



The Parliament of Montenegro

**Third Quarterly Report on the Implementation of the
Action Plan for Strengthening the Legislative and Oversight Role of the
Parliament of Montenegro
01 June to 01 September 2011**

September 2011

Introduction

At the meeting held on 9 December 2010, the Collegium of the Speaker of the Parliament of Montenegro adopted the Action Plan for Strengthening the Legislative and Oversight Role of the Parliament of Montenegro from November 2010 to November 2011. The adoption of this document followed the European Commission's Opinion specifying that EU accession negotiations with Montenegro would be launched once the country has achieved the required level of compliance with the membership criteria, particularly the political Copenhagen criteria, where one of the key seven priorities is directly related to the Parliament of Montenegro, i.e. improving the legislative framework for elections in line with the recommendations of the OSCE – ODIHR and the Venice Commission, and strengthening legislative and oversight role of the Parliament. The Action Plan is also a reflection of the need to increase the administrative capacity of the Parliament of Montenegro required to assume the role that the Parliament is to play in the coming phases of the EU integration process.

The Action Plan stipulates over 30 measures and activities, including explanations, responsible entities and deadlines aimed at strengthening the legislative and oversight role of the Parliament, which are related to adoption of laws and other acts, increased efficiency of the Parliament and its bodies, strengthening the administrative capacity, and further increase of openness and transparency. Strengthening Parliament's capacity to oversee and monitor the harmonisation of domestic legislation with the European Union's *acquis* is one of the key priorities that numerous activities and measures stipulated by the Action Plan address, directly or indirectly.

The last measure from the Parliament's Action Plan (AP) envisages that the Parliament's Administration will prepare Quarterly Reports on AP implementation for the consideration of the Collegium. As a result, the 1st Quarterly Report, covering the period between 01 December and 01 March 2011, deliberated and adopted by the Collegium at its meeting held on 7 March 2011, and the 2nd Quarterly Report for the period from 01 March to 01 June 2011, deliberated and adopted by the Collegium at its meeting held on 13 June 2011, were prepared. The present, 3rd Quarterly Report, gives an overview of the implementation of the AP measures and activities taken from 01 June to 01 September. The report has a narrative part, with short description of activities implemented over the reporting period, as well as a tabular part, with indicators and the status, or degree of implementation.

We recall that on 17 December 2010 the Government of Montenegro adopted the Draft Action Plan for Monitoring the Implementation of Recommendations from the EC Opinion, and after the public debate and the consultative meeting with the EC - DG Enlargement held on 8 and 9 February in Podgorica, the Government adopted the Action Plan on 17 February 2011. The Parliament's AP, i.e. tabular overview of AP activities was also integrated to form a single document with the Government's Action Plan.

Given that the European Commission is to monitor the Action Plan implementation on regular basis, it was agreed with the EU Delegation in Montenegro that both the Parliament and the Government should submit monthly overviews of implemented activities that would be submitted to Brussels as an integrated document. In order to facilitate the monitoring of AP implementation, the Parliament opted for a uniform tabular reporting model that includes indicators and the status, i.e. the degree of implementation. After being considered and adopted by the Collegium, the Report will be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI), as well as the EU Delegation in Montenegro.

From the AP adoption to 1 September 2011, out of the total of 29 measures envisaged over the period stipulated, 20 were fully implemented, two partly implemented, and seven measures are currently in progress, with the deadline being shifted for one of them. The AP also envisages five measures which are implemented in continuity.

By the end of the third quarter of 2011, two more measures are envisaged, and the preparatory activities for their implementation are now in progress.

The overview of activities envisaged by the Parliament's AP:

Activity 1: Adopt the Law on Election of Members of Parliament and Local Councillors, in line with the OSCE - ODIHR and the Venice Commission recommendations (deadline shifted)

At the 13th sitting of the first regular (spring) session 2011, held on 31 July, the Draft Law on Election of Local Councillors and MPs failed to win majority support, following which, by adopting the Draft Constitutional Law amending the Constitutional Law for Implementation of the Constitution of Montenegro, the deadline was extended to 31 December 2011. The Parliament is convened for session on 6 September 2011 with the Draft Law amending the Law on Election of Local Councillors and MPs, submitted by five MP clubs, on the agenda.

