

CHANGES THROUGH THE ACTIVITIES OF CIVIC ALLIANCE

ANNUAL REVIEW OF WORK





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ANNUAL REVIEW OF WORK 2024

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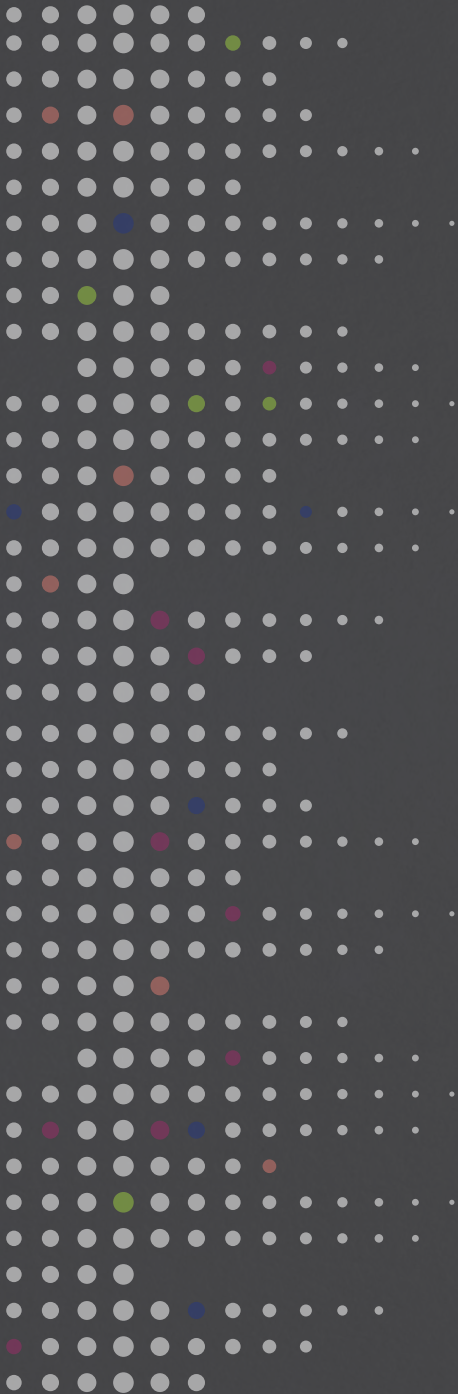
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Milan Radović
Program Director

We are pleased to present the Civic Alliance Report for 2024 that contains the successful results achieved through our projects, as well as challenges Civic Alliance faced last year.

After a long break in implementing the necessary reforms for Montenegro's European path, we can say that, despite numerous unresolved issues, this has been a year when a significant progress was made in the process of integration of Montenegro into the European Union (EU), and when the EU accession became a central political topic. The Report on the fulfillment of provisional benchmarks (IBAR) and the closing of three negotiation chapters have brought optimism that Montenegro will soon become the next EU member state. This has also been supported by positive signals and statements from EU officials that Montenegro will become the 28th member by the end of 2028.

We hope that this high goal will be achieved through the cohesion of work between the government and opposition.

However, we must note that a certain setbacks occurred during 2024, raising valid questions if this goal can still be achieved.

Firstly, the destabilization of relations between Montenegro and Croatia due to the adoption of the Resolution on the Genocide in the Jasenovac, Dachau, and Mauthausen camp system led to the blocking of the closure of Chapter 31 – foreign, security, and defense policy, as well as the reappearance of other unresolved issues between the two countries on the agenda.

In addition to the aforementioned, the political scene became additionally complicated, both at the national and local level. The blockage of the Parliament of Montenegro due to the election of a Constitutional Court judge slowed down the EU accession program, as well as the delay in adopting the Budget Law of Montenegro for 2025. At the local level, political parties in Budva were unable to form a government for a long time, the crisis in Kotor has continued, and the elections in Šavnik, after several attempts and efforts to repeat them, have not been completed.

It may seem that the increase in salaries and pensions was aimed at improving the socio-economic status of the citizens of Montenegro. However, due to rising prices and inflation, it ultimately did not lead to an improvement in the quality of life for citizens.

As in previous years, the Civic Alliance worked on improving the position and strengthening the capacities of minority communities and vulnerable groups, as well as advancing gender equality. We also continued regional cooperation with partners from all the region countries and contributed

to addressing the most important challenges we face as a society.

In that regards, the facts show that Civic Alliance was mentioned 2,500 times in the media in 2024.

Our main focus remains the fight for human rights and the rule of law, which are the foundations of a democratic society that we, as a country and community, strive to.

This report can serve as a tool for informing citizens, donors, and all interested parties about the areas in which Civic Alliance operates, including human rights, the protection of minority rights, vulnerable groups, asylum seekers, gender equality, and dealing with the past. Additionally, the report clearly illustrates how our organization actively contributes to improving the respect and protection of human rights, with the aim of creating a safer, fairer, and more inclusive society.

Thank You for the support and trust.



Edina Hasanaga Čobaj
Administrative Director

Civic Alliance continued to build 2024 on the grounds of previous successes and experiences, with the significant progress in many segments of work. This year, our team counted 24 employees and our presence was extended on three offices which enabled more efficient work and better connection with communities we support. This growth, both in human resources and spatial capacities, implied serious efforts in organization of work which we successfully exercised thanks to the efficient internal management and mutual communication.

Through stable finances and careful planning, we managed to maintain continuity in the implementation of project and non-project activities, as well as to responsibly manage all aspects of business. Dedication of each team member enabled the successful realization of the set goals and adaptation to unforeseen challenges.

In the spirit of our principles and mission, 2024 was also the year in when we continued with humanitarian activities. We can proudly say that our organization was actively involved in collecting aid and supporting those who need it most, through activities aimed at preserving basic human rights and solidarity. In 2024, among other things, we collected clothes and food for socially vulnerable families and continued to contribute to society through various forms of donations.

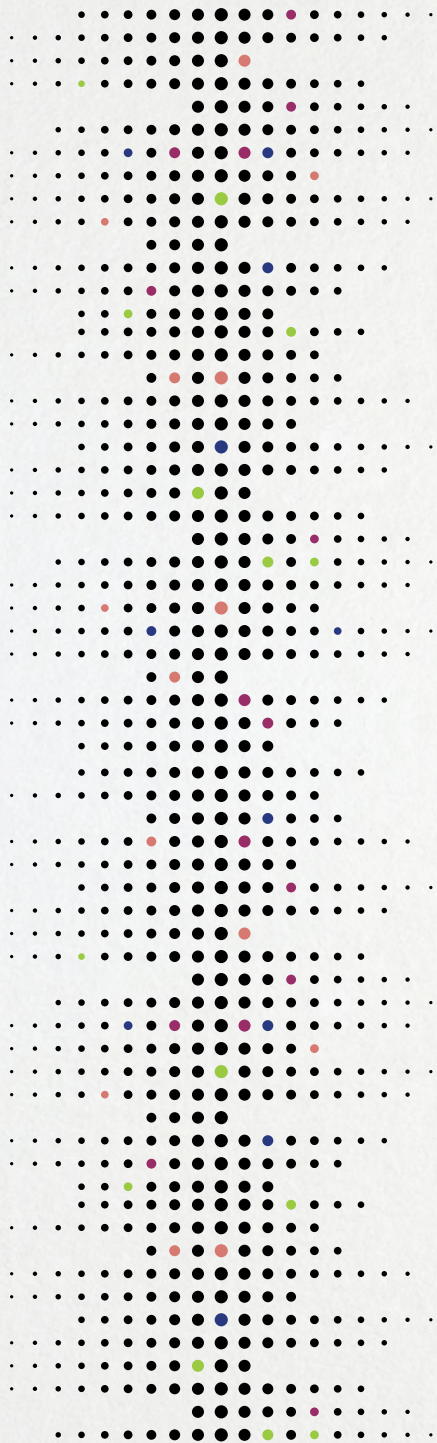
For us, 2024 was a year of stability, growth and further improvement of capacities, which at the same time enabled our employees to achieve personal and professional goals in an environment of mutual respect, collegiality and shared enthusiasm. We continue to support the citizens and communities we work with, believing in the power of togetherness and importance of fighting for human rights.





The background is a dark, blurred photograph of a large crowd of people, possibly at a protest or public gathering. The individuals are out of focus, with some wearing headscarves. On the left side of the image, there is a solid red triangle pointing towards the center.

**HUMAN RIGHTS
AND JUSTICE
PROGRAM**





Pavle Ćupić

Coordinator of Human Rights and Justice Program

Responsibility and professionalism marked the work of the Human Rights and Justice Program of Civic Alliance in 2024 as well, whereby Civic Alliance continued to act as a reliable partner to citizens and institutions in protecting human rights and strengthening the rule of law in Montenegro.

The election of the president of the Supreme Court of Montenegro marked the end of the multi-year acting presidency situation in the judiciary. However, problems such as the lack of judges and prosecutors in the judicial system, the functioning

of the Constitutional Court of Montenegro, which was left without two judges during the year, remain a serious challenge.

Civic Alliance continued to provide free legal aid to refugees, Roma and Egyptian community, socially vulnerable persons and those without appropriate documentation for legal status in Montenegro. Our work was also aimed at strengthening awareness on gender equality, fighting against impunity for police torture, supporting institutions in solving challenges in the field of asylum and migration, and improving judicial capacities. This year, we made a special contribution in the area of dealing with the past.

In addition, through the work in working groups for Chapter 24 and the Ethics Committee, Civic Alliance continued to contribute to the development of institutional standards, while it supported the inclusion of minority peoples and promoted their culture and traditions through projects.

A detailed overview of the activities and achievements of the Civic Alliance in 2024 is presented below in the report.



In terms of the fight against corruption, Civic Alliance implements the project “**Society for the fight against corruption in Montenegro**”, in cooperation with the organization BIRN hub from Sarajevo. The general goal of this project is to increase the level of responsibility of the national and local authorities of Montenegro, public institutions, and to strengthen the judicial system and contribute to establishment of the rule of law, while the specific goal refers to the empowerment of local media, civil society and citizens so that they can identify and report corruption in their communities.

Through the implementation of this project, the goal is to increase the capacities of local NGOs to deal with issues in areas of environmental protection, health and education. Besides local NGOs, media representatives are included as well.

