Europeanisation of National Political Parties and Party System: Case Study of Montenegro
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Olivera Komar and Zlatko Vujović

Abstract: *The process of European integration is at the very early stages in Montenegro. However, certain influences of this process on politics at the national level can be observed, including the building of a strong consensus on integration, which is partly due to the significant influence the European Union (EU) had in the organization of the referendum on the state status of Montenegro in May 2006, as well as the special dynamic between political parties and citizens. These internal changes so far include changes in party rhetoric, mentioning the EU in party manifestos and declaring membership of it as a goal of political action. Other structural changes are less visible at the moment. Although the process of integration is at the very beginning, bearing in mind the period of time that has passed since the referendum (all other issues except the status of Montenegro as a state remained in the background until this issue was resolved), changes are happening rapidly, and one could argue that process of Europeanization of the party system might be faster in new EU accession countries.*

Key words: *political parties; party system; Europeanization; European integration*

Introduction

The stimulus for analysing the influence of the process of Europeanization on national parties in Montenegro came from theoretical assumptions made in a study conducted by a group of authors including Thomas Poguntke, Nicholas Aylott, Elisabeth Carter, Robert Ladrech and Kurt Richard Luther[1].

This article accepts one of the possible meanings of the term "Europeanization" and sees it as the institutionalization of the European political system, which has certain effects on domestic structures and member states, and on concrete, intra-organizational change in national political parties, as a result of the ongoing process of European integration (Carter et al., 2007: 4–5). The study is especially concerned with the top-down dimension of the Europeanization process, and the hypothesis underlying this research is that European integration has enhanced the intraparty power of two partially overlapping categories – EU specialists[2] and party élites.

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[1] *The Europeanization of National Political Parties – Power and organizational adaptation*, Routledge, London and New York, 2007.

[2] In this study EU specialists are seen as a "heterogeneous group of actors who are characterized by the fact that a considerable part of their political activity is related to the process or substance of European governance" (Carter et al. 2007: 12). They include MEPs, members of national parliamentary EU affairs committees, EU spokespersons, etc.

Although inspired by this study, we realize that the model of research introduced in it is not fully applicable to Montenegro. First of all, it is not a part of the EU; it is in the very early accession stages and therefore: 1) its political parties do not have representatives in the European Parliament; 2) political parties' representatives do not participate in the work of EU bodies that work on the basis of member state representation and; 3) Montenegrin EU specialists are not yet intensively participating in the work of EU institutions. In this sense the process of Europeanization is still at the very early beginning and has had very limited consequences in Montenegro.

On the other hand, the first changes can be noticed. The negotiation process between Montenegro and the EU resulted in certain consequences due to which it is not possible to say that the process of Europeanization has had no influence on political parties in Montenegro. Some of these consequences included: 1) sections of the political élite are involved in the process of negotiations on accession to the EU because some of their work is for the Government and Council for European integration[3]; 2) some EU specialists, as members of the national parliament and EU specialists in parties, are involved in the process of association through: a) participation in government negotiations with EU representatives; b) participation in the work of European Parliament political parties' joint bodies; c) participation in the cooperation between the national and European Parliaments, including parliamentary delegations in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Partnership for Peace; (d) participation in the work of the National Parliamentary Board for European Integration.

This is why this article is based on another semi-hypothesis made in the aforementioned study, namely, that the authors of the study choose not to include in their comparison the new EU member states because they felt that their political parties did not have enough time to respond to the new environment (Carter et al., 2007: 17). On the other hand, the authors pose the question: was joining the EU in the post-Maastricht period for the new EU countries an "external shock", which was consequently followed by faster organizational adaptation? This article develops this question, and extends it to the countries that have yet to join the EU, including Montenegro.

As we are limited by the fact that the article is an in-depth qualitative study of a single country, this question cannot be properly answered. It can, however, provide a thorough description of the early stages of the process and therefore contribute to further research in this field; which could continuously monitor the process and provide more accurate "measurements". This essay argues that the new accession countries are suffering from rapid changes due to the aforementioned "external shock", which

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[3] The (Montenegrin) Council for European integration was founded in April 2004 and its head is the President President of Montenegro. Its members include the President of the Government; the President of Parliament; the Vice-president of the Government for European integration; the Rector of the State University, President of the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts, President of Constitutional Court and the President of the Supreme Court. One seat that is intended for an opposition party representative has still not been occupied.

makes them change and adapt rapidly. This would be especially true if, as in the case of Montenegro, the role of the European Union was extremely strong in one phase of a new EU member state's development and provided a base for firm consensus among political parties about integration.