Activity 2: Define the roles and responsibilities of the Parliament in the coming stages of EU integration (in progress)

Based on the data collected through the ECPRD network (European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation), the Section for Research, Analysis, Documentation and Library completed the research into the role of national parliaments in the accession negotiations with the EU, which is to contribute to and assist the decision-makers in defining the role and responsibilities of the Parliament of Montenegro in the coming phases of EU integration. The research outcome was submitted to the Collegium of the Speaker in December 2010. After

receiving the MP Clubs positions with regard to this issue, the role and responsibilities of the Parliament in the coming stages of EU integration will be considered by the Collegium.

Activity 3: Draft and adopt the Law on Parliamentary Oversight in the Field of Security and Defence (implemented)

The Law on Parliamentary Oversight in the Field of Security and Defence, drafted by the multi-party Working Group set up by the Committee, was unanimously adopted on 22 December 2010. This Law, adopted to facilitate the parliamentary oversight in the specific field of security and defence in addition to the oversight mechanisms stipulated by the Rules of Procedure, provides the precise definition of responsibilities of all actors, and ensures the protection of rights and freedom of citizens against any potential misuse.

In line with Article 12 paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Law on Parliamentary Oversight in the Field of Security and Defence, which stipulates that parliamentary oversight should be conducted regularly according to the annual plan adopted by the Committee and on extraordinary occasions, if required, the Security and Defence Committee adopted the Plan of its oversight activities in 2011 on its 31st meeting held on 13 April 2011. In addition, the Committee, as is the case with all other parliamentary bodies, adopted the Committee's 2010 Activity Report and the 2011 Work Plan.

Activity 4: Introduce the practice of committee secretaries preparing an opinion in the form of an information brief, for each draft law (implemented)

With a view of providing good-quality support to MPs in performing their legislative and oversight functions, the practice of Committee Secretaries preparing an information brief for each item on the committee's agenda was introduced. In this regard, guidelines for preparation and the contents of an information brief were adopted, setting the procedure of development and submission of briefs by committee secretaries. Moreover, in February training was organised for committee secretaries with regard to preparation of information briefs (in cooperation with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) and the UK House of Commons). Since the introduction in February 2011 to the end of July, committee secretaries prepared 169 information briefs.

In cooperation with the EU Delegation to Podgorica, the Parliament applied for 8-month expert support, divided into several missions, in the area of legal harmonisation and regulatory impact assessment. The aim of this assistance is to strengthen the Parliament's capacity to scrutinize draft laws and their alignment with the acquis, as well as to be trained, through monitoring the regulatory impact assessments submitted by the Government and drafting assessments for extensive amendments and certain regulations, to assume the role defined in the Inter-Institutional Common Approach to Impact Assessment by the European Commission, the

European Parliament and the Council. Following the three rounds of application procedures for experts (the first of which failed since none of the applying candidates met the criteria set by the Terms of Reference, and the second call needed to be repeated on the account of administrative requirements of EU procurement procedures), a team of experts was eventually selected in August, and the project commencement is envisaged for the first half of September.

Over the reporting period, special attention was paid to legislative harmonisation with the EU *acquis* through the consideration of all draft laws by the Committee on International Relations and European Integration and detailed check of tables of concordance submitted by the Government that is carried out by Committees, with records kept since January this year. Having viewed supporting documentation accompanying draft laws until the end of spring session (the total of 97 draft laws), the committee staff made 31 amendments in substance and 12 technical amendments to documents verifying EU compliance.

Activity 5: Prepare the calendar of the Parliament and its bodies (implemented)

In February 2011 the Calendar of the Parliament of Montenegro was adopted for the first time for the period through the end of the spring session, i.e. the end of July, aimed at better planning of the Parliament's work. Parliamentary Calendar specifies the days in a month intended for plenary sessions, committee meetings, as well as parliamentary days intended for the work of MPs in MP Clubs and with citizens.

The novelty is also that all Committees, in line with the Action Plan, adopted their 2011 work plans, which include the plan of oversight activities as well. Also for the first time, the committees prepared and adopted their annual activity reports for 2010. All these documents are available on the website of the Parliament.