Jointly with colleagues from BIRN Hub Sarajevo, Civic Alliance published two calls in 2024 for three local media and three local NGOs that were awarded with funds for contribution to fight against corruption at the local level, in areas of environmental protection and health. Tailored training sessions and mentoring programs were continuously held, and all local NGOs and media received an interactive digital tool, through which citizens could report corruption and address corruption issues in the healthcare sector. Civic Alliance provided support to all entities that received projects through this initiative.

In 2024, nine policy papers were published, prepared by local NGOs on corruption in the areas of environmental protection and healthcare. Specific recommendations from these documents were provided with the aim of improving policies and laws through constructive engagement between civil society, the government, and the private sector.

Both cycles concluded with an Anti-Corruption Forum, where the results of the work of local media and local NGOs were presented, including:

ANTI-CORRUPTION FORUM

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION March 6th 2024

- **The first Anti-Corruption Forum, dedicated to environmental protection** was held in March 2024. The forum assessed that all levels of government must responsibly manage ecological wealth of Montenegro, while inspection services must respond more promptly to reports of corruption in the environmental sector and process them without selectivity. The importance of collaboration between local self-government and citizens who report corruption was also emphasized, as well as the need for the judiciary to be more timely and set higher standards for sanctioning violations of environmental laws.





Photo: BIRN

ANTI-CORRUPTION FORUM

CORRUPTION IN HEALTHCARE

25.11.2024.

- **The second Anti-Corruption Forum – corruption in healthcare** – took place in November 2024. The forum emphasized that there are still no verdicts for corruption in healthcare, despite the ongoing issues such as bribery and gifts to doctors, fake diplomas, monopolies, and manipulation in the public procurement system.

The project, whose implementation period runs from October 1, 2022, to July 1, 2025, is financially supported by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.



Photo: Civic Alliance



Photo: Civic Alliance



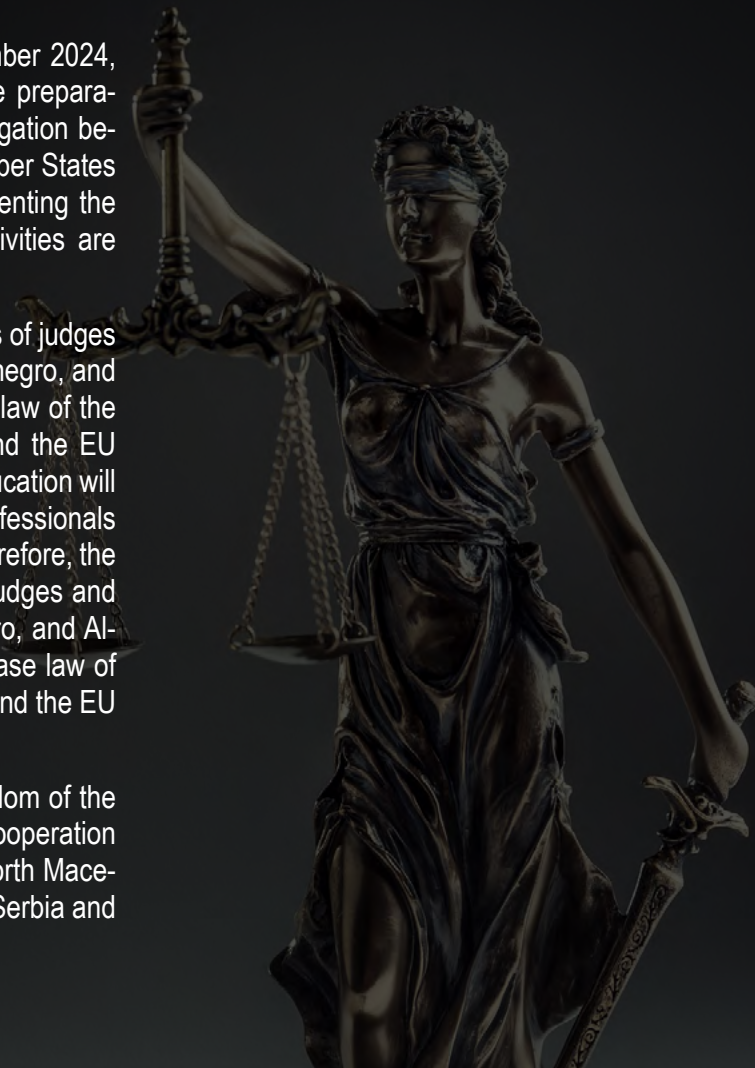


The Civic Alliance team deals with the judiciary through the project **“Strengthening Regional Judicial Cooperation in the Western Balkans for Effective Litigation before the CJEU and Implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights”**. The project implementation started on October 1, 2024, and will last until March 31, 2027.

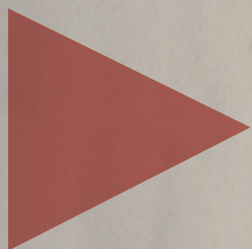
Although the project is in its initial phase, in December 2024, the first call for legal experts was published for the preparation of two strategic documents – Guidelines for Litigation before the Court of Justice of the EU for New EU Member States and Challenges for New Member States in Implementing the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Other key activities are planned for 2025.

The goal of the project is to strengthen the capacities of judges and prosecutors in North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania, with a focus on the application of the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Continuous legal education will be essential for improving the expertise of judicial professionals and harmonizing with European legal standards. Therefore, the project is designed to strengthen the capacities of judges and prosecutors in North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania, particularly regarding the application of the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The project, supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Skopje, is being implemented in cooperation with the Center for Legal Research and Analysis (North Macedonia) and the organization Civil Rights Defenders (Serbia and Albania).



Civic Alliance has contributed to gender equality through several projects. In 2024, activities continued that involved the establishment of women's councilor clubs and their networking, as well as fostering cooperation with the Women's Club of the Parliament of Montenegro.



Networking Platforms for Achieving Gender Equality

The project “**Networking Platforms for Achieving Gender Equality**”, supported by the U.S. Embassy in Podgorica, aimed to strengthen the capacity and position of women in public life at the local level in the municipalities of Plav, Gusinje, and Rožaje, with a focus on national minorities, through networking and advocating for gender equality.

Civic Alliance, through various training programs, strengthened the capacity of female councilors for advocacy and joint action. One of the results of this project was the preparation and signing of three agreements on the operation of women's councilor clubs and established platform for cooperation among the clubs.

The project also improved cooperation between female councilors and MPs through meetings with representatives of the Women's Club of the Montenegrin Parliament and the Gender Equality Committee. A platform for cooperation and a strategy for further joint action were also created.



Photos from the workshop: II modular training with councilwomen from Plav, Rožaje, and Gusinje, June 21, 2024, source: Civic Alliance

The key result of this project was the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Women’s Club of the Montenegrin Parliament and women’s councilor clubs from fourteen municipalities, ceremoniously held at the conference “Connected Women Have the Power to Transform Society” on June 21, 2024, at the Hilton Hotel. The Memorandum defines that after its signing, the signatories will share visions, expertise, and other professional resources, while the Women’s Club of the Montenegrin Parliament will provide expert support to local women’s councilor club initiatives, strengthening their impact and capacity.



At the aforementioned conference, awards were presented for the three best journalistic stories about the women’s participation in the political process and their influence on decision-making. The competition, published in the mid-February, was opened to all journalists working in Montenegro for video-reports and articles published in media outlets registered in Montenegro.

The first prize was awarded to Tijana Radulović from Radio Free Europe, the second prize went to Bojana Dabović from Gradska TV, and the third prize was given to Nada Đurđevac from the daily newspaper “Pobjeda”.



Photo: Civic Alliance, Conference “Connected Women Have the Power to Transform Society”



The final activity of this project was the closing conference titled „**Life Between Challenges and Success**“ where it was concluded that only through active communication between the local and national levels can the voice of local women’s initiatives gain national significance.



Photo: Civic Alliance, Final Conference “Life Between Challenges and Success”



Photo: Civic Alliance, Panel “Does the State Level Hear the Voice of the Local”

Through the active panel discussion „**Does the National Level Hear the Voice of the Local**“ the main ideas for improvement of the dialogue between local and national institutions in supporting women were the establishment of gender equality offices by local governments, the inclusion of gender equality in primary education through civic education courses, and breaking down stereotypes and barriers.

The project was implemented from October 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024.

The project „**Platform for Creating a Network of Women’s Councilor Clubs in Montenegro**“ supported by the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of Montenegro, was implemented from November 23, 2023, to September 23, 2024.

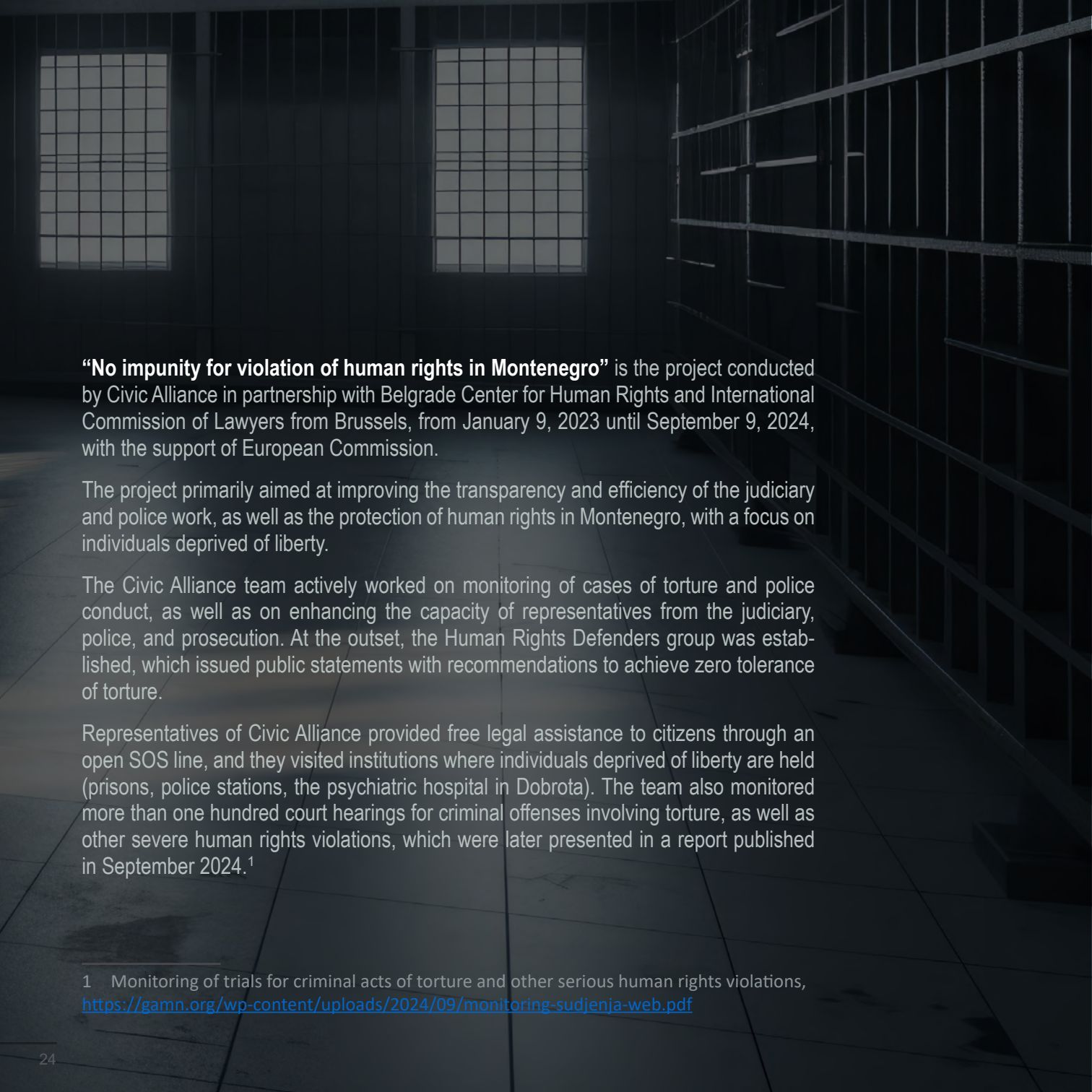
Through this project, Civic Alliance worked on improving the strategic framework for achieving gender equality, strengthening the position of women in public life at the local level, and promoting gender equality.

