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Introductory speech

Dear readers,

The eighteenth issue of the Newsletter of the European Integration Office presents the most important events and activities in EU accession process during the fourth quarter of 2021.

European Integration Office is committed to coordinating the work of negotiating structure and intensifying activities aimed at achieving tangible results in all chapters, partnership and cooperation with other authorities, as well as strengthening ties and relations with EU institutions and members states in order for Montenegro to take equal place among European partners.

During the previous three months, amid coronavirus pandemic and in accordance with health measures, we have continued with implementation of activities in term of coordinating of the negotiation process, implementation of IPA, cooperation with local self-governments and the civil sector, and organization of relevant activities and campaigns, mostly in the online format.

We believe that this newsletter represents a contribution to improving informing, understanding and knowledge of citizens about the accession process and future membership of Montenegro in the EU.

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OFFICE
DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION ON EU AND EU ACCESSION
PROCESS – GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MONTENEGRO

Key results

860+ members
in the strengthened Negotiating structure

3 coordinations
in format CN - Heads of 33 working groups

6 negotiators
for 6 clusters included in the Negotiating Group

33 road maps
for negotiating chapters

7 subcommittees
within SSA

Over 6000 EU acts
analysed

Key results

- ★ **Montenegro's Programme of Accession to the European Union 2020 – 2022 prepared**
- ★ **New Committee for EU established**
- ★ **Round of consultations in the EU area has been launched with NGO**
- ★ **Memorandum of Cooperation with the Legal UCG Faculty of Law**
- ★ **Europe Day in Kotor, Bar and Bijelo Polje**

73.4%
public support for EU accession

35+ events
which affirmed the EU accession process

10+ meetings
with Parliamentary Committee on EU

EVENT THAT MARKED THE PREVIOUS PERIOD

13. XII 2021.

SECOND POLITICAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE BETWEEN MONTENEGRO AND THE EU HELD



"I am pleased to lead the Montenegrin delegation today, which will soon, at the second Intergovernmental Conference between Montenegro and the EU, have the opportunity to inform partner countries and members about the direction and everything that has been done in the past year by the Government, primarily concerning the strengthening of the rule of law, fight against corruption and organized crime, acceleration of structural reforms in the economic area, but also public administration reforms, all with the aim of improving the living standards of our citizens and accelerating the European integration process of Montenegro, stated the Minister of Economic Development, Jakov Milatovic, leading the Montenegrin delegation at the International Conference between Montenegro and the EU in Brussels.

He presented the Action Plan for addressing key priorities from the European Commission's Report on Montenegro, which was adopted by the Government with the aim of speeding up the EU accession process. Montenegro's Chief Negotiator with the EU, Zorka Kordic, pointed out that the second political Intergovernmental

Conference is in fact an excellent addition to Government's work in the field of European integration this year.

"This is a great opportunity for Montenegro to reiterate its geostrategic commitment to the EU membership, emphasize a clear vision and plans in the field of the rule of law, in addition to its foreign policy priority and to underline other important elements for the overall progress of our country in this process, including significant measures for economic recovery, which from this year we are treating within the so-called cluster of Fundamental chapters. "What is especially important is that we have strengthened the political dialogue with the member states of the European Union, and this Intergovernmental Conference is a confirmation of those efforts," Kordic said.

On behalf of the Council of European Union, under the Slovenian Presidency, the conference was opened by State Secretary Gaspar Dovzan, while the European Commission was represented by the Enlargement Commissioner Oliver Varhelyi.

ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS

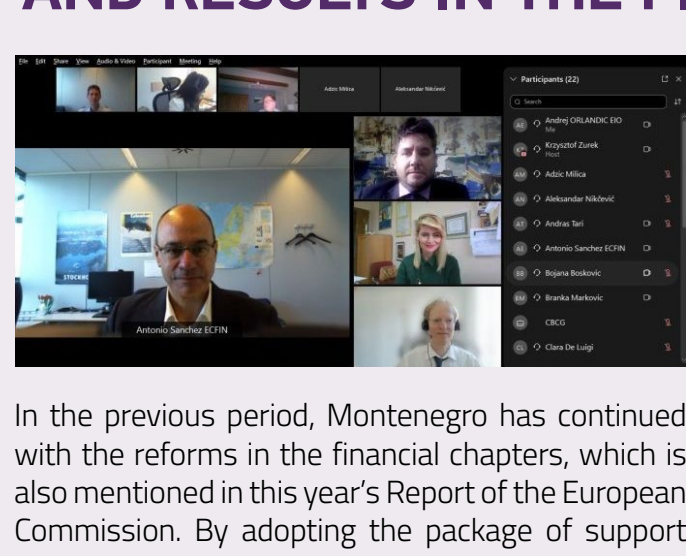
DEDICATED WORK OF THE NEGOTIATING STRUCTURE CONTINUED

During the last quarter of 2021, the negotiating structure continued its dedicated work on fulfilling the obligations from the EU accession process. In the period from October to December, 46 sessions of working groups for negotiations were held, of which 31 plenary and 15 thematic.



5. X 2021.

MONTENEGRO CONTINUING ITS PROGRESS IN THE REFORM PROCESS TOWARDS THE EU IN THE AREAS OF TRADE, CUSTOMS, INDUSTRY AND TAXES



Montenegro, with the continuous support of the European Union, in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, is making progress and continues to implement comprehensive reforms in full compliance with the acquis and EU standards, which is confirmed by achieved results, it was stated at the meeting of the Subcommittee on Trade, Industry, Customs and Taxes.