Since the beginning of this year, 13 consultative and three control hearings have been held:

- The Committee for Political System, Justice and Administration held one consultative hearing on the "Judicial Reform in Montenegro in the context of Recommendations from the EC Opinion"
- The Committee on International Relations and European Integration held nine consultative hearings with regard to the 2010 Performance Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 21st and 22nd quarterly reports on the overall activities in the stabilisation and association process, the first, second and fourth monthly reports on implementation of commitments from the Action Plan for Monitoring the Implementation of Recommendations given in the EC Opinion, the Report on implementation of commitments stemming from the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the Quarterly Reporting Table, as well as with regard to issuing an opinion on the candidate for ambassador of Montenegro to the Council of Europe, the candidate for ambassador of Montenegro to the Republic of Poland, and the candidate for extraordinary and

plenipotentiary ambassador of Montenegro to the Republic of Azerbaijan, on non-resident basis with its seat in Ankara;

- The Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget held two consultative hearings on: “Current state of affairs in telecommunication focusing on the implementation of the Law on Electronic Communication” and “Draft Law on Investment Funds focusing on impact of the current law application”;
- The Administrative Committee held a consultative hearing of the candidate for the president of the Council of the Insurance Supervision Agency;
- The Commission for Monitoring and Control of the Privatisation Process deliberated on the privatization of the Aluminum Plant Podgorica (KAP), the privatization of the Margo market, and of Arsenal Tivat, and held two control hearings within such deliberations;
- The Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms – control hearing of the Director of the Institution for Execution of Criminal Sanctions (ZIKS) on “ZIKS activities related to the findings from the EC Analytical Report and the recommendations of the Ombudsman contained in the Final Opinion no. 84/10 as of 29 March 2010”;

In addition to hearings, committees organise thematic sessions, sessions held outside the seat of the Parliament, public panels and round table discussions on topical issues, and other similar activities. A brief overview of such activities follows below:

- The Committee on Tourism, Agriculture, Ecology and Spatial Planning held a thematic session with regard to the petition of MANS concerning the Brief on Destruction of Surplus Military Ammunition on the temporary site “Prage” in the vicinity of Nikšić on 9 February, while on 6 April it also held a thematic session where the Draft Law on Communal Activities was presented. Also, at a meeting held on 21 June in the Parliament’s building the Committee was briefed about the natural disaster that hit the area of Golubovci and Tuzi on 09 June. The session was attended by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development;
- The Security and Defence Committee held a session on 9 May to consider the Brief on actions undertaken by the Supreme State Prosecution of Montenegro in the “Balkan Warrior” case. In addition to the members of the Committee, the session was also attended by the Supreme State Prosecutor, Mrs Ranka Čarapić. At its session held on 20 June, the Committee considered the 2010 Report on the state of play in the civil emergency response system in Montenegro, with information on floods in November and December 2010. Also, on 01 July 2011, the Committee considered the annual report of the Ministry of Defence, the 2010 Report of the Army of Montenegro as well as the 2010 Report on Deployment of Montenegrin Troupes in International Forces. At its session held on 18 July, the Committee considered the 2010 Report of the National Security Agency;

- The Committee on Human Rights in cooperation with the OSCE Mission organised on 28 February in Cetinje a public forum with the topic: "Rights of a child – implementation of the Law on Preschool Education and the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence". On 11 March 2011 the Committee considered the Brief of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights concerning the position of LGBT population in Montenegro at the session which was attended, upon invitation, by the Minister of Human and Minority Rights, Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms and representative of the NGO Juventas - Youth Creative Centre. Also, the members of the Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms met the representatives of the Association of parents of children and youth with development disorders "Naša Inicijativa" on 21 April in the premises of the Parliament of Montenegro. On 03 June, the Committee members held a meeting with the members of relevant institutions towards addressing the issue of IDPs currently residing at Konik I and II camps. On 27 July 2011, the Committee considered the Brief on the activities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare concerning the findings of the EC Analytical Report regarding the situation in the Public Institution "Komanski most" and the Ombudsman's recommendations referring to the same institution, the Information Brief on the activities taken by the Government in reference to durable solution for displaced persons and IDPs staying at Konik I and II camps, and the Information on the share of minority nations and other national minority communities in public services, state and local administrative authorities;
- The Gender Equality Committee in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Montenegro and the UNDP Country Office organised the presentation of the publication "Research into awareness of and the actual application of the Gender Equality Law in the institutions of Montenegro" on 27 May. Also, on 27 June a round table on "Participation of Women in the Political and Public Life – Challenges and Opportunities" was held hosted by the Gender Equality Committee, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and the OSCE Mission to Montenegro;
- The Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare held a session on 25 March at the occasion of marking the World Tuberculosis Day, while on 15 April in cooperation with the German Foundation Konrad Adenauer, it held a round table with the topic "Parliament and social policy – current challenges of social policy in Montenegro and Germany". Also, the Committee held a session on 30 May in cooperation with the National Committee for Control of Smoking of the Ministry of Health and the Institute for Public Health of Montenegro in the premises of the Institute in Podgorica to mark the World No Tobacco Day. On 28 June, the Committee held a thematic session on the occasion of celebrating the International Day against Drug Abuse, at the Public Institution Centre for Placement, Rehabilitation and Re-socialisation of Users of Psychoactive Substances - Kakaritska gora, Podgorica;
- The Administrative Committee held a public debate on 31 May on the topic "How to determine the representatives from NGO sector in the procedure of election and appointment", where seven non-governmental organisations took part;