Through the implementation of activities, Civic Alliance contributed to strengthening the capacities for advocating gender equality and joint action among female councilors from municipalities in the northern and southern regions of Montenegro, as well as improving cooperation with members of the Montenegrin Parliament.

The Civic Alliance team has been working intensively to strengthen the role of women in local politics through a series of activities aimed at establishing and empowering women’s councilor clubs in Montenegro.

- We sent letters to all municipal assemblies where women’s councilor clubs have not yet been established, encouraging female councilors to form them.
- We organized meetings with female councilors across Montenegro, provided them with mentorship support during the process of forming the clubs, and conducted training sessions for club members, strengthening their capacity for active participation in political life.
- Additionally, we worked on establishing a network of women’s councilor clubs in Montenegro, gathered data on trends in their formation, and presented it to the Gender Equality Committee, the Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms, and the Women’s Club of the Montenegrin Parliament.

By establishing fifteen women’s councilor clubs, Civic Alliance made a tangible contribution to strengthening women in local assemblies and advancing gender equality in Montenegro.

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a prison corridor. The walls are made of dark, heavy metal bars, creating a grid-like pattern. Two windows with multiple panes are visible on the left wall, letting in some light. The floor is dark and reflective. The overall mood is somber and oppressive.

“No impunity for violation of human rights in Montenegro” is the project conducted by Civic Alliance in partnership with Belgrade Center for Human Rights and International Commission of Lawyers from Brussels, from January 9, 2023 until September 9, 2024, with the support of European Commission.

The project primarily aimed at improving the transparency and efficiency of the judiciary and police work, as well as the protection of human rights in Montenegro, with a focus on individuals deprived of liberty.

The Civic Alliance team actively worked on monitoring of cases of torture and police conduct, as well as on enhancing the capacity of representatives from the judiciary, police, and prosecution. At the outset, the Human Rights Defenders group was established, which issued public statements with recommendations to achieve zero tolerance of torture.

Representatives of Civic Alliance provided free legal assistance to citizens through an open SOS line, and they visited institutions where individuals deprived of liberty are held (prisons, police stations, the psychiatric hospital in Dobrota). The team also monitored more than one hundred court hearings for criminal offenses involving torture, as well as other severe human rights violations, which were later presented in a report published in September 2024.¹

1 Monitoring of trials for criminal acts of torture and other serious human rights violations, <https://gamn.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/monitoring-sudjenja-web.pdf>

Civic Alliance also worked on increasing the capacity of local NGOs through training on monitoring and promoting the rule of law and human rights, as well as a sub-granting program. In this way, six non-governmental organizations were supported financially and with mentoring through the distribution of sub-grants totaling 35,000.00 euros. Additionally, through training for a group of human rights defenders, workshops for students, young lawyers and doctors, capacities for preventing impunity and protecting the human rights of persons deprived of their liberty were enhanced.

With great interest and participant attendance, training sessions and workshops on the efficient investigation of torture and human rights violations were held, targeting representatives of the Police Directorate, prosecutors, and judges.



Photo: Civic Alliance, Conference "Overview of Implemented Projects, Results, and Impact"



Photo: Civic Alliance, Training for doctors titled "Documenting Injuries Caused by Torture, Inhuman Treatment, and Punishment of Persons Deprived of Liberty"

On the occasion of International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Civic Alliance organized a conference titled **“Elimination of Torture and Impunity”** as part of this project. The event was opened by Milan Radović, Program Director of Civic Alliance, Milorad Marković, Supreme State Prosecutor, Siniša Bjeković, Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms, and Friederike Wunschmann, Rule of Law and European Integration Adviser at the European Union Delegation in Montenegro.

The conference concluded that Montenegro has still been recognized as a country where a culture of police abuse, negative police solidarity, and impunity for officers who commit torture against citizens, persists.

Darko Vukčević, Director of the Directorate for Execution of Criminal Sanctions (UIKS), Vladan Popović, Chief Police Inspector at the Police Directorate, Aleksandar Mačić, Director of the Special Psychiatric Hospital “Dobrota”, and Mirjana Radović, Deputy Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms were also speakers at the conference and were talknih about the state of play in institutions where the person deprived of liberty were placed.



Photo: Civic Alliance, Conference
“Elimination of Torture and Impunity”

The regional conference “**How to create a police culture that eliminates torture**” is the final activity of this project, where it was concluded that the elimination of the culture of abuse in Montenegro requires the synergy of key institutions dealing with this problem.

The event was opened with a panel whose participants were Zoran Brđanin, Director of the Police Directorate, Danka Đerić Ivanović, Prosecutor of the Higher State Prosecutor’s Office and Željka Jovović, President of the Basic Court.

In the continuation of the conference, through the panel “What hurts more, beatings or injustice?”, Milorad Mijo Martinović, who experienced brutal police torture in 2015, reflected on the details of that event, not blaming the direct perpetrators of the attack, but exclusively asking for the command responsibility to be determined, that is, the name and surname of the person who ordered it.²


² See more information on <https://gamn.org/snazna-saradnja-uprave-policije-sudstva-i-tuzilastva-preduslov-za-eliminaciju-torture-u-crnoj-gori/>



Photo: Civic Alliance, Regional conference “How to Create a Police Culture that Eliminates Torture,” Panel I



Photo: Civic Alliance, Regional conference “How to Create a Police Culture that Eliminates Torture,” Panel II



Culture of Remembrance

FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE



“Culture of Remembrance for a Brighter Future”, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP, represented a significant initiative aimed at dealing with the past, with a special focus on the victims of war crimes committed on the territory of Montenegro during the 1990s.

During the implementation period of this project, from 15 January 2024 to 15 January 2025, the importance of recognizing the suffering and injustices suffered by the victims and their families was particularly emphasized. The project laid the foundations for broader social change, highlighting the key role of collective memory in the process of building a more just society.

The goal of the project was to develop a comprehensive database of war crimes victims as a key resource for providing support through various project activities. The project was also aimed at raising public awareness about the importance of confronting the past and prosecuting war crimes, thereby contributing to the further advancement of social reconciliation and justice. In addition, the project provided direct psychological support to victims, while also strengthening the capacities of communities to fight for justice and truth.

Through this project, several educational activities were carried out, such as seminars, workshops, training sessions, and panel discussions, with the aim of strengthening the capacities of relevant actors and institutions to work on issues related to war crimes. The training and workshops were intended for family members of the victims, as well as representatives of local organizations dealing with confronting the past, war crimes victims, and local councilors.



Photo: Civic Alliance, from the commemoration of the war crime Klapuh



Photo: Civic Alliance, Panel discussion "Institutions that (Don't) Hear the Cry of Injustice"



Photo: Civic Alliance, Workshop "Illuminating the Past: Psychological, Activist, and Media Approaches"

The topic of the panel discussion, "Women and Transitional Justice: Perspectives and Challenges" enabled a discussion about the role of women in reconciliation processes and the challenges they face in exercising their rights in post-conflict societies.

The women's networking seminar enabled women from different communities to connect, exchange experiences, and create a platform for collaborative work on issues related to women's rights and victims of war crimes.



Photo: Civic Alliance, Training for activists who work on facing the past



Through this project, a publication titled “**Tragovima sjećanja**” (“Traces of Memory”)³, koja predstavlja zbirku podataka o žrtvama ratnih zločina i može poslužiti kao baza za dalje istraživanje i edukaciju o ovim pitanjima. Dokument pruža detaljan uvid u spisak žrtava i okolnosti ratnih zločina koji su obrađeni u okviru projekta.

A network of activists was also formed, through which various initiatives were developed and sent to representatives of the Government of Montenegro, the Prime Minister, and municipalities. These initiatives focused on the introduction of a Day of Remembrance, the setting up of memorials, commemorations, etc. This network represents the foundation for the ongoing fight for the rights of victims and transitional justice in Montenegro.

The implementation of activities for the commemoration of war crimes victims was crucial in raising awareness about the importance of remembrance and recognizing the suffering of the victims, while also directing initiatives to decision-makers for the construction of memorials at the crime sites, as a gesture of recognition and respect for the victims.

A documentary content was also developed, focusing on war crimes, with an emphasis on personal testimonies and the importance of truth in the process of confronting the past and reconciliation. The films “Štrpci - The Train That Passed”⁴ and “Klapuh: Three Decades of Injustice”⁵ explore tragic events from the past and provide deeply emotional portrayals of the survivors’ experiences, while also highlighting the long-lasting consequences.

In order to promote the documentary films as effectively as possible, prior to their official release on social media and broadcasting via Radio and Television of Montenegro (RTCG), a series of premiere screenings were held in all three municipalities from different regions of Montenegro. In each municipality, after the screenings, panel discussions took place, featuring prominent experts and relevant speakers, individuals who have been engaged with this topic for many years.

