March, the Committee unanimously adopted the Decision on holding a control hearing of the Minister of Finance Radoje Žugić, Minister of Economy Vladimir Kavarić and

Bankruptcy Administrator of the Saltworks "Bajo Sekulić" Ulcinj, for the purpose of acquiring information on the bankruptcy procedure in the Saltworks "Bajo Sekulić", with special emphasis on protection of rights of workers in the Saltworks and the property of the Saltworks.

At its 48<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 19 March, the Committee voted on the Proposal for the Decision on control hearing of the Minister of Economy Vladimir Kavarić and the Chair of the Board of Directors of Electric Power Plant of Montenegro JSC Nikšić Srđan Kovačević. The Proposal for the Decision did not obtain the necessary majority. In addition, the Committee determined the initial list of institutions required to submit the data and information to the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget, for the purpose of conducting parliamentary oversight, in accordance with the Law on Financing of Political Parties.

At its 49<sup>th</sup> meeting, which took place on 24 March, the Committee held a consultative hearing on the topic "Efficient energy use - situation in Montenegro with reference to Draft Law on Effective Energy Use." Apart from Committee members, representatives of the following took part in the discussion: Ministry of Economy, Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, German Organisation for International Cooperation (GIZ), Montenegrin Employers Federation, as well as representatives of nongovernmental organisations - Civic Alliance, Montenegrin Center for Energy Efficiency, Expeditio, Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) and Green home. The Committee concluded that there has been a progress in the concerned field. However, the awareness of the society on energy efficiency and manner of energy spending has not reached the necessary level yet.



- At the 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms**, the Committee unanimously adopted the Report and Information on activities realised from 20 January to 20 March 2014.

At its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 26 March, the Committee considered and adopted the 2013 Performance Report of the Committee and the 2014 Work Plan of the Committee.

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- At the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **Gender Equality Committee**, which took place on 21 March, the Committee presented the results of the “Second research on cognition and application of the Law on Gender Equality in institutions of Montenegro”. Chair of the Gender Equality Committee emphasised the importance of the project which had been realised in 68 institutions and parliamentary parties in Montenegro, during the second half of 2013.



- At its 28<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 21 March, the **Committee on Education, Science, Culture and Sports** adopted the 2014 Plan of international activities of the Committee and the Request for holding a consultative hearing of Rector and Secretary General of the University of Montenegro, on the topic: “Current situation at the University of Montenegro, with special reference to legal regulations in the Statute of University of Montenegro and Law on Higher Education”. In addition, the Committee was informed on the statement submitted by the Association of Gaming and Betting Operators “Montenegro Bet”.
- At its 34<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 4 March, the **Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare** unanimously adopted the 2013 Performance Report of the Committee and the 2014 Work Plan.

The Committee dedicated its 35<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 12 March, to combatting the grey economy in the labour market. After the discussion, the Committee adopted several conclusions.

At its 37<sup>th</sup> meeting, which took place on 25 March, the Committee members were acquainted with Information from the parliamentary seminar on the topic: “Health and Consumer Protection”, and accepted it unanimously. In addition, the Committee supported the Initiative for holding a consultative hearing regarding frequent attacks on health professionals in Montenegro.

At its 39<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 26 March, the Committee dedicated to the current situation on the strike of the disabled workers from the North of Montenegro. The meeting was attended by Jovo Pajović, Director of Directorate for Pension and Disability Insurance, Veteran and Disability Protection to the Ministry of

Labour and Social Welfare, Marija Jovović, PR Manager at the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Dušan Perović, Director of Pension and Disability Insurance Fund of Montenegro, Milka Vraneš, Assistant to Director of Pension and Disability Insurance Fund of Montenegro, Aleksandar Žurić, President of Municipality of Bijelo Polje, as well as representatives of the disabled workers from the North of Montenegro. The Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare called for disabled workers who strike in Ribarevine near Bijelo Polje to cease with protests, in order to contribute to resolving their problems.

Zsuzsanna Jakab, Director of the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organisation attended the 38<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee, held on March 27. The Regional Director emphasised that Montenegro has made a significant progress in the health system and that it may count on the future support of the World Health Organisation, both Regional Office in Copenhagen and Office of the World Health Organisation in Montenegro.



At its 41<sup>st</sup> meeting, held on 31 March, the Committee observed that conclusions from the previous meeting were realised. Also, the disabled workers reached an agreement with the lead ministry and the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare on cessation of protests and resolving of the requests within the existing law.

At their 40<sup>th</sup> meeting, which took place on March 31, the Committee held a consultative hearing on the topic: “Frequent Attacks on Health Workers in Montenegro”. The following attended the hearing: Miodrag Radunović, Minister of Health; Raško Konjević, Minister of Interior; Milan Mijović, Director of the Clinical Centre of Montenegro; Vladimir Pavićević, representative of the USSCG; Ljiljana Krivokapić, representative of the SSCG; Vladimir Dobričanin, Director of the Emergency Department, and Saša Stefanović, Director of the Emergency Medical Assistance.

