



Weekly Briefing

Montenegro External Relations briefing:

**Montenegro in an attempt to maintain a good position in international relations
in all fields**

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Montenegro in an attempt to maintain a good position in international relations in all fields

During the previous week, the 73rd Session of the United Nations Assembly, was held. It was attended also by Montenegrin officials. This event was an ideal opportunity for the Montenegrin political elite to express a clear position that it wants to maintain a good position in international relations in all fields and to remain recognized as a good example in the Western Balkans when it comes to good neighborly relations. Also, Montenegro's commitment to membership in all international organizations is evident, such as the UN, as well as the NATO alliance who's Montenegro is a member. Nevertheless, it seems that the commitment of Montenegro to Euro-Atlantic integration does not diminish the ambition to achieve also good external relations with other countries, like PR China.

Session of the UN General Assembly– confirmation of good relations between Montenegro and the rest of the world

In the second half of September, the delegation of the Government of Montenegro, headed by Prime Minister Dusko Markovic, took part in the work of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly. This year's theme was “Making the United Nations Relevant to All People: Global Leadership and Shared Responsibilities for Peaceful, Equitable and Sustainable Societies”. Delegation of Montenegro had a very active participation at this year's meeting. The participation of the representatives from the Government of Montenegro at the UN General Assembly is an opportunity for further promotion of the achieved results and priorities of Montenegro on the internal and foreign policy

plan, strengthening of the position and visibility of Montenegro in the UN and improvement of bilateral relations with the participating countries.

Mr. Markovic participated in several meetings, primarily in high-level meetings on the control and prevention of non-communicable diseases, as well as at high-level meetings on the financing of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Action for Peacekeeping, as well as participation to the discussion related to the supporting the Economic Resistance of Small Islands and Developing Countries through Citizenship Programs ". Also, Mr. Markovic has participated in the Blumberg Global Business Forum which brings together the most important leaders from the public and private sectors in order to consider the burning challenges for the prosperity of all and building key stakeholders between the business community and governments. In this way, Mr. Markovic had the opportunity to talk with representatives of governments of a large number of countries, but also with representatives of business and international organizations and thereby present Montenegro and contribute to its relations and presence in the international community. This year's theme of the meeting was global trends which are related to the growth of the world's population, income inequality and climate change. Although a small country that does not have a significant economic impact, Montenegro can nevertheless contribute to these challenges through co-operation with other countries, with the aim of joint prosperity and ensuring sustainable economic development.

One of the important issues for the external relations of Montenegro is regional cooperation. During the UN General Assembly, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, Mr. Darmanovic, has participated to WB6 meeting, as well as in a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Central European Initiative (CEI) countries. In general, meetings with the regional and EU countries are of the great importance for Montenegro and its foreign policy. Certainly it will support the process of EU integration, but also to solve some of the international issues such as migration crisis and security risk. In addition, such as meeting

helps to Montenegro to strengthen bilateral cooperation with regional and EU countries, as well as continue to conduct policy in the direction of preserving peace and stability in the region.

Relations between Montenegro and other WB countries have been improved in the previous period. Common efforts and cooperation resulted in improvements in neighborly relations of whole region. In relation to that, Prime Minister of Montenegro, Mr. Markovic stated at UN General Assembly that now WB region is better place to live than two or three decades ago and that goal of Montenegrin government is regional stability and prosperity. As the stability of the region requires the cooperation of all, Montenegro is committed to promoting stability and good neighborly relations. Among others, Montenegro welcomes the signing of the agreement between Macedonia and Greece, as well as negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina.

In the forthcoming period, Montenegro will work to improve good neighborly relations and continue to play a constructive and stabilizing role in the WB region, but also continue to contribute to the UN's tackling of global challenges, but also to more effective action. Besides current membership and Montenegro's chairing of the Executive Board of the UN Women, the candidacies have been presented for the upcoming period for membership in the Economic and Social Council 2020-2022, the Human Rights Council 2022-2024 and the UN Security Council 2026-2027. These activities will certainly contribute to the greater involvement of Montenegro in international relations and improve cooperation with other countries, but also improve human capacities and strengthen its institutions. Also, it will contribute to the continuation of the policy of multiculturalism and multiethnicity, which was priority of the Montenegrin authorities in previous period.

NATO membership - obligation and responsibility, but also stability

In addition to the above, it seems that the Montenegrin Government in every occasion tries to emphasize membership in the NATO military alliance as a necessity, which at the same time means stability not only of Montenegro, but of the whole region. In addition, NATO membership should not be viewed through an external significance prism, but also through an incentive to the national economy. Support to this assertion is the fact that from the moment of Montenegro's accession to NATO (last year) a high growth rate of the Montenegrin economy was achieved. Namely, NATO membership gave Montenegro a strong incentive for further implementation of economic reforms that in the last year and the first half of this year resulted in GDP growth of over 4.5 percent (according to unofficial MONSTAT data). It would be incorrect to attribute the entire economic growth to NATO membership, but the fact is that significantly higher growth rates were achieved in relation to the period before membership. The implemented measures are based on sustainable development, which in the long run should provide a higher level of living standard. In addition to economic benefits, it seems that the affirmative attitude towards membership in NATO is based on the conviction of the Montenegrin authorities that this membership provides further strengthening of the rule of law based on the highest democratic values. This was even confirmed by the Montenegrin prime minister at the aforementioned UN session.

But it is obvious that the stability and benefits of NATO membership require some responsibility and commitment. Aware of the necessity of a safe and secure environment, Montenegro has accepted the obligation to participate in issues of security, preservation and enhancement of common values, both within NATO and in UN peacekeeping missions. In addition to the obligation to participate in international missions, it is evident is that such obligations require resources, both material and human. This was confirmed by last week's speech by the Chief of General Staff of the Army of Montenegro at the session of the

NATO Military Committee, the highest military body of the Alliance, which is held in Warsaw. Nonetheless, it was noted that Montenegro will continue to respond responsibly to this issue, in accordance with its obligations, as well as opportunities.

Do not forget China

In addition to its commitment to good foreign relations with its neighbors and EU member states, Montenegro is clearly trying to build better relations with economic, political and cultural "giants" from the rest of the world. First of all, it refers to PR China. In addition to participating in numerous economic initiatives initiated by PR China, it seems that Montenegro wants to build cooperation in other fields, such as education, culture, sports, health, etc. This statement is supported by the fact that the President of the Committee for Education, Science, Culture and Sports in the Government of Montenegro had a meeting with representatives of the Embassy of China in Montenegro with the aim of more precise introduction and deepening of the relations between the two countries in terms of science, culture and health. Therefore, further steps and visits are planned that should improve the cooperation between the Parliaments of the PR China and Montenegro and between numerous working bodies, especially in the field of education.

It is evident that Montenegro has built a good position in terms of relations with many countries, despite membership in certain organizations, based on which it could be speculated that there is no neutral attitude. The last session of the UN General Assembly once again confirmed the good position of Montenegro in international relations, as well as the growing obligations of Montenegro in maintaining such a position.