

New challenges and new opportunities of 2020

Annual Report





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A YEAR WITH TOO MUCH HISTORY

Boris Raonić, President

Dear citizens,

The year behind us was intense and turbulent, and in line with the worst side of the Balkan political tradition, which produces more history than can be consumed. From the conflict in the Parliament over the adoption of the famous Law on Religious Communities and processions, which then mobilized a huge number of citizens through a kind of protest against that law; through the COVID-19 pandemic and uncoordinated application of restrictive measures, the collapse of the tourist season, until elections and negotiations on forming a government that followed, and finally to the formation of the Government ... all this happened to us, exhausting the attention of the public - while proverbially problematic topics such as European integration, inefficient public and judicial sector, growing human rights violations, national and religious distances, galloping corruption and weak economy - continued to escape the public's focus.

While we are still wandering in interpretation of the history, we do not understand the essence of European values. Time passes and we are already entering the fourth decade of transition, the second decade of the EU candidacy, and still too far from the set goals, while the forces that are fighting for the successful realization of these goals stall fail to become dominant in the society.

The team of Civic Alliance have tried to keep alongside all developments and influence them, as part of our mandate and mission, through direct and active cooperation with citizens and partner non-governmental activists. Regardless of the fact that our values and program goals are very often on the opposite side from the prevailing socioial and political attitudes, we continued with the same enthusiasm and slowly entered the second decade of our work.



In an extremely divided society, we have successfully maintained active cooperation with all parties of divided political and media communities, promoting constructive and joint platforms and initiatives, with the aim of strengthening social capital and potentials, which are a necessary precondition for our mission - civil Montenegro, imbued with anti-fascism and human rights values, free from discriminatory practices, with strong institutions and an efficient system of justice and the rule of law.

At the end of the year, we adopted a new three-year strategic plan, which will be a guideline for our work in the coming period, full of challenges for society, both those chances for progress, but also those that annul the already achieved results. And in a time marked by curses and big words, even if they were the naive ones "I wish you lived in interesting times" - the awareness of the necessity of dialogue, hope and trust as elements of social cohesion must survive.

The pages in front of you are part of our intention to openly announce the details of our work during 2020.

In the end, I would like to thank all our partners for their cooperation and I promise that we will enter 2021 with even greater enthusiasm.





NEW CONDITIONS AND DEVELOPED SKILLS

Edina Hasanaga Čobaj, Executive Director

In this year, marked by the pandemic of COVID-19 virus and its social and economic consequences, even the administrative and financial sector of our organization did not remain immune to these tectonic disturbances. Many activities had to be reorganized, postponed or adapted to the new conditions. The future has become more uncertain than ever. Realizing the extraordinary conditions in which we found ourselves, we tried to adapt, and we managed to successfully conclude 2020 as well. On the positive side, we have improved our working skills in emergency conditions, thus once again raising the standards in administrative and financial project management and reporting.

We have gained the trust and support of donors, many of whom we have traditionally cooperated with; therefore, we managed to conclude this year as well. With joint efforts, we have implemented a number of projects and activities through various institutional and other grants, and we are glad to have a diversified donor structure. Among them are UNHCR, Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro, Council of Europe, UNICEF, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Government of Montenegro, the US Embassy in Podgorica, Balkan Trust for Democracy, the Royal Norwegian Embassy and others.

There were many vulnerable groups and individuals who needed humanitarian assistance. Their needs increased during the pandemic, and we had more requests for help from different addresses. Using the fund, which we collect thorugh donations from employees, we provided humanitarian assistance to those who needed it most, such as members of the Roma population, persons with disabilities, single mothers and the elderly.

In addition, at the end of last year, we became a member of one of the most recognized European organizations that nurture the protection and promotion of human rights, ECAS (European Citizen Action Service), with which we already



have cooperation. ECAS is an international organization based in Brussels that will soon celebrate 30 years of existence. Throughout its decades of existence, ECAS has been working to empower both citizens and the European Union through the promotion and defense of civil rights, as well as development and support of development mechanisms to increase the democratic participation of citizens and civil society organizations in the European Union. We are very pleased that we will be able to work jointly with such a renowned organization in order to improve human rights and citizens' rights, European integration, as well as solutions related to democratic innovations.

During the month of Ramadan, we organized an iftar in Pljevlja, which was attended by representatives of religious communities in Montenegro, priests, Ombudsman, President of Municipality of Pljevlja, local officials, as well as many other prominent citizens. As part of this visit, a meeting was held the next day with the leaders of political parties in this town and Ombudsman, which was an opportunity for several parties of different views to sit at the same table and exchange views on the current socio-economic situation in Montenegro.



Professional development of our employees is a constant imperative of our organization. So this year, our employees were participants in various activities that contributed to their progess and positioning, such as seminars, trainings and the like. Working during the COVID-19 pandemic was a kind of test for us, and we believe that by implementing the necessary activities, we managed to pass it, which gives us additional confidence, wind in the back and the belief that we will gain more success.





CHALLENGES TURNED INTO OPPORTUNITIES

Milan Radović, Program Director

Civic Alliance has entered the second decade of its contribution to building a civil and democratic society, adapting to conditions caused by COVID-19 virus. However, we did not change the goals we set through our programs Human Rights and Justice, School of Political Studies and Media Program "Building of Montenegrin society as a civil society, where rights of all its citizens are respected." We implemented all activities according to the plan. Also in 2020, full of challenges due to the epidemic of COVID-19, we pointed to anomalies in society from the domain of our work.

We are one of the most numerous NGO teams in Montenegro. Cooperation and a dialogue is the basic motto of CA, so we have continued cooperation with institutions, partner NGOs and international organizations, on the path to EU integration in these conditions.

