



Delegation to the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee

D-ME_PV(2021)0422_0

MINUTES

of the meeting of 22 April 2021, 13.00-14.30

Remote via WEBEX

The meeting opened at 13.00 on Thursday, 22 April 2021, with Vladimír BIL ÍK (Chair) presiding.

1. *Adoption of draft agenda*

The Agenda was adopted without any changes.

2. *Adoption of the draft minutes of the meeting of the EU-Montenegro Delegation of 21 September 2020*

3. *Chair's announcements*

Assessing the first five months of Montenegro's new government in office, D-ME Chair Mr Vladimír BIL ÍK mentioned as a positive development the establishment of a National Council against high-level corruption, measures taken by Parliamentary Speaker and Co-Chair Mr Aleksa Bežić to increase the transparency and accountability of the Skupština, which re-established the Committee for Comprehensive Electoral Reform tasked with implementing outstanding OSCE/ODHIR recommendations. The Government also set up a Council for Monitoring the Electoral Roll, which held its first meeting in February 2021.

Among challenges, D-ME Chair pointed out meeting the interim rule of law benchmarks, especially in the field of media freedom, the fight against organized crime and corruption and reform of the judiciary. He also touched upon some "hasty decisions" with regard to amendments

to the controversial Law on Freedom of Religion and the Prosecution Laws, political appointments in the public administration, possible changes to the citizenship law, the difficult cohabitation between President Djukanović and the new government and Montenegro-Serbia relations. D-ME Chair also mentioned the highly controversial statements on the Srebrenica genocide by Montenegro's Minister of Justice as being very problematic in an already very polarized domestic and regional environment.

In addition, he raised the issue of Montenegro's recent plea to the European Union for help to repay a \$1 billion loan from China to build the highway to neighboring Serbia, which may further and dangerously expose the country to Chinese influence.

4. Exchange of views on the first few months in office of the government of Montenegro in the presence of:

- Ms Oana Cristina POPA, Head of the EU Delegation in Montenegro;
- Mr Thomas HAGLEITNER, Head of Unit for Montenegro in the DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of European Commission;
- Ms Elsa FENET, Head of Division 'Western Balkans' in the European External Action Service

Subjects discussed: the first months in office of the new government, cohabitation, Montenegro-EU relations, Montenegro-Serbia relations, the Covid-19 pandemic, the rule of law, the Chinese loan, the economic situation and the CSFP.

5. Exchange of views on the first few months in office of the government of Montenegro in the presence of:

- Ms Jela VULETIC-MANTHOU, Chargé d'affaires ad interim, Mission of Montenegro to the European Union;

Chargé d'Affaires Ms Jela Vuletić-Manthou reminded about the recent stream of visits from Montenegro to Brussels by the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, three other ministers and Montenegro's Chief EU Negotiator - which served the purpose of showcasing the country's commitment to the EU cause and that EU integration is Montenegro's main foreign policy goal. She reiterated the government's wish and willingness to speed up EU reforms and the negotiation process, and regretted that the negotiations had not accelerated enough over the last couple of years. Furthermore, Montenegro has accepted the revised methodology and recognizes its added value, which will allow the country to demonstrate its political commitment through high level political dialogues and intergovernmental conferences. She hoped to see the first such event take place already by the end of the Portuguese Presidency.

Furthermore, she informed that the government had adopted the Programme of Accession of Montenegro to the EU (PAMNE) for the period 2021-2023, which would drive reforms in the rule of law area and fulfill the interim benchmarks in chapters 23 and 24. She also informed that Montenegro had established a National Council for the Fight against High-level Corruption, and that it had launched investigations into several cases involving high-level state officials. Regarding the prosecution laws, she underlined that the government's position is to consult with its "European friends" (European Commission and Venice Commission) and relevant

stakeholders prior to making any decisions and adopting or amending the laws. In addition, she announced that the Sub-Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security had been held in March, and informed about the success of the two peer review missions – with regard to the integrated border management and the Agency for Prevention of Corruption, respectively.

