



**Montenegro**  
**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations**  
Sector for Consular Affairs and Diaspora

No: Sarajevo, 14.10.2011.

**Workshop on joint approach to linking migration and development of the  
countries of origin in the Western Balkans – Sarajevo, 13-14 October-  
Montenegrin approach to linking Diaspora and development of its country of  
origin**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is pleasure to greet distinguished colleagues and experts from Western Balkans and wish success to our gathering dedicated to so important subject for our region

Strategy of cooperation with Diaspora from 2011-2014, adopted by Montenegrin government 10 months ago, defines as Diaspora all citizens of Montenegro who live abroad and all persons born or having origin in Montenegro even if they are not Montenegrin nationals. As this definition obviously embraces emigrants of II and III generation, we can say that outside present Montenegrin borders resides vast population of emigrants which is numerically equal to actual size of total Montenegrin population (around 650 thousand).

After renewal of its state independence 2006 until now, our state strived to restore elementary institutional cooperation with Montenegrin Diaspora and its associations, which has been neglected due to well known sorrowful and tragic happenings in ex - Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia during last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Reminding that „Matica iseljenika CG,, ( Mainstream organization of Montenegrin Diaspora) was formed in 1962, ten years later than all other ex-Yugoslav republics and that it discontinued work for 12 years because of civil war in Yugoslavia, we can say that only recently appropriate conditions appeared for more subtle inclusion of our Diaspora in development projects inside the country of origin. For Montenegro, as the youngest

independent state in the region, experiences of other Western Balkans states in this respect are of great importance.

We don't have exact and reliable data about number and structure of Montenegrin Diaspora, taking into account that inside census forms, which were applied at recent censuses held in foreign countries where our people live, for the first time appeared box in which it was possible to write „Montenegro,, for state of origin and „Montenegrin,, for nationality or ethnical origin. These data will be known after censuses in reception states accomplished, but even after that data will not be complete, because censuses will not embrace II and III generation of emigrants. However, previous censuses in Montenegro give us approximate number of Montenegrin citizens at so called temporary work and stay abroad (around 55 thousand, which is 9% of our population). According census results biggest number of emigrants we have from municipalities in north and south of Montenegro: Plav ( 57,4% from total inhabitants of this municipality), Rozaje (22%), Berane ( 16,9%), Bijelo Polje ( 14%), Ulcinj (30,5%), Bar (13,8%).

Available data show that biggest number of our citizens have temporary work and residence in U.S.A. (45 % from total number), then in Germany (20 %). Switzerland (7, 9%). Naturally, these percentages don't embrace even the smallest part of our Diaspora, because number of our emigrants and their offspring, who are not registered as persons at temporary work or stay abroad, are many times bigger. For example, only in Luxemburgh live around 12 thousand persons by origin from Montenegro ( I and II generation included ), in U.S.A. 30 thousand, in Argentina 20 thousand, in Serbia 70 thousand, in Albania 12 thousand, in Slovenia 2 600, in Bosnia and Herzegovina at least 12 thousand, in Croatia 5 thousand, in Canada 2 400, in Australia 1 200... These numbers are partly reliable, because they relate to censuses held 10 years ago in some countries of Western Europe and former republics of ex-Yugoslavia. Statistical Office of Germany reported on 31.12.2010. that 12 930 citizens of Montenegro were registered in Germany, but it is self-understandable that number of persons originating from Montenegro, who live in Montenegro, is significantly higher.

You can understand the significance of granting incentives to Diaspora to invest in economic development of Montenegro from mere fact that our emigrants are financially and socially well established and integrated in receiving countries, which means that they give valuable contribution to wellbeing to countries of their permanent residence. Number of our citizens who are obliged to return in Montenegro in accordance with agreements on readmission with EU states is not only small, but also in constant decrease. For example, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Montenegro gave consent for readmission of 209 persons in 2008, for 182 in 2009, for 2010 in 154 and in first 9 months of 2011 our authorities issued positive reply to 68 requests for readmission.