We were often forced to replace the work in office with work from home, but we did not give up on our concept of direct communication with citizens. So, our "door" in 2020 was always open for all complaints on the work of institutions, suggestions and communication with citizens. We believe that our work would not be of good quality without this element, but certainly, a lot of citizens whom we helped in additionally difficult circumstances than in previous years, understand that this is a process through which they contribute to better work of institutions.

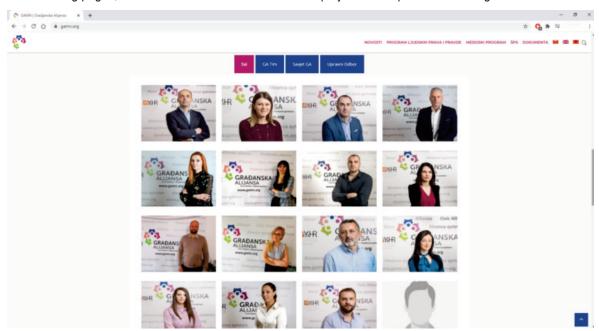
We paid special attention to the most vulnerable groups in society. We provided free legal aid to socially vulnerable people, refugees and migrants, Roma and people who do not have documents. We have twice organized the distribution of aid to vulnerable groups, in the amount of more than 60 thousand euros. In addition to donor funds, the employees themselves donated for the most vulnerable people.



Within our programs, the focus was on joining the EU and chapters 23 and 24. Then, we dealt with the status of Roma and Egyptians, we educated civil servants, and we researched how vulnerable categories use the right to free legal aid, we provided free legal aid to refugees and other citizens, we have also encouraged a dialogue between ethnic and national communities in order to promote diversity as a cultural asset and reduce ethnical distance. We have continued our constant activity of dealing with the past this year as well, and we have established a Research and Documentation Center, in order to gather all the evidence and information on war crimes in one place. We organized a program to educate students about media rules and encourage them to do investigative journalism. Through our School of Political Studies and in 2020, we have included young leaders from NGOs, politics and the media.

We also continued to contribute through activities that were not covered by the project. Through these activities, we participated in the work of parliamentary committees and monitored the work of other institutions, provided free legal aid to citizens, marked important dates in the field of human rights, organized humanitarian activities and worked on regional networking in areas where we operate.

In the following pages, there will be more words about certin projects we implemented during 2020.



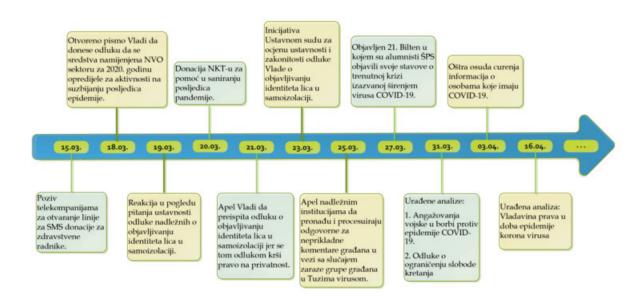


DEALING WITH THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Since the appearance of Corona virus in Montenegro, Civic Alliance has directed all its capacities towards contributing to its suppression and reduction of spread. The office has adapted to the new working conditions, reorienting to teleworking and online communication. Following the activities of the competent authorities in terms of prevention of spread of the virus, we noticed that the implementation of certain measures calls into question respect of basic human rights, and in that sense we have taken a number of activities, because human rights protection is one of the basic values of our organization. At the same time, we realized the need to help vulnerable categories of society and refugees, which was the focus of our activities as well.

Here are our activities after the appearance of COVID-19 virus.

AKTIVNOSTI GA U VEZI EPIDEMIJE COVID-19





We have also prepared a publication entitled "Testing society on COVID-19" in which we showed how Montenegro has coped with the virus pandemic when it comes to human rights, as well as our activities in this regard. Through numerous appearances in the media, our representatives gave their opinion regarding the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as the imposed measures on civil and human rights in Montenegro. Then we published another publication entitled "The rule of law in the era of the coronavirus epidemic" in which we presented the actions of the authorities during COVID crisis regarding human rights and their violations, especially when it comes to publishing lists of people in isolation, as well as the passivity of certain institutions at a time when they should have been much more active. Within the School of Political Studies, we held a webinar on "Crisis Communication and Human Rights in the Age of the COVID-19 Epidemic" with experts in the field of communications.

Shortly afterwards, together with TV Vijesti, we held another webinar "The Day After COVID-19", at which renowned experts spoke about the consequences of COVID on society. A number of donations were given to the most endangered in society, who were most severely affected by the crisis caused by COVID-19 epidemic. We participated in an online Meet-Up event organized by EU TACSO where NGOs exchanged experiences as well as lessons and needs of NGOs during the COVID-19 crisis. As part of the #JednakoVažni campaign and actions in support of the most vulnerable groups that were particularly affected by the COVID-19 crisis, we distributed over 3,000 packages, with the support of Group 484 and Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade. With relevant individuals from Montenegro, we held a Webinar on "Human Rights in Times of Crisis".



PROGRAM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE



Zoran Vujičić, Coordinator of the Program for Human Rights and Justice

Last year was full of challenges for the rule of law. After eight years of negotiations, Montenegro seems to be at the very beginning. Numerous adopted laws, strategies, action plans, harmonization of the acquis did not bring what was essentially needed, such as stronger and independent institutions as a basic precondition for the rule of law. And what did we get in Montenegrin conditions? We have the judiciary in the acting state; Judicial Council that elects court presidents violating at the same time the Constitution and laws; the Constitutional Court that overturns its own decisions; state prosecutors who were all rated excellent, while numerous verdicts fell before the courts, and the police who fought with the state prosecutors via media for jurisdiction.

The pandemic has exposed the weakness of human rights institutions. The Government of Montenegro has published the lists of people in self-isolation, violating their right to privacy. At the initiative of Civic Alliance, the Constitutional Court overturned this decision of the Government. Let us also mention the prosecutors who applied the law unevenly during the epidemic, so they sometimes prosecuted citizens in the same situations, and sometimes not. Freedom of expression was also restricted, so individuals were prosecuted if they commented certain public officials on their private profiles.

