



POLICY PAPER

NATO AND MONTENEGRO

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INTRODUCTION

This paper tends to analyze the progress of the accession process of Montenegro towards the NATO during the year of 2011. The most important changes in the area of foreign policy priorities affected internal events in terms of NATO integration. Since 2010, when the European Commission set seven conditions for starting negotiation talks, official Montenegrin political agenda became more EU-oriented, while less attention has being paid to NATO integration. The year behind us was especially marked by Montenegrin efforts to, first of all, present itself as a country progressing on the European integration path. Judging by the intensity of public campaign, issue of NATO membership was not in primary focus of Government during this year.

It is farthestmost important to note that unequal emphasizing of the priorities ultimately affects public opinion and level of public support, as it seems that support to NATO membership increases when this issue is in the focus of public interest and vice versa. In this context, we have different phases in Montenegro¹. Having in mind that Government of Montenegro, the most influential opinion maker, has constantly emphasized much greater importance of the EU over NATO, and based on analysis of planned Government activities² and its actions, the eventual drop of support for NATO could have been expected. And that was precisely the case September 2011.

However, regardless of the introductory remarks, it should be noted that this year was still marked by activities very important for the accomplishment of planned agenda and obligations for the membership in Alliance to be obtained. With regards

¹ CEDEM's results on empirical research indicate that citizens' support to 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; while research results from September 2011 point to higher drop of support to NATO (30,9%), when Government was more EU-oriented (For more information visit www.cedem.me).

² During the 2011, the most important Government activities are continuously directed towards: 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)

to aspirations of Montenegro for membership in NATO, bilateral cooperation between Montenegro and the Alliance becomes more intensive - in the areas of institutional, political, military and defence reforms, and also having in mind continuous participation of Army of Montenegro in the international missions. The application of first cycle of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) has started this year through the first Annual National Programme (ANP). Second ANP was also adopted in the second cycle of MAP and will continue to develop. So far, the quality and implementation of NATO standards were excellently rated.

In addition to this, we must emphasize that NATO officials are frequently expressing satisfaction with Montenegro's progress on the path to the NATO. This is primarily due to the persistent participation of units in ISAF mission in Afghanistan, and thus followed by allies' repeatedly sent positive messages regarding Montenegrin membership. This is the most direct and effective way for optimism on membership in Alliance to be strengthened in public. On the other hand, this optimism was further strengthened in recent months by binding to concrete dates. Namely, there is prevailing attitude that the next call for NATO enlargement could take place in the following Alliance Summit in Chicago, in the spring 2012; and in relation to that, there is strong belief that hitherto progress ranks Montenegro as one of the most serious candidates for membership.³ However, in the accession process, probably the greatest challenge and toughest task before Government will be to balance between its loyalty to Alliance and citizens' attitudes⁴ towards the NATO and membership in this organization. If we think of the upcoming period, then it

³ Since 1 January 2011, Slovenian Embassy replaced Hungary as contact country for NATO in Montenegro; it will perform this duty by the year of 2012. Slovenian Embassy announced a plan, under which it will try to ensure that Montenegro receives invitation for full membership in the Alliance at the next summit in Chicago that will take place early in 2012.

⁴ Prime Minister **Igor Lukšić** gave a lecture before U.S. officials, ambassadors and representatives of American foundations, during his mid-October visit to USA and Atlantic Council in Washington. On this occasion he opened discussion on low support toward NATO integration of Montenegro, when he stated that - ***opponents of Montenegrin membership to NATO will by time become minority and that some decisions which are good for country, must be made even though majority of citizens doesn't understand them!*** Contrary to this position, we think that Government must show farther greater interest for public attitudes when it comes to such important issues. It must become clear that unless general acceptance of citizens is reached, there is no democratic legitimacy of government decisions.

becomes pretty clear that the area which needs to be more seriously taken in consideration is the increase of public support towards the NATO integration.