- At the thirteenth meeting of the **Commission for Monitoring and Control of the Privatisation Procedure**, which took place on 31 March, the



Commission considered the privatisation procedure of the Saltworks "Bajo Sekulić" JSC Ulcinj. Assistant Minister of Economy Vladan Dubljević, representative of the Investment and Development Fund Mirko Mašković, bankruptcy administrator in the Saltworks Ognjen Jovović, Chair of the Trade Union of the Saltworks Marko Miranović, representative of workers of the Saltworks Veselin Mitrović and representative of the Eurofond owner Boiša Šotra, took part in the meeting.



- At its 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 3 March, the **Administrative Committee** unanimously adopted the 2013 Performance Report and 2014 Work Plan of the Committee. Within its oversight function, the Committee gave consent on the Act on organisation and systematisation of working positions in the Service of the Parliament of Montenegro, Act on organisation and systematisation of Commission for Prevention of Conflict of Interests and Act on organisation and systematisation of Agency for Personal Data Protection and Free Access to Information. In terms of the Complaint, from 17 February 2014, against the Decision of the Administrative Committee from 27 December 2013, submitted by the former MP Zdenka Popović, concerning the right stipulated under the Law on Wages of Civil Servants and State Employees, the Committee decided that to issue an adequate decision after the Working Group submits its Report to the Committee. The Committee also decided that Aleksandar Damjanović will perform the duty of Chair of the Working Group instead of Branka Bošnjak.

At the continuation of its 28<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 13 March, the Committee decided to send a letter to the Collegium of the President to acquaint them with the Complaint of former MP Zdenka Popović, regarding the exercise of the right provided under Article 10 of the Law on Wages of Civil Servants and State Employees.

The same day, the Committee held its 29<sup>th</sup> meeting and determined eight proposals for the decisions. In that regard, the Committee decided to propose to the Parliament of Montenegro to elect MP Nikola Gegaj as a member of the Committee on International Relations and Emigrants and the Gender Equality

Committee, to elect MP Marta Šćepanović as a member of the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration, to elect MP Veljko Zarubica as a member of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget, to elect MP Zorica Kovačević as a member of the Anti-Corruption Committee, to elect MP Obrad Mišo Stanišić as a member of the Committee on European Integration, to elect MP Nik Gjeloshaj as a member of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget and the Anti-Corruption Committee. With regard to the submitted resignation of Andrej Nikolaidis to the position of Advisor to the President of the Parliament of Montenegro, the Committee decided to issue a Decision on dismissal, as well as the adequate decision on compensation for up to a year. In order to appoint members of the Radio and Television of Montenegro Council (hereinafter: RTCG Council), the Committee formed a Working Group assigned to establish a list of applicants which meet the requirements for membership to the RTCG Council.

At its 30<sup>th</sup> meeting on 18 March, upon Proposal of the Working Group, the Committee established the List of applications which meet the requirements for membership to the RTCG Council.

At its 31<sup>st</sup> meeting held on 25 March, the Committee supported the work methodology and rules for compiling the Draft list of applicants that meet the requirements for membership to the RTCG Council, determined by the Working Group of the Administrative Committee. In addition, according to Article 67, Paragraph 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Montenegro, the Committee denied the request for participation in the meeting of the Committee to Goran Đurović, a candidate for membership to RTCG Council.

At its 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting, which took place on 27 March, the Committee has initiated the procedure for appointing the Chair of the State Election Commission and one member of the State Election Commission, by publishing open vacancy notice, in line with the Law on Election of Councillors and MPs. The Committee also sent an Invitation to MP Groups of the Parliament of Montenegro of 25<sup>th</sup> convocation to submit proposals for appointments.



## NEWS FROM PARLIAMENT



### *President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ranko Krivokapić visited the Czech Republic*

President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ranko Krivokapić, upon the invitation of Presidents of both houses of the Czech Parliament paid a visit to the Czech Republic. During the visit in Prague, Krivokapić met with President of the Czech Senate Milan Štěch as well as Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka.

During the meeting with the President of the Czech Senate Milan Štěch, interlocutors referred to the Historical link between Montenegro and the Czech Republic, which is more evident through the medal, awarded to the painter Jaroslav Čermák by King Nikola, for courage shown in a battle, and the countries' current relations where the Czech Republic is a strong advocate of Montenegro's membership to the EU and the North Atlantic Alliance. Krivokapić thanked Štěch for the active engagement of both houses of the Czech Parliament in the field of state integration and democratisation of Montenegrin society. The political ties between Montenegro and the Czech Republic has always been a solid foundation for cooperation between the two countries in specific economic projects.