3 Publication “Tragovima sjećanja” („Traces of Memory“), <https://gamn.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/tragovima-sjecanja-web.pdf>

4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35Relw8Ejjk>

5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snmPC95mZCg>

The panelists offered their analyses and reflections on the content of the films, providing deeper insight into the context of transitional justice and its implementation in Montenegro.

In collaboration with the partner BIRN in Montenegro, five investigative journalistic stories were published, addressing topics related to transitional justice and facing the past.⁶ These stories contribute to informing the broader public about important issues related to war crimes.

• • • • Additionally, in order to inform public, a public call was announced for the best journalistic story about promoting the culture of remembrance for war crimes victims. Its goal is to emphasize the war crimes that occurred in Montenegro during the 1990s, about which the public has limited available information (Bukovica, Kaluđerski Laz, Morinj, Deportations, Štrpci, The Klapuh Family).

The first prize was awarded to Lela Šćepanović for the broadcast/story “Montenegrin Prosecutors Reinvestigate the Crime in Bukovica”⁷. The second prize was awarded to Miloš Rudović and Natalija Jovanović for the broadcast/story “The Klapuh Case: How Serbia’s Ministry of Justice ‘Forgot’ to Extradite a War Criminal to Montenegro”,⁸ while the third prize was awarded to Mila Vukčević for the broadcast/story “A Life Engraved by Štrpci”.⁹ The special award for providing a unique perspective on shedding light on war crimes was awarded to Radovan Furtula for the story “Belgrade – Bar, passing through the Štrpci Station”.¹⁰

6 <https://www.birn.me/istrazivanja/prezivjeli-iz-masakra-u-kaluderskom-lazu-jos-cekaju-na-pravdu>; <https://www.birn.me/istrazivanja/crnogorsko-tuzilastvo-ne-istrazuje-optuzbe-za-silovanja-u-foci>; <https://www.birn.me/istrazivanja/nadlezni-izbjegavaju-podsjecanje-na-ratnu-proslost>; <https://www.birn.me/istrazivanja/crna-gora-jos-bez-optuznica-protiv-vikend-ratnika>; <https://www.birn.me/istrazivanja/kako-osudenicima-za-ratni-zlocin-nad-porodicom-klapuh-izbjegavaju-zatvor>

7 <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/crna-gora-ratni-zlocini-bukovica-vojska-tuzilastvo/32854036.html>, article published on web portal Radio Free Europe (RFE/RL) on March 8, 2024

8 <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/crna-gora-slucaj-klapuh-ratni-zlocini/32861446.html>, article published on Radio Free Europe (RFE/RL) on March 15, 2024

9 <https://rtcg.me/tv/emisije/dokumentarni/izdvajamo/524141/zivot-prozet-strpcima.html>, article published on public broadcast RTCG on February 24, 2024.

10 <https://www.vijesti.me/kolumne/695781/beograd-bar-preko-stanice-strpci>, the article published on the web portal Vijesti on February 27, 2024.

As part of the joint program of the European Union and the Council of Europe, **ROMACTED**, the Civic Alliance successfully completed its participation in the implementation of this project, which lasted from November 17, 2021, to March 15, 2024.

During 2024, 13 art workshops took place for children from the Roma and Egyptian (RE) population, and their works were exhibited at the community center, where these workshops took place. In addition to the workshops for children, health workshops for women were also held in collaboration with the Red Cross and the Institute for Public Health of Montenegro, aiming to raise awareness about the importance of disease prevention and regular health check-ups.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Civic Alliance, in collaboration with the Red Cross, marked this important date with a discussion with women from the Roma and Egyptian (RE) population about the significance of gender equality, along with a brief overview of the history of March 8, through the feminist movement.

International Roma Day, April 8, was marked by organizing a "Knowledge Quiz" that covered questions about the history, culture, and tradition of the Roma. The participants were primary school students from both the Roma and majority communities.

The Quiz was organized in cooperation of Civic Alliance with the European House and the Council of Europe Programme Office in Podgorica, in cooperation with partners – Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation and the Capital City.

As the final activity of this project, a gathering was organized with participants from all the workshops held from February to March 2024. On this occasion, all participants were presented with gifts in the form of backpacks, notebooks, and pencils.

The project “**Career REvolution**” aimed to combat discrimination and reduce ethnic distance, while increasing the social inclusion of the Roma and Egyptian (RE) community members in Montenegro. It was implemented from November 2023 to September 2024 with the support of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights.

The focus of the activities was on improving the knowledge of the RE population about their rights, as well as enhancing their economic status through vocational trainings and provision of free legal assistance.

During the project implementation period, vocational trainings were organized in the fields of hairdressing, cosmetology, and carpentry. The trainings lasted for three months, during which participants gained practical knowledge and skills necessary for starting their own business initiatives.

Three members of the RE population successfully completed trainings in hairdressing and cosmetology. Along with the knowledge gained, they were provided with sets for practical professional development, enabling them to start their own businesses. In this way, the conditions for the employment of RE community members were improved.

By hiring a legal advisor, the project enabled members of the RE community to exercise their rights before the institutions. To this end, the activity included field visits in the municipalities of Podgorica, Nikšić, Berane, Pljevlja, Budva and Bar, where informative flyers were distributed so that the community would have the necessary information about their rights, after which direct legal assistance was provided to individuals to resolve administrative and legal issues.



Photo: Civic Alliance, distribution of packages with basic equipment for practical work



The Civic Alliance team organized a round table as a final activity, where the results of the work were presented. At this event, the key challenges faced by members of the Roma and Egyptian communities were highlighted, along with an exchange of ideas for improving their social inclusion.

The formal partners were “Danka Company” d.o.o., “Barber Shop Nikola” d.o.o., “By M-Miracle” d.o.o., “Milikic Company” d.o.o. The project showed that professional trainings and legal support are key steps in improving the social and economic inclusion of RE community members.



Photo: Civic Alliance, Round table – presentation of the results of the “Career REvolution” project

The Civic Alliance began implementing the project “**Inclusion and Empowerment of Roma and Egyptians through the Promotion of Culture, Tradition, and Language**” in July 2024. With the support of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of Montenegro, the project will run until March 22, 2025. The goal of the project is to contribute to the creation of a more inclusive society in Montenegro through the promotion of Roma and Egyptian (RE) culture, tradition, and identity, while simultaneously strengthening tolerance and mutual respect.

During the implementation of the project, significant goals were achieved that had a direct impact on the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians, especially the youth from these communities. Through participation in sports competitions and training sessions in October, November, and December, all costs for the youth were covered, enabling better socialization and boosting their self-confidence.



Photo: Civic Alliance

CONTEST FOR THE BEST JOURNALISTIC STORY



Additionally, by publishing the competition for the best journalistic story about promoting the culture, tradition, and language of Roma and Egyptians¹¹ the visibility of topics related to the culture and identity of the RE communities was increased. The first prize was awarded to Dragana Šćepanović for the journalistic story “Romani chib” – The Language of Family and Private Conversations, which was published on the Vijesti portal.¹² The second prize went to Vanja Rakonjac for the broadcast/story “The First Roma Woman in Bijelo Polje with a University Degree”, which was aired on the First Program of RTCG.¹³ The third prize was awarded to Dajana Zečević for the broadcast/story “When Language Disappears, Identity Fades”, which was published on the Zumiraj web portal.¹⁴



Photo: Civic Alliance, Award winners for the three best journalistic stories on the promotion of Roma and Egyptian culture, tradition, and language

11 <https://gamn.org/urucene-nagrade-za-tri-najbolje-novinarske-price-na-temu-promocije-kulture-tradicije-i-jezika-roma-i-egipcana/>

12 <https://www.vijesti.me/kultura/726763/romani-chib-jezik-porodice-i-privatnih-razgovora>

13 <https://rtcg.me/vijesti/drustvo/599932/romkinja-iz-bijelog-polja-diplomirala-engleski-jezik-ne-odustajte-od-snova.html>

14 <https://zumiraj.me/kada-jezik-nestaje-identitet-blijedi/zum/zoom/zumiranje/zom/>

With the support of the Ministry of European Affairs, the Civic Alliance has been implementing the project **“EU Understanding – Steps Towards Europe”** since July 22, 2024. The goal of the project is to strengthen the capacities of citizens of Montenegro and civil society organizations in the process of European Union accession, while simultaneously increasing the level of understanding of European integration.

This project has organized several significant activities, such as a seminar for participants of the School of Political Studies titled **“The Political Landscape of Montenegro: Real or Fictitious Democracy”¹⁵**; empowering youth for the active promotion of European values through two events for young people, held as part of the program marking International Human Rights Day¹⁶.

Through the implemented project activities, the understanding of European integration among the citizens of Montenegro, especially young people and representatives of political parties, has been significantly improved.

15 For more details see the part of the Report about the School of Political Studies

16 For more details see the part of the Report about the Human Rights Day

From November 23, 2023, to May 23, 2024, the Civic Alliance team worked on the implementation of the project **“Getting to Know for Youth Tolerance”** with the support of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights.

The project was carried out with the aim of reducing interethnic and international tensions, as well as social and ethnic distance. It was focused on areas related to the promotion of culture and tradition among national communities that show a high degree of intolerance, through direct cultural exchange.

The specific goal of the project was to familiarize and strengthen the capacities of young people in Pljevlja and Ulcinj in understanding and applying the concepts of tolerance, reconciliation, dialogue, and interculturalism.

To achieve this goal, the Civic Alliance organized cultural visits of high school students from Ulcinj to Pljevlja, and cultural visits of high school students from Pljevlja to Ulcinj, as well as cultural evenings on tolerance and interculturalism in both municipalities.

The Civic Alliance gathered eight students and two teachers from both Ulcinj and Pljevlja, who, jointly with their professors, had the opportunity to get acquainted with the local customs, cultures, and traditions of national communities. They also attended various lectures together and visited local cultural and historical sites in both Pljevlja and Ulcinj.