NATO – MONTENEGRO RELATIONS

Continuous devotion to fulfilment of partnership obligations in application of Membership Action Plan seems to be very important prerequisite of progress in that direction. As we have previously stated, Government has been pretty successful in implementation of first and second MAP. Therefore, we shall briefly outline main dates related to adoption and implementation of these documents.

First, we should briefly remind of 28 October 2010 – when the *First Annual National Programme* was presented in Brussels during the meeting of the North-Atlantic Council (NAC), which then represented the opening of the first Montenegrin cycle of MAP. The first cycle was closed in Brussels on 27 June 2011, when the Report for previous and current year was presented. This is also where the *Report on Implementation of the First Annual National Programme of Montenegro* was assessed. Twenty of NATO member states found the *Report* successful in terms of its applicability and scope. Also, special emphasize was put on the evident contribution Montenegro has made to global security, by its participation in ISAF mission. Member states welcomed the progress Montenegro is making in all areas, with encouragement to continue with same dynamics in process of initiated reforms and achievement of standards in the upcoming period with regards to road to full membership in NATO.

Following this trend, Government adopted the second *Annual National Programme* within the second MAP cycle on 29 September 2011. This Programme is focused on successful conduction of reforms and achievement of NATO standards, especially stressing the implementation of standards and measurability of goals with regards to recommendations from *NATO Progress Report* on conducting the first ANP. The second *Programme* indicates that great attention shall be paid to improvement of overall rule of law, promotion of human and minority rights, capacity building of

institutions fighting against organized crime and corruption in society, therefore improvement of political criteria; there are plans for an intensification of security sector reform; whilst the priority is again recognized in making contribution to allied operations through participation in ISAF mission in Afghanistan. Soon after that, the second *Annual National Programme* was presented in Brussels on 18 October 2011. Presentation of this document officially launched second MAP cycle for membership in NATO. This ANP was also found comprehensive and of a high quality.

Government of Montenegro adopted the Regulation in beginning of November 2011, under which it gives approval for NATO to secretly transfer its materials over Montenegrin territory, which therefore binds Montenegro to provide safe transfer of sensitive documents and materials of courier service of the Allied Command for Operation (ACO). According to this Regulation, which was created based on previously signed contract with the Alliance⁵, Montenegrin institutions (police and army, above all) are obligated to provide safe shipments of Alliance and logistical support to its couriers on the territory of Montenegro.

On the other hand, it is necessary to point out that NATO allies are very pleased with what Montenegro has done on its path towards membership. After all, such an attitude could have been recognized during the meeting in Brussels on 23 May 2010, held on adoption of *PARP assessment*⁶ of Montenegro for the year 2011. Meeting was attended by representatives of Ministry of Defence, Army of Montenegro, as well as NATO member states, which praised the progress of Montenegro in the Partnership for Peace and MAP.

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen paid official visit to Montenegro⁷, on 29 June 2011, when he said that Montenegro has so far made very evident

⁵ *Contract on Transfer of Secret Data over the Montenegrin Territory* was signed by [Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe](#) (SHAPE) and Montenegro in Belgium on September 2011.

⁶ **PARP** mechanism is tool for monitoring achievements of NATO standards and measuring progress made by partnership country within the Partnership for Peace and MAP.

⁷ Rasmussen met with President of Montenegro - Filip Vujanović and Prime Minister - Igor Lukšić, and he was also a guest at the meeting of Partnership Commission A5, which was held in Budva. This was the closing meeting after six-month-period of Montenegrin presidency over the Commission. The

progress in security sector reform, as well as in other wider reforms in country. Nevertheless, this was also followed by message that there are still some areas in which more evident progress should be provided; especially in the areas of organized crime and corruption. It was also indicated that defence and security agencies should be totally in line with NATO standards. Lately, there have been some speculations that Ministry of Defence is considering the establishment of military-intelligence service, with authority to collect data for Army and Ministry of Defence, during the preparation for membership in NATO. Put differently, this service would independently work on collecting intelligent and counter-intelligent data⁸ for the purpose of achieving NATO standards and interoperability. However, it remains to be seen what will be achieved in this regard in the future.