There have been numerous reports on excessive use of force by police officers, which have remained without effective investigation. Next year is a turning point in the rule of law area. The new government has to deal with a number of problems, including numerous staff cuts, the exit from the acting situation in judiciary and concrete results in this area.

We will be there to praise all good moves of institutions, and criticize the bad ones even more.



You will find below more information about project activities.

We implemented the project "Transparent and Efficient Judiciary for Effective Negotiations in Chapters 23 and 24", with the support of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway and the Balkan Fund for Democracy (BTD) of the German Marshall Fund of the United States of America. The project sought to achieve results through a series of activities focused on addressing the key weaknesses in the justice system, with the aim to initiate the public dialogue and involve the key actors in finding solutions to key issues of meeting the standards for Chapters 23 and 24. The main activities were: four informative, educational events based on dialoge of School of Political Studies; preparation of leaflets for the Code of Judicial and Prosecutorial Ethics; monitoring of Judicial and Prosecutorial Council and application of the Code of Ethics; preparation of a brochure / guide in relation to Article 5 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; training for lawyers, police forces, judges and prosecutors about the efficiency of investigations in relation with application of Article 5 of the Convention; a survey among judges, prosecutors and citizens to investigate their attitudes and confidence in the functioning of the justice system; organization of lectures for the students about the right to a fair trial; and a closing conference during the celebration of International Human Rights Day.

Monitoring of the Judicial and Prosecutorial Council has shown that Judicial Council, despite the GRECO Report, and other relevant international organizations, as well as numerous local NGOs, has continued the practice of electing presidents of courts elected in the third or more terms, thus severely undermining the rule of law. European Commission Montenegro Report 2020 also pointed out on this practice, so the efforts to take a step forward in Chapters 23 and 24 are only formal, but not essential.

It remains unclear on which criteria the members of Judicial Council form the assessment for each candidate, which ultimately decides who will become a judge and who will not. An oral interview can potentially put certain candidates in unequal position in comparison with others.

In the process of reviewing complaints on work of state prosecutors and heads of the state prosecutor's offices in a view of legality of work, the Prosecutorial Council did not provide more detailed information on the content and outcome of complaints, so it is important to improve the transparency of this process and, except statistical data, publish explanation of individual cases

Information on possible disciplinary proceedings against state prosecutors for violation of the Code of ethics cannot be found on the website of prosecution, which needs to be made easily accessible to website visitors and the interested public. The latest news at this moment is about disciplinary proceedings from 2019.



You can find the Final Report here:

https://gamn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/GA-lstrazivanje-o-povjerenju-sudijatuzilaca-i-gradana-u-u-pravosude-2020.pdf

We organized the workshop for lawyers, police officers, judges and prosecutors about the efficiency of investigations in relation to implementation of Article 5 of the Convention. The workshop showed a lack of cooperation between institutions of the system, especially between the police and state prosecutors. The





Representative of Montenegro before European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg indicated it was necessary to establish the better system of responsibility, because in the end citizens pay all failures when the Court in Strasbourg finds the Convention violations. The conclusion is that better cooperation and coordination of all institutions is needed.

A Guidebook related to Article 5 of the Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was developed and is very useful for both people in judiciary and others in institutions of the system. Find the Guidebook on this link:

https://gamn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/GA-Vodic-kroz-clan-5-evropske-konvencije-u-ljudskim-pravima.pdf



Civic Alliance also organized the lecture for the law students on topic "Application of Article 5 of the Convention on Human Rights in practice".

https://gamn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/GA-Vodic-krozclan-5-evropske-konvencije-u-ljudskim-pravima.pdf

In addition, we also worked the research on confidence of citizens, judges and prosecutors in judiciary. Please find the research here:

https://gamn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/GAlstrazivanje-o-povjerenju-sudijatuzilaca-i-gradana-u-upravosude-2020.pdf

The report showed that, when it comes to general opinion of citizens on the judiciary, the answers are divided. The percentage of citizens who have more or less negative attitude towards judiciary is 48.26%, while 33.1% have mostly positive or very positive attitude. Asked if they have heard of the Code of Ethics for Judges and Prosecutors, 43.5% of

citizens said yes, while 36% gave negative answer. If they heard about the Code of Ethics, citizens received this information from: 1) the media (36.5%), 2) through the official web portals of judicial institutions (14.2%) or 3) through a brochure (4.8%). The survey showed that the majority of citizens (49.9%) are still not familiar with the work of the Commission for the Code of Ethics for Judges and Prosecutors (Table 18). Also, 20.9% of respondents answered that they did not even know that it existed.



The final conference took place at the hotel "Hilton" that could be attended by up to 20 people, due to the epidemic measures. The final conference was also observed online on Fb and ZouTube channel of Civic Alliance.





One of the main conclusions of the conference was that a lot of work was needed in all social fileds, and that the new political majority should start a dialogue with the opposion in order to exit the acting state in judiciary. See the final conference on this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=px3AmKqioiQ

https://www.facebook.com/GradjanskaAlijansaCG/videos/397828911420095



In 2020, CA organized **Open Days**. During four sessions organized once a week, we talked to representatives of judiciary, prosecution, Agency for the Prevention of Corruption and the police. Citizens had the opportunity to ask questions directly to speakers via social networks, because sessions were published directly via Facebook and YouTube channel. Responding to questions of citizens, we also achieved improved transparency of institutions itself, at the same time trying to improve the confidence of citizens in institutions.