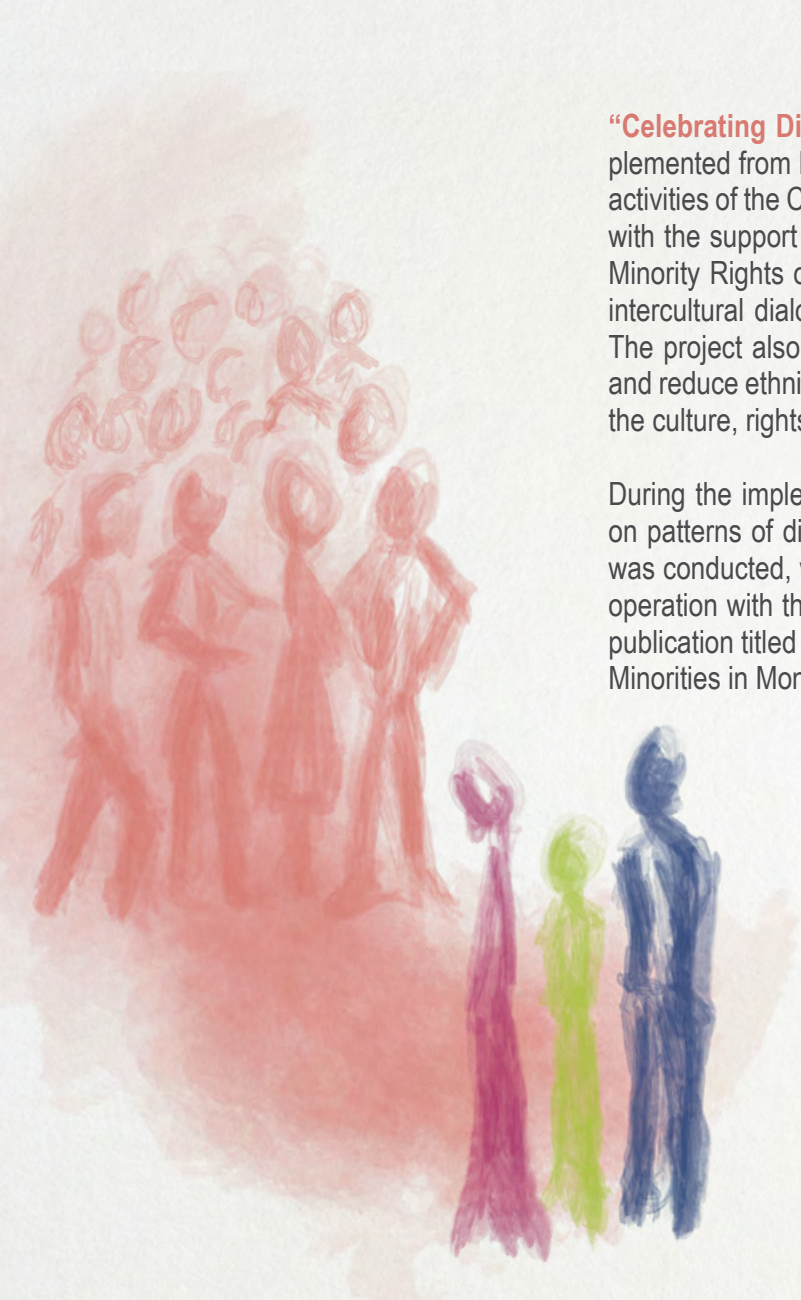
Photo: Civic Alliance, Cultural visit of high school students from Pljevlja to Ulcinj, reception of students at the High School “Bratstvo jedinstvo” in Ulcinj



Photo: Civic Alliance, Cultural visit of high school students from Pljevlja to Ulcinj, visit to the museum in the Old Town of Ulcinj



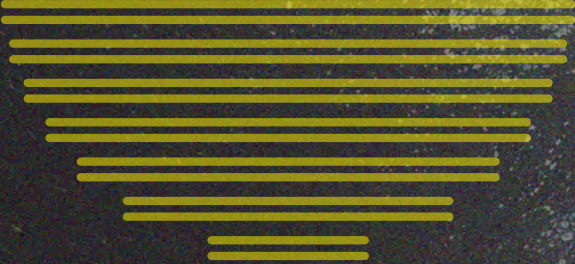
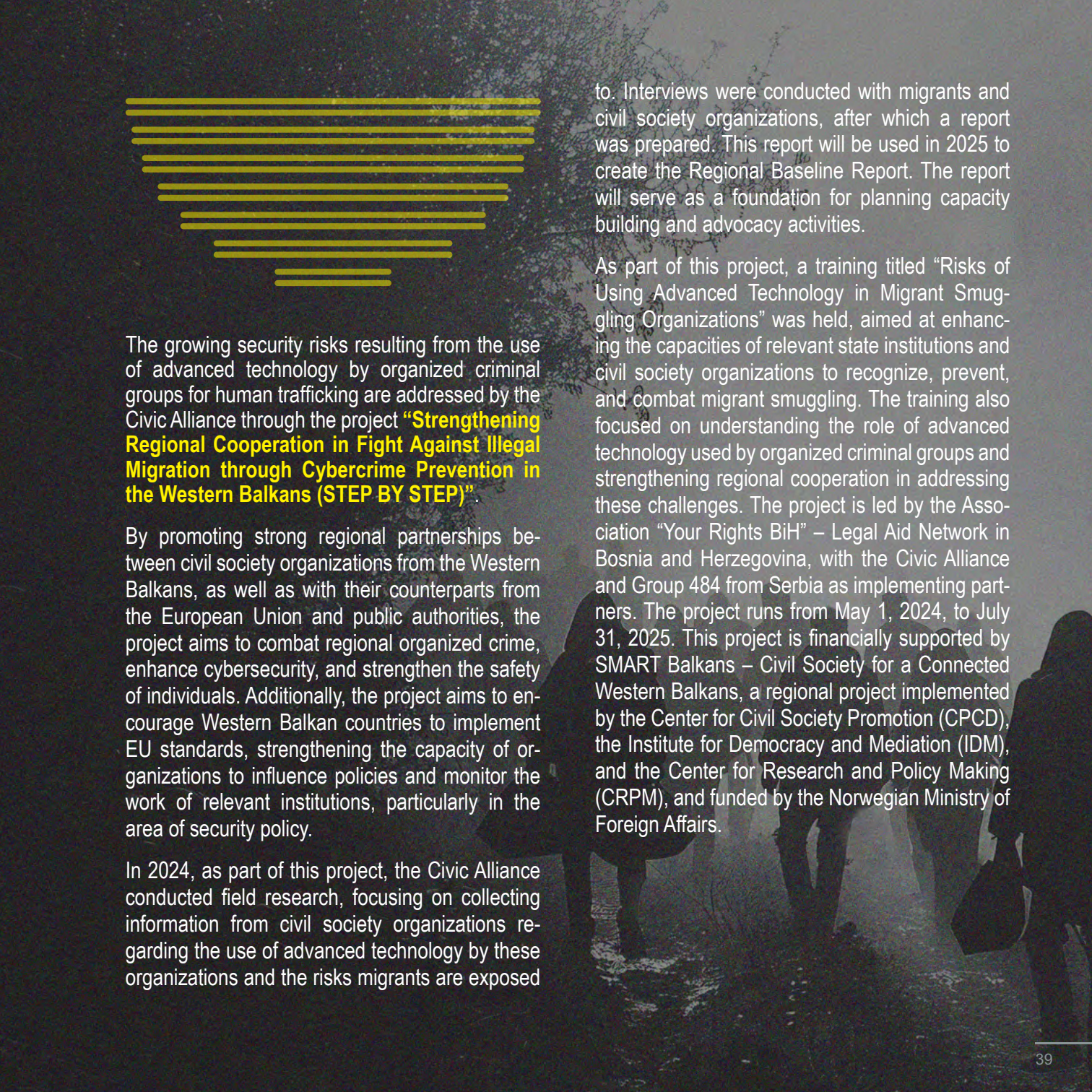
Photo: Civic Alliance, Cultural evening on tolerance and interculturalism at the Knjižara / Bookstore, Ulcinj



“Celebrating Diversity. Nurturing Cultures” is a project implemented from December 28, 2023, to October 30, 2024. The activities of the Civic Alliance were carried out during this period with the support of the Fund for the Protection and Exercising Minority Rights of Montenegro, aimed at increasing tolerance, intercultural dialogue, and mutual understanding and respect. The project also aimed to promote tolerance, interculturalism, and reduce ethnic distance among youth by introducing them to the culture, rights, and customs of minority communities.

During the implementation of this project, a quantitative study on patterns of discrimination against minorities in Montenegro was conducted, which was realized by the Civic Alliance in cooperation with the DAMAR Institute. Based on the research, a publication titled “Analysis of Patterns of Discrimination Against Minorities in Montenegro” was developed¹⁷.

17 Patterns of Discrimination Against Minorities in Montenegro, <https://gamn.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Obrasci-diskriminacije-manjina.pdf>



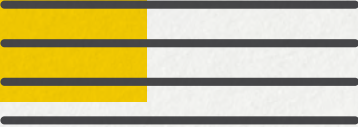
The growing security risks resulting from the use of advanced technology by organized criminal groups for human trafficking are addressed by the Civic Alliance through the project **“Strengthening Regional Cooperation in Fight Against Illegal Migration through Cybercrime Prevention in the Western Balkans (STEP BY STEP)”**.

By promoting strong regional partnerships between civil society organizations from the Western Balkans, as well as with their counterparts from the European Union and public authorities, the project aims to combat regional organized crime, enhance cybersecurity, and strengthen the safety of individuals. Additionally, the project aims to encourage Western Balkan countries to implement EU standards, strengthening the capacity of organizations to influence policies and monitor the work of relevant institutions, particularly in the area of security policy.

In 2024, as part of this project, the Civic Alliance conducted field research, focusing on collecting information from civil society organizations regarding the use of advanced technology by these organizations and the risks migrants are exposed

to. Interviews were conducted with migrants and civil society organizations, after which a report was prepared. This report will be used in 2025 to create the Regional Baseline Report. The report will serve as a foundation for planning capacity building and advocacy activities.

As part of this project, a training titled “Risks of Using Advanced Technology in Migrant Smuggling Organizations” was held, aimed at enhancing the capacities of relevant state institutions and civil society organizations to recognize, prevent, and combat migrant smuggling. The training also focused on understanding the role of advanced technology used by organized criminal groups and strengthening regional cooperation in addressing these challenges. The project is led by the Association “Your Rights BiH” – Legal Aid Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the Civic Alliance and Group 484 from Serbia as implementing partners. The project runs from May 1, 2024, to July 31, 2025. This project is financially supported by SMART Balkans – Civil Society for a Connected Western Balkans, a regional project implemented by the Center for Civil Society Promotion (CPCD), the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), and the Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), and funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Since 2019, the Civic Alliance has been implementing the project **“Provision of Legal Aid to Asylum Seekers, Refugees, and Persons at Risk of Statelessness in Montenegro”**, with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The primary focus of Civic Alliance work is to resolve the legal status of these individuals, obtaining documentation, and provide social protection, as well as to inform them about their rights.