There would be no exaggeration if argued that the political support of USA is one of the main preconditions for perspectives of Montenegro as NATO member state. As noted before, Prime Minister of Montenegro Igor Lukšić visited USA and North-Atlantic Council in mid-October. During the visit, he met with U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden and State Secretary Hillary Clinton. U.S. highest officials expressed satisfaction with Montenegrin progress on a road to NATO. They also commended Montenegrin contribution to international ISAF mission in Afghanistan and stressed that the United States of America are interested in Montenegro to become full member state in NATO and EU, as soon as possible.

PARTICIPATION OF MONTENEGRO IN INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

Although Montenegro is not obliged to participate in missions, it still seems that further important condition for reaching the membership in NATO is continuation

meeting was attended by local officials, ministers of foreign affairs from Charter member states and U.S. ambassador to Montenegro.

⁸ At this moment, intelligence data are collected by officials of Agency for National Security (ANS). This due to adoption of Law on Amendments on Law on Agency for National Security in April 2011, by which authorities of Agency are extended to issues 'of importance for defence interests of Montenegro, as well as achievement of strategic security aims and interests'. Also, this law states that ANS reports to Defence and Security Council, Minister of Defence and Chief of General Staff of Army of Montenegro.

of engagement of Montenegrin soldiers in ISAF mission in Afghanistan.⁹ Due to the two-year long participation of 35-37 soldiers in ISAF mission, Montenegro has ensured confidence and respect of NATO allies. Today, the fourth contingent of our soldiers partakes in the ISAF mission¹⁰, which means that this is the second year of participation in the mission and fourth contingent of soldiers in Afghanistan. Beside this, the fourth contingent is also composed of first group of members of Army of Montenegro, who will be engaged in Military-Police School in Kabul together with other members of regional armed forces in the upcoming six-month period. By showing an initiative during the presidency over American-Adriatic Charter for sending a joint team of trainers from all Charter member states¹¹ and Slovenia, Montenegro ensured increase of its contingent for five additional soldiers in Military-Police School in Kabul. By making this decision, maximum number of members of Army of Montenegro in Afghanistan is now determined to 45.¹²

This decision was not firstly accepted by members of Constitutional Issues and Legislative Committee of the Parliament. However, Parliament accepted draft Decision to send five additional members of Army to ISAF mission on its plenary session in the beginning of July. Montenegro has, thus, gained positive points, because allies found such an endeavour as “extra effort” on the road to membership in NATO. Montenegrin officials announced that Montenegro has no intentions to increase the number of its members in the ISAF mission, for partaking member states have announced withdrawal of their soldiers from Afghanistan by the year 2014. Further, Montenegrin soldiers and officers continue to participate in peace-keeping missions in Somali and Liberian waters.

⁹ Just recently, the October 7, 2011 was marked as tenth anniversary since international military operation against Al-Qaida and Taliban regime in Kabul was launched. Today, ten years later, majority of European citizens, which units partake in that intervention of international forces oppose to further engagement of their soldiers in Afghanistan. Public opinion research in European countries show that 66% of citizens calls for withdrawal of troops, and only 3% supports sending of additional forces to Kabul. European states engaged in this operation lost about 750 soldiers, out of which 382 were British nationals. France lost 75, and Germany 53 soldiers.

¹⁰ The newest IV contingent is in Afghanistan since August 22, 2011, while the members of III contingent stayed in ISAF peace-keeping mission since February 14, 2011.

¹¹ Besides Montenegro, members of American-Adriatic Charter are the following countries from the region: Albania, Bosnia i Hercegovina, Croatia and Macedonia.

¹² Based on former decision of Parliament of Montenegro, the ISAF mission could not be composed of more than 40 members of Army of Montenegro. This number has already been engaged in securing the base in Mazar-e-Sharif.