You can find all the sessions here:

https://www.facebook.com/GradjanskaAlijansaCG/videos/4 16134389404526

https://www.facebook.com/274469272593718/videos/3743 66240445087

https://www.facebook.com/274469272593718/videos/2766704256932961

https://www.facebook.com/GradjanskaAlijansaCG/videos/4 01619751039392









An Analysis of effectiveness and efficiency of work of Administrative Court was made. The Analysis showed that it was necessary to create preconditions for faster and more efficient acting of Administrative Court, through legislative, personnel and material reforms, which would include the rise of number of judges, material and spatial working conditions, but also informatization of Administrative Court and permanent professional development of judges and advisers on issues related to the acquis communautaire, which is, in many areas, related to the jurisdiction of administrative courts. Consistent application of legal provisions on deadlines for administrative proceedings in administrative proceedings and for deciding on the right, obligation or legal interest of a party in administrative proceedings, and compliance with the provisions on obligation and execution of judgments of the Administrative Court, prevented violation of the parties' right to a decision within a reasonable time, which also includes the right to a full and timely execution of a judgment rendered in its favor, as clearly stated in the section relating to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights in administrative matters. However, it is problematic how public and law bodies apply these provisions in practice. Inactivity, shown by certain administrative bodies, disrespecting the decisions of the Administrative Court - and as shown by the unexecuted decisions of Civic Alliance made in the general, public interest - can cause Montenegro's responsibility for human rights violations, which is already the case.

Here you can find more about the report:

https://gamn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/GA-Analiza-Upravno-sudstvo.pdf

in 2020, CA signed Memorandums on Cooperation with Judicial and Prosecutorial Council.







FREE LEGAL AID FOR MIGRANTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

In 2020, Civic Alliance, in cooperation with UNHCR, continued to successfully implement the project aiming to provide free legal aid to migrants, foreigners seeking international protection, as well as asylum seekers and foreigners with subsidiary protection.

Although this year was particularly challenging due to the COVID-19 epidemic that struck Montenegro, the system of international protection has to some extent developed for the better, but in some segments it has stagnated.

In order to overcome the crisis and help migrants and asylum seekers, twice in 2020 CA distributed 180 humanitarian packages to the beneficiaries.

During this year, CA received 18 judgments from the Administrative Court in which it represented cases rejected by the Ministry of Interior (MUP), according to the concept of a safe European third country. In all cases, the CA's lawsuits were upheld and the proceedings were returned to MUP for reconsideration. After returning the case to MUP for reconsideration, out of 18 adopted verdicts, MUP approved international protection for seven persons, which is





a great success, both in the practice of Administrative Court, which pointed out on all failures in MUP decisions and in the practice of MUP, which has recognized foreigners who need to be granted international protection.

In 2020, in the first instance proceedings before MUP, we represented 56 foreigners seeking international protection. Oou of this number, eight foreigners received international protection.

When we talk about foreigners who have been granted international protection, and in order to achieve the conditions for full integration of these persons, it is important to continue to work on strengthening of intersectoral cooperation of all competent institutions in this area, in order to create a unified system of functioning in practice. It should be noted that, although two years have passed since the adoption of Law on International and Temporary Protection of Foreigners, the system is still very slow in issuing personal and travel documents to foreigners granted international protection, which further slows down the access to all other rights guaranteed by law.

ADMINISTRATIVE, LEGAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED PERSONS

In June 2020, Civic Alliance was engaged as a partner of UNHCR in one more project - the provision of administrative, legal and financial assistance to displaced persons from the former Republic of Yugoslavia, stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness, in order to obtain identification travel documents and documents regulating their legal status in Montenegro.









In April 2020, the total number of persons at risk of statelessness is 474 (139 at risk of being stateless and 335 in a situation similar to stateless persons), of which at least 200 persons do not have a birth certificate, in Montenegro, and in the countries of origin.



We also provided assistance to displaced persons from the former Republic of Yugoslavia (mostly from Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia) whose requests are still pending before the Ministry of the Interior.

Regardless of the impact of the pandemic, Civic Alliance successfully provided legal assistance, both orally and in writing to 248 persons; 15 persons received passports of the Republic of Kosovo, five children were

registered in the birth registry through non-litigation procedure, various procedures were initiated (determining the time and place of birth, guardianship, etc.) which are necessary for regulating the status in Montenegro. One of the goals of this project is to obtain permanent residence in Montenegro. Through this project, Civic Alliance also strengthens cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, and municipal Centers for Social Work, and we would especially emphasize that we have established cooperation with the NGO CRPK from Kosovo, as well as persons from RE community who are engaged as the field workers and interpretors on this project.



70 YEARS OF CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The Convention on Human Rights was signed on November 4, 1950 in Rome, when one of the most important legal acts of the Council of Europe was adopted. This signing represents the beginning of standardization on European soil and the acceptance of obligations to respect human rights and freedoms, as well as the recognition of jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights.



Thanks to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, the Convention has become a living instrument for the past 70 years, which follows the evolution of social flows and ensures the protection of human rights, making the European community more human at the national and regional-international level.

After 70 years, we have celebrated this important event with not so good results. Institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights, and primarily the Ministry for the Protection of Human Rights, still have insufficiently strong capacities. The Office of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms continues to have good visibility and productivity. The human rights education provided for public administration officials, law enforcement agencies and legal professionals is still insufficient. As far as the prevention of torture and ill-treatment is concerned, we continue to have ineffective investigations, especially in cases of serious allegations of excessive use of force by police officers. As regards the prison system and conditions, the limited capacity of detention and prison facilities remains a concern. The material conditions in detention remain poor, and serious challenges in this regard are further expressed in the context of the Covid-19 virus pandemic.



Civic Alliance has traditionally organized a series of activities aimed at promoting the Convention on Human Rights Day, as well as reminding the authorities and the public of the importance of its respect and implementation.