During the meeting with the Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka, Krivokapić emphasised that Montenegro considered the Czech Republic a good friend, a proven long-time ally and also an important investor. Krivokapić and Sobotka agreed that there was significant room for advancing economic cooperation between the two countries, particularly in the field of transportation, energetics and tourism, the intensifying of which would be of great interest to both sides.

Second day of the official visit, Krivokapić met with President of the Chamber of Deputies Jan Hamacek and made a speech at the joint sitting of members of both houses of the Czech Parliament.

At the sitting, where, in addition to members of the House of Representatives and members of the Czech Senate, students of Faculty of Political Science, Anglo-American University (Prague) attended, Krivokapić stated:

“Historical closeness of Montenegro and the Czech Republic supports the thesis that countries don't have to share borders in order to have good neighbourly relations.



Josef Holecek, Czech journalist, writer, Slav and a great admirer of Montenegro, in his book titled "Černa Hora" wrote as follows: “Montenegro is a world wonder. There is no example in the history of mankind that supports the existence of a small population, insignificant by number, that has successfully managed to prevail over the attacks of a thousand times more powerful enemies, throughout the centuries. Montenegro-small, rocky and impoverished, is the only one that succeeded at it”.

While speaking of the current economic crisis, Krivokapić stressed that vision required strong leadership which was unthinkable without parliamentary democracy and that leadership required more than an efficient administration. It required a diagnosis of an expert, a concise formulated strategy and individuals that were not afraid of accepting counsels of other people, but at the same time independent in their decision-making, by remaining persistent in achieving their goals, since winners never quit, while those who easily quit never win.

During the meeting with the President of the Chamber of Deputies Jan Hamacek, Krivokapić agreed with Hamacek that historically close relations between the two countries would be represented through an exhibition of Jaroslav Čermák's paintings, which would take place on the fortieth anniversary of his last exhibition in Podgorica held in 1974.

### *Meeting of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments*

Meeting of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, a consultative body of the Inter-Parliamentary Union took place at the same time as (concurrently with) the conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on 17-20 March in Geneva. During the meeting of the Association, Secretaries General had the opportunity to exchange experience and opinions

about several issues and challenges encountered by parliamentary administrations within their various working segments. When it comes to the Parliament of Montenegro, particularly interesting were presentations made on the Code of Conduct, that steered further discussion on reasons why the Code should be adopted, its content, the legislation in the field and methods of



implementation of the Code of Conduct.

Additionally, during the meeting, within general debates, current parliamentary topics were considered. They were dedicated to co-ordination of assistance and support to foreign parliaments, parliamentary communication and public relations, and restoring public trust in parliament.



At the meeting, Secretary General of the Parliament of Montenegro Damir Davidović introduced the legislative framework for inclusion of civil society in the legislative process at the Parliament level as well as in the process following the determination of Proposals for laws at the government level. Davidović especially referred to the participation of NGO sector in the meetings of parliamentary committees, and the 2013 attendance

record including 280 attendances and participation of representatives from 70 organisations.

Significant contribution of the civil society to the scrutiny process, according to Davidović, were initiatives and proposals submitted to the committees. Part of Davidović's speech was dedicated to publicity of work and transparency, including openness of Parliament and committee meetings to public, publication of all the documents produced within the legislative process and other information on the work of the Parliament as well as all the data on the use of budget.

In addition, Davidović introduced several projects which have been realised or initiated in cooperation with NGOs such as Democracy workshops, Children's Parliament, Internship Programme, Open Parliament, National Convention on European Integration as well as several projects realised in cooperation with foreign organisations. Important form of cooperation with NGOs, according to Davidović, is realised through answering requests regarding free access to information, submitted in 95% of cases by NGOs. Within the discussion following the presentation of Davidović, secretary generals of several parliaments stated that their impressions on the Parliament of Montenegro were that it possessed a wide range of measures, aimed at including civil society in Parliament's work.

### *Third Session of "Women's Parliament" held*

Vice-President of the Parliament of Montenegro Željko Šturanović opened the third session of "Women's Parliament", during which members of the Government of Montenegro answered questions posed by the participants, representatives of women's groups from parliamentary groups as well as representatives of the civil society.

"Women's Parliament" was organised by the Gender Equality Committee, on the occasion of International Women's Day - 8 March, with the aim of promoting women's rights in Montenegro. The sitting was attended by diplomatic representatives, representatives of international organisations and local self-government. Before the beginning of the session, Chair of the Gender Equality Committee Nada Dobnjak opened the exhibition of art work made by children with intellectual disabilities, titled: "The Way of Love".