When it comes to international operation, there is a need to recall the ***Draft Law on Ratification of Agreement between Montenegro and European Union*** to establish legal framework for Montenegro to take part in the EU crisis management operations. Agreement between Montenegro and European Union was signed in February 2011. Parliamentary Committee on International Relations and European Integrations discussed about this Agreement at the end of November. It was clearly emphasized that the Agreement does not implicate automatically participation of Montenegro in all EU emergency operations. On contrary, Committee members agreed that each individual case of eventual participation shall demand previous separate parliamentary discussion. The decision will be made based on current interests and capacities of the country. Furthermore, the Committee stressed that Montenegro will not partake in the funding of per diem or any other allowances within these missions. In the end, it should be noted that Montenegro is so far the only Western Balkan country which has signed this agreement.

As for the missions' costs, we have data that Montenegro has so far spent 2 million EUR on the engagement of soldiers in Afghanistan, out of which the greatest amount was paid for per diem of mission's members. The data was released in public by the Ministry of Defence during the presentation of the ***Report on the Use of Units of Army of Montenegro in International Forces in 2010***¹³, which took place in the Parliament of Montenegro in the middle of the year. Also, representatives of Ministry of Defence shared the data of total costs of operations in Somalia and Liberia, which amounted to 42.800€ for Somalia and 89.000€ for Liberia in the last year.

In accordance with the new ***Law on Parliamentary Oversight***, this type of report must be presented before members of Security and Defence Committee and the members of Parliament of Montenegro, which was done this year for the first time.

¹³ The report stated that in 2010 67 members of Army of Montenegro were engaged in ISAF mission in Afghanistan, five navy members partook in Atlanta operation, and four Montenegrin soldiers were engaged in UNMIL in Liberia.

In addition to costs overview, the Report also states that Montenegrin soldiers had no significant problems during their stay in ISAF mission in Afghanistan¹⁴; that participation in missions is a good opportunity for personal development of Army members; that by making contribution to these missions, our country affirms itself as credible and constructive partner in international relations.

It should also be noted that Government of Montenegro adopted Information on realization of partnership goals named *“Support by the Host Country”* on 13 October 2011. This is an obligation which implies defining of available national military and civil capacities of the countries¹⁵, which could be put at NATO disposal during the planning of activities for responding to potential crisis and emergency situations or during drills with NATO forces¹⁶. This obligation is in accordance with requests defined by Membership Action Plan (MAP) and is considered as important preconditions for membership in NATO.

Ministry of Defence 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).

Of course, Ministry of Defence and Army of Montenegro have shown great determination to meet the requirements for membership in NATO, and majority of their activities are directed towards modernization and equipping of Army, destruction of remaining redundant and obsolete weapons¹⁷ and their safe keeping,

¹⁴ Unfortunately, Mijailo Perišić, Sergeant First Class who was member of IV contingent of Army of Montenegro in Afghan ISAF Mission died from a heart attack.

¹⁵ **CATALOGUE OF HOST COUNTRY'S CAPACITIES TO PROVIDE SUPPORT (HNS CAPCAT)**

In order to implement this partnership goal, state has a plan to form an intersectional commission for Catalogue development. Catalogue is to be developed by the end of first quarter of 2012.

¹⁶ For example, one of the obligations of the state could be to provide partnership countries' military forces with certain assistance, during their stay within territory of Montenegro (military exercises, going to missions or return from missions, etc)

¹⁷ Minister of Defence **Boro Vučinić**, announced the upcoming destruction of more than 3.000 tons redundant and obsolete weapons and ammunition. It is estimated that Montenegro could be set free from redundant and obsolete weapons during the next three years, which would instantly imply removal of great inner security risk.

capacity building of their staff in compliance with NATO standards, etc. These activities are carried out with purpose of creating adequate human and material formation of the Army, which could be capable to respond to contemporary security risks and which could eventually be integrated in NATO. Shall this intention succeed remains to be seen; however, we must point out that such a goal requires significant financial resources.

Government estimates that the total costs of Montenegro's membership in NATO could amount to 6 million EUR a year, out of which money would be spent for: annual membership fee, costs of permanent mission in Brussels, headquarters' staff in NATO commands and participation costs in permanent peace-keeping missions. In addition to this, indirect costs, which are farthestmost greatest, include investment in army for achievement of NATO standards, because army modernization requires huge resources. It is, however, important to note that Government has recently said that funds allocated from the budget for Army of Montenegro will be reduced for 700.000 EUR in 2012 in relation to 2011. Therefore, it is justified to pose a question - what resources can be used for the purpose of army modernization in 2012?!