In cooperation with the Council of Europe, we distributed **pocket conventions on human rights** to all members of the Parliament of Montenegro. Within their decisions from the parliamentary benches, which affect the lives of all Montenegrin citizens, it will be useful to have such a document at hand, which they can consult or remember its articles at any time.

We organized a visit to the Information and Documentation Center attended by Ms. Lidija Vukčević - Prosecutor in the Special State Prosecutor's Office, Nerma Dobardžić - Deputy Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms, Edin Koljenović - Head of the Office for Regional Cooperation of Youth (RYCO) in Montenegro and Rifat Fejzić – reis of Islami Community in Montenegro. The





gathering was organized in the premises of the Information and Documentation Center established by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, a member of the Civic Alliance, which deals with collecting and documenting materials related to war crimes committed during the 1990s in our area.



The conference organized by the Council of Europe at the Faculty of Law of Montenegro on "Celebrating the 70th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights" was attended by the Civic Alliance, on behalf of which a lecture was given by the lawyer Dalibor Kavarić "Decisions of the European Court of Human Rights in relation to Montenegro – summary".

Participants were able to follow the conference online.





At the end of the year, we organized a handful of activities to mark Human Rights Day, as well as Rule of Law Day.







The European Union in Montenegro and Civic Alliance organized the first online tournament for high school students on the occasion of Human Rights Day, entitled "Human Rights in the Palm of Your Hand". All high schools in Montenegro had the right to participate and the areas covered by the game were: children, culture and sports, democracy, PWD, discrimination and intolerance, education, gender, media, migration, work, general human rights, religion and belief, life environment, citizenship, institutions, minorities, family, dealing with the past and the European Union and human rights.

A three-day seminar was held in Ulcinj, entitled: "Culture and Minority Rights in Montenegro". The seminar was opened by Mr. Vladimir Leposavic, Minister of Justice, Human and Minority Rights, who gave an introductory lecture to the participants. At the seminar, we also dealt with the rights of minorities - international and domestic standards and legislation, dealing with religious separatism in a time of global political change, as well as the participation of minorities in public life in Montenegro.



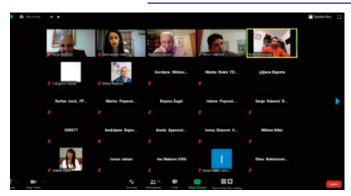


We held a National Conference "(Dis)respect for human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic" whereby the speakers were Minister of Justice, Human and Minority Rights Vladimir Leposavic, Ombudsman Sinisa Bjekovic, Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro, HE Oana Kristina Popa, Head of the Program Office of the Council of Europe in Podgorica Evgenia Giakoumopoulou and Program Director of GA Milan Radović.



At the Round Table - "Facing the Past - Where Are We Today?" Lidija Vukčević, Special State Prosecutor, Sead Sadiković, TV Vijesti journalist and author of the show "Without Borders", Boris Raonić, President of the Civic Alliance and Ferid Osmanagić, NGO Bukovica spoke on various topics related to the process of dealing with the past in Montenegro.





The lecture for students of law faculties (UCG, UDG, University Mediterranean) was held by professors of legal sciences on the topic "Dealing with the past - Montenegro". Topics discussed were the practice of the European Court of Human Rights, International Law and the relevant practice of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the crime of genocide and issue of responsibility, but also the Bukovica case.





At the end of 2020, we started with activities on the project "Promotion of Roma Culture and Language" supported by the Ministry of Human Minority Rights. The aim of this project is to contribute to the preservation and development of minority culture in Montenegro, and to promote and inform the public about the culture and traditions of Roma and Egyptians.

At the end of the project, we expect to raise public awareness about the culture and customs of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro, as well as to build the capacity of the civil

sector, state administration and media in Montenegro on culture, customs, languages and rights of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro.

In the course of the project so far, we have announced a competition for the best journalist story on the topic of promoting the culture and language of Roma and Egyptians, for which there is already great interest.





As part of the **#JednakoVažni** campaign, we implemented actions to support the most vulnerable groups that have been particularly affected by the #COVID19 crisis, who need the help and understanding of the entire community. Through this action, we distributed over 3000 packages with food and hygiene products, with the support of Group 484 and Norwegian Embassy.











On the occasion of December 18, International Day of Migrants, this year we also organized a humanitarian activity - distribution of humanitarian aid packages with food and hygiene products for migrants, supported by Deutsche Botschaft Podgorica / German Embassy in Podgorica.





On the day of Montenegro's Independence day, we published a publication entitled "Testing society for COVID" in which we presented the human rights situation during the epidemic of COVID-19 virus, as well as our views and activities regarding the activities of the authorities in such conditions.

In addition, the day after formation of the new Government of Montenegro, CA sent to the newly elected Prime Minister a document "12 pages for progress - review of priority activities in the field of justice and human rights" with analysis of the situation in Montenegro in the areas covered by our organization.





MEDIA PROGRAM

Amina Murić, Deputy Executive Director

Through the Media Program, we strive to contribute to the improvement of information exchange process between citizens and institutions, with the aim of increasing the degree of democracy of Montenegrin society. We achieve this goal through various activities envisaged both by the projects and by the plan of the Media Program itself. Activities include promoting ethics in journalism, development of materials that are socially responsible, as well as educating journalists. During 2020, we dealt with the principles of media ethics, improving investigative journalism, as well as improving media literacy and critical thinking, where we focused on journalism students and their education and capacity building to raise the standards of professional journalism in Montenegro.



Our colleagues were very active in the field of appearance in the media, within which we provided opinions on a number of current topics in Montenegro. Hence, during 2020, we achieved a total of **2425 media appearances**.

Numerous journalists from Montenegro applied within the **Competition for the best investigative story in the field of employment of Roma and Egyptians**. After the evaluation, at the beginning of the year we chose the best stories, so the award was given to Ivana Popović for the article "Discrimination against Roma", as well as to Milan Sekulović for the story "Two Roma employed in five years".