At the opening of the sitting of the Women's parliament, Vice-President of the Parliament of Montenegro Željko Šturanović emphasised that by opting the path of European and Euro-Atlantic Integrations, as a framework for the overall democratic and economic development of the country, Montenegro has undertaken the necessary measures in order to achieve equality between men and women in the society, thus, achieving political, economic, social and cultural development. Šturanović stated that the Parliament of Montenegro shall provide support to the Gender Equality Committee and to other competent working bodies and dedicate special attention to monitoring activities of state authorities and institutions in the field of gender equality.



During her keynote address, Drobnjak, stated that in the previous period, a lot has been done in Montenegro in terms of completion of the legislative framework which shall provide equal chances and possibilities to both genders. However, in practice, we still encounter ourselves with the traditional understanding of the position and the role of women in family and society. Drobnjak assessed that significant activities were realised during the previous year in the following fields: combating violence against women, increasing the participation of women in public and political life, strengthening mechanisms at the local level, promoting women's entrepreneurship, initiating activities aimed at improving the status of women living in rural areas, advancing the position of Roma and Egyptian women as well as increasing the participation of men in family responsibilities. Drobnjak concluded by saying that more work needed to be done in terms of adequate implementation of enacted legislation.

## IN FOCUS



### *The Eighth Meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee*

The Eighth Meeting of the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee, which took place in Podgorica was opened by Co-Chairs President of the Parliament of Montenegro Ranko Krivokapić and Chair of the EP Delegation for relations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo Eduard Kukan.



Krivokapić emphasised that when it comes to big issues, the previous year had been very successful for the Parliament of Montenegro.

-Constitutional reforms, particularly in the field of the rule of law represent a challenge to all countries. We, as a Parliament, have proven that we are capable to solve even the hardest political challenges in a consensual manner. Even if at a given moment, we forgot that justice is a foundation of a country, a global association such as the European Union brings us back to the fundamental message, that all the other forms of integration, our internal ones in Montenegro and the EU ones as a whole, should start from the rule of law and constant remodeling of the battle for the rule of law, added Krivokapić.

He concluded that this made our challenges easier, since we weren't the only ones facing them, and the experience we are gaining in the Balkans could use us in the future in building an exemplary EU legal system.

Keynote speaker of the meeting was Igor Lukšić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, who, inter alia, stated that the

dimension of parliamentary cooperation included within the SAPC title, represented a key solution for constantly achieving good results on Montenegro's path to the EU. Lukšić concluded that Montenegro had shown its maturity even in its previous example by amending electoral legislation. This has been a result of hard work by representatives of all parliamentary parties and also the civil sector and an indicator of activities of all parts of society focused precisely on fulfilling commitments and tasks within the dynamic European agenda, in a timely manner.

Greek Ambassador to Montenegro Ilias Fotopoulos spoke on behalf of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, where he noted that Montenegro's rate of progress was good and that this country continued to fulfill its commitments and played an active role in the region and also was involved in further development of regional cooperation, which, along with good-neighbourly relations remained an essential part of accession negotiations.

Head of Unit for Montenegro and Iceland Dirk Lange, while speaking on behalf of the European Commission, emphasised that Montenegro had made good progress in the negotiation process, step by step, however feasible results were needed since reform wasn't based only on good documents, but also implementation. Lange added that electoral legislation shall be assessed by taking into account the fulfillment of recommendations given so far. He considered that achieving political consensus in terms of Montenegro's path towards the EU was very significant, and that the doors were open; however, the path was filled with conditions and requirements.

After the two-day work, the adoption of recommendations certified that progress was achieved in various fields within the EU accession process of Montenegro and identified the fields where further efforts were needed in the future, towards fulfilling European standards, which were needed for a full-fledged membership in the EU.

## PARLIAMENTARY GLOSSARY

**Electoral quota-Electoral threshold.** "Electoral quota is a percentage of votes needed in order to be awarded one seat. The quota is also called a natural threshold. The electoral quota is calculated by dividing the total number of votes (100%) by the number of seats".<sup>1</sup> "The purpose of determination of legal threshold is to deny the candidate lists which have obtained a small percentage of votes the right to participate in the allocation of mandates".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Marijana Pajvančić, Ph.D.-Ustavno pravo-Ustavne Institucije, Novi Sad: Faculty of Law, 2007, p. 201

<sup>2</sup> IBID, p. 202

# FROM THE HISTORY OF MONTENEGRIN PARLIAMENTARISM



## THE LAW ON ELECTIONS OF PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES

24 June/7 July 1906.

WE

NIKOLA I

By the grace of God

PRINCE AND SOVEREIGN OF MONTENEGRO

Announce and declare:

That on the proposal of Our Ministerial Council,  
Upon hearing Our State Council, in the purpose of  
implementing par. II of Article 221 of the Constitution,