- The Committee for Political System, Judiciary and Administration, in line with the Anti-Corruption and Organised Resolution, on its session held on 20 July voted unanimously for the Resolution Implementation Report;
- The Committee for Economy, Finance and Budget, at its session held on 28 July, considered the 2010 Report on the Situation in the Energy Sector in Montenegro and the 2010 Activity Report of the Insurance Supervision Agency. The Committee also got acquainted with the 2010 Activity Report of the Financial Stability Council, which is submitted to the parliament for information only, as envisaged by Article 11 of the Law on Council for Financial Stability. In addition, at its session held on 04 and 05 July, the Committee considered the 2010 Annual Report of the Securities Commission and the 2010 Annual Report on State Aid Granted in Montenegro, as well as Draft Conclusions on the occasion of considering the 2010 Activity Report of the Central Bank of Montenegro.

This year shows the trend of increasing the number of MP questions. During the spring session the total of three sittings were dedicated to the Prime Minister Hour and MP questions. There were in total 21 questions posed to the Prime Minister, 214 questions for the members of the Government, and 16 additional questions. By way of comparison, over the same period last year, there were 12 questions for the Prime Minister, 129 for the members of the Government, and 28 additional questions.

Activity 6: Monitor and control the implementation of recommendations from the EC Opinion on Montenegro's application for EU membership and the Analytical Report (implemented in continuity)

A share of the envisaged committee workload is also related to monitoring the implementation of the EC recommendations, while it is the Committee on International Relations and European Integration that is responsible for coordination of relevant activities. This Committee prepared in December 2010 a Report on EC findings and recommendations from the Opinion on the application for EU Membership and the Analytical Report. The chairs and deputy chairs of all committees held a meeting to consider this document, which will constitute the base for future oversight of the implementation of the Government Action Plan for Monitoring the Implementation of Recommendations from the EC Opinion.

In late March, the Committee on International Relations and European Integration considered the first Government's monthly report on the implementation of the commitments from the Action Plan for Monitoring Implementation of Recommendations from the EC Opinion at a joint session with the National Council for European Integration (NCEI). The second session was held in May when it was agreed that in future Government's monthly reports would be considered on regular basis.

By the end of the reporting period, the total of five joint sessions of the NCEI and the Committee were held discussing the monthly reports on the Action Plan implementation.

Activity 7: Adopt the Decision amending the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Montenegro (partly implemented)

The Decision amending the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Montenegro was adopted on 22 December 2010 (EPA 461-XXIV). The Decision amended Article 32, among others, which facilitated for MP Clubs to be able to engage more expert consultants at the expense of the Parliament. The amended Article 32 stipulates that an MP Club with up to five MPs may engage one expert consultant, an MP Club with up to 15 MPs may engage 2 expert consultants, and an MP Club with over 15 MPs may engage another expert consultant for each initiated group of 10 MPs.

Under this activity, the options of having new amendments is currently considered, also aimed at strengthening the legislative and oversight role of the Parliament, particularly given the approaching EU accession negotiations. The Collegium adopted a Conclusion at the 125th meeting held on 9 May to establish a Working Group for drafting the amendments to the Rules of Procedure, composed of the representatives of all MP Clubs. The Working Group will, among other things, address the issue of passing of proposals coming from the opposition MP Clubs that fail to gain the required majority in regular consideration by working bodies. The Working Group submitted the draft text to the Collegium that discussed it at the meeting held on 29 July. The Collegium concluded that, even though failing to meet the deadline envisaged by the Conclusion of the Collegium, the Working Group had not managed to fulfil the assigned task and to submit to the Collegium harmonized draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure, which means that the deadline envisaged by the Action Plan has not been observed. At the same meeting, the Collegium decided that the Working Group, in accordance with the Conclusion of the Collegium adopted at the 125th meeting, should continue its work on drafting the amendments to the Rules of Procedure in the first week of September, as well as that the work should continue with the greatest possible support from representatives of all MP clubs so as to provide for draft amendments to be discussed in the beginning of the second ordinary session of the Parliament.