At the 14th meeting of this Subcommittee between Montenegro and the European Union, which covered chapters 1 – Free movement of goods, 16 – Taxation, 20 – Enterprise and industrial policy, 29 – Customs union and 30 – External relations, representatives of the relevant Montenegrin institutions informed the EC representatives about these activities carried out in the previous period in these areas.

Deputy Chief Negotiator Marko Mrdak stated that among the negotiating chapters that were covered at the meeting, there are candidates for temporary closure after the achievement of satisfactory results in the field of the rule of law. He said that within all chapters that are the subject of the Subcommittee, continuous work is being done on harmonization with the acquis communautaire and EU standards.

7. X 2021.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES: MONTENEGRO CONTINUES TO MAKE PROGRESS IN THE AREAS OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD SAFETY AND FISHERIES

Over the previous period, Montenegrin institutions have continued to meet their obligations and European standards in the areas of agriculture, food safety and fisheries. Progress in these areas is ongoing, but further strengthening of administrative capacities is needed, both in terms of legislative alignment and implementation of EU pre-accession support for rural development, it was stated at the 14th meeting of Subcommittee on Agriculture and Fisheries between Montenegro and the European Commission, which was held online.

Progress achieved in the period since the last meeting, held on October 6, 2020, was presented for the chapters 11 – Agriculture and rural development, 12 – Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy and 13 – Fisheries.

Representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management and the Directorate for Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Affairs presented the achieved results, current activities and plans for the upcoming period.



At the opening of the meeting of the Subcommittee, the Chief Negotiator, Zorka Kordic, pointed out that Montenegro was encouraged, both by messages from the first political Intergovernmental Conference in June 2021 and those that arrived yesterday from the highest EU positions on Brdo Summit, which confirmed that the door of the Union is open to Montenegro. She expressed her belief that our institutions will intensify efforts and reforms in all areas in the coming period with the aim of adopting standards and achieving a quality of life that will ultimately lead to EU membership.

8. X 2021.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC DEMONSTRATED IMPORTANCE OF DIGITALISATION, INNOVATION, EDUCATION, INFORMATION SOCIETY, MEDIA AND PROTECTION OF WORKERS' RIGHTS



The challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic have demonstrated the growing importance of digitalisation, innovation, education, information society, media and protection of workers' rights for development of the state based on the EU good practice. While Montenegro still has a lot of work to do in these areas, during the past period, the relevant institutions have systematically and dedicatedly worked on solving challenges, through implementation of democratic reforms, preserving economic stability and building a European future, it was stated at the 11th meeting of the Subcommittee on Innovations, Human Resources, Information Society and Social Policy.

Representatives of Montenegrin institutions presented to their colleagues from the European Commission activities in areas that include chapters 2 – Freedom of movement for workers, 10 – Information society and media, 19 – Social policy and employment, 25 – Science and research and 26 – Education and culture, since the previous meeting, which was held on October 9, 2020.

During the opening of the Subcommittee's meeting, Deputy Chief Negotiator Marko Mrdak reminded that the year of the COVID-19 pandemic caused many problems to all European countries, but also demonstrated that the EU and its partners, when united, can respond to this demanding health and social challenge, confirming that the EU remains the most credible partner in this challenging period for our country.

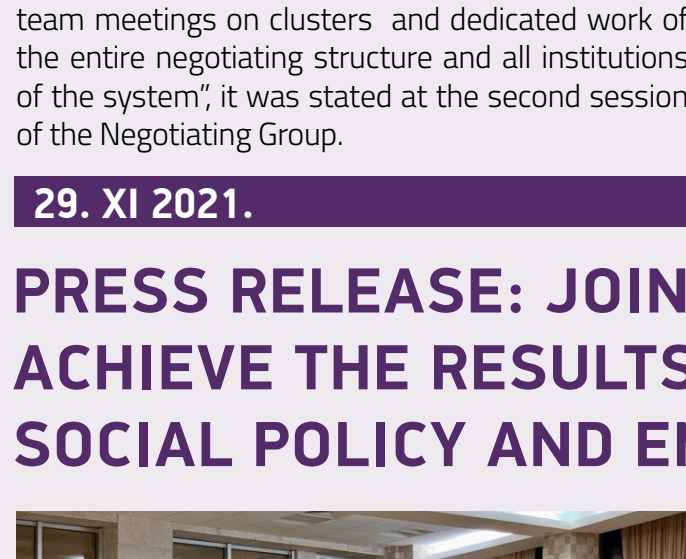
Deputy Head of the Directorate for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Barbara Jesus-Gimeno, recalled last week's visit by the EC President, Ursula von der Leyen to Podgorica, which illustrates the European Commission's strong commitment to Montenegro's EU accession and its socio-economic recovery.

She welcomed Montenegro's progress in the various areas that were discussed by the Subcommittee, including Freedom of movement for workers (Chapter 2), Information society and media (Chapter 10), Social policy and employment (Chapter 19), Research and innovation (Chapter 26), Education and culture (Chapter 26).

The Head of the Working Group for Chapter 19, Jevrosima Pejovic, pointed out that within the four chapters that are the subject of this Subcommittee, laws are being adopted and issues of importance for European integration are being resolved, and that it is therefore important to intensify communication with the European Commission and work on the fulfilment of final benchmarks.