Compared with total number of our citizens and members of Diaspora in Europe, U.S.A., Canada, Australia and South America, the number of Montenegrins who couldn't managed to integrate themselves in countries of reception is really insignificant. Their reintegration into Montenegrin society, after being subjected to readmission procedure, in some cases has gone without bigger difficulties, especially if the requesting states were able to secure some financial assistance for their return to requested state (Luxemburg is good example).

We are quite aware of the fact that huge potentials of our Diaspora to invest into Montenegrin economy and develop mutually useful partnership have remained dormant and mostly unexploited. Having in mind that only 10 months ago our government adopted Strategy for cooperation with Diaspora it would not be fair to say that we could accomplish more then we realistically could until now.

During last 10 months our diplomatic-consular representations in various countries have been pondering possible business projects and initiated promotion of possible investments in small and middle companies in Montenegro together with Center for Diaspora and distinguished members of Montenegrin Diaspora associations and clubs. Preliminary analysis of agreements on avoiding double taxation and on protection of investments has been made. We established for the first time data base containing facts about business people of Montenegrin origin all over the world. We are working on founding investment forums in the country and abroad. Competent authorities of Montenegro now engaged in drafting legislative projects and regulations relating to customs and tax decrease for equipment and objects that serve for initiation of small and middle companies managed or owned by members of Montenegrin Diaspora. Separate section inside our Institute for employment and inside government's Direction for Personnel has been opened in order to research possibilities to recruit from Montenegrin Diaspora persons with special knowledges, skills and experiances, with professional profiles that are difficult to find in Montenegro.

Among imporant initiatives aiming to include Diaspora in Montenegrin development are: 1. Government of Montenegro and Montenegrin Comercial Bank established „Found for Diaspora,, which should provide 40% of resources, while Diaspora ( as project holder ) should participate with 60%. This initiative still hasn't come to life because of lack of interest in Diaspora, but Found continues to be opened and waits for better times 2. Chancellery of WUS-Austria in Podgorica has established „Brain Gain Program,, which finance experts from our Diaspora to come in Montenegro as guest-lecturers at our University from one to three weeks for exchange of knowledge in different areas. 3. Center for

Diaspora, Ministry of science of Montenegro and government's Direction for Personnel have recently initiated creation of special data base of Montenegrin scientists and experts who live abroad.

All these activities should help to move to upper level classical forms of Diaspora investments in country of origin like return after pensioning, collection of donations for infrastructural project in native places, purchase of land or houses and remittances to relatives. During next phase of our relations with Diaspora we expect more real business project based on profit and partnership relations with different subjects in country of origin. It is known that Montenegrin Diaspora via official banking channels send per year registered remittances amounting to 250 million euro. Via informal channels probably is transferred the same amount every year. Knowing the size of Montenegrin budget it is clear that Diaspora represents significant factor of financial stability of Montenegro. It is, also, clear that return of some part of our Diaspora would have had enormous beneficiary impact on Montenegrin economy, not only through capital invested, but also through sharing and expansion of knowledge and experiences acquired abroad.

Although Montenegrin competent authorities started to be occupied by Diaspora more seriously just after renewal of statehood in 2006, we can say that there are encouraging positive examples, because number of returnees who invest in small and middle companies in Montenegro grows slowly but steadily.

Instead of conclusion, allow me to inform this distinguished gathering about one fact which reflects strengthening of confidence between old Montenegrin Diaspora and very young Montenegrin independent state. During recent visit to U.S.A. on the occasion of latest session of U.N. General Assembly, Montenegrin Premier Igor Luksic used that opportunity to have meeting with the most successful representatives of our Diaspora in New York. They discussed possibility to construct with joint efforts and participation the building of „Montenegrin house,, (total value 6 million dollars) in which will be located Montenegrin mission to U.N., General Consulate of Montenegro and Association of Montenegrin Diaspora in the U.S.A. This preliminary talks proposed financial model according which 1/3 part of project costs will cover Montenegrin government, 1/3 will be provided by banks and 1/3 will be secured by members of Montenegrin Diaspora in U.S.A. If realized, this project will be exceptional example of cooperation, confidence building and understanding between Diaspora and country of origin.

**Thanking for attention allow me to express satisfaction for having opportunity to be one time more in beautiful multicultural city of Sarajevo**