This year we have continued with activities on the project aimed at improving media literacy and critical thinking, through contribution to professionalism and capacity building of final year journalism students, in order to contribute to the standards of professional journalism in Montenegro. The project is implemented with the support of the US Embassy in Montenegro. One of the goals of the project - active work and organization of training for final year journalism students, who are also the target group, has already been realized. At the trainings, an experienced team of journalists from the written media, radio and television presented to the students

how different forms of journalism are written in different media, how information differs from misinformation, how to build a story, research, document and formulate stories, and how to represent them to public opinion. A promotional campaign on media literacy and objective reporting is being prepared, as well as publication in which research stories of training participants will be published. The the end of the project will be marked by the organization of a round table where all relevant actors on media scene will discuss the current situation in Montenegrin media to students and their knowledge upon completion of studies.

Training of journalists on searching the archives of International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals was organized. The training was attended by journalists



from five different Montenegrin media houses, and the lecturers were Helena Eggleston, spokesperson for the Mechanism, and Nemanja Stjepanović, a researcher of the Information Mechanism Program. We plan to continue the training during 2021, when the lecturers will present the updated databases of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.



At numerous meetings and public appearances, we advocated the improvement of legislation on the media, as well as on the issue of poor status of journalists in Montenegro. Unfortunately, Montenegro is still not making progress in this area, as indicated by the European Commission's 2020 Report. Starting with the most recent events when the portal editors were arrested for the content they posted, and of course there are cases of murders and attacks on journalists, which have not yet been resolved. In addition, there are still political and strong ownership influences on the work of the media, difficult economic situation for the work of media, unacceptably bad position of journalists, lack of self-regulation, as well as the emergence of more and more media ready to spread false news.

Thus, we have a situation that not many journalists have the opportunity to report objectively, but in order to keep their jobs, they have to adapt their journalistic work to the interests of media owners who dictate editorial policy in order to pursue certain political interests. Those who try to avoid this pattern often end up with consequences, such as dismissal. It seems to us that polarization of the media is more emphasized than ever, where we get the impression that there is not much impartiality and objectivity in reporting on both sides, and certainly there is no place for this in a democratic society that we strive to build. If we want the position of journalists in Montenegro to be improved and to improve the freedom of media, which is the basis of any democratic society, all of us - media, journalists, authorities and the civil sector – must work to ensure that journalists are primarily guardians of the interests of citizens, and not the owners of the media they work for.

In cooperation with the Trade Union of Media of Montenegro, we plan to implement the project "Support to Media



Freedoms and Journalistic Standards".

The aim of the project is to contribute to the improvement of media freedoms through: monitoring the implementation of new media legislation, building journalistic capacity for ethical reporting and human rights standards, contributing to the safety of journalists, public advocacy of standards and issues in the field of media freedom. The project is funded by the Balkan Trust for Democracy, German Marshall Fund of the USA and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade.



SCHOOL OF POLITICAL STUDIES



Jelena Ristović, Coordinator of School of Political Studies

School of Political Studies this year continued to develop as a key national platform for dialogue and joint cooperation of socio-political actors. Through educational goals, the School has contributed to achieving synergies between different sectors and policy options, contributing to social cohesion and improving the reform process.

During 2020, the School continued to help improve the work of politicians, journalists, representatives of non-governmental and international organizations, and civil servants through the education of actors of social changes and political processes in Montenegro on practical skills and topics not covered by the existing education system.

During the previous year, the work of the XVII generation was completed, and we started with implementation of the program for the new, XVIII generation of the School of Political Studies. The new generation gathered representatives of political parties, journalists of the most important media in Montenegro, representatives of institutions and international organizations.

The thematic framework during the year covered the areas of justice, fight against corruption, human and minority rights and environmental protection, thus addressing key national priorities and problems. Through concrete project initiatives in these program areas, we have deepened our strategic partnership with the Council of Europe, BTD and GIZ.

The emergence of COVID-19 significantly affected Montenegrin society, bringing to the surface a large number of systematic and logistical problems, which were in the strong focus of both Civic Alliance and the School. From the technical point of view, we organized a large number of activities through digital platforms, which proved to be an innovative alternative and opened space for designing similar activities in the future.

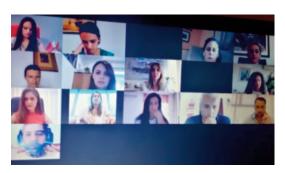


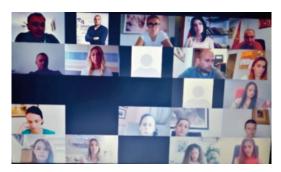
On the program side, worrying data on the increase in human rights violations have conditioned our activities as well.

Thus, on April 30, we organized a webinar "Crisis Communication and Human Rights During the COVID-19 Epidemic", when SPS alumni were held lectures by Miodrag Strugar, Expert in the Field of Communications, and Milan Radović, Program Director of CA.

After this, Civic Alliance organized an online conference "The Day After COVID-19", in May 2020. Panelists at the conference were Vesko Garčević, Professor at the University of Boston; Radoje Cerović, Clinical Psychologist, Business Consultant and Expert in Communication Psychology and Aleksandar Damjanović, Member of the Parliament of Montenegro.

As part of the Civic Alliance project, which is supported through a joint program of the European Union and the Council of Europe "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey 2019-2022", SPS held a webinar on "Human Rights in Times of Crisis". Alumni of the School, were given lectures by Siniša Bjeković, Protector of Human





Rights and Freedoms, Maja Raičević, Executive Director of the Center for Women's Rights and Bojana Jokić, President of the Management Board of NGO LGBT Forum Progres. The speakers, each from their own perspective, spoke about the situation within vulnerable groups (women - victims of violence, people with disabilities, LGBT population, Roma), about the impact of hate speech on their security and expressed their opinion on how institutions react and how to help the vulnerable groups to solve the problems they face.