22. X 2021.

NEW EUROPEAN INTEGRATION COMMITTEE DISCUSSED THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPORT



"The latest report of the European Commission, as well as our internal assessments and dynamic plans developed for Chapters 23 and 24, and roadmaps for other negotiating chapters are a clear indication in which direction and according to which dynamics all three branches of the government, with professional and technical support of the negotiating structure, should work in the next period in order to complete

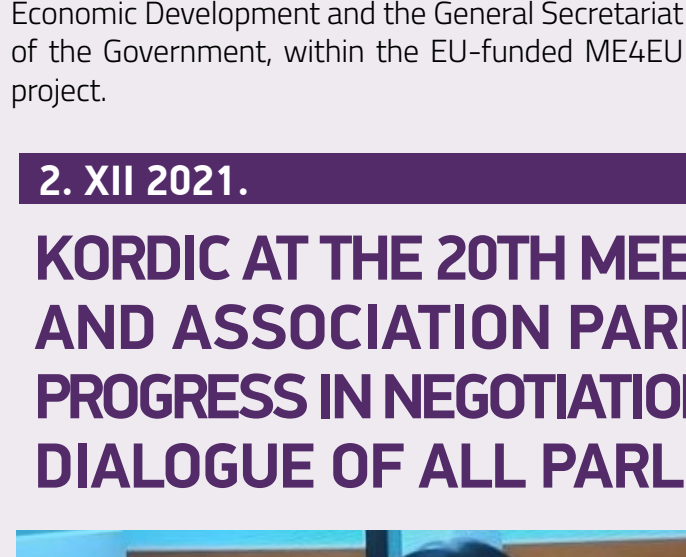
this process and prepare Montenegro to become the next member state of the EU", said the chief negotiator, Zorka Kordic, at the meeting of the European Integration Committee.

At the first meeting of the new Committee, the assessments from the EC Report were discussed, as well as monitoring of realization and dynamics of preparation of the new Montenegro's Programme of Accession to the European Union for the period 2021 – 2023, and the Plan for the translation of the acquis communautaire.

The Chief Negotiator pointed out that the role of the newly-established Committee will be of special importance for a more efficient addressing and monitoring of the implementation of all obligations from the negotiation process in the context of the application of the revised methodology.

22. X 2021.

MONTENEGRO HAS CONTINUED WITH REFORMS AND RESULTS IN THE FINANCIAL CHAPTERS



In the previous period, Montenegro has continued with the reforms in the financial chapters, which is also mentioned in this year's Report of the European Commission. By adopting the package of support to the economy and citizens, as well as significant financial support from the EU, the Government of Montenegro took timely measures to reduce the negative consequences of the coronavirus pandemic – it was assessed at the meeting of the Subcommittee on Economic and Financial Affairs and Statistics.

At the 14th meeting of this Subcommittee between Montenegro and the European Union, held online, covering economic and financial issues and challenges, as well as policies under Chapters 17,

18, 32 and 33, representatives of the Montenegrin authorities informed the representatives of the EC about the activities in these areas that were carried out in the previous period.

Andrej Orlandic, Head of the EU Sector Policy Directorate at the Office for European Integration acquainted his interlocutors with the activities in the chapters covered by the Subcommittee, including the Economic Reform Programme 2021–2023, Revised Guidelines for Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policy for the period 2021–2023, Annual Plan of Official Statistics for 2021, Consolidated Report on Governance and Internal Control in the public sector of Montenegro for 2020, the Decree on the establishment of internal audit in the public sector, and the Law on Budget of Montenegro for 2021.

He emphasized that Montenegro remains committed to fulfilling the remaining obligations from the negotiating chapters 17 – Economic and Monetary Union, 18 – Statistics, 32 – Financial Supervision and 33 – Financial and Budgetary Provisions, in order to improve the situation and achieve full preparedness for EU membership.

4. XI 2021.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTS 6 NEGOTIATORS FOR CLUSTERS - STRENGTHENED COORDINATION OF THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS



"By appointing negotiators and forming the Negotiating Group, we have further improved the negotiating structure and strengthened the coordination of the EU accession process," said Chief Negotiator Zorka Kordic after the Government

session for the appointment of negotiators that will lead Montenegro's EU accession negotiations.

In accordance with the revised methodology of accession negotiations with the EU, the Government of Montenegro has appointed six negotiators to conduct negotiations on Montenegro's accession to the European Union, for six thematic clusters within which 33 negotiation chapters have been grouped. Appointed negotiators, at the level of Secretaries of State and Directors-General, constitute the Negotiating Team headed by the Chief Negotiator.

The key task of the Negotiating Group will be to effectively monitor the implementation of the Action Plan, which is being drafted, for addressing the recommendations from the EC Report.

15. XI 2021.

NEGOTIATING GROUP: WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP SPEED UP THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS



In light of the Government's commitment to make every effort by the end of its term to make Montenegro ready for the EU membership, the role of all actors in the accession process should be proactive and strong. In that sense, the Negotiating Group represents the focal point which will give its full contribution to the quality and dynamics of the European integration process by its dynamic directing, monitoring the realization of obligations and encouraging inter-sectoral cooperation for the most important issues of the process – it was assessed at the constitutive session of the Negotiating Group.

The session was chaired by the Chief Negotiator, Zorka Kordic, and was attended by newly appointed negotiators: State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights Bojan Bozovic, State Secretary for Economic Development Policies in the Ministry of Economic Development

Milena Lipovina Bozovic, Acting Director General of the Directorate for European Integration and International Cooperation in the Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare Suco Orahovac, State Secretary for Energy and Mining in the Ministry of Capital Investments Marko Perunovic, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ljubomir Misurovic.

The Chief Negotiator, Zorka Kordic, pointed out that among the key tasks of the Negotiating Group will be the efficient monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan for addressing the recommendations from the EC Report.

As she said, the Action Plan will serve as a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of activities and obligations with the aim of accelerating the fulfillment of key EC recommendations from the last Report on Montenegro for 2021.

"A new momentum in the accession negotiations requires the engagement and proactivity of all institutions. All ministries have recognized their obligations and we know what must and can be done according to the recommendations of the last EC Report, and all your efforts will be focused in that direction," said Kordic.