We have decided to proclaim and decree  
the following:

LAW

ON

ELECTIONS OF PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES

PART V

Polling stations, Polling Boards and Voting

Article 24

Polling station designated for Captaincies shall be the office of Captaincy court, whilst for electoral boroughs the venue is Municipality court. If these places are found to be unsuitable, the voting shall take place in other suitable state and municipal locations, that is in captaincies, with the consent of the tribe captain and president of village municipalities (head of kmets), and also in electoral boroughs with the consent of President of the municipal borough and Municipal Committee. The place designated for voting as well as the venue shall be announced by the tribe captain for the captaincy and by the President of Municipal borough for the boroughs, ten days before election day, according to Article 19 governing the

publication of electoral rolls.

\*\*\*

Article 26

Polling Board shall be elected as follows:

As previously mentioned, each municipality shall elect their representatives of the Committee on 8 September.

Polling board in electoral boroughs shall consist of five members, elected by the Municipal Committee. Thus, on the election day, the elected members of the Polling Board shall jointly elect a President. For the purpose of providing handwritten copies and all that is necessary to the Polling Board for the election of people's representatives, a scribe is to be designated for captaincies, whereas, Municipal secretary for boroughs.

Article 31

The Polling Board shall be present in the venue where the voting is to take place, no more than six hours before noon;

recieve electoral rolls from the tribe captaincy court, respectively Municipal borough court, and the voting shall start afterwards. The voting takes place in a designated location, and the voters shall enter one by one, approach the Committee table and cast their vote. Individuals who are literate shall write down the name of the candidate they wish to vote for; next to their name, whereas, in the case of illiterate individuals, the Committee scribe shall write it down for them. Given that one individual has finished voting, the other one shall enter the room.

Cetinje, 24 June 1906 **Nikola, handwritten signature**

### From the Law on Elections of People's Representatives

Pavićević, B, Raspopović, R, eds. Crnogorski zakonici 1796-1916, knj. IV (Montenegrin Codes 1796-1916, Book IV), Podgorica, Istorijski institut Crne Gore, 1998, pp. 245-258

## FROM PARLIAMENT'S GALLERY

The third Montenegrin dynasty, the Crnojević dynasty, laid the foundation of the Montenegrin state heraldry. A golden crowned two-headed eagle with raised wings on a red triangular beveled shield became the standard symbol, retained in the subsequent Montenegrin coats of arms. The Cloak is depicted in red and gold. Above the shield, there is a casque with a golden crown over it, followed by a dark dragon with raised wings.



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# CALENDAR



## 1 March

- During the visit in Italy, President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ranko Krivokapić met with President of the Italian Senate Pietro Grasso, Chair of the Italian Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee Pier Ferdinando Casini as well as Italian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly headed by Paolo Romani. During the talks with Grasso, Italy's former chief anti-Mafia prosecutor, Krivokapić stressed the issue of the rule of law as crucial in Montenegro's negotiation process with the EU, especially after the opening of Chapters 23 and 24. During the conversation with Casini, good bilateral cooperation between the two countries was emphasised as well as further intensifying of relations between the two Parliaments.



## 3 March

- Members of the Committee on European Integration met with Chief Negotiator for Serbia's accession negotiations with the EU Tanja Mišćević as well as representatives of Serbia's negotiation structures. The hosts acquainted their interlocutors with regular activities of the Committee on European Integration, which is delegated with almost all the competences in terms of negotiations. Topics covered during the meeting were also on segments of the transparency process concerning the need for constant informing of public about novelties related to the negotiation process.
- Delegation of the Parliament of Montenegro consisted of Aleksandar Damjanović, Zoran Vukčević, Mladen Bojanić, Fatmir Gjeka, members of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget as well as Damir Davidović, Secretary General of the Parliament of Montenegro attended a two-day conference on the

topic: "The Role of Parliaments in promoting investments and competitiveness in the Western Balkans", which took place on 3-4 March in Belgrade.

- Chair of the Gender Equality Committee of the Parliament of Montenegro Nada Drobnjak participated in the regional conference "Work in parliamentary bodies-achievements and challenges, from the gender equality perspective", which took place on 3-7 March in Sarajevo. Topics covered during the conference were on the challenges and achievements of various structures of the legislative branch of government which promote gender equality.

## 4 March

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ranko Krivokapić, upon the invitation of the President of both houses of the Czech Parliament visited the Czech Republic. During the visit, Krivokapić met with President of the Czech Senate Milan Štěch, Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka and President of the Chamber of Deputies Jan Hamacek.

## 5 March

- Members of the Gender Equality Committee of the Parliament of Montenegro Žana Filipović and Ljerka Dragičević participated in the Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on "Preventing violence against women-a challenge for all", which took place in Brussels. As scheduled within the Agenda, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights made a presentation and there was a talk on strategic actions at European level and ideas for making further progress.