The activities that were carried out last year within the School of Political Studies are presented below.



An informative lecture on the topic of sustainable urban mobility was held in the Parliament of Montenegro on Feb-



ruary 24, 2020. On that occasion, the Guide for MPs on sustainable urban mobility was presented, and GIZ expert from Slovenia, Dr. Aljaž Plevnik spoke about the experiences in Slovenia related to the support of the national level to the implementation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans. The Guide for MPs on this topic is a brief introduction to the principles of sustainable urban mobility through the prism of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan and is intended for MPs in the Parliament of Montenegro, to get acquainted with the model of sustainable traffic planning in urban areas. Pres-

entation of the Guide and Slovenian experiences in the implementation of policies in the field of sustainable urban mobility was organized so that MPs had enough information about this concept in the decision-making process on relevant laws at the national level, which arose in response to modern challenges of urban living. The informative lecture was organized with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbG (GIZ) and its Open Regional Fund for Southeast Europe - Energy Efficiency (ORF EE), in cooperation with the School of Political Studies.

At the final seminar for the XVII generation of the SPS in Petrovac, we dealt with the role, obstacles and weaknesses of the prosecutorial organization. The seminar was held from February 28 to March 1.







The next gathering with the alumni of the School was held at the seminar in Ulcinj from 12 to 14 June. This seminar was dedicated to the fight against corruption and negotiation chapters 23 and 24.









The work of School continued by announcing a competition for creating new, XVIII generation of SPS and selecting participants. The new generation started working with a seminar that was held from October 30 to November 1 in Petrovac. The seminar "Challenges in the work of judicial institutions" was opened by Aleksa Bečić, President of the Parliament of Montenegro, who introduced the seminar participants to the goals of 27th convocation of Montenegrin Parliament and reminded of two priority goals - reform of electoral legislation and reform of judicial system, ehich are, as he said, expectations of European partners.





Participants were also addressed by HE Karen Maddocks, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Montenegro, Chris Carber, Deputy Head of the United States Mission in Montenegro, and Boris Raonic, Director of SPS.



Gathering of alumni members of the Association of Schools of Political Studies was not realized this year at the World Forum of Democracy, which is traditionally held every year in Strasbourg. Due to the situation caused by the virus outbrake, this year each School organized an event on the topic of planned Forum, and this time it was the protection of environment in the country.

As part of this program, on November 19, the School of Political Studies organized a national environmental conference "Renewing the Idea of Montenegro - an Ecological State", which was opened by Dr. Ratko Mitrović, Minister of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism, Miloš Konatar, Vice President of URA (Membber of European Greens) and MP, Prince Nikola Petrović Njegoš and Boris Raonić, president of Civic Alliance.











After the conference in Budva, a seminar was held on the topic "Can Democracy Save the Environment", during which we specified a number of topics that were opened.

The seminar was opened on November 20 by Prince Nikola Petrović Njegoš with an introductory lecture, within the thematic framework - the concept of ecological state and how to implement it through priorities of the new Government. We also opened topics such as status and prospects of EU accession negotiations on environmental issues, natural resources, wildlife habitats and sustainable development. We dealt with key environmental risks in Montenegro and ways to address them. The green agenda for the Western Balkans was also presented - with a focus on energy, climate and urban mobility. Part of the seminar was about the innovative ecosystem in Montenegro, i.e. new opportunities for development and political aspect of environmental protection, or how political parties through their regular and parliamentary activities can contribute to the realization of ecological principles.



The last SPS seminar was dedicated to the culture and rights of minorities in Montenegro. The seminar was held in Ulcinj from 11 to 13 December. The seminar was opened by Vladimir Leposavic, Minister of Justice and Human and Minority Rights, who talked about the rights of minorities in Montenegro and compliance with international standards. Participants had the opportunity to see presentations on the rights of minorities - international and domestic standards and legislation, dealing with religious separatism in a time of global political change and participation of minorities in public life in Montenegro. A publication entitled "Culture, Customs and Language of National Minorities in Montenegro" was presented at the seminar, which was created within the CA project with the support of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights. There were also mentioned the right to use minority languages, right to informing in mother tongue, rights of LGBTQ persons in Montenegro, role of MPs and councilors in exercising the rights of the Albanian minority and the rights and position of Roma in Montenegro.







YOUTH INTIATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (YIHR)



Aleksandra Vukčević, Program Director of YIHR

The year 2020 in YIHR office was marked by various activities within the project "No Impunity for the past", funded by the European Commission and co-financed by the Ministry of Public Administration. The process of facing the past and transitional justice remain in the focus of regional YIHR offices.

The aim of the project is to acquaint the public with the war crimes during the 90's through the work of Information and Documentation Centre, but also to collect documentation and other material related to these crimes that will be available and useful, above all, for the State Prosecutor's Office in opening new investigations and procedures, and then for the general public.

The most important moments from this very challenging year are presented below:

Signing of Memorandum on Cooperation with the Parliament of Montenegro and Faculty of Law.

The conference entitled "Information and Documentation Center - Justice for the Past, Pledge for the Future" was held at EU Info Center, where a Memorandum was signed between the Parliament of Montenegro and Youth Initiative for Human Rights on the establishment of the Information and Documentation Center, within the project "No impunity for the past!" implemented by YIHR with support of the European Union.







A survey was conducted among young people on the knowledge of war crimes in Montenegro.

The research generally showed a low level of knowledge and interest of Montenegrin citizens in the topics of war crimes that took place on our territory during 1990s. What is particularly worrying is the fact that young people are very poorly informed, and that they were mostly informed on this topic from the elderly.

