



**POLICY BRIEF**  
**NATO AND MONTENEGRO**  
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## INTRODUCTION

First six months of 2011 were especially marked by Montenegrin efforts to present itself as a country progressing on the European integration path. ***During these first months, it appeared that the membership in the EU assumes membership in the NATO. This is particularly the case after the European Commission at the end of last year set seven conditions which Montenegro needs to fulfil in order to get the date for starting membership talks.***

Although this change of course followed just after recent personnel shift at the top of the Montenegrin government, this is rather connected to Montenegro's changed focus of foreign policy priorities which are directing current activities of the executive power. Judging by recent sublimed results on 100 days of Government's work, *The Government Action Programme*<sup>1</sup>, and also by often mentioned public dedication to prior fulfilment of the criteria for the EU membership<sup>2</sup>, we can conclude that the tidal wave is currently moving in opposite direction; i.e. in analysed half-year-period the EU integration has priority over the NATO integration.

In this context, NATO is perceived as a sort of lobby to the EU, and also as a mean for achieving that goal – an integral part of the Euro-Atlantic integrations package. Nevertheless, this also tells us that membership in the NATO precedes the EU membership according to state policy plans, even though there are no speculations on précised dates. However, it would be wrong to suggest that this is some kind of Government's apostasy from the Alliance or change of opinion of Montenegrin foreign policy towards this issue. Simply put, unlike the last year, the issue of NATO membership is no longer in the focus of the Government, and consequently not in the focus of total Montenegrin public. We note that unequal emphasizing of the priorities ultimately affects public opinion and level of public support, as it seems that support for NATO membership increases when this issue is in the focus of public interest and vice versa. In this context, we have different phases in Montenegro.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Besides priorities mentioned by the ministries, during the first 100 days of work and first 100 days in 2011, Government's activities will be directed toward: 1. Realization of seven priorities set in the Commission Opinion on Montenegro's application for EU membership; 2. Developing structures and capacities for successful conduct of negotiations for the EU membership. (See: Government Action Programme in the first 100 days and priority activities in 2011, [www.gov.me](http://www.gov.me))

2 'As Montenegro is quickly fulfilling European obligations, it will be closer to the NATO membership, because conducting reforms within the EU integrations makes us closer to the Alliance standards. The road to the NATO... is a prerequisite for the progress within the EU integrations.' said Luksic, when receiving new duties in late December, 2010.

3 CEDEM's results on empirical research indicate that citizens' support to the NATO membership increases when Government actualizes this matter in public. The greatest positive trend of NATO supporters (35,4 %) was recorded in the second half of 2010, when Government treated this issue as a high priority of foreign policy, and all this due to fact that leading political elite monopolies and determines public discourse. Results and their analysis were presented in CEDEM's publication, Yearbook 2010 (For more information visit [www.cedem.me](http://www.cedem.me)).

However, it should be noted that most of Government's activities within the NATO integration corps are on the right track. ***The application on first cycle of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) has started this year through the first Annual National Programme (ANP)<sup>4</sup> and will continue to develop during the next year. On the other hand, it should be pointed out that NATO officials express very high satisfaction with Montenegro's doings on the path to the NATO.*** In addition to this, Montenegro is constantly getting affirmative messages on probably positive outcome on the issue of the NATO membership.

## **NEW CYCLE IN MONTENEGRO – NATO RELATIONS**

Ministry of Defence (MOD) is consistently dedicated to continuous fulfilment of partner obligations, as well as to MAP implementation. MOD should submit its Report on Realization of the First Action Plan in Brussels at the end of June. At the same time, Montenegro continues with the engagement of its soldiers in peace-keeping missions. This is the second year of Montenegrin participation in missions and the third contingent of soldiers in the ***ISAF missions to Afghanistan<sup>5</sup>***. It should be noted that security situation in Afghanistan is more complex now than it was when first and second contingent were leaving that country. Also, ***Security and Defence Council*** has recently suggested to the Parliament to decide on the participation of Montenegrin soldiers in joint instructing team for the training of local security structures in Afghanistan, which formation was envisaged in ***Regional Initiative A-5<sup>6</sup>***. This means that our instructors may already be in Afghanistan in September; this would increase Montenegrin contingent for five more members. Additionally to that, Montenegrin soldiers and officers continue to participate in peace-keeping missions in Somali and Liberian waters.

However we should also point out to some specific problems in the internal organization of Army of Montenegro<sup>7</sup>. Just recently Dragan Samardzic, Head of General Headquarters in the Army of Montenegro, has during an interview with local TV station<sup>8</sup> implicitly announced the worrying fact - that our defence system cannot independently defend

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4 Note that the first Annual National Programme (ANP) was presented on the North-Atlantic Council (NAC) meeting in Brussels on 28th October, 2010 – which represented the start of first cycle of MAP implementation in Montenegro.