The draft Decision amending the parliamentary Rules of Procedure was adopted on 22 July at the 11th session of the Parliament. The amendments primarily concern the remuneration for the Parliament staff aiming to increase the autonomy of the Parliament, i.e. strengthen its administrative capacity.

Activity 8: Analyse the need to separate responsibilities and set up sub-committees (in progress)

At its 125th meeting held on 09 May, the Collegium adopted the conclusion to set up a working group for drafting amendments to the Rules of Procedure, composed of the members of all MP Clubs. Among other things, the Working Group addressed the need for separation of some parliamentary bodies on the account of their wide scope of competences and the drafting of rules for setting up sub-committees (composition, decision-making and relation with the parent committee). The Working Group submitted the draft text to the Collegium that discussed it at the meeting held on 29 July. The Collegium concluded that, even though failing to meet the deadline envisaged by the Conclusion of the Collegium, the Working Group had not managed to fulfil the assigned task and to submit to the Collegium harmonized draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure, which means that the deadline envisaged by the Action Plan has not been observed. At the same meeting, the Collegium decided that the Working Group, in accordance with the Conclusion of the Collegium adopted at the 125th meeting, should continue its work on drafting the amendments to the Rules of Procedure in the first week of September, as well as that the work should continue with the greatest possible support from representatives of all MP clubs so as to provide for draft amendments to be discussed in the beginning of the second ordinary session of the Parliament.

Activity 9: Adopt the Annual Plan of Legislative Harmonisation and monitor its implementation (in progress)

The adoption of the Annual Plan for Legislative Harmonisation is based on the analysis of the National Programme for Integration (NPI), following its adoption by the Government, as well as the monitoring of the implementation of the Government's annual Work Programme. This activity is planned for the 1st quarter of 2011, and the Government's Work Programme adopted in the meantime envisages the adoption of the National Programme for Integration for the 2nd quarter. Thus, the adoption of the Parliament's plan is also delayed.

However, based on the Government Work Programme and the Action Plan for Monitoring the Implementation of Recommendations from EC Opinion adopted on 17 February, Parliament's Administration prepared an overview of draft laws the Government is planning to approve in 2011, by quarters, as yet another measure to improve planning of Parliament's legislative work.

Activity 10: Prepare and consider annual reports of parliamentary bodies (implemented)

Activity Reports for 2010 were adopted by 11 working bodies. In March, the Commission for Monitoring and Control of the Privatisation Process held a discussion on the activities undertaken in the previous period and accordingly adopted the conclusions on the future work.

Activity 11: Adopt rules concerning document management procedures in the Parliament's Administration (implemented)

The internal document management rules were adopted by the Parliament and applied since the beginning of 2011. The new rules provide for efficient document management, reduction in the number of bookkeeping journals, precise definition of the procedure for recording e-mail communications, and recording and filing of documents according to topics rather than the session during which they were handled, as was the case previously. Thus, the new rules make a solid base for future introduction of the IT monitoring of legislation.

Activity 12: Adopt the Classification Plan (implemented)

The Classification Plan was adopted at the beginning of 2011 when it commenced to be applied. The Classification Plan provides for classification of legislation according to negotiation chapters and more efficient tracking of amendments to laws and their compatibility with the European Union *acquis*. According to the Plan, the classification codes are allocated to all acts received in the Registry Office. All proposed laws submitted by the Government (117 in total by the end of the spring session) are classified according to their subject matters by negotiation chapters they belong to. This procedure will facilitate efficient preparation of MPs during the negotiation process with the EU, for the reason that all draft laws that by their subjects belong to one negotiation chapter will be kept at one place rather than according to sessions at which they were adopted, as was the case previously.

Activity 13: Introduce abbreviations for parliamentary documents (partly implemented)

Draft Decision on abbreviations for parliamentary documents has been produced. The Working Group that is established to determine the abbreviations for laws published in the Official Gazette of Montenegro, since its first edition after the adoption of the new Constitution in October 2007, completed the work and produced the abbreviations within the envisaged timeframe, and further setting of abbreviations takes place on regular basis.