Regarding the pandemic, she informed that the number of infections was decreasing, and that a national strategy for vaccination was in place. Currently, vaccination is conducted with Astra Zeneca, Sinopharm and Sputnik, but the country is also expecting a Pfizer donation from the EU and more doses from the COVAX system, as well as bilaterally agreed doses. She also mentioned that two support packages had been adopted during the past two weeks, with the aim of helping the economy, employment, and the citizens of the country. Montenegro was hit hard by the pandemic, as it is heavily dependent on the tourism sector. To a question asked by D-ME Chair on how Montenegro is getting ready for the summer season, the Chargé d’Affaires told that the country is already planning how to best receive tourists, lowering costs and facilitating PCR tests for them before they leave the country. Furthermore, MEP Thomas WAITZ enquired about whether Montenegro was well-included in the discussion on the EU’s so-called green passport scheme, to which the Chargé d’Affaires replied that Montenegro would like to be part of.

To a question asked by D-ME Chair with regard to the long-pending appointment of Montenegro’s EU Ambassador, the Chargé d’Affaires replied that the procedure to appoint the new Ambassador was slow but would start soon, and that the government already had an idea on whom it would like to see in the post.

6. Any other business

D-ME Chair Mr Vladimír BIL ÍK drew the Members’ attention to the upcoming joint meeting of the Western Balkans and Turkey Delegations on the topic of gender equality and women’s rights, which would be held on 11 May. The meeting will present the members of the delegations an opportunity to exchange views with gender equality and women’s rights experts from the region.

7. Date and place of the next meeting

D-ME Chair Mr Vladimír BIL ÍK informed the Members that the SAPC Delegation of the Parliament of Montenegro had recently been constituted was ready to participate in the 19th EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee meeting organized semi-remotely on 3 June.

The meeting closed at 14.30.

**/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZEN NÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/
 ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE NIMEKIRI/ /RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/
 LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/POPIS NAZO NIH/ELENCO DI PRESENZA/APMEKL JUMU RE ISTRS/DALYVI S RAŠAS/
 JELENLÉTI ÍV/RE ISTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNO CI/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/
 LIST DE PREZEN /PREZEN NÁ LISTINA/SEZNAM NAVZO IH/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/NÄRVAROLISTA**

<p style="margin: 0;">/Mesa/P edsednictvo/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/ Biuras/Elnökség/Prezydium/Birou/Predsedníctvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">/Bureau/Predsjedništvo/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/ Nariai/Képviselők/Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputati/Deputati/ /Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/ Nariai/Képviselők/Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputati/Jäsenet/Ledamöter</p>
<p>Vladimír Bil įk</p>	
<p>Lena Düpont, Thomas Waitz</p>	
<p>/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/ Supplenti/Aizstājīji/Pavaduojantysnariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleančníci/Náhradníci/ Namestniki/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter</p>	
<p>Tomislav Sokol</p>	

<p>209 (7)</p>	
<p>216 (3)</p>	
<p>56 (8) (/Punto del orden del día/Bod po adu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/ Päevakorra punkt/ μ μ /Agenda item/Point OJ/To ka dnevnog reda/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārt bas punkts/Darbotvarķis punktas/Napirendi punkt/Punt A āienda/Agendapunkt/Punkt porzīdukā dzienego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/To ka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Punkt på föredragningslistan)</p>	
<p>H.E. Chargé d'affaires, Jela Vučetić-Manthou of Mission of Montenegro to the EU Oana Crisitna Popa, HoEUD Montenegro</p>	<p>p.4 P.3</p>

/Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatører/Beobachter/Vaatiejad/ Osservatori/Nov rot ji/Steb tojai/Megfigyel k/Osservaturi/Waarnemers/Obserwatorzy/Observadores/Observatori/Pozorovatelia/ Opazovalci/Tarkkailijat/Observatörer	/Observers/Observateurs/Promatra i/ /At the invitation of the Chair/Sur l'invitation du président/ Na poziv predsjednika/Su invito del presidente/P c priekš d t ja uzaicin juma/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/ Fuq stedina ta -'Chairman'/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodnicz cego/A convite do Presidente/La invita ia pre edintelui/ Na pozvanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan
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/Por invitación del presidente/Na pozvání p edsey/Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des
Vorsitzenden/Esimehe kutsel/ /At the invitation of the Chair/Sur l'invitation du président/ Na poziv
predsjednika/Su invito del presidente/P c priekš d t ja uzaicin juma/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/ Fuq stedina
ta -'Chairman'/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodnicz cego/A convite do Presidente/La invita ia pre edintelui/
Na pozvanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan

/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nõukogu/ μ	/Council/Conseil/Vije e/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/ Conselho/Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)
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Laetitia Bot

/Comisión/Komise/Komissionen/Kommision/Komisjon/ Kummissjoni/Comissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisia/Komissio/Kommissionen (*)	/Commission/Komisija/Commissione/Bizottság/ /European
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Thomas Hagleintner, Kirsi Pekuri, Maja Smirkolj

/Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior/Evropská služba pro vn jší innost/ EU-Udenrigstjenesten/Europäischer Auswärtiger Dienst/Euroopa väliseenistus/ External Action service/Service européen pour l'action extérieure/Europska služba za vanjsko djelovanje/Servizio europeo per l'azione esterna/Eiropas r j s darb bas dienests/Europos išor s veiksm tarnyba/Európai Külügyi Szolgálat/Servizz Ewropew g all-Azzjoni Esterna/Europese dienst voor extern optreden/Européjska Slu ba Działa Zewn trznych/Serviço Europeu para a Ação Externa/ Serviciul european pentru ac iune extern /Európska služba pre vonkajšiu innos /Evropska služba za zunanje delovanje/Euroopan ulkosuhdehallinto/Europeiska avdelningen för yttrre åtgärd (*)	/European
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Elsa Fenet, Ulla Hakanen, Pavel Lacki, Plamena Halacheva

/Otras instituciones y organismos/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner og organer/Andere Organe und Einrichtungen/Muud institutusioonid ja organid/ μ μ /Other institutions and bodies/Autres institutions et organes/Druge institucije i tijela/Altre istituzioni e altri organi/Citas iest des un strukt ras/Kitos institucijos ir staigas/ Más intézmények és szervek/Istituzzjonijiet u korpi o ra/Andere instellingen en organen/Inne instytucje i organy/Outras instituições e outros órgãos/Alte instituiții și organe/Iné inštitúcie a orgány/Muut toimielimet ja elimet/Andra institutioner och organ
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<p>/Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/ Other participants/Autres participants/Drugi sudionici/Altri partecipanti/Citi kl. tesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztvevők/Parte ipanti ohra/Andere aanwezigen/Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/AI i participan i/Iní účastníci/Drugi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare</p>

<p>/Secretaría de los Grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupin/Gruppernes sekretariat/ Sekretariat der Fraktionen/Fraktsioonide sekretariaat/ /Secretariats of political groups/Secrétaire des groupes politiques/Tajništvo klubova zastupnika/Segreteria gruppi politici/Politisko grupu sekretariats/Frakcij sekretoriai/ Képviselő csoportok titkársága/Segretariat gruppi politi/ Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secretariado dos grupos políticos/Secretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupín/Sekretariat politi nih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristöt/ De politiska gruppernas sekretariat</p>	
PPE	Jorgen Siil
S&D	Juliana Huszar-Dekany
Renew	
ID	
Verts/ALE	
ECR	
GUE/NGL	
NI	