The members of the Negotiating Group expressed their full commitment to the obligations from the negotiations and expressed their belief that their joint work will contribute to the acceleration of the EU accession process.

17. XI 2021.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES FROM THE MONTENEGRO'S PROGRAMME OF ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION NEED TO BE ACCELERATED

"In the upcoming period, we must accelerate the implementation of planned activities from the Montenegro's Programme of Accession to the European Union for the period 2021–2023, and especially focus on smarter planning with a more detailed analysis of commitments," said the Chief Negotiator Zorka Kordic.

She chaired the second session of the European Integration Committee in Budva, followed by the 4th

meeting of the heads of working groups and cluster negotiators.

The members of the Committee discussed the situation regarding the implementation of the Programme of Accession and evaluation of the newly received acts of the acquis communautaire, as well as the plan for translation and professional editing of the Montenegrin version of the acquis communautaire.

In relation to the preparation of the Montenegrin version of the acquis communautaire, the dynamics of realization has been agreed for future specific tasks and methods of planning obligations concerning other processes of legal harmonization, taking into account the comprehensive analysis of EU acts based on which domestic regulations are adopted.

29. XI 2021.

NEGOTIATING GROUP: TOWARDS THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE - ACTION PLAN IN THE FINAL PHASE, DEDICATED TO FULFILLING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EC REPORT

"Ahead of the Intergovernmental Conference between Montenegro and the EU, the Action Plan, which will form the backbone of Montenegro's position, is in the final phase. The goal is to successfully fulfil the recommendations of the European Commission from this year's report and significantly improve the situation in all areas through team meetings on clusters and dedicated work of the entire negotiating structure and all institutions of the system," it was stated at the second session of the Negotiating Group.

The session was chaired by the Chief Negotiator, Zorka Kordic, and participants were the negotiators: State Secretary for Economic Development Milena Lipovina Bozovic, Acting Director General of the Directorate for European Integration and International Cooperation in the Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare Suco Orahovac, Director General of the Directorate for Rural Development in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Andrijana Rakocevic, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ljubomir Misurovic and the deputies from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Capital Investments.

The members of the Negotiating Group discussed the Draft Action Plan for addressing the key recommendations from the European Commission's Report on Montenegro 2021, which will soon be forwarded to the Government for adoption.

29. XI 2021.

PRESS RELEASE: JOINT SOLUTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE RESULTS IN CHAPTER 19 - SOCIAL POLICY AND EMPLOYMENT

"A joint approach and solutions that will meet the needs of all actors at the tripartite level, ensure good results under Chapter 19", it was stated at the two-day workshop entitled "Implementation of the Labour Law and the Law on Occupational Safety and Health as a closing benchmark for Chapter 19 – Social policy and employment in the context of European Integration", which was held in Budva.

The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Economic Development and the General Secretariat of the Government, within the EU-funded ME4EU project.

Workshop participants discussed the implementation and supervision of the implementation of the Labor Law and the Law on Occupational Safety and Health. Opinions were exchanged regarding the current application of the law and the improvement of employees' rights in accordance with the acquis communautaire.

Deputy Chief Negotiator, Dragana Markovic, pointed out that for the progress in the negotiation process, it is necessary that our normative framework clearly reflects the needs of our society and the state that strives for European values.

"This is why we are here, to discuss how can we work more effectively on the preparation and implementation of legislation in order to exercise the rights and protection of workers in Montenegro. This chapter covers the most important policy segments that are a prerequisite for knowledge-based economic development, high employment and social cohesion. Equal access to social services, advanced social protection system, trained personnel, high employment rate and incentive measures for those who are less present on the labour market are, in fact, the policy of the state that takes care of its citizens," Markovic said.

2. XII 2021.

KORDIC AT THE 20TH MEETING OF THE STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE: PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS REQUIRES CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE OF ALL PARLIAMENTARY ACTORS

"I am satisfied with the fact that we are continuing to lead the negotiation process with the EU in partnership, and continuous and efficient cooperation with the Parliament, whose role is of special importance for the further progress of Montenegro on its European path. In light of the application of the new methodology, which is firmly directing us to strengthen democratic institutions, the rule of law, fight against corruption and organized crime, it is clear that further reform and capacity building in the Montenegrin judiciary is crucial for progress in negotiations with the EU. This can be encouraged and achieved through a constructive dialogue of all parliamentary actors-parties whose common

denominator is Montenegro's membership in the European Union", said the Chief Negotiator, Zorka Kordic, at the 20th meeting of the Stabilization and Association Parliamentary Committee held between Montenegro and the EU.

Kordic presented to the members of SAPC the most important activities and results in the field of European integration of Montenegro in the period from June of this year.

She pointed out that the Government was committed to drafting an Action Plan that would address key recommendations from the EC Report, with a special focus on those recommendations that state institutions will implement by June 2022.

As she said, the Action Plan will also include a set of recommendations to the legislative and judiciary authorities, the implementation of which in the next 6 months would lead to a better assessment of the next European Commission's report, next fall.

"We are fully aware that the progress made in all chapters should be accompanied by the progress in the rule of law area, therefore it is necessary for all three branches of government to strengthen political dialogue when it comes to judicial reform, i.e., key appointments in the judiciary and state prosecution, which means that we need a more significant reform of the entire state prosecution and judiciary," Kordic said.

23. XII 2021.

WORKING BREAKFAST WITH JOURNALISTS HELD: EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PATH THAT THIS COUNTRY DETERMINEDLY AND PROUDLY CHOOSES

On the occasion of the Second Intergovernmental Conference between Montenegro and the EU and the adoption of the Action Plan to address the recommendations from the latest European Commission Report, the General Secretariat of the Government, within the EU-funded ME4EU project, organized a working breakfast with journalists, with the aim of better and more comprehensive informing of the public about Montenegro's EU accession process.