5 Since 21st February, 2011 there are 36 soldiers and officers headed by the commandant of the third Montenegrin contingent – Mayor Zoran Vukadinovic in the ISAF missions, together with the medical team with four officers.

6 **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM, Slovenia and Montenegro** (all former Yugoslav republics, except Serbia) plan to create joint team which would conduct training of local newly-formed Afghan military police. This mission is considered as a part of the NATO international efforts to help and train new local army.

7 In the last months we have seen disturbed human relations, dissatisfaction shown through conduct of legal disputes between some Army members and its top ranking people, than there are two syndicates forming and we have public appearances of Army officers in media, discipline procedure against the President of the Syndicate Organization of the Army of Montenegro and other; all this indicates that Army has many problems, which cannot be neglected when talking of its perspectives in the NATO.

8 Interview with TV station *Vijesti*, show *Nacisto*.

Montenegro's territory, particularly having in mind air space and the sea<sup>9</sup>. What he tried to say is this is the reason why Montenegro should join the NATO, because otherwise total expenses of rebuilding independent defence system could be significantly higher in relation to expenses if it defends as the NATO member. MOD has also started a state-level-initiative for establishment of integral control and monitor system of sea and sky through the regional approach to this issue. This approach envisages that all region countries are provided with joint contemporary systems, which are considered as economically most sustainable and purpose-making (e.g. joint radar picture of sea and sky).

In the domestic political sphere, the leading coalition DPS – SDP is still considered as main promoter of Montenegrin membership in the NATO<sup>10</sup>, while opposition does not share this attitude.<sup>11</sup> ***One of the greatest challenges before the Montenegrin Government will be a success in assuring that Montenegrin integration to the NATO is not the Government project, but interest of entire society.*** The issue of how to decide on future membership was not in the public focus, so we are still faced with open dilemma in this regard. Nevertheless, in countries with developed democracies there is a great interest in public opinion about such issues. There is also a strong belief that there is no democratic legitimacy of government power unless it is supported and accepted by great majority of population. On the basis of so-far-conducted analysis, we could conclude ***that one of the key challenges is the provision of active public support for joining the NATO, especially as Brussels' has repeatedly stressed the importance of increasing public support for the membership in the Alliance.***

## **CAMPAIGN FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE NATO**

During the first six months of 2011, activities of the Government Coordination Team have been mainly carried out in accordance with the adopted plan. The Coordination Team has conducted activities within six Action Plans by the beginning of 2011, while Government adopted the ***Report on Implementation of Communication Strategy on Euro-Atlantic Integrations*** at the session held on January 21, 2011; this is new six-month **VII Action Plan**. The VII Action Plan contains long list of activities envisaged under Communication Strategy, implementation deadlines, costs and target groups in the campaign. However, there is the apparent lack of elaboration of general framework, which implementation is further impeded by certain limitations. First, the Action Plan does not contain detailed elaboration of selected activities, and their real impact and

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<sup>9</sup> Critics and experts on military issue warn that 4.500 of soldiers is not sufficient for the territory defence; they also point out the lack of vision as well as documents like ***Longitudinal Development Plan*** and ***Army Doctrine***, which is considered as wrong strategy in public opinion. Also, constant insisting on membership in the NATO by the MOD seems absurd in a situation of the lack of adequate material and human formation in the Army, and when this Army cannot respond to contemporary security challenges.

<sup>10</sup> Parliamentary Minority Parties (Albanians, Croats, Muslims and Bosniaks) also undoubtedly support Montenegrin membership in the NATO.

<sup>11</sup>When it comes to parliamentary opposition parties, NOVA is against, PZP supports membership, and the biggest opposition party SNP does not have clear attitude on this issue (neither has said something about this in its party program).

desired goals often remain unclear. Use of resources should be accompanied by clearly specified context of their implementation, as well as measurable results that are wanted and able to achieve.

It is not superfluous repeating that at some time campaign looks like propaganda, as it often contains many-time mentioned and repeated contents and messages. This issue should finally be put in open and discussed and indicate what are advantages and disadvantages of membership in the NATO. ***It is necessary to strongly emphasize the importance of timely and objective informing of all structures of Montenegrin society on the process of Euro-Atlantic integrations.*** It is definitely needed to develop more advanced and thoughtful campaign that is based on well-informed citizens, because current campaign has no apparent concrete and expected results. Based on that fact, we could say that ***propaganda-coloured campaign and low public support are becoming some kind of characteristics of the process of Montenegro's accession to the NATO Pact.***

