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Well-functioning public administration important for citizens, businesses and EU integration process

PODGORICA, 1 February 2017 – Speaking at a workshop on principles of public administration, EU Ambassador Aivo Orav encouraged Montenegro to pursue public administration reform decisively, no matter how painful the process may be. "It is only with an accountable and efficient public administration that Montenegro can reach its full economic potential and can effectively pursue its EU integration path", said Orav at a workshop for civil society organisations, organised in Podgorica by Institut Alternativa and SIGMA/OECD.



Ambassador Orav noted that there are still many challenges in this area. "There is a need to draw a clear and thick line separating politics from administration. As noted in the European Commission's latest Report on Montenegro, strong political will is needed in this regard. It is equally important to ensure effective lines of accountability and to make further efforts when it comes to the right-sizing of administration", he said.

Montenegrin Minister of Public Administration, Suzana Pribilović said that, despite the positive results achieved in the reform of public administration in the past, the Government is aware that much more needs to be done. "First as a citizen, and then as a Minister, I am aware that public administration is not what it primarily needs to be - a service for citizens and businesses. We continue to face the crucial problem - the lack of efficiency and accountability at all levels, so when we talk about reforms, I wish to emphasise that the Government's priority in the future will be the establishment of an effective, rational and transparent public administration", she said, giving her first public speech as the head of a newly formed Ministry of Public Administration within the Government of Montenegro.

The workshop was organised in the framework of the "Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform ([WeBER](#))", funded by the European Union and co-financed by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in the amount of over €1.2 million. During the three years of this project's implementation, organisations from six Western Balkans countries will work to increase the relevance, participation and capacity of civil society organisations and media in the Western Balkans to advocate for and influence the design and implementation of public administration reform.

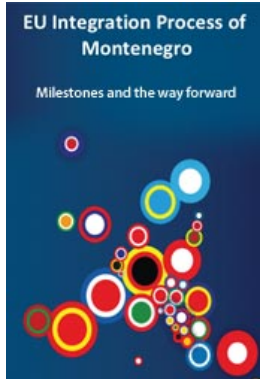
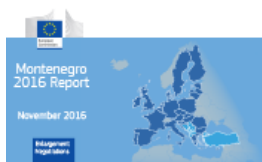
Montenegrin partner in the project is NGO Institut Alternativa. President of its Managing Board, Stevo Muk, recalled that Montenegro is entering the 13th year of the formal process of a rather slow public administration reform, and added that now was the time for measurable, visible, and sustainable results, and actual changes in the work of civil servants and the life of citizens.

To highlight the importance of the topic, speakers at the event also noted that public administration reform is one of the key pillars of the EU's enlargement policy, together with the rule of law and economic governance.

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