Media representatives spoke with the Minister of Economic Development Jakov Milatovic, Chief Negotiator Zorka Kordic and members of the Negotiating Group: Bojan Bozovic, Milena Lipovina Bozovic, Suco Orahovac, Marko Perunovic and Andrijana Rakocevic.

Minister Milatovic said that the European integration of Montenegro is a strategic priority of this Government and the path that this country consciously and proudly chooses.

"The Government has been working on the preparation and drafting of laws, and currently many laws are the subject of discussion in the plenum, and we hope that through dialogue with all political parties in the Parliament will ensure the consensus needed in the rule of law and judiciary area, i.e., negotiating chapters on which Montenegro's further progress in the EU depends – Chapters 23 and 24. Concrete, visible and quality reforms in these areas are necessary for further progress and accession to the EU," Milatovic said.

The Chief negotiator Zorka Kordic said that this year is a turning point, because we are now focusing on the remaining tasks in the rule of law area in order to start the final phase and start closing the chapter. She said that we have obtained a revised framework of priorities in the rule of law area at the recent Intergovernmental Conference.

She added that the Action Plan for addressing key recommendations from the EC Report is guided by the principle of accountability, and it aims to improve the work of all departments and enable them to demonstrate proactivity and vision during this process.

24. XII 2021.

PRESS RELEASE: THE REVISED PROGRAMME OF ACCESSION PROVIDES A CLEAR STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EU

"Montenegro's revised Programme of Accession to the European Union is a clear strategic landmark of the EU accession process and is a product of joint work of all our departments, which are making maximum efforts to meet current obligations and plan new ones under this umbrella document of the European

integration process. The fact that in a short period of time the European Integration Committee, with the corresponding teams, analysed and distributed almost seven thousand illustrations of the new acquis communautaire illustrates commitment and renewed enthusiasm towards meeting specific final benchmarks in all negotiating chapters," said the Chief Negotiator Zorka Kordic at the third session of the European Integration Committee.

The first completed version of the revised Programme of Accession to the European Union 2022–2023 was discussed at the session, as well as its compliance with the medium-term and Annual Work Programme of the Government, and the Action Plan for addressing recommendations from the EC Report for 2021.

IPA

25. IX 2021.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EU PROJECTS BRINGS US CLOSER TO EUROPEAN VALUES AND STANDARDS



"Apart from bringing new significant benefits to our citizens, the implementation of projects brings us even closer to European values and standards and strengthens the capacities of Montenegrin institutions and beneficiaries," said the Chief Negotiator and national IPA coordinator Zorka Kordic during a visit to Vujovo Katun in Cakor.

On the occasion of the European Cooperation Day 2021, the European Integration Office organized a visit to "Vujov Katun", which was attended by representatives of the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro, embassies in Montenegro, Operating Structure of Kosovo and project beneficiaries.



The visit was an opportunity to discuss the results that Montenegro has achieved through cross-border and transnational cooperation programs, which represent joint efforts of the countries of the European area with the aim of overcoming numerous challenges that exceed their individual strengths.

The Chief Negotiator pointed out that Vujov Katun testifies that the results of European Territorial Cooperation are tangible even in remote rural areas, i.e., that cross-border cooperation programmes give us the opportunity to fully valorize the potentials of our natural heritage.

1. X 2021.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN MRKOJEVICI RECEIVED A DONATION OF IT EQUIPMENT AND MUSIC CLASSROOM



Elementary school "Mrkojevići" in Bar received valuable equipment and music classroom, which was donated by the European Integration Office on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the European Cooperation Day.

The total value of the donation, which includes 20 desktops, multifunction printer, interactive whiteboard with a projector and a piano with a piano bench, is 17,272 euros, and the funds were provided

through the Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro 2014-2020.

Handing over the equipment, the Chief Negotiator, Zorka Kordic, said that the European Cooperation Day is primarily dedicated to children and youth and all the benefits and standards that children can enjoy in the European Union, and that she is especially pleased to present this valuable donation to the students of "Mrkojevići" school.

"In order to achieve the objectives of this programme, but also other cooperation programmes, and thus improve the quality of life of our citizens, we believe that with all these current project initiatives, it is equally important to provide adequate access to education to our children as they are already developing awareness of the European values at a school age", said the Chief Negotiator.

22. X 2021.

CONTINUATION OF ALL NINE CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMMES IN WHICH MONTENEGRO HAS PARTICIPATED CONFIRMED FOR THE FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE 2021-2027



"European Territorial Cooperation programmes as a unique instrument enable countries to act in a harmonized way in addressing common challenges. Created at the initiative of the European Commission, they represent the financial support of the European Union to the cooperation of border areas of neighbouring countries (cross-border cooperation) or cooperation of several countries / regions (transnational cooperation) in resolving issues of common interest. Projects within European Territorial Cooperation represent concrete

evidence that borders are not obstacles for joint initiatives and successful cooperation. Thanks to a number of projects supported by the EU over the last 30 years, living conditions for more than 170 million Europeans in cross-border regions have been improved and new opportunities for cooperation have opened up. These programmes have been providing significant opportunities for Montenegrin institutions and organizations for over 14 years", said Miodrag Raceta, Head of the Department for European Territorial Cooperation in the European Integration Office.

He pointed out that, within the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for the period 2014-2020 (IPA II), Montenegro participates in nine European Territorial Cooperation programmes. In the current seven-year cycle (2014-2020), 240 projects have been contracted so far - 179 within trilateral and transnational programmes, with the EU support of 252.8 million euros, of which about 35 million euros have been allocated to Montenegrin partners, as well as 61 projects within bilateral programmes, totalling almost 20 million euros.