Activity 14: Introduce the Record of Parliamentary Acts (RPA) (implemented)

The RPA register was established and RPA Records are applied in the Parliament's Administration since the beginning of 2011. In accordance with this, each act accepted by the Registry Office of the Parliament is allocated an RPA reference code which consists of the combination of Arabic and Roman numerals. The Arabic numeral represents the ordinal number of the parliamentary act accepted by the Register Office within the term of the present Parliament, while the Roman numeral represents the number of the term.

Activity 15: Introduce Eurovoc descriptors (implemented)

In 2010, a multi-disciplinary Expert Group was formed to deal with the translation of Eurovoc descriptors to Montenegrin. The Expert Group completed its work within the envisaged timeframe. Translated descriptors were submitted to the EU Publications Office. In the meantime, the Government passed the Decree on Legal Information System which stipulates that this system should contain Eurovoc descriptors, and the competent state administration authority is obliged to provide selected descriptors along with the proposed or adopted act under its responsibility to the Official Gazette. Thus, it will be ensured that the overall legislation is indexed by the same descriptors used by EU institutions and EU countries.

Activity 16: Adoption of the Rules of Procedure of the Section for Analysis, Documentation, Research and Library, with supporting documents (implemented)

The Rules of Procedure of the Section for Analysis, Documentation, Research and Library were adopted and their application started. The Rules for requesting and preparation of research papers, with the request template, were also adopted. To date, five research papers were made on parliamentary autonomy, the role of the parliament in negotiations, on office space and facilities of the parliament, on parliamentary bodies and the MP questions.

The Parliament's Administration responds regularly to all requests from other members of the ECPRD network, with eleven responses prepared and sent in the form of brief information at the request of ECPRD during this reporting period.

Also, the Section prepares weekly news from the EU institutions and delivers the same to MPs and employees every Friday.

Activity 17: Preparation of the Preliminary Design for the information system that would enable IT tracking of the entire legislative process (the deadline is third quarter of 2011).

The Parliament Administration recorded and analysed individual processes, following which on 01 July a working group was set up to draft the initial project brief "Develop the Support System for the Legislative Process".

Activity 18: Adoption of the Human Resources Development Strategy in the Parliament of Montenegro January 2011 to December 2013, including a Training Plan (implemented)

The Human Resources Strategy was adopted, stipulating the vision and mission, principles and values and strategic goals of human resources development, including indicators and activities. In addition to the Strategy, the Strategic Plan with the schedule of activities was also adopted. The Training Plan was also prepared, which identifies the training needs that are supported by

the development of operating monthly training plans. This document enables strategic planning of human resources development in the Parliament of Montenegro.

Activity 19: Providing intensive training for the staff of parliamentary committees and clubs (implemented in continuity)

This activity is implemented on continuous basis, as envisaged by the Action Plan.

The Training Plan envisaged by the end of the reporting period the holding of 12 training sessions for parliamentary staff, outside the regular training delivered by the HRMA, out of which 11 were actually delivered. Since the beginning of the year, staff members attended 57 trainings, 11 of which are envisaged by the Training Plan, 27 delivered by the HRMA, and 19 by others. In July, 17 staff attended training, or 176 in total since the beginning of the year.

In cooperation with the EU Delegation to Podgorica, the Parliament applied for 8-month expert support, divided into several missions, in the area of legal harmonisation and regulatory impact assessment. After the application and evaluation of experts, a team of experts has been selected, so that the project should start on 12 September. The aim of this assistance is to strengthen the Parliament's capacity to scrutinize draft laws and their alignment with the acquis, as well as to be trained, through monitoring the regulatory impact assessments submitted by the Government and drafting assessments for extensive amendments and certain regulations, to assume the role defined in the Inter-Institutional Common Approach to Impact Assessment by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council.

Activity 20: Filling vacancies in the Parliament Administration, in accordance with the Rulebook on Internal Organisation and Job Descriptions (implemented in continuity)

On 31 August 2011, there were 89 employees (and 10 interns), as contrasted to 154 posts envisaged by the Rulebook, and 73 employees (and 2 interns) on 31 December 2010.

Activity 21: Devise the plan with short-term and long-term solutions to the issue of shortage of office space for the needs of the Parliament (in progress)

In order to carry out this activity envisaged by the Action Plan, a decision was adopted to rent additional office space for the needs of the Parliament. The tender document is currently being prepared. As for the long-term solution related to shortage of office space, on July 28, the Government of Montenegro has adopted the Study on Possible Solutions for Providing Work Space to the Parliament of Montenegro and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European

Integration. The Government tasked the Secretariat General of the Government to define the final proposal regarding this issue in cooperation with the Secretary General of the Parliament.