About 26% of respondents believe that foreign forces are to blame for the events and conflicts in the 1990s, 23% of them believe that nationalism from all sides is to blame, every fifth citizen believes that political elites who started the wars are responsible, while the smallest number of respondents, 9.4%, blames Serbia and Serbian nationalism. The research also showed that the largest number of citizens believe that people of the former Yugoslavia have not yet reconciled in the right way, and that the perpetrators of the events from 30 years ago still have not been held responsible in majority of cases.







A training entitled "Investigating and Documenting War Crimes Facts" was held during last year. The lecturers were also colleagues from the partner organization "Documenta" from Zagreb, who spoke about the challenges of archiving and documenting in institutional and non-institutional environment, with an emphasis on protection of human rights. They also made an introduction to the basic concepts of archiving with an emphasis on the issue of authenticity of sources, and proving in criminal proceedings. As part of the training, participants had the opportunity to be included in a discussion with a journalist from TV Vijesti and author of the show "Without Borders", Mr. Sead Sadikovic on the topic of war crimes, who also showed a film about Bukovica.





At the beginning of October, President of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksa Bečić, Head of Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro HE Oana Kristina Popa and Milan Radović, on behalf of Youth Initiative for Human Rights, officially opened the Information and Documentation Center on War Crimes.

Mr. Bečić emphasized the importance of this Center, and stated that the collection of evidence, statements and other information on war crimes in Montenegro, which will be later made available by the Parliament, shows that the state is ready to be among the responsible societies. He also added that opening of the Center is an incentive for reconciliation and cooperation – the values that should be nurtured in order to further improve relations in former Yugoslavia area.

The Head of the EU Delegation to Montenegro, Oana Kristina Popa, expressed satisfaction that the European Union is financing such a project, and that the opening of a IDC on war crimes is an important moment in Montenegro's political history, in terms of dealing with the war past and healing. She stated that, like many other reconciliation initiatives, this one was initiated by the civil sector, and she believes that the Center should be taken over by THE Parliament and other institutions for good process management, collection and archiving of documents.



Mr. Radović concluded with the words: "May this Center be a guarantee - for the victims to be remembered, for future generations that crimes will never happen again."







Youth Initiative for Human Rights organized a study visit to Dubrovnik from 3 to 5 November, which is one of the activities of the "No Impunity for the Past" project, funded by the European Union and co-financed by the Ministry of Public Administration.

On the first day, a group of representatives of Prosecutor's Office, Constitutional Court, journalists, lawyers, NGO activists and students had the opportunity to visit the old town of Dubrovnik, War Photo Limited Gallery, Homeland War Museum on Srđ, and then the Konavle Homeland Museum.





The study visit to Dubrovnik ended with a visit to the State Archives of Dubrovnik and a tour of Cavtat.



IDC was also visited by students from the Faculty of Law.



As part of the #FootballPeople campaign, #YIHR organized a football match this year as well, with the aim of reducing discrimination against minority communities in Montenegro. Therefore, members of the RAE population, migrants and asylum seekers in Montenegro were in the role of football players, as well as players of different religions and nationalities.





On September 15, YIHR became a member of the Youth Network, which brings together 35 NGOs dealimng with youth.







BOARDS AND MEMBERSHIPS

A part from program activities, our team is also active in terms of monitoring the Board on Human Rights and Freedoms, as well as other parliamentary committees.

In addition, the President of CA, Boris Raonić has been a member of the Council of the Agency for Electronic Media of Montenegro since December 2019.

Program Director Milan Radović is a member of RTCG Council and the Working Body of the National Preventive Mechanism formed by Ombudsman.

YIHR Program Director Aleksandra Vukčević is a member of the Rule of Law Council, member of the Working Group for Negotiating Chapter 24, as well as a member of the Interdepartmental Working Group for Monitoring Asylum Policy.

The coordinator of the Human Rights and Justice Program, Zoran Vujićić, is a member of the State Election Commission.

Legal Advisor, Dušica Merdović, is a member of the Interdepartmental Working Group for development and monitoring of implementation of the Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Returnees in Montenegro for the period 2021-2025.

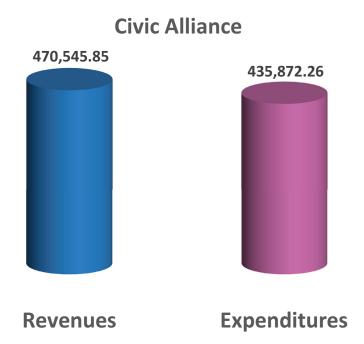


DONORS

- Council of Europe
- **♦** Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro
- Embassy of Germany in Podgorica
- ♦ Fare Network
- **♦** Group 484
- Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of Montenegro
- Open Regional Fund for Southeast Europe Energy Efficiency (ORF-EE), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade
- ♦ The Balkan Trust for Democracy / German Marshall Fund
- **♦** The Netherlands Helsinki Committee
- UNHCR Representation in Montenegro
- **♦** US Embassy in Podgorica



TOTAL STATISTICS: REVENUES, EXPENDITURES



Regarding the taxes, all payables and receivables towards the state have been duly settled.



CA TEAM

- Boris Raonić, President
- Edina Hasanaga Čobaj, Executive Director
- Milan Radović, Program Director
- **Zoran Vujičić**, Coordinator of the Program for Human Rights and Justice
- ♦ Jelena Ristović, Coordinator of School of Political Studies
- Aleksandra Vukčević, Legal Advisor
- Amina Murić, Deputy Executive Director
- Dušica Merdović, Legal Advisor
- ♦ Danilo Papović, Legal Advisor
- Anđela Đuković, Legal Advisor
- Aleksandra Srbljanović, Program Assistant
- **♦ Vojo Đuranović**, Program Assistant
- Zoran Zola Vujačić, Office and IT Manager
- Sonja Radulović, Translator
- **♦ Muhamed Hassan**, Translator
- **♦ Bojan Andrejević**, Accountant
- Lidija Cerović, Housekeeper