4. XI 2021.

SYNERGY OF THE NEGOTIATING AND IPA STRUCTURE LEADING TO SUCCESSFUL NEW PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF GREEN AGENDA AND SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIVITY



"In September, the European Parliament approved the pre-accession support for the next seven-year period - IPA III, in the amount of 14.2 billion euros for the Western Balkans and Turkey. Our goal is to start working as soon as possible in a thorough and comprehensive manner on linking priorities at all levels, so that the EU funds in the coming period can be utilised to the maximum and therefore improve the dynamics of Montenegro's accession to the EU", said the Deputy Chief Negotiator - National IPA Coordinator Bojan Vujovic.

He opened a two-day workshop in Budva dedicated to Strategic Integration and Improving the Draft Strategic Response for Window 3 - Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity.

Vujovic pointed out the need to improve the Strategic Response, as a document that serves as a basis for multiannual strategic planning and which is a reflection of our vision and the direction of Montenegro's until 2027.

He said that, within IPA III, the selection of specific thematic areas and projects to be supported is in line with the goals and results defined by key strategic documents and priorities from the EU accession process.

Members of the negotiating working groups for Chapters 14, 15, 21 and 27 and the IPA III programming working group reviewed the results and discussed plans and ways to improve the Strategic Response to make the best use of EU financial support in the coming period.

12. XI 2021.

EU SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS



"Efficient and professional public administration is essential for the work in all negotiating chapters, and this highlights the need for careful planning of EU support for its further reform and reforms in related areas," said Deputy Chief Negotiator Bojan Vujovic, during the opening of the workshop on Strategic Integration and Improving the Draft Strategic Response for the Window 2 - Good Governance, Alignment with the Acquis, Good Neighbourly

Relations and Strategic Communication, held in Kolasin.

The workshop highlighted that EU pre-accession assistance provides support for the adoption and implementation of key political, institutional, social and economic reforms in line with EU values and gradual alignment with EU rules, standards and policies.

The aim of the workshop is to connect working groups for the preparation of IPA projects during the period 2021-2027 (IPA III) and negotiating groups for related chapters, for a more efficient planning of EU support and preparation of the Strategic Response of Montenegro for IPA III period.

During the workshop, members of the negotiating working groups for Chapters 5, 10, 16, 17, 23, 29, 32 and 33 and the IPA III programming working group for this policy area exchanged views, discussed suggestions and worked on improving the draft Strategic Response.

18. XI 2021.

EU FUNDS FOR A MORE DYNAMIC ECONOMIC GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT OF COMPETITIVENESS



"EU support is crucial for further strengthening of the private sector and improving competitiveness, and its timely planning is a good way to contribute to the strengthening of the entire economy in Montenegro", said the Deputy Chief Negotiator-National IPA Coordinator Bojan Vujovic, opening a

workshop on Strategic Integration and Improvement of the Draft Strategic Response for IPA III Window 4 - Competitiveness and inclusive growth.

At the workshop, organized in Budva, it was pointed out that EU pre-accession assistance provides significant support to the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in Montenegro and represents a concrete incentive to further strengthening of science and education, as well as implementing adequate social and inclusive policies in accordance with values, rules and EU standards.

During the workshop, members of the negotiating working groups for chapters 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20, 25, 26 and 28 and the IPA III programming working group for this policy area had the opportunity to exchange opinions, provide constructive proposals and ideas with the aim of improving the area of competitiveness and inclusive growth, through projects that will be implemented in the future with the support of EU funds.

24. XI 2021.

REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR BETTER PROJECTS AND ACHIEVEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT GOALS



"Cooperation of the Western Balkan countries in the field of coordination of EU funds is essential for efficient use of available funds in order to strengthen reforms and socio-economic development at the level of the entire region," said Deputy Chief Negotiator-IPA Coordinator Bojan Vujovic at the

Regional Conference on IPA III Financial Framework, held in Tirana.

The Regional School of Public Administration (Respa) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), in coordination with the European Commission, organized a two-day conference bringing together representatives of public administrations in the Western Balkans that are coordinating EU support and representatives of the European Commission. Funds available are over € 14 billion for the Western Balkan countries for the IPA III Financial Perspective (2021-2027) and will be used to support the fulfilment of EU membership criteria, including infrastructure development. Representatives of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo exchanged opinions in relation to challenges in planning IPA III funds, as well as future steps when it comes to using assistance from the EU funds.

10. XII 2021.

EU SUPPORT WILL BE AN INCENTIVE TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE RULE OF LAW



"Support that Montenegro is receiving through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance is crucial for further progress in implementation of reforms in the area of rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy, as part of the areas that are horizontally important for the EU accession process", said the Deputy Chief Negotiator - IPA Coordinator, Bojan Vujovic, at the opening of the workshop on Strategic Integration and Improvement of the Draft Strategic

Response for IPA III Window 1 - Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy.

The workshop was organized in order to more intensively connect working groups for the preparation of IPA projects during the period 2021-2027 (IPA III) and negotiating groups for relevant chapters, with the aim of more efficient planning of EU support and preparation of Montenegro's Strategic Response for IPA III period that defines the priorities and the way in which Montenegro plans to use the allocated financial assistance.

During the two-day workshop, members of the working groups for Chapters 23 and 24 and the working group for IPA III programming for this policy area had the opportunity to give constructive proposals, exchange experiences and define priorities to further improve the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy through projects that will be implemented with the support of EU funds during the upcoming seven-year period.