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# CALENDAR



## 6 March

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ranko Krivokapić received H.E. Shahin Mustafayev Abdulla oglu, Minister of Economic Development and Industry of the Republic of Azerbaijan. During the meeting, Krivokapić and Mustafayev emphasised that Montenegro and the Republic of Azerbaijan had partnership relations, particularly feasible in the economic field. Krivokapić welcomed Azerbaijan's willingness and wish to invest in Montenegro and emphasised that when it comes to significant investments this gesture represented a proof of trust in our country and our investment environment.
- Chair of the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration Rifat Rastoder attended a regional conference on the topic: "Indicators of Independence of Regulatory Bodies in the Media Field", which took place on 6-7 March in Tirana. Keynote speakers at the gathering were Marco Leidekker, the Head of the CoE Office in Tirana and Lejla Dervišagić, Programme Manager in the Media Department of the CoE Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law. The conference continued with discussion on indicators of formal and substantial independence of regulatory bodies in the media.



- Delegation of the Committee on International Relations and Emmigrants visited Macedonia on 6-8 March, where the following meetings took place: meetings with chairs of the Committees for Foreign Affairs and the Committees on Political System and Interethnic Relations of the Parliament of Macedonia, meetings with the Ambassador of Montenegro to Macedonia, meetings with representatives of the Montenegrin community in Macedonia as well as President of Agency of Emmigration of Macedonia. The delegation consisted of Miodrag Vuković, Chair of the Committee on International Relations and Emmigrants, Obrad

Mišo Stanišić, Mićo Orlandić, Dritan Abazović and Danko Šarančić.

- Chair of the Gender Equality Committee Nada Drobnjak participated in the project "Women in Parliaments, Inspiring Change", organised by the Women in Parliaments Global Forum(WIP), on the occasion of International Women's Day-8 March.

## 7 March

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ranko Krivokapić took part in the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which took place in Paris. In the margins of the Standing Committee of PACE, Krivokapić met with President of the Parliamentary Assembly Ann Brasseur and Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland. It was assessed that there was enormous space for further advancing of cooperation especially in the field of monitoring of electoral processes, respectively joint work in the area.
- Vice-President of the Parliament of Montenegro Željko Šturanović opened the third session of "Women's Parliament", during which members of the Government of Montenegro answered questions posed by participants, representatives of women's groups from parliamentary groups as well as representatives of the civil society.

## 10 March

- Delegation of the Committee on Education, Culture and Sports of the Parliament of Montenegro, consisted of Chair of the Committee and Head of Delegation Branka Tanasijević and members of the Committee Radosav Nišavić, Andrija Popović, Srđan Perić, Saša Pešić, Rešid Adrović i Draginja Vuksanović visited the Republic of Finland on 10-13 March 2014.



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# CALENDAR



The Delegation of the Committee met with Chair of the Committee for Education and Culture Raija Vahasalo and Chair of the Committee for the Future Päivi Liponen. During the visit at the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Delegation met with Ministry experts responsible for Elementary and High School Education, Secondary Education and Sports.

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly received Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations. During the meeting, it was assessed that Montenegro is fully engaged in the stability and promotion of peace values, dialogue and regional cooperation, which represent the fundamentals of the UN organisation. Krivokapić thanked Eliasson for acknowledging Montenegro's efforts and contribution Montenegro has made through participation in Peacekeeping operations and political dialogue. Eliasson emphasised that Montenegro was a very successful story in this part of Europe. Intrlocutors concluded that peace and stability were the highest priorities to which UN member states must be constantly committed. Each individual contribution leads to the security of the whole community.

## 13 March

- Chair of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget Aleksandar Damjanović met with Head of PIFC Department of European Commission's Directorate-General on Budget Robert Gielisse. During the meeting, the following was discussed: development of external revision in Montenegro, position of State Audit Institution (SAI) in the legal system of Montenegro and its independence, cooperation of the Parliament of Montenegro, i.e. Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget with SAI, need of further strengthening capacities of this institution as well as adoption of Amendments on the Law on State Audit Institution, to be realised in the period to come.
- Members of the Security and Defence Committee and the Committee on International Relations and Emmigrants met with NATO expert team, headed by Laurie Walker, Chief of the NATO Desk for Montenegro regarding Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Fourth Annual National Programme within the MAP process. Topics covered during the meeting were on the progress of Montenegro on its path toward Euro-Atlantic Integrations, role of the Parliament of

Montenegro in the process, conducted reforms in the security and defence sector, with special emphasis on priorities and directions in terms of operation in attaining Foreign Policy goals of Montenegro, as well as mechanisms and realisation of activities related to parliamentary oversight and work of the Security and Defence Committee and the Committee on International Relations and Emmigrants.