The legal team of Civic Alliance frequently conducts extensive analyses of the legal framework and provides support throughout the entire process, from document preparation to representation before relevant authorities.

In 2024, the Civic Alliance provided support to 1,584 individuals who expressed their intention to seek asylum in Montenegro. Following the established procedure, after crossing the border and entering the territory of Montenegro, comprehensive interviews were conducted with them, and data were collected regarding their country of origin, reasons for leaving their home country, the route they took to reach Montenegro, the challenges they faced before entering, and their treatment upon arrival in Montenegro. Additionally, the Civic Alliance team informed all these individuals about their rights.

Civic Alliance assisted 210 beneficiaries in the process of applying for international protection.

The legal and logistical support covers several key phases: preparation of documentation, legal representation, and assistance in gathering evidence. This includes three preparatory interviews with each beneficiary before the interview with the Directorate for Asylum, as well as drafting appeals against negative decisions from the Directorate or negative rulings from the Administrative Court.

When it comes to international protection in Montenegro, Civic Alliance worked with 50 people who were in the process of obtaining protection and 63 individuals who already had international or subsidiary protection. The legal team of Civic Alliance provided support that included drafting legal documents such as written notifications, applications, and urgent requests, representation before relevant authorities and institutions, and offering legal advice related to access to rights prescribed in the Law on International and Temporary Protection of Foreigners.

The legal team of Civic Alliance also provided assistance to foreigners with temporary protection from Ukraine, which implied work on exercising their rights from the moment of obtaining temporary protection.

Given the large number of individuals, Civic Alliance operated four offices dedicated to these issues. Besides the main office in Podgorica, legal advisors and interpreters from offices in Bar, Budva, and Herceg Novi provided assistance to foreigners with temporary protection from Ukraine. Additionally, the Civic Alliance mobile team, in collaboration with the Red Cross of Montenegro, was regularly available to users in Tivat and Kotor.

Civic Alliance was strategically positioned in municipalities with the highest number of foreigners under temporary protection, and its importance was recognized by all local institutions.

In 2024, Civic Alliance provided assistance to 3,612 individuals with temporary protection. In addition to helping with the renewal and submission of new applications, the Civic Alliance team ensures support on the terrain regarding access to rights and provides legal aid, representing users before competent authorities and institutions. The team also monitors procedures related to the realization of rights prescribed by law, including the preparation and submission of written documents, as well as the preparation and submission of lawsuits to relevant state authorities and courts.

When it comes to work with persons at risk of statelessness, the legal advisors on this project handle administrative procedures, raising awareness among users, and overseeing the allocation of financial assistance to obtain necessary personal documentation, which would enable users to acquire a stable legal status in Montenegro, including temporary or permanent residence, identity cards, citizenship, and similar.



In 2024, for the first time in Montenegro, an individual who had been recognized as a stateless person (apatride) was granted Montenegrin citizenship based on admission. The legal support and advocacy of the Civic Alliance team were crucial in ensuring the rights and identity of individuals in similar situations.



Photo: source UNHCR

Legal team of Civic Alliance provided assistance for 392 persons, provided 500 services and assisted in collecting 256 documents aiming at acquiring legal status.



Photo: source UNHCR

Team members participated in a lot of events, trainings, conferences, panels that were related to their acting field that can lately be useful for their professional development and the needs of organization.

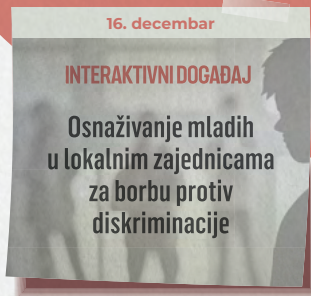
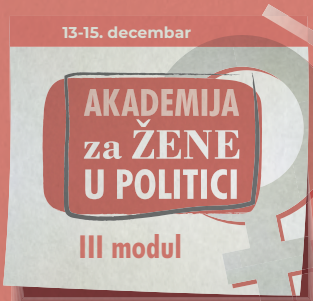
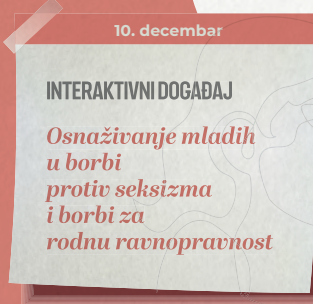
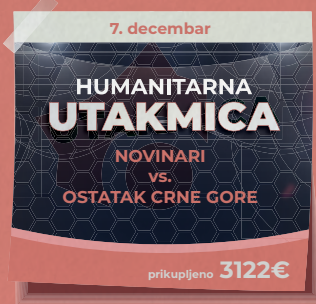


Among the events, Civic Alliance highlights the traditional celebration of World Refugee Day on June 20, which was also held in Bar in 2024, the city that recorded the highest number of people from Ukraine. The event was organized at the Summer Stage of the Old Town, through a joint program with UNHCR in Montenegro, in cooperation with the Municipality of Bar. The event brought together representatives from the Embassy of Ukraine, UNHCR in Montenegro, the Municipality of Bar, the Ministry of Interior, Social Work Centers, the Red Cross, the Crisis Center, as well as many other representatives from the NGO sector and institutions involved in the system of international and temporary protection.



Photo: Civic Alliance,
Celebration of the World Refugee Day

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY



In 2024, Civic Alliance, in collaboration with its partners, continued the long-standing tradition of marking International Human Rights Day through the organization of several activities. Through cooperation with institutions such as the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro, the Council of Europe, the European House, and others, numerous initiatives were carried out to address key challenges faced by society.

The program covered a wide range of topics, including women's rights and their position in Montenegrin society, the rights of minority groups, and facing the past. Special attention was given to the involvement of youth in the activities. The program also included humanitarian initiatives, providing support to those in greatest need. In this way, Civic Alliance made a significant contribution to strengthening human rights and social justice, engaging all sectors of society to create a more inclusive and just environment.



The program marking International Human Rights Day for 2024 began with the traditional humanitarian football game. Journalists from various Montenegrin media outlets responded to the invitation to participate, competing against a team composed of athletes, politicians, diplomats, and activists from different sectors of society.

Through this sporting event, a total of €3,122 was raised, which was donated to the Public Institution Resource Center for Children and Youth “Podgorica,” providing support to its beneficiaries and strengthening social solidarity.



Photo: Civic Alliance, Humanitarian Football Match



Interactive event:

“Empowering Youth in the Fight Against Sexism and for Gender Equality”



This interactive event, organized by the Civic Alliance in collaboration with the Council of Europe, took place at the European House. High school students from Podgorica had the opportunity to hear inspiring presentations about the importance of respecting human rights and the possibilities for building a fair society. The event began with addresses from representatives of international organizations, the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro, and other relevant speakers. After the introductory speeches, a human rights quiz followed, which allowed young people to expand their knowledge and awareness about this important topic.



“Empowering Youth in the Fight Against Sexism and for Gender Equality”

Interactive event:

“Empowering Youth in Local Communities to Fight Against Discrimination”

The interactive event “Empowering Youth in Local Communities to Fight Against Discrimination,” organized by the Civic Alliance in collaboration with the Council of Europe, was a continuation of activities that began in Podgorica. This time, the event took place in Bijelo Polje, where high school students from local schools, as well as representatives from the municipality, participated. The program started with a panel discussion, when participants discussed the importance of fighting discrimination and strengthening the role of youth in local communities. After the panel, a “Living Library” was organized, an interactive session that provided the exchange of experiences and deeper discussions on key topics. The event concluded with an educational quiz on human rights, providing participants the opportunity to expand their knowledge in a fun and dynamic format.



Photo: Council of Europe, “Empowering Youth in Local Communities to Fight Against Discrimination”

FORUM

A MAN WHO COULD NOT REMAIN SILENT

This forum was dedicated to the promotion of the film with the same title by Croatian director Nebojša Slijepčević, who portrayed the suffering of Tomo Buzov, as well as a discussion on the importance of justice, truth, and personal courage. The event gathered representatives of civil society, institutions, the academic community, the media, and citizens, providing a space for exchanging views on the challenges of facing the past. The forum was held on December 16, 2024 at the “Vojislav Bulatović Strunjo” Cultural Center in Bijelo Polje.



Before the film screening, a panel discussion took place with Demir Ličina, a representative of the families of Štrpci victims, and actress Julija Mlačić Petrović Njegoš. They emphasized the importance of such projects in the process of coming to terms with the wartime past, from different perspectives.

Thanks to the initiative of Civic Alliance, director Nebojša Slijepčević was presented with an award plaque shortly after the Forum, during the ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Bijelo Polje, as the recognition of his contribution to development of the city's culture, especially in context of shedding light on the tragic events whose victims were mostly from Bijelo Polje.



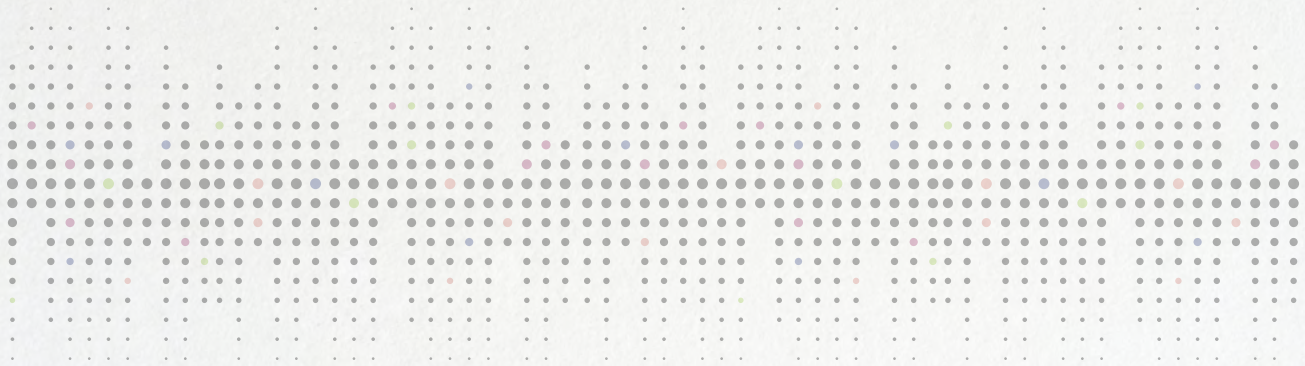
Photo: Civic Alliance

As part of the celebration of International Human Rights Day, the final module of the Academy for Women in Politics took place from December 13 to 15 in Budva.