15. XII 2021.

MONTENEGRO IS COMMITTED TO THE EFFECTIVE USE OF EU FUNDS IN THE NEW FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE



"Continuation of timely implementation of projects and good coordination of all actors in the system of management of EU funds are of great importance for fulfilling the obligations from the EU accession process," it was said at today's meeting of the IPA Monitoring Committee, held online.

The meeting was co-chaired by Montenegro's Chief Negotiator and National IPA Coordinator, Zorka Kordic, with the participation of representatives of line ministries, NGOs, the European Commission and the European Union Delegation to Montenegro. The Chief Negotiator talked about the most significant achievements related to the use of the EU funds during 2021.

Regarding the further successful use of EU funds, Kordic pointed out that in 2021, dedicated work was done on drafting project proposals for the IPA 2021

programme, for which the EU has committed a total of 32.4 million euros in grants.

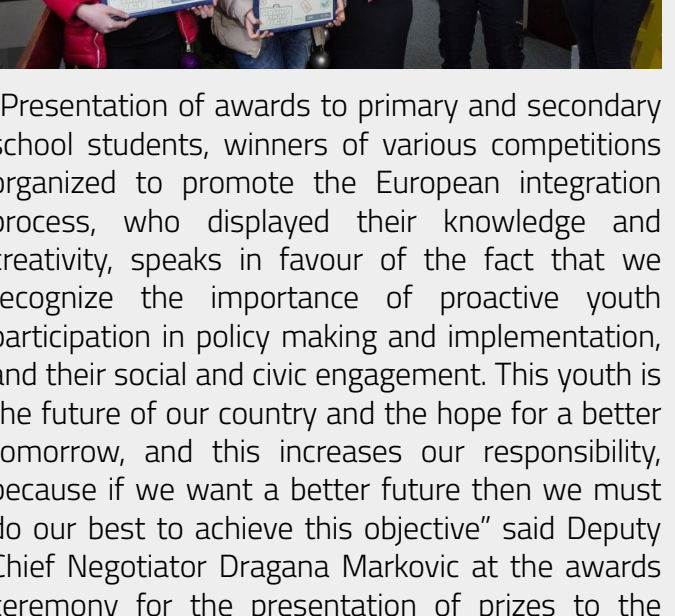
When it comes to future activities, she pointed out that it is very important to focus financial resources on strategically important projects, which will have an impact on both socio-economic development and the fulfilment of obligations from the EU accession process.

"Several months of dedicated work and consultations with all relevant institutions have contributed to the development of the first drafts of action documents for IPA 2022 and the comprehensive Strategic Response of Montenegro for IPA III programmes, which will serve as a basis for future project development in accordance with sectoral and national needs and EU priorities", Kordic said.

CONFERENCES, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

1. XII 2021.

THE REGION HAS THE CAPACITY TO BE A CREDIBLE PARTNER OF THE EU



"Regional cooperation is a means of building trust and is going countries to learn from each other when helping through the painful reforms. Through cooperation, the region demonstrates its capacity to be a credible partner of the EU. EU membership should improve the lives of people in the Western Balkans, and therefore integration should not be slowed down because it helps both the EU and the WB," it was said the Western Balkans regional panel: Future of Europe is our Common Agenda.

The first in a series of panels, as an essential contribution of the Western Balkan countries to the debate on the future of Europe, was held

in a hybrid form in Podgorica, at the initiative of Montenegro within the Regional Project for Promoting EU Integration funded by German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

During the three sessions, relevant actors in the process of European integration at the level of Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers for European Integration and Chief Negotiators from the Western Balkans discussed the next steps in the European integration process of the Western Balkans, climate changes and environmental goals and the issue of investing in youth.

Chief Negotiator Zorka Kordic emphasized the importance of regional cooperation, bearing in mind that the countries of the Western Balkans share a common vision of the future and have common challenges.

"Together we are learning and improving, and we see the framework of European integration as an opportunity to really improve specific sectoral policies and their implementation, especially in the field of economy, environment, and youth," said Kordic. She pointed out the need to define concrete steps and mechanisms of regional cooperation at the operational level, such as the establishment of a regional platform for sharing of knowledge, establishment of a network of chief negotiators, etc.

19. XI 2021.

MONTENEGRO IS COMMITTED TO QUALITY HARMONIZATION OF DOMESTIC LEGISLATION WITH EUROPEAN REGULATIONS

"Montenegro is committed to quality harmonization of domestic legislation with European regulations. Bearing in mind that the European Integration Office is responsible for coordinating the process of harmonization of national legislation with the acquis communautaire, and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Government of Montenegro, the drafting authority is obliged to submit a statement on compliance of draft acts with relevant regulations of the European Union, with the accompanying table of compliance to the Office for verification and confirmation in order to determine the draft act at the Government session", said Mira Radulovic, Head of the Unit for alignment of legislation in the field of political system and social services in the European Integration Office.

Radulovic participated in the conference "Unit in Practice" organized by the Government Office for Legislation of the Republic of Slovenia, where she spoke about the importance of harmonizing national legislation with the acquis communautaire, as well as Montenegro's experience in this area.

The conference was organized within the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, during which the legal challenges were presented in terms of interpretation and application of EU law in the national legislation of EU member states, the interpretation of EU legal acts and their application by Slovenian courts, the nature and importance of so-called "Soft EU law", as well as procedures of the European Commission in case of violation of the provisions of EU legal acts by member states.

It was concluded that the process of harmonization of legislation with the acquis communautaire is dynamic and does not end with country's accession to the European Union. Member states face various challenges in the field of direct application of EU regulations, monitoring and application of European Court of Justice judgments before national courts, which is why it is important that all institutions involved in the European integration process are informed and trained in order to effectively respond to future challenges.