- Chair of the Committee on International Relations and Emmigrants Miodrag Vuković met with H.E. Ferdinand Nagy, newly appointed, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Romania to Montenegro. Vuković presented the current activities and expectations regarding European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Montenegro and stated that in addition to the ongoing EU membership negotiations, the main priority for the moment were activities related to Euro-Atlantic integration. Vuković also added that he was mildly optimistic about the upcoming NATO summit, which is to take place in the United Kingdom in Autumn, and emphasised that he expected Montenegro to get an invitation for NATO membership. Ambassador Nagy highlighted that it was important that Ambassadors and Parliamentarians stay in touch with each other and added that Romania joins other countries in favour of Montenegro's membership to the NATO Alliance and all Montenegro's efforts in that regard.

## 14 March

- Ambassador of the United Kingdom of the Great Britain and North Ireland to Montenegro Ian Whitting visited Democracy workshops of the Parliament of Montenegro on the topic: "European Union", where he spoke with students of class VIII-3 from "Njegoš" Elementary school, Cetinje. While answering questions asked by children, the Ambassador familiarised workshop participants with the significance of unifying European countries into a

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community such as the European Union, the experience of Great Britain in the accession process and why was it important for Montenegro to become part of the European community.



Nations (MIMUN) visited the Parliament of Montenegro. The participants were primarily acquainted with the history, organisation and work of the Parliament of Montenegro and were additionally informed about the competences and functions of the Parliament of Montenegro as well as activities of working bodies. This year's second conference of MIMUN has gathered young people from 15 countries - four continents as well as students from the the University of Montenegro, Mediterranean University and Faculty of Administrative and European Studies. The visit was organised within the programme "Open Parliament", which enables individual and collective visits, aimed at familiarising the largest number of citizens with the work of the Parliament.

### 16 March

- Chair of the Committee on International Relations and Emigrants Miodrag Vuković, as member of the Working Group participated in the Twelfth Meeting of the Working Group of the Parliamentary Dimension of South-East European Cooperation Process "SEECF PD" in Bucharest. During the meeting the following topics were considered: Draft Rules of Procedure on the work of Parliamentary Assembly SEECF, Draft Inaugural Declaration and Amendments on the proposed texts of the aforementioned documents as well as the Performance Report of the SEECF PD.
- Chair of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksandar Damjanović and member of the Committee Damir Šehović attended a meeting of Chairs of the Committees on Production, Trade and Maritime Affairs, which took place in the Greek Parliament. Three sessions were held within the meeting and were attended by forty parliamentarians of EU member states.

### 17 March

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ranko Krivokapić received H.H. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al-Nehayan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates. Krivokapić welcomed the current bilateral relations between the two countries as well as the special contribution made by H.H. Sheikh Al-Nehayan in this regard. Krivokapić emphasised that he was pleased with the growing interest shown by Emirates investors for projects in Montenegro, and that there was enormous space for intensifying economic cooperation.
- Group of participants of International Student Conference-Montenegro international Model of United



- Meeting of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, a consultative body of the Inter-Parliamentary Union took place at the same time as the conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on 17-20 March in Geneva. During the meeting of the Association, secretary generals had the opportunity to exchange experience and views about several issues and challenges encountered by parliamentary administrations within various segments of their work.

### 18 March

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ranko Krivokapić paid a visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where he met with the highest officials of the country. During the visit in Sarajevo, Krivokapić met with Presiding member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Bakir Izetbegović, Presiding member of the Council of Ministers of B&H Vjekoslav Bevanda, Minister of Foreign Affairs Zlatko Lagumdžija, Management Authorities of both Parliamentary Assemblies of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Ambassador Fletcher Burton, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Head of the permanent Delegation of the Parliament of Montenegro to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Mevludin Nuhodžić participated in the work of 85<sup>th</sup> Rose-Roth seminar on the topic: "Security and

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democratisation in the Western Balkans: Consolidating stability, Pushing Reforms”, that took place on 18-20 March in Sarajevo.



### 19 March

- MPs Azra Jasavić and Husnija Šabović, members of the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration attended a Joint Meeting of the European Parliament and national parliaments on the topic: “Future Priorities in the field of Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs”, which took place in Brussels and was hosted by the European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and the Standing Committee of the Hellenic Parliament on Public Administration, Public Order and Justice.

### 20 March

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ranko Krivokapić received Ambassador of Ukraine to Montenegro H.E. Oksana Slusarenko. Krivokapić emphasised that the International Community should be a guarantee to the sovereign and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Slusarenko expressed gratitude to Krivokapić for the efforts he had made and contribution he had given in solving the situation in Ukraine in a peaceful manner.