A closer insight reveals that for the fourth time the Action Plan envisages development of cost – benefit analysis, which never seems to be done, and yet it is considered as one of the most important segments in the campaign. This remark could also be applied to current VII Action Plan.<sup>12</sup> Economic argumentation seems to be one of the weakest parts of this campaign, because it seems rather unconvincing and poor. Recently during the Parliamentary session, Minister of Defence, Boro Vucinic, said that direct total cost of Montenegro's membership in NATO could be estimated at around six millions EUR a year. In addition, indirect costs (which are farthestmost highest) also include investing in the modernization of army in order to reach NATO standards. On this occasion, it was also stated that Government has spent more than 344 thousands EUR for the campaign for membership in NATO, counting from 2008.<sup>13</sup>

It is necessary to further inform public about indirect economic benefits coming from the Alliance, so that membership can be understood as an opportunity for economic growth and development of the country. This could be primarily achieved through supplying the NATO forces with domestic products, obtaining an opportunity to participate in NATO tenders for procurement, which could be good export opportunity for domestic production (especially food industry). There is also a possibility for construction companies to build infrastructures in countries where there are missions, but of course, for our military industry as well – hence, for all those who can meet the

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12 Last **Action Plan** also envisaged conducting of cost-benefit analysis on membership in cooperation with Faculty of Economics, which should be done by the end of this half-year-period. However, it has not been conducted so far.

13 **MFA** engaged lobby companies '**Orion Strategies**' and '**Reef Group**' for political consulting in USA. Their job is to meet members of American administration officials and talk about 'Montenegro's interest in becoming NATO member', but also to lobby on Montenegrin activities within American-Adriatic Charter (A5). This contract, previously signed for 2 years, has been prolonged for the next 2 years in total cost of 500.000 USD per year (2.000.000 USD for 4 years).

market demands.<sup>14</sup> *A valid campaign should develop expectation that membership in NATO may help economic growth of the country, and show what real –direct and indirect – economic benefits there are for citizens. But, primarily, it is urgent to develop cost – benefit analysis on membership in the NATO.*

## **MONTENEGRIN PERSPECTIVES FOR MEMBERSHIP IN NATO**

NATO is very pleased with what Montenegro has done on its road towards membership. In promoting Montenegrin achievements in NATO regard, there is quite number of occasions when openly expressed that Montenegro represents positive example in European and Atlantic integrations, with specific aim to encourage authorities to persevere in this orientation; and all this because Montenegro could positively affect other neighbouring countries in this regard. Among the latest assessments of that kind is the one from May, when ambassadors of several NATO member states<sup>15</sup> congratulated Montenegrin Prime Minister on the achievements in the process of Euro-Atlantic integrations, and also commended Montenegro's contribution to peace-keeping missions. In addition, member states commended Montenegrin progress in the Partnership for Peace and MAP at the meeting of representatives of MOD and Army of Montenegro, held in Brussels on May, 23<sup>rd</sup> in order to adopt the PARP assessment<sup>16</sup> of Montenegro for the 2011.

It is often openly said that Montenegro might become next NATO member.<sup>17</sup> Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011, Slovenian Embassy replaced Hungary as contact country for NATO in Montenegro; it will perform this duty by the year of 2012. Slovenia has a plan to ensure that Montenegro receives invitation for full membership in the Alliance at the next summit in Washington, early next year.<sup>18</sup> If these optimistic expectations come true, Montenegro could realistically expect to complete the process for full membership in next two or three years, regardless of number of open issues in domestic public. Besides, it should not neglected that in the previous NATO summit in Lisbon prevailed belief that, based on current criteria, the doors to Alliance must be open for potential new members nor should we forget the fact that USA strongly supports the rapid accession of Montenegro to NATO.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> **Montenegrin Chamber of Commerce** should be particularly commended, because since recently it makes efforts to be more actively involved in the campaign. Chamber of Commerce organized several notable events during May and June in Podgorica, in cooperation with Embassy of Slovenia. They touched upon issues of economic aspects of membership in NATO, as well as précised and very concrete placement opportunities of domestic industrial products on NATO markets.

<sup>15</sup> Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Poland and Slovenia

<sup>16</sup> PARP mechanism for monitoring achievements of NATO standards and measuring certain country's progress within Partnership for Peace and MAP

<sup>17</sup> Just recently while in visit to Podgorica, Karl Lamers, the President of the NATO's Parliamentary Assembly, said that Montenegro is an important NATO partner and that it fulfils 'all criteria' to become its 29<sup>th</sup> member.

<sup>18</sup> **PARTNER**, Slovenian military attaché in Podgorica, Rade Klisarić, February 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Newly appointed **US** Ambassador to Montenegro Sue K. Brown, while receiving credentials from President of Montenegro, Filip Vujanović, announced: 'Montenegrin membership in the NATO is one of the highest **US** priorities',