<p>/Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelář prezidenta/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinett des Präsidenten/Presidendi kantselei/ /President's Office/Cabinet du Président/Urad predsjednika/Gabinetto del Presidente/Priekšējā ja kabinets/Pirmininko kabinetas/Elnöki hivatal/Kabinet tal-President/Kabinet van de Voorzitter/Gabinet Przewodniczącego/Gabinete do Presidente/Cabinet Prezidenta/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmannens kansli</p>	
	Alina Girbea
<p>/Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelář generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/ Kabinet des Generalsekretärs/Peasekretäribüroo/ /Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du Secrétaire général/Urad glavnog tajnika/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/ ener sekretářa kabinetu/Generalinio sekretoriaus kabinetas/ Főtitkári hivatal/Kabinet tas-Segretarju enerálni/Kabinet van de secretaris-generaal/Gabinet Sekretarza Generalnego/Gabinete do Secretário-Geral/Cabinet Secretar General/Kancelária generálneho tajomníka/Urad generalného sekretarja/Pääsihteerin kabinetti/ Generalsekretærerens kansli</p>	

<p>/Dirección General/Generální editelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/ / Directorate-General/Direction générale/Glavna uprava/Direzione generale/ ener ldirektor ts/Generalinis direktoratas/F igazgatóság/ Direttorat generali/Directorate-general/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direc ii Generale/Generálne riadite stvo/Generalni direktorat/Pääsasto/Generaldirektorat</p>
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DG PRES	
DG IPOL	
DG EXPO	Gorana PopGeorgieva (MEDiation unit), Francesco Ronchi (PAAC)
DG EPRS	
DG COMM	
DG PERS	
DG INLO	
DG TRAD	
DG LINC	
DG FINS	
DG ITEC	
DG SAFE	

<p>/Servicio Jurídico/Právní služba/Juridisk Tjeneste/Juristischer Dienst/Öigusteenistus/ μ /Legal Service/ Service juridique/Pravna služba/Servizio giuridico/Juridiskais dienests/Teis s taryba/Jogi szolgálat/Servizz legali/Juridische Dienst/ Wydział prawny/Serviço Jurídico/Serviciu Juridic/Právny servis/Oikeudellinen yksikkö/Rättstjänsten</p>

<p>/Secretaría de la comisión/Sekretariát výboru/Udvalgssekretariatet/Ausschusssekretariat/Komisjoni sekretariaat/ μμ /Committee secretariat/Secrétaireat de la commission/Tajništvo odbora/Segreteria della commissione/ Komitejas sekretari ts/Komiteo sekretoriatas/A bizottság titkársága/Segretarjat tal-kumitat/Commissiesecretariaat/ Sekretariat komisji/Secretariado da comissão/Secretariat comisie/Sekretariat odbora/Valiokunnan sihteeristö/Utskottsssekretariatet</p>

Peter Lang, Tatiana Mrazikova, Andre de Munter, Ausra Rakstelyte, Maria Alvarez

<p>/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/ /Assistant/Assistente/Pal gs/Pad j jas/Asszisztens/Asystent/Pomo nik/ Avustaja/Assistenter</p>
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Vesselina Veleva, Cristina Chiorean, Rosa Maria Licop

* (P) = /Presidente/P edsedá/Formand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/ /Chairman/Président/Predsjednik/Priekš d t js/
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 (VP) = - /Vicepresidente/Mistop edsedá/Næstformand/Stellvertretender Vorsitzender/Aseesimees/ /
 Vice-Chair/Potpredsjednik/Vice-Président/Potpredsjednik/Priekš d t ja vietnieks/Pirmininko pavaduotojas/Alelnök/ Vi i
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 Varapuheenjohtaja/Vice ordförande
 (M) = /Miembro/ len/Medlem./Mitglied/Parlamentiliige/ /Member/Membre/ lan/Membro/Deput ts/Narys/Képvisel /
 Membru/Lid/Członek/Membro/len/Poslanec/Jäsen/Ledamot
 (F) = /Funcionario/Ú ednák/Tjenestemand/Beamter/Ametnik/ /Official/Fonctionnaire/Dužnosnik/
 Funzionario/Ier dnis/Pareig nas/Tisztvisel /Uffijal/Ambtenaar/Urz dnik/Funcionário/Func ionar/Úradník/Uradnik/Virkamies/
 Tjänsteman