**SCHOOL OF
POLITICAL
STUDIES**



The School of Political Studies (SPS) is one of the programs of the Civic Alliance, operating with the support of the European Association of Schools of Political Studies.

Each year, the School of Political Studies forms a new generation consisting of representatives from political parties, the media, state and international institutions, the non-governmental sector, and public administration. Given that the School brings together people from various professions and political perspectives, and considering the current tensions on the political scene, it has significantly contributed to better mutual understanding and awareness of these tensions. In this way, the School has played a key role in overcoming political disagreements by gathering people in one place, enabling more open communication and the achievement of common goals for the broader social good.

This approach has enabled a better understanding of different perspectives and helped overcome divisions, providing participants with the opportunity to work together on constructive solutions for the challenges that society faces.

In 2024, the School's seminars addressed important and current topics, including police torture, confronting the past, the fight against discrimination, and EU integration. These topics were at the center of discussions, allowing participants to gain a deeper understanding of key challenges faced by society and the political system, as well as to exchange views on possible solutions to these issues.

Throughout 2024, the work of the XXI generation of the School of Political Studies continued through forums and seminars.

XXI Generation

III Module - Montenegro on the Path to the EU: Human Rights from Standards to Practice

The forum titled “**Montenegro on the Path to the EU: Human Rights from Standards to Practice**” was held from 5 to 7 April in Ulcinj, focusing on topics related to European integration, as well as the opportunities and challenges Montenegro faces on this path. In addition, relevant lecturers addressed issues of police torture and international standards in the context of police detention and custody. The forum covered topics such as the process of deprivation of liberty, the rights of detained individuals, the prevention of torture, and concrete examples of the fight against torture in practice.

**Crna Gora na putu ka EU:
LJUDSKA PRAVA OD STANDARDA DO PRAKSE**
OTVARANJE FORUMA

Fahim Gliba,
minister ljudskih i manjinskih
prava

Prerad Zensušić,
glavni pregovarač Crne Gore
sa Evropskom unijom

Štefan Bjelković,
zaštitnik ljudskih prava i
sloboda

Amna Morić,
Građanska zajednica

Artijan Mavrić,
predsjednik Građanske
opštine Ulcinj

Finansira
Evropska unija

Ministarstvo
intranet

75
75
75

5. april 2024.
Hotel Otrant, Ulcinj

IV Module – Regional Cooperation Through the Reconciliation Process

The module titled “**Regional Cooperation Through the Reconciliation Process**” provided an in-depth analysis of Montenegro’s multilateral relations with neighboring countries, the role of its parliament in promoting good neighborly relations, cooperation and reconciliation, as well as regional youth cooperation in this field.

The module was opened by Dragoslav Šćekić, Deputy Prime Minister for Demography and Youth and Minister of Sports and Youth; H.E. Anne Marie Maskay, Ambassador of the Republic of France to Montenegro; Milan Radović, Program Director of the Civic Alliance; Edin Koljenović, Head of RYCO’s Local Office for Youth Cooperation in Montenegro; and Nemanja Stjepanović, Representative of the UN International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

This module concluded with a diploma awarding ceremony for the XXI generation of School of Political Studies of Montenegro.



22.
generacija
ŠKOLE
POLITICKIH
STUDIJA



Škola političkih studija



GRAĐANSKA
ALIJANSA

Polaznici/ce 22. generacije Škole političkih studija



Aleksandar Ljermović



Boban Štralić



Bojana Pilon



Breda Maršević



Damir Nuvođević



Đorđan Čelofić



Edin Krajin



Edin Smolović



Edna Belidenaj



Envera Džalaj



Goslava Đurašić



Ivana Meruzović



Marija Redonjić
Čepić



Milica Radošević



Alibek Halilović



Mirsad Azemović



Mirer Kujelica



Mirer Fouzović



Nafsa Kijljanec



Nedžad Mešanović



Nira Šepanović



Rozalinda Lajgurović



Slobodan Đukić



Srećan Kandić



Tamara Vojtović



Veselin Savić



Zorica Bojanić
Kalović

22nd generation of the SCHOOL of POLITICAL STUDIES



Photo: Civic Alliance, lecture by Gordana Đurović at the School of Political Studies (SPS) seminar



Photo: Civic Alliance

I Module

POLITICAL LIFE OF MONTENEGRO: Real or Faked Democracy

The work of the new 22nd generation of the School of Political Studies (SPS) began in October 2024 with a forum titled **“Political Life of Montenegro: Real or Faked Democracy”**, held on 4 October in Podgorica.

The forum assessed that women’s political participation in Montenegro is limited by patriarchal attitudes, prejudices, and numerous evasions of legal regulations, which hinder their activism.

The forum was opened by Milan Radović, Program Director of the Civic Alliance, and Lejla Dervišagić, Head of the Program Office of the Council of Europe in Podgorica, who emphasized that the central theme of the forum – gender equality – is crucial for the pace of democratic development in Montenegro.



After the introductory speeches, the event continued with a panel discussion titled “Women in Parliament: A Game of Numbers or Real Influence”, featuring participants Zoja Bojanić Lalović, MP from the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), Edina Dešić, MP from the Bosniak Party (BS), Dragoslav Šćekić, Minister of Sports and Youth, and Nikola Mugoš*, Chairman of the State Electoral Commission¹⁸.



The forum continued with a seminar during which participants engaged in numerous discussions about the current EU moment, the political potential of women and minorities, as well as how political elites have been media-exploiting this topic in the public space for years.



¹⁸ Find the statement from the panel “Women in Parliament: Real or Faked Democracy” on <https://gamn.org/zene-u-parlamentu-igra-brojeva-ili-stvarni-uticaj/>

Photo: Civic Alliance

II module

MONTENEGRO:

A Vast Field of Discrimination

The second module of the School of Political Studies, titled “**Montenegro: A Vast Field of Discrimination**” was held from 22 and 24 November.

The module began with a panel under the same name, which took place on 22 November in the Blue Hall of the Rectorate.

The panel concluded that discrimination against members of the Roma population, as well as women, is a complex issue driven by social prejudices, institutional injustice, and economic inequalities. Panel participants included Fatmir Gjeka, Minister of Human and Minority Rights, Radinka Činčur, Member of the Parliament of Montenegro, and Sin-iša Bjeković, Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro.¹⁹

The panel was opened by Milan Radović, Program Director of the School of Political Studies, and Giovanni Gabassi, Acting Head of the OSCE Mission in Montenegro.

¹⁹ Find more information about the conclusions at the following link: <https://gamn.org/crna-gora-nepregledno-polje-diskriminacije/>



Photo: Civic Alliance

The second module continued with lectures by Miloš Bešić, Professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade, and Slaven Živković, Director of the De Facto agency. During these sessions, participants analyzed statistical data illustrating discrimination trends in Montenegro from 2012 to 2022, providing deeper insights into the norms and values of Montenegrin society.

A special highlight of this module was the panel discussion titled “How Society Created in Which Roma Are a Symbol of Discrimination Was Created?” During this session, Fana Delija, Elvis Beriša, and Nevenka Vuksanović shared their experiences with the participants of the School of Political Studies, providing firsthand insights into the presence of discrimination in both their personal and professional lives.



Photo: Civic Alliance



Photo: Civic Alliance



Photo: Civic Alliance, SPS seminar in Budva

Forum of Alumni

PATH TO RECONCILIATION

Challenges and Opportunities

The School of Political Studies forum titled **“Path to Reconciliation: Challenges and Opportunities”** was held from 13 to 15 December 2024, in Budva. The goal of this forum was to encourage constructive dialogue on confronting the past and to create space for joint reflection on the challenges and opportunities for building trust and reconciliation in society.

The panel discussion titled **“Strategy for Investigating War Crimes: Reopening Old Cases or Creating New Wounds”**, held as part of the forum, raised key questions about the role of the judiciary in the processes of confronting the past, especially regarding the reopening of unresolved war crime cases, balancing between achieving justice and avoiding retraumatizing victims and society.

The role of culture and art in reconciliation processes was also a topic of the forum, where the discussion focused on art as a tool for creating space for dialogue, reflection, and collective healing.

The forum was supported by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Montenegro (YIHR) and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) in Montenegro.



Photo: Civic Alliance, Forum “The Path to Reconciliation: Challenges and Opportunities”



■ ■ ■

The World Forum for Democracy, held annually in Strasbourg, is a unique platform for decision-makers and activists to discuss solutions to the key challenges faced by democracies around the world. By identifying and analyzing experimental initiatives and practices, the Forum highlights and encourages democratic innovations aimed at strengthening the foundations of democratic societies. This event was also attended by participants of the XXII generation of the School of Political Studies, and the Forum took place from 6 to 8 November 2024.

At the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, discussions focused on the challenges faced by democracy, the creation of mechanisms to protect electoral processes from the dangers posed by the digital age, and the fight against disinformation, which has become an integral part of political life.

During their stay in Strasbourg, participants also visited the European Court of Human Rights, where they had a conversation with the Vice-President of the institution, Ivana Jelić. Additionally, the participants of the School of Political Studies had the opportunity to meet with Montenegro's permanent representative to the Council of Europe, Ambassador Božidarka Krunić.





Škola političkih studija

ACADEMY for WOMEN in POLITICS



Through the program of the School of Political Studies, the **Academy for Women in Politics** was established with the support of the German Embassy in Montenegro. The Academy was founded with the aim of educating, networking, and building the capacities of local female politicians.

The first generation of the Academy consisted of 26 female councilors and politicians.

AKADEMIJA za ŽENE U POLITICI

Polaznice prve generacije Akademije za žene u politici

Aneta Đurđević	Anica Đurđević	Desislava Vukobratović	Dijana Vuković	Dragana Kalanogrić Štanić	Elza Rumanović	Farida Ferozović	Gordana Knežević	Ivana Đurđević
Jelena Borčević	Lidija Ivanović	Maja Stevović	Milena Božović	Milena Vujčić	Anica Rudić	Milica Knežević	Milica Anđelić	Nermina Muratović
Kicvena Bajčević	Nilsa Petrija	Sabina Kaladžević	Sandra Miholjević	Slavica Božović	Slavica Ristić	Snežana Zoranić	Tejana Peršić	


Škola političkih studija

GRADANSKA ALIJANSA

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I Module of the Academy for Women

At the conference “Political Landscape of Montenegro: Real or Faked Democracy”, organized in October 2024, the work of the first generation of participants in the Academy for Women in Politics began.