COOPERATION WITH THE CIVIL SECTOR

In the period October - December 2021, public calls were launched for NGOs to nominate a representative as a member of the working group for negotiating chapters 29 - Customs union, 18 - Statistics and extended public calls for nominating a representative as a member of the working group for negotiating chapters 11 - Agriculture and rural development, 12 - Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy and 13 - Fisheries.

COOPERATION WITH LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS

2. X 2021.

EUROPEAN COOPERATION DAY MARKED IN BAR: COMMON BORDERS BRING US CLOSER

"Common borders bring us closer" is the motto of the European Cooperation Day which sends a message about the importance of our participation and contribution to the overall concept of European territorial cooperation and to which we are committed," said the Chief Negotiator Zorka Kordic at the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the

European Cooperation Day, which was organized in Bar by the European Integration Office and the Municipality of Bar.

She said that the successful cooperation of many involved institutions, organizations and individuals, resulted in the recognition of common priorities and successful implementation of projects that contribute to the quality of life in this part of the country.

"Improving health services, establishing new social protection services, platforms for cultural cooperation and creative industries, improving tourism offer and protecting ecosystem diversity, strengthening entrepreneurship and competitiveness, transport and environmental protection - are just some of the results of numerous cooperation projects that have been implemented in Montenegro, including the municipality of Bar", said Kordic.

OTHER

27. X 2021.

THE SEVENTEENTH ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OFFICE HAS BEEN PUBLISHED

The seventeenth issue of the newsletter of the European Integration Office presents the most important events and activities in the process of EU accession during the third quarter of 2021.

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29. X 2021.

EXHIBITION "EUROPEAN INSPIRATIONS - THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS IN THE EYES OF ARTISTS" OPENED

The exhibition is on display at the Centar Gallery in Podgorica from October 28 to November 2. The exhibition was officially opened by Oana Cristina Popa, the Ambassador of the European Union to Montenegro.

The exhibition features works by 22 former and current graphic design students at UDG. The works came about as a result of visual facilitation

- translating words into pictures. The students first attended lectures on the negotiating process results, delivered by the representatives of the European Integration Office. After visiting the exhibition, Zorka Kordic, Montenegro's Chief Negotiator with the EU, said that the students had managed to grasp the essence of the negotiations and turn them into visual symbols.

"For this reason, I want to tell these young people that their works inspire and motivate us and that our teams in the European Integration Office, the negotiating structure and the Government of Montenegro will work even more efficiently, so that Montenegro could take an equal place in the European family as soon as possible so that they can enjoy the same rights and make use of opportunities just like their peers throughout the European Union," said Kordic.

15. XII 2021.

ONLINE QUIZ "HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE EU?"

The General Secretariat of the Government - Sector for Informing the Public about the EU and the EU

Accession Process organized an online quiz "How much do you know about the EU?", within the "EU4ME" project funded by the European Union.

Eight and ninth grade elementary school students were eligible to participate.

Participants in the online quiz, on the Instagram profile of me4eu, gave about 4,000 answers to 10 questions, and valuable prizes were provided for the best participants.

The quiz, which is traditionally held in December, is a great opportunity to encourage students to research and learn more about the European Union and Montenegro's EU accession process, and enables them to test their knowledge of the EU and win valuable prizes; it was stated by the General Secretariat of the Government.

28. XII 2021.

AWARDS PRESENTED TO THE WINNERS OF THE COMPETITION: YOUNG PEOPLE BELIEVE IN THE EUROPEAN FUTURE OF MONTENEGRO

"Presentation of awards to primary and secondary school students, winners of various competitions organized to promote the European integration process, who displayed their knowledge and creativity, speaks in favour of the fact that we recognize the importance of proactive youth participation in policy making and implementation, and their social and civic engagement. This youth is the future of our country and the hope for a better tomorrow, and this increases our responsibility, because if we want a better future then we must do our best to achieve this objective" said Deputy Chief Negotiator Dragana Markovic at the awards ceremony for the presentation of prizes to the

winners of the online competition "How much do you know about the EU?" and winners of competitions on the occasion of the European Day of Languages and the European Day of Science. Young people expressed their satisfaction with participating in the competitions and said that they believe in the European future of Montenegro.

The awards were presented to Hana Vojac, student of the Elementary School "Vladimir Nazor" from Podgorica and Anita Alili, student of the Elementary School "Srbija" from Bar- winner of the online quiz "How much do you know about the EU?"

Jovana Kesićević and Novak Koprivica, students of the Gymnasium "Stojan Cerović" from Niksic, were awarded for winning in the quiz on European science and competition on knowledge of European languages.

In 2021, the General Secretariat of the Government - Sector for Informing the Public about the European Union and the European Union Accession Process organized three competitions for young people, within the project "EU4ME" funded by the European Union.

28. XII 2021.

THE NINTH EDITION OF EUROKAZ PUBLISHED

Within several sections, Eurokaz presents current events from the negotiation process, the results of reforms implemented by Montenegro in the accession process, successful examples of the use of EU funds, etc.

Eurokaz's interlocutors talk about current topics from the negotiation process and current events in the field of EU functioning.

Representatives of the Government of Montenegro, the European Commission, journalists of Montenegrin print and electronic media, as well as representatives of local self-government write and speak for Eurokaz.

Among other things, Eurokaz published texts of the Chief Negotiator, Zorka Kordic and negotiator for the second cluster - Internal Market, Milena Lipovina Bozovic.

In the ninth edition, you can read interviews with the Ambassador of the Republic of France, which holds the EU Presidency, Christian Thimonnier and the Head of the Mission of Montenegro to the EU, Ambassador Petar Markovic.

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EUROKAZ

ČASOPIS O EVROPSKOJ INTEGRACIJI CRNE GORE

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Vladimir Cerović