Activity 22: Improve the office and staff capacities available to MPs based on earlier needs assessment (in progress)

Under this measure a comparative review was produced, which includes a brief description of the current situation with office space in the Parliament, tabular presentation of the data on the office space footage and amenities available in several national parliaments taken over from the ECPRD network and collected by a questionnaire that the Parliament's Administration sent to the addresses of several parliaments in the region.

The tender document is currently being prepared. As for the long-term solution related to shortage of office space, on July 28, the Government of Montenegro has adopted the Study on Possible Solutions for Providing Work Space to the Parliament of Montenegro and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. The Government tasked the Secretariat General of the Government to define the final proposal regarding this issue in cooperation with the Secretary General of the Parliament.

Activity 23: Provide access to the Parliament building for persons with disabilities (in progress)

Public invitation to tender for procurement and installation of folding electric stair lifts for disabled persons to be installed into the Parliament's building was published on 01 June 2011, and the deadline for opening of bids was 28 June. On 12 July the decision was made to cancel the tender for procurement and instalment of folding electric stair lifts to accommodate the needs of disabled persons in the interior of the Parliament building, since there were no valid bids. Currently, the repeated tender procedure is being prepared.

Activity 24: Prepare and publicise the Annual Report of the Parliament of Montenegro (implemented)

The Annual Report for 2010 was produced and posted on the website in Montenegrin and in English. This annual report was for the first time produced by the Parliament's Administration on its own, only two months after the end of the year. The report contains comprehensive data on the results of legislative and oversight work of the Parliament, information on special activities of the Parliament, its committees and organisational units, including international cooperation and an overview of administrative capacity development.

Also, the Parliament's Administration introduced monthly reporting which yields better insight into the work of employees and organisational units, at the same time facilitating semi-annual and annual reporting within the Parliament.

Semi-annual report (01 January – 30 June) was posted on the Parliament website on 26 July. In addition, 150 copies in Montenegrin were published.

The information brief on the legislative and oversight activity of the Parliament of Montenegro by the end of spring session 2011 was posted on the Parliament website on 01 August.

Activity 25: Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Parliament of Montenegro and NGOs (implemented)

Memorandum on cooperation between the Parliament of Montenegro and the Network of CSOs dealing with democracy and human rights was signed on 30 March of the current year. The MoU is the result of the project implemented in cooperation with the Centre for Development of NGO (CRNVO) Network and the Parliament, and the draft document was prepared by the working group whose members were MPs and NGO representatives. The MoU sets the principles of cooperation between the Parliament and NGO Network in the area of democratisation and human rights, which will be applied to all other NGOs interested in cooperating with the Parliament. In parallel with the signing of the MoU, a form was posted on the Parliament's website that the civil sector representatives and individuals can fill out to submit their opinions, proposals and suggestions to the Parliament, subsequently forwarded to the body or an organizational unit responsible for the given issue.

The cooperation between the Parliament of Montenegro and the civil society is constantly improving and enhancing, particularly confirmed by increased CSO participation in the working bodies meetings, especially in case of consultative hearings and other forms of interaction, which is subject to accurate record keeping within monthly reports of committee secretaries since the beginning of the current year. Thus, from the beginning of the year there have been some 50 communications addressed to the parliamentary bodies from the side of the civil society (proposals, applications, draft amendments, requests for free access to information, comments to draft acts, appeals, petitions and the like), as well as around 70 participations from about 40 organizations in the meetings of working bodies, including consultative hearings.

On 05 April, the First conference of the National Convention on European Integration of Montenegro took place in the Parliament building. The "National Convention on European Integration of Montenegro" is organised in cooperation with the NGO European Movement in Montenegro and Slovakian Association for Foreign Policy and the Parliament of Montenegro and the Government of Montenegro with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the

Republic of Slovakia and SLOVAKAID. The second conference of the National Convention was held on 19 July, again in the Parliament building, where the project results were summed up.