NATO CAMPAIGN

Many times we have pointed out that Government campaign on NATO was not successful, and there are at least two reasons for such an outcome. First, campaign does not significantly effect on the increase of pretty low public support to NATO membership, which is its main and basic goal. The most important challenge before the Government, therefore, must be the provision of adequate public support for joining the NATO. Second, this campaign seems to have been using propaganda-coloured messages and persuasion of citizens. However, messages that are being sent by public policy have their latent function that need to be read in sense of encouragement of systematic *NATOisation* of public and political discourse. State

establishment claims that joining the NATO is very useful decision, which will lead to prosperity of society and that Montenegro could have healthy developing perspectives if it reaches membership in NATO. However, it is evident that Montenegro lacks previously conducted cost-benefit analysis of such an enterprise. It should be said that joining the organization such as NATO bears certain risk to the state if not preceded by detailed designed planning of economic membership aspects. On the other hand, effects of membership in NATO on economy of Montenegro often remain vague to the citizens, which is farthestmost weakest element of the Campaign and one of the main reasons of low level of citizens' interest in NATO¹⁸. First of all, the Campaign should develop expectations that membership in NATO can and will help in development of country's economy, by pointing to direct and indirect economic benefits for citizens; however, total costs of membership should also be outlined and presented. In this regard, it is essential for cost-benefit analysis of NATO membership to finally be done.

In addition to all of above stated, the campaign did not succeed in convincing the citizens that membership in NATO is an issue which concerns them the most. It is necessary to explain the citizens that membership in NATO is not an interest of leading political elite¹⁹ - but, on contrary, is an issue of wider parts of society. Thus, what should be considered as the main challenge Government will be facing with in the upcoming period is enduring in intention to show that integration of Montenegro in NATO structures is not Government's project, but the interest of entire society²⁰.

¹⁸ In CEDEM's research from July 2010 on NATO integration of Montenegro, when asked how important the issue of NATO membership is to the Montenegrin citizens, 26, 4 % respondents answered with "very important", 18, 8% said this issue is "somewhat important", while the greatest number of respondents – 27, 3% considers this issue "not important". Number of those indecisive was estimated to 27, 5%.

¹⁹ In afore mentioned CEDEM's research from July 2010, when asked *who will benefit the most if Montenegro becomes NATO member state*, 54.7 % respondents said that the ones who will benefit the most are members of current governing elite, whilst only 17,2 % of respondents thinks that Montenegrin citizens will benefit from such an situation.

²⁰ Leading coalition **DPS-SDP** is the biggest promoter of Montenegrin membership in NATO. It is not suffice to remind that the strongest political party **DPS** officially joined the NATO membership to its political program during their congress on 21 May 2011, which then made NATO membership the part of program goals of the strongest party on public scene of Montenegro.

No such effect was produced in domestic public, despite the fact that Government's Coordination Team conducted the NATO campaign within eight Action Plans. In the beginning of 2011, Government adopted the Report on Implementation of Communication Strategy on Euro-Atlantic integrations, when new VII six-month Action Plan was adopted as well²¹, that was followed in the first half of year. In the middle of the year, Montenegro adopted *Report on Implementation of Communication Strategy on Euro-Atlantic integrations* for the first six months of 2011 and presented new *VIII Action Plan*²², valid for the second half of year.