- At the meeting of the Gender Equality Committee and the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget, there was a discussion on statistics, success and barriers women entrepreneurs were currently facing. It was concluded that a lot of work had been done in the field of women’s entrepreneurship and that even more work was ahead of us. Additionally, it was concluded that one of the key activities was to adopt the Strategy for the development of women’s entrepreneurship in Montenegro.

### 21 March

- Group of students of Montenegrin Association for Political Science Students paid a visit to the Parliament of Montenegro. The students were primarily acquainted with the history of Montenegrin parliamentarism, organisation and structure of the Parliament, its competences and functions. In addition, they were acquainted with the functioning of the working bodies and MP Groups.

### 25 March

- The Eighth Meeting of the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee, which took place in Podgorica, was opened by Co-Chairs President of the Parliament of Montenegro Ranko Krivokapić and Chair of the EP Delegation for relations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo Eduard Kukan. Topics covered during the meeting were on the current situation regarding accession negotiations between Montenegro and the EU, monitoring of proposals adopted during the previous meeting held in Strasbourg, fight against corruption and organised crime as well as public finances and economic reforms.
- Chair of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksandar Damjanović and member of the Committee Mladen Bojanić met with the IMF Delegation, which consisted of Alasdair Scott, Head of Delegation, Matthew Gaertner and Chris Faircloth. Representatives of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget and IMF spoke about the current state of public finances, the highway project and the new Law on Budget and Fiscal Responsibility.

### 26 March

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ranko Krivokapić received H.E. Masafumi Kuroki, Ambassador of Japan to Montenegro. During the meeting, Krivokapić and Kuroki referred to good bilateral relations between

Montenegro and Japan and emphasised that they should be directed toward intensifying economic cooperation. Krivokapić also stated that projects which Japan had already realised in Montenegro were an example of good cooperation, therefore these kinds of activities are welcome in the future. Kuroki underlined that Japan is fully supportive of political processes in our country, referring to integration in the structure of NATO Alliance and the EU.

- President of the Parliament of Montenegro and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ranko Krivokapić met Gerard Stoudman, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Western Balkans. From the moment it was founded, the OSCE has had an important political role, especially in this part of Europe, in the Western Balkans, assessed Krivokapić and Stoudman. Krivokapić stated that democratic and fair electoral processes as well as the rule of law were the OSCE key priorities, since they led to stability, security, and peace, therefore they must remain fundamentals of OSCE activity and politics. Stoudman assessed that Montenegro's path to the EU and NATO represented a guarantee for stability and strengthening of the rule of law. Interlocutors emphasised that the OSCE has always had a constructive role in the democratisation process, and that it shall remain committed to the same goal.

### 27 March

- Vice-President of the Parliament of Montenegro Suljo Mustafić and member of the Committee on International Relations and Emigrants MP Dritan Abazović participated in the conference titled: "Contribution of Parliaments to the NATO Enlargement", organised by Seimas, on the occasion of 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lithuanian membership to NATO. The topics covered during the conference were: prospects and implications of possible NATO enlargement in light of new security challenges and the NATO summit which is to take place this year as well as European countries and their path toward the Euro-Atlantic Integration, the role of Parliaments and the main challenges in the process.
- Members of the Security and Defence Committee Borislav Banović and Luidž Škrelja participated in the work of the seminar titled: "The Role of Parliaments in reducing the threat of small arms and light weapons in the Western Balkans – experience and new challenges", which took place on 27-28 March in Belgrade. The seminar gathered parliamentarians from the whole Western Balkans region for the purpose of promoting mechanisms for the control of

small arms and light weapons and exchange of experience in regional peace and security.



### 28 March

- Chair of the Gender Equality Committee Nada Drobnjak received French Ambassador H.E. Véronique Brumeaux and Director of French Institute Stéphane Maïcon. During the talks, willingness for cooperation was shown, particularly in terms of amending the Law on Gender Equality, implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence as well as economic strengthening of women.

### 31 March

- Representatives of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget of the Parliament of Montenegro MPs Aleksandar Damjanović, Filip Vuković, Mladen Bojanić, Srđan Milić and Strahinja Bulajić attended a trilateral meeting of fifteen members of parliamentary committees of the Parliament of Montenegro, National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia and National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska on the topic: "Investments in energetics as a precondition for regional development in the Western Balkans countries".
- Chair of the Committee on European Integration Slaven Radunović and members of the Committee Zoran Srzentić, Srđa Popović and Danko Šarančić participated in the seminar "Role of Parliaments in the EU accession negotiation process", which took place in Sophia. Topics covered during the seminar were the following: main challenges in the accession process, oversight mechanisms of legislative authorities, role of national parliaments and the civil sector in the negotiation process as well as development of interparliamentary communication focused on the importance of exchange of experience between countries that are currently in the negotiation process with the EU.