Activity 26: Roundtable discussion of Members of the Parliament and media representatives (implemented)

The Round table “Parliament, Media and Citizens” was held on 12 July and gathered the members of MP Clubs in the Montenegrin Parliament, editors-in-chief of the media accredited to cover the work of the Parliament, members of the EU Delegation to Podgorica and the UK Embassy in Podgorica. The event was organised by the Parliament of Montenegro within the cooperation programme with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), in partnership with the Thomson Reuters Foundation, London and the Media Institute of Montenegro. The aim of the roundtable gathering MPs and media representatives was to exchange opinions and adopt conclusions that would foster better understanding and cooperation.

Activity 27: Round table discussion on the issues of conflict of interest in the case of MPs (implemented)

The conflict of interest round table discussion, focusing on possible conflict of interest in the case of MPs, was held on 10 June and was participated by the MPs, members of the Government and NGO sector, as well as foreign experts. It was concluded that the law amendments that would prevent MPs from being members of managing and supervisory boards in companies where state holds a majority stake and the ones to prevent the MPs being members of state and local authorities should be supported.

The Law Preventing Conflict of Interest was adopted on 29 July at the 11th sitting of the first regular (spring) session in 2011.

Activity 28: Improving internal communication within the Parliament’s Administration (in progress)

This measure is aimed at improved exchange of information and creation of conditions for good external communication through defining the rules of internal communication and unifying procedures for communication with stakeholders, designing documents, etc. Preparation activities are in progress in cooperation with the WFD and UK House of Commons, and the person for internal communication has been appointed.

The comparative overview of internal communication systems in the parliaments of EU members states and the countries of the region is being prepared.

Activity 29: Further increase of transparency of the Parliament and its communication with the public (implemented in continuity)

The transparency of the Parliament's work and communication with the public are improved on continuous basis. This year, live streaming from the press position in the Parliament building has been made possible. Also, all relevant information is regularly posted on the website which is partially redesigned making the information available more easily accessible. The form for submission of opinion for civil society is available online.

In January this year the publication of the monthly newsletter "Open Parliament" commenced in cooperation of the Parliament of Montenegro and the Centre for Democratic Transition which is supported by the European Commission through the EU Delegation in Podgorica.

Numerous visits to the Parliament (there is a form on the website of the Parliament for citizens to apply to visit the Parliament) were organised in the previous period, as well as exhibitions, and the session of the Children's Parliament.

In 2011, the number of requests for free access to information significantly increased. Since the beginning of the year, the Parliament received in total 117 requests for information (with 355 sub-requests in total) and all were responded to, 60 by allowing access, in 27 cases the Parliament did not hold the requested information, while 28 responses informed that the requested information was already posted or another authority was in charge of the said information. In reference to two requests two conclusions were passed (passed when the request is dismissed because the administrative matter in question was already decided).

From 01 June onwards the information most frequently requested referred to the implementation of the AP activities, followed by the information on financial operations (e.g. copies of acts containing the information on the amount spent from the Parliament's budget for payment of transport costs, accommodation costs, daily allowances for MPs travelling abroad and within Montenegro), as well as public procurement.

Activity 30: Program "Open Parliament" (implemented in continuity)

The first edition of the monthly newsletter "Open Parliament" was published on 04 February in cooperation with the Centre for Democratic Transition (CDT), supported by the European Commission through the EU Delegation in Podgorica. So far, six editions have been published on the web pages of the Parliament and of the CDT, in Montenegrin and English, forwarded to close to 900 addresses.

In 2011, the implementation of the Internship Project in cooperation with the CDT continued. The selection procedure for students was completed and since March five students have the

opportunity to gain first-hand experience of the work of parliamentary services and take part in their activities.

Currently, the "Democratic Workshop" project is being developed. It is intended for primary school children, and will be implemented in cooperation with ERSTE Foundation and the Austrian Parliament.

In July a public call for expression of interest was issued to NGOs for participating to the projects to be financed by the ERSTE Foundation in cooperation with the Parliament of Montenegro. The deadline for applications was 20 July. All applications were gathered, and organisations meeting all the requirements selected. The following stage of the application procedure will commence in September.

Activity 31: Reporting on the implementation of the Action Plan (implemented)

The Action Plan envisages quarterly reporting to the Collegium of the Speaker. This is the 3rd quarterly report which covers June, July and August. The first quarterly report was adopted on 9 March and it covered December, January and February, while the 2nd Quarterly Report, covering March, April and May, was adopted on 13 June by the Collegium.

Monthly reports on implementation of the Action Plan are regularly submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration which prepares an integrated report and submits it to the European Commission.