 During the conference, it was concluded that women’s political participation in Montenegro is limited by patriarchal attitudes, prejudices, as well as numerous shortcomings in the implementation of legal regulations that hinder their activism.

After the conference, the work of the first generation of the Academy continued with a module held in Ulcinj. Through inspiring discussions, the participants had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with specific knowledge from various fields. The lecturers in this module covered topics related to the stages of the political process in shaping local policies, including the challenges and opportunities arising from this process²⁰.

The participants had the opportunity to attend a lecture on problem identification and data collection methods, and through practical exercises, they worked on identifying problems in local communities. Additionally, a lecture was held on current topics related to the EU, the political potential of women and minorities on the path to EU membership. As part of the module, a group analysis of real problems from the participants’ communities was also conducted.

In addition, the participants had the opportunity to learn more about the importance of networking among women, as well as the role of women in building a just society.

The lecturers in the mentioned module were Dina Bajramspahić, certified trainer, Sergej Sekulović, Master of Law, Gordana Đurović, Professor at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Montenegro, and Goran Delić, communications expert.

20 Find more information about the conference at the following link <https://gamn.org/crna-gora-nepregledno-polje-diskriminacije/>



Photo: Civic Alliance, Academy for Women in Politics, I Module

II Module of the Academy for Women for Women

The second module of the Academy for Women was held in Budva and focused on strengthening the participants' capacity for strategic planning and creating practical, sustainable solutions aimed at addressing challenges affecting sustainable development at the local and national levels.

Lidija Brnović, an expert in strategic planning, delivered a series of lectures and practical workshops on evidence-based public policy planning and the development of concrete proposals for their implementation.

A special emphasis was placed on analyzing the legal, institutional, and social context, identifying key issues, and determining the responsible parties, based on which specific solutions were formulated and turned into proposals for improving public policies.



Photo: Civic Alliance, Academy for Women in Politics, II Module

III Module of the Academy for Women

The third and final module of the Academy for Women in Politics was held in Budva from 13 to 15 December.

After this event, the participants of the Academy attended a lecture on how institutional communication has become a tool for inter-party confrontations. A discussion on the reconciliation process was held with Dr. Ralf Rösner, Chargé d'Affaires of the German Embassy in Montenegro.

Following the conversation with Mr. Rösner, the participants were awarded certificates for successfully completing the Academy for Women in Politics.



Photo: Civic Alliance, participants of the Academy for Women in Politics



Photo: Civic Alliance





WORK OF THE GREEN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Through the program of the School of Political Studies, since 2021, the project “Capacity Building of the Green Parliamentary Group in Montenegro for Sustainable Energy and Urban Mobility” has been implemented. The main goals of the project are to improve the capacity of the formal Green Parliamentary Group in Montenegro in order to strengthen the EU energy and transport agenda within their sphere of influence. Additionally, the project’s objectives include establishing the Green Parliamentary Group in the new mandate of the Montenegrin national parliament and holding regular meetings of group members on energy and transport topics.

- The official re-establishment of the new Green Parliamentary Group was successfully carried out on 19 February 2024, in Budva during the forum “Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina: How the Decarbonization Process Shapes Our Future?”. The members of parliament present at the forum signed the Charter for the establishment of the Green Parliamentary Group. During the forum, the first official meeting of the newly established Green Parliamentary Group was also held.
- The meeting of the new members of this group in 2024 was held in early March, during which the Agreement on the Operation of the Green Parliamentary Group was presented. This document, among other things, defines the areas of action, outlines the working methods, and profiles the partners with whom cooperation will be established. During the meeting, the members of parliament emphasized that rational energy use, i.e., reducing energy losses without compromising the living standards of citizens, while applying modern technologies, should be viewed as a way of life in the society we want to live in. They also stated that they would work dedicatedly on adopting an efficient legislative framework to support the transition to clean energy sources and reduce environmental pollution.

- The Green Parliamentary Group of the 28th session of the Government of Montenegro participated in a two-day study visit to Slovenia from 1 to 3 April, with the aim of promoting the exchange of best practices in the fields of energy and sustainable development. The visit was organized by the School of Political Studies and represents an activity within a project aimed at developing the capacities of Green Parliamentary Groups in the Western Balkans on topics related to the green agenda, energy, and urban mobility, supported by the German organization GIZ.



Photo: Civic Alliance, the First meeting of the members of the Green Parliamentary Group in 2024



Photo: Civic Alliance, Study visit to Slovenia



Photo: Civic Alliance, Study visit to Slovenia

- On the occasion of the presentation of the work of the civil society coalition dedicated to the fight against corruption in the field of environmental protection, the Green Parliamentary Group (GPG) held its third meeting in July 2024. During the meeting, the parliamentarians emphasized the need to strengthen adequate mechanisms for preventing illegal exploitation of natural potentials and resources, as well as establishing a proper accountability system.



Photo: Civic Alliance, Meeting of the members of the Green Parliamentary Group

The “crnetacke.me” platform, which provides an overview of black ecological spots in Montenegro, was also presented. Considering the statements of the civil society representatives, the parliamentarians welcomed their initiative, recognized its importance in the fight against corruption in the environmental protection sector, and expressed their willingness to intensify cooperation in the upcoming period to establish an adequate legal framework for implementing the proposed solutions. In the continuation of the meeting, the Green Parliamentary Group elected two coordinators: MP Bojana Pićan as a representative of the parliamentary majority and MP Ana Novaković Đurović as a representative of the parliamentary opposition.



- The first official meeting of the Green Parliamentary Group with the Energy Community Secretariat was held on 5 November 2024, in the Parliament of Montenegro. The meeting was opened by MP Ana Novaković Đurović, the coordinator of the Green Parliamentary Group. In her opening speech, MP Novaković Đurović emphasized the importance of the Group's work, primarily as an additional encouragement to the relevant committees, especially the Committee responsible for energy, but also noted that the Group consists of representatives from both the parliamentary majority and the parliamentary opposition, as well as representatives from nearly all parliamentary clubs in the Parliament of Montenegro.




Photo: Civic Alliance, Meeting of the Green Parliamentary Group with the Director of the Secretariat of the Energy Communities, Artur Lorkowski

On the occasion of this meeting, the Director of the Energy Community Secretariat, Artur Lorkowski, expressed his satisfaction, stating that it demonstrates how the continuous cooperation between the Parliament of Montenegro and the Energy Community, the activities being carried out to achieve the goals of the Green Agenda, and the growing commitment to European integration, represent interconnected processes that are being implemented with the intention of all political groups.



- The coordinator of the Green Parliamentary Group, MP Ana Novaković Đurović, held a meeting in Podgorica on 17 December with Martina Martinoski, an expert on electricity and statistics at the Energy Community Secretariat. During the meeting, MP Đurović emphasized that it represents a continuation of the cooperation and strong expert support that the Energy Community Secretariat seeks to provide to the members of the Green Parliamentary Group. Considering that the new Energy Law is in the parliamentary procedure, she expressed interest in the changes this law brings in terms of obligations and benefits for Montenegro, market operators, energy companies, and citizens.



The income and expenses of Civic Alliance
in 2024 amounted to

€ 687,002.28

COMMITTEES AND MEMBERSHIPS

In 2024, we continued our activities monitoring the Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms and other parliamentary committees.

Representatives of Civic Alliance actively participated as members of working groups, councils, agencies, and committees, contributing to the creation and implementation of policies in key areas. Their engagement facilitated more effective coordination and the improvement of regulations, especially in segments related to human rights and European integration.

- **Milan Radović** was a member of the Council of the Agency for Electronic Media until the end of 2024, where, through the implementation of legal solutions, he influenced the establishment of policies that guarantee media freedom.

- **Aleksandra Dubak** is a member of the Ethics Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

- **Pavle Ćupić** was elected president of the Council of the Agency for Prevention of Corruption (ASK) in August 2024. He is also a member of the Council for the Rule of Law. Within the scope of the work of the Council for the Rule of Law, he monitors the implementation of obligations from chapters 23 - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, and 24 - Justice, Freedom, and Security in Montenegro's process of accession to the European Union.

- **Milena Vujović** is a member of the Negotiating Working Group for preparing and conducting negotiations on Montenegro's accession to the European Union in the area of the EU legal acquis related to negotiation chapter 24 - Justice, Freedom, and Security. She is also a member of the Working Group for drafting the new Law on the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro.

Through their engagement in the mentioned working groups and government bodies, our colleagues actively contribute to improving the environment and the situation in the area of human rights. Through consistent actions, they provide support to accelerate Montenegro's accession process to the European Union.

DONORS

- Embassy of Germany in Montenegro
- Embassy of the United States of America in Montenegro
- Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Montenegro
- Delegation of the European Union in Montenegro
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- Fund for the Protection and Realization of Minority Rights in Montenegro
- Environmental Protection Fund, Eco-fund
- Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of Montenegro
- Ministry of Public Administration of Montenegro
- Ministry of European Affairs of Montenegro
- U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Council of Europe
- Smart Balkans

CA TEAM

Milan Radović, *Program Director*
Edina Hasanaga Čobaj, *Administrative Director*
Pavle Ćupić, *Program Coordinator*
Ivan Radulović, *Program Coordinator*
Danijela Darmanović, *Communications Coordinator*
Aleksandra Dubak, *Project Coordinator*
Milena Vujović, *Project Coordinator*
Jelena Ristović, *Project Coordinator*
Jelena Ristić, *Office Manager*
Anja Radulović, *Legal Advisor*
Dušica Merdović, *Legal Advisor*
Emina Bajrović, *Legal Advisor*
Ivana Đodić, *Legal Advisor*
Jovan Milić, *Legal Advisor*
Lela Radović, *Legal Advisor*
Mileva Delibašić, *Legal Advisor*
Miloš Janketić, *Legal Advisor*
Miloš Mitrić, *Legal Advisor*
Nikola Vukčević, *Legal Advisor*
Petar Vukčević, *Legal Advisor*

Radimir Đokić, *Legal Advisor*
Rajko Raonić, *Legal Advisor*
Ružica Božović, *Legal Advisor*
Vučić Filipović, *Legal Advisor*
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Ana Kankaraš, *Translator*
Evgeny Novozhilov, *Translator*
Irena Batakovich, *Translator*
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Goran Delić, *External Associate*
Maja Vuletić, *External Associate*
Slađana Andrejević, *Accountant*