Both of Action Plans contain very extensive list of activities, which are being conducted under Communication Strategy on membership in NATO. For each and every activity, Action Plans envisage period of realization and target groups that activities are relating to. These activities are part of long-term efforts which have so far been conducted by Coordination Team for NATO campaign. However, the last

²¹**VII Action plan** envisages the following activities: forming of NATO info centre, 5 TV shows – *NATO magazine integrations*, show *NATO info* on RTCG TV station twice a month, TV talk show on RTV Atlas once a month, attending the course *Public information* of NATO school in Oberammergau, Germany, making cost-benefit analysis, lectures for senior students, study visit to NATO Headquarters in Brussels, workshop for journalists, public opinion research, readers' questions in daily newspaper *Pobjeda*, research on how informed students are on NATO, conference *NATO Dialogue*, regional school of security, debating competition of pupils and students, preparation for ALIANTE 2011 contest, organization of seminar in NAMS system of codification, publishing online journal on security *MONET – Security Edition*, organization of NATO Caravan in 5 cities, multimedia event *Peace Fest*, organization of activities for members of Parliament, education of public and local officials and servants on Euro-Atlantic integrations, publishing of monthly newsletters, media agency cooperation, meeting with representatives of NATO member states in Montenegro, working dinner of journalists and Minister of Defence, organization of the event *Open Doors Days* – visit of students to Special Anti-terrorist Unit of Police Department, Facebook campaign "*Pristajem NA TO*" (I agree to NATO), NATO info line, writing of Report on Implementation of six-month-long Action Plan, preparing of Action Plan for the period July – December 2011.

²² **VIII Action Plan** envisages the following activities: NATO-Info on national television, Talk Show Pro et Contra on TV IN, themed shows on RTV Atlas, NATO info on Radio Montenegro, lectures for senior students, study visit to NATO Headquarters in Brussels, workshop for journalists, research on how informed students are on NATO, School of Euro-Atlantic Integrations, set of discussions *Towards more successful integrations*, set of tribunes with citizens and lectures in 4 cities in Montenegro, World ALIANTE Contest 2011, Regional Camp REACT 2011, Project on education of youngsters *I want to see, I want to know!*, Virtual school on Euro-Atlantic integrations, Simulation of Parliamentary session, Conference devoted to European Day of Science, School of Rhetoric, Project Čuvaj.me (Save.me), educative workshops *Youngsters in Integrations*, meeting with representatives of NATO member states in Montenegro, NATO info line, discussion with retired people, cooperation with daily newspaper *Pobjeda*, education of public and local servants and members of Parliament, publishing of monthly newsletters, cooperation with teachers in high schools, meeting of journalists and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and/or Minister of Defence, Report on Implementation of Action Plan for the period July – December 2011, making of Action Plan for January – June 2012.

two Plans have put stronger emphasis on activities related to adoption of first Report on realization of activities envisaged under *Annual National Programmeme* (ANP) from the first MAP cycle, as well of activities on informing international public on Montenegrin efforts to join the NATO Pact. Funding for activities within VII and VIII Action Plans is provided in the Budget of Montenegro 2011. The amount of funding for VII Action Plan is estimated to 60.100 EUR, while for VIII Action Plan the amount is 47.200 EUR, which brings us to the total sum of 107.300 EUR in 2011²³.

Governmental NATO campaign is not consolidated with real needs in that sense. Many activities are being copied and repeated, regardless of the fact that their efficiency was not previously tested. However, we should not neglect the convincing potential of messages that are being repeated, given that one of the basic laws of propaganda is to make an effect through enduring repeat. Lack of strategic planning should also be pointed out, having in mind that Action Plans only shallowly consider activities in question, which is then followed by inability to see measurable results of their real effects and goals they tend to achieve. This is why we get an impression that some activities are arbitrarily planned, that they seem inefficient from the very beginning and are goals for themselves, even though their conduction requires no small amount of money.

PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH RESULTS

Public opinion research surveys have shown that promoters of Montenegrin accession to NATO don't enjoy majority support of citizens but, on the other hand, this policy's opponents are not in majority, either. In addition, results indicate that citizens are more likely to express indifference when it comes to this issue. As

²³ Since 2008, Government has spent approximately 400 thousands EUR for the purpose of NATO campaign. In addition to that, Ministry of Foreign Affairs engaged two lobbying companies **Orion strategies and Rif Group** for policy consults in USA. Their job is to meet American public officials on issues of "interests of Montenegro to become NATO member state" and to lobby on Montenegrin activities within American-Adriatic Charter (A5). After two years of engagement, the contract was last year prolonged to additional two years, with amount of 500 thousands American Dollars a year (2.000.000 US \$ for four years).

previously noted, in 2011²⁴ CEDEM's research surveys have been focused on current public issues, which are the most directly connected with the citizens' support towards primary foreign policy goals of Montenegro (EU and NATO integrations). CEDEM's public opinion research from September pointed to the drop of citizens' confidence in NATO for 5% in relation to the research conducted in December 2010. The research showed that if citizens are now to vote on referenda on issue of Montenegrin membership in NATO – **30.9 % OF RESPONDENTS WOULD BE IN FAVOUR, AND 39.5 % WOULD BE AGAINST, while 29.6 % DOESN'T HAVE SPECIFIC OPINION** on this issue.

In relation to the research surveys from 2010, there is evident drop of supporters of NATO membership (from 35.4% in December 2010 to 30.9% in September 2011), which means that membership in NATO is supported by barely over one third of total population of Montenegro, whilst on the other hand and in the same time, we have situation of light drop of opponents of membership (from 40.9% in December 2010 to 39.5% September in 2011). Between these two extremities, we have significantly increased percent of indecisive citizens (from 23.7% in December 2010 to 29.6% in September 2011), which indicates that process of NATO integration of Montenegro is regularly followed by greater number of those which are indecisive when it comes to that issue, which was often outlined in our previous works.

This should be also complemented by following finding of the research – when it comes to citizens' confidence in system institutions, only 30.1 % of respondents said they have confidence in NATO, which also indicates to higher drop of confidence in NATO if compared to the same question in December 2010 research, when we had 35.8% citizens with confidence in this regard. Why such drop of confidence happened? We have previously mentioned that in 2011 Montenegro strongly oriented itself towards EU integration, and somewhat put NATO integration in behind. Since NATO issue was not in the focus of public, it is therefore easy to understand why the drop of support to NATO happened in such situation. Besides,

²⁴ **Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM)** conducted two researches on this issue within defined period – in September and December 2011. Both of public opinion researches were supported by US Embassy to Montenegro, based in Podgorica.

as stated before, the drop of support in domestic public happened mainly because of inefficient NATO campaign. Further, support to NATO was also conditioned by contemporary and comparative drop of support towards membership in the EU²⁵ (which is traditionally very high in Montenegro). Why? Firstly, because of sense of endanger caused by economic crisis which affected EU, but because of other factors as well, such as one regularity noted in comparative research surveys in different European countries. What seems to be the rule is as one country is getting closer to focal dates on its EU path, the support of its citizens is simultaneously getting lower. In addition to that, there is also a negative effect of certain external factors, such as NATO intervention at peak of crisis in Libya. This intervention strongly affected Montenegrins' attitudes towards NATO, given that this intervention was often connected to the bombing of Federal Republic Yugoslavia in 1999, and in first line because of unjustified number of kills of civilians.

However, the latest CEDEM research from December 2011 indentifies greater trend of increase of NATO supporters. Hence, if referendum on membership of Montenegro in NATO is to take place now, the eventual results would be as follows: **38% IN FAVOUR, 36% AGAINST, while 26% respondents doesn't have specific opinion.**

The latest trend, first of all, indicates that number of supporters of NATO membership has significantly increased from **30.9%** to **38%** in a very short period – from September to December; in the same time, this is the greatest level of support to NATO ever recorded in CEDEM's research surveys. Further, in relation to results from September, this December research indicates to the drop of NATO opponents, which is now estimated to **36%** in relation to **39.6%** opponents in September. This means that, for the first time, we have more supporters (38%) than opponents (36%) of membership of Montenegro in NATO. This trend of drop of

²⁵ In relation to the comparative period of last year, we have also recorded the dropping trend of support towards EU because now – 62 % citizens thinks Montenegro should become EU member state; 16 % thinks it should not; while 22 % doesn't have an opinion. In December 2010, number of those supporting the EU integration was 70%, while some prior researches recorded support of 76 % respondents. We could conclude that in regard to EU, we have always had two-third support of citizens

membership opponents is almost equal to trend of drop of number of indecisive respondents on this question – it went from **29.6 %** in September to **26%** in December 2011.

In addition to that, it is important to outline another relevant research in this regard – *Europe in my town*, conducted in the beginning of October by Centre for Civic Education (CCE) in cooperation with Centre for Monitoring (CEMI) and Civic Initiatives (CI), with financial support of Delegation of European Union to Montenegro. Research tends to question the level of civic support in certain Montenegrin cities²⁶ towards process of NATO and EU integrations. However, this research is not representative for entire population of Montenegro, but note that it was not the original intention of the research surveys in the first place. Regardless of intentions, this research reveals certain valuable results, when it comes to situation on micro level of public community, i.e. within nine included Montenegrin municipalities.

When asked the following question: *“If referendum on accession of Montenegro to NATO is to take place now, how would you vote?”* – the results are as follows: **The most of those IN FAVOUR come from Ulcinj (59.2%), then Pljevlja (49.1%) and Podgorica (34.6%),** while the least number of those in favour was found in Herceg Novi (19.7%) and Kolašin (25.7%). Bijelo Polje, Budva, Cetinje and Nikšić are somewhere at the level of current Montenegrin average – somewhere around 30% in favour of NATO integration. **Highest percent of those AGAINST membership of Montenegro in NATO was recorded in Herceg Novi (56.7%), Bijelo Polje (55.4%) and Kolašin (54.4%).** But what is interesting is the fact that the capital of country – Podgorica also has high percent of citizen opposing NATO integration (40.3%), which is again considered as regular average of opponents toward Montenegrin membership in NATO. The least answers AGAINST were recorded in Ulcinj (21.6%), same municipality where recorded the most answers IN FAVOUR. Also, equally interesting are data of citizens who declared themselves indecisive by this issue. **The highest percent of indecisive citizens was recorded in old capital**

²⁶ Research included nine Montenegrin municipalities: Bijelo Polje, Herceg Novi, Kolašin, Nikšić, Pljevlja, Ulcinj, Podgorica, Budva, Cetinje.

Cetinje (40.7%), which in the same time has high percent of those who would not go out to eventual referenda on NATO membership (12.6%). This result is significantly beyond an average in public opinion researches in Montenegro, but in other municipalities as well, among which the total sum of those indecisive or those who would not go out to eventual referenda, varies from 13 % in Bijelo Polje (where answers were pretty polarized) and 30 % in Budva.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Government should equally emphasize the importance of the most important foreign policy goals – accessions to the EU and NATO, because by doing so it consequently affects public support. It is especially important if we bear in mind the traditionally less expressed importance of security and defence issue in public perception, i.e. NATO issue. While putting focus on the EU is just, Government should be equally focused on NATO.
- Public debate on security challenges and risks should be actively initiated, because Montenegro is exposed to different global, regional and specific risks which are not always predictable. Since faced with such circumstances, it should seriously consider importance of its security and decide on the most optimal concept of future security system, within which it could respond to security treats in quick, efficient and economic manner.
- Ensure more adequate public support to accession to NATO pact, which will become more and more important as the moment when Montenegro will be invited to join the NATO becomes closer. So defined security policy must be, beyond other, accepted in public, since it is obvious that statement which claims this is the national interest doesn't seem to be sufficiently strong argument.
- Conduct detailed cost-benefit analysis of membership in NATO and publically present all benefits coming from membership in NATO, but also, precisely calculate and present in public total indirect and direct costs of such an act. In this sense, by analyzing different economic aspects and by considering more relevant facts, it becomes imperative to form basic elements of economic vision of Montenegro in the Alliance.
- Campaign should serve for providing arguments for statement that most important beneficiaries of accession to NATO are citizens and the state, and not the government structure; it should also list all indirect and direct economic benefits citizens can expect due to future membership in NATO. Foster NATO campaign in direction of increase of citizens' interests in NATO membership.