At the beginning the article will provide brief a description of the party system in Montenegro, with a brief chronology of the main developments on the political scene since the multi-party system was reintroduced after the break up of Yugoslavia. Then, it will seek to explore the consensus on European integration, which exists in Montenegro among political parties and citizens, from three angles: its rationalization, manifestations and effects. In terms of rationalization, the article will look into the roots of EU rhetoric in the party scene in Montenegro and try to localize the main points of development, events that put the issue at the top of the political agenda, as well as events that accelerated this process. In this regard, the role of the EU in the main political events in Montenegrin society, including the recent referendum, will be explored. In the second part, the article will try to identify and present all manifestations of a positive attitude to the EU in the work of political parties, specific party decisions, party rhetoric, manifestos and policies, etc. This part of the article will also focus on effects of the presence of the EU in Montenegrin politics and the impact of its work, as well as internal changes in political parties as a result of greater integration into EU politics in terms of policy and structural changes. The third part of the article will look into the effects of this process and will try to measure the achieved effects of such attitudes in society and the party system. The main types of data to be used will be the results of the relevant public opinion polls, party manifestos and public statements of the representatives of political parties in Montenegro.

Overview of development of post-communist party pluralism in Montenegro – Two Montenegrin transitions and one dominant party

The Montenegrin post-communist transition after the break-up of Yugoslavia comprised two basic phases. The beginning of the first was the "anti-bureaucracy revolution"[4], which started in January 1989. During this "revolution" the former communist governing élite was deprived of power. A curious feature of the first Montenegrin transition was the fact that the main clash happened inside the governing Communist Party élite, and the main goal was not to change the system but the leadership structure. The leaders of the revolution were all members of The Alliance of Communists of Montenegro and held high positions. Srđan Darmanović (2007: 84) describes first Montenegrin transition in his article *Long transition in Montenegro – from Semi-competitive Elections to Electoral Democracy* as comparable to Romania, because a new political élite emerged from the old system, from the previous centre

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4 Popularly called the "Anti-bureaucracy revolution" revolution, this change of the rulling élite within the governing Alliance of Communists of Montenegro took place in January 1989 as a result of a number of riots caused by the economic and political crisis in the country.

of power. Thus, the Democratic Party of Socialists was created from the former Alliance of Communists of Montenegro and continued to dominate the political scene in Montenegro for at least the first 16 years of party pluralism.

After the "Anti-bureaucratic Revolution" Montenegro entered a period that Darmanović describes as a hybrid semi-authoritarian régime, led by one overwhelming authoritarian party – the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) and its "oligarchic ruling élite" (Darmanović, 2007: 85). Since then voters in Montenegro have had an opportunity to choose their representatives eight times, and on all eight occasions they chose this party or its representatives.

In this period free and fair elections were held, but the opposition never had a real opportunity to win. Thanks to its monopoly position, and moreover the fact that it was created as a "state party", the DPS won all the elections, leaving the opposition helpless. There is no doubt that this party was winning the elections based on the will of the voters. However, this desire was a significant product of the DPS's monopoly position, which was inherited from the ex-Communist party from which it emerged, acquiring mechanisms for controlling various aspects of the state system.

The second Montenegrin transition started in a very similar way to the first: through conflict inside the ruling élite. This happened not long after the parliamentary elections in 1996, when the DPS gained a significant victory again thanks to gerrymandering, among other things. The main opponent of the DPS was the united opposition led by the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro, a party which strongly supported the independence of Montenegro, and the People's Party, which supported union with Serbia. This unusual coalition was formed with the main aim of winning elections and taking power from the existing ruling party. It undertook to put aside all other differences until this goal was achieved.

Although this coalition represented one of the most important steps forward in creating a more tolerant society and an attempt to at least temporarily eliminate polarization in society concerning state and national issues, success was not achieved. Thanks to a sudden "reform" of electoral constituencies (one of the good examples of gerrymandering) just before the elections, as well as other mechanisms that were at the disposal of the DPS, this party once again managed to preserve power (the DPS won 51.2 percent of votes, or/and 45 out of 71 seats in parliament).

At that moment a relatively unexpected conflict emerged inside the ruling party, which split it into two almost equal parts. It surfaced within the highest oligarchic élite, and the DPS was divided into two new parties: the DPS, which had an anti-Milošević programme and was led by Milo Đukanović, who was prime minister at the time; and the Social People's Party, which became a strong supporter of Milošević's politics in Montenegro and was led by Momir Bulatović, who was until then President of the Republic.

This conflict was followed by presidential elections, which were extremely important not because of the amount of power accumulated in the hands of the president of the republic (although elected by the people, the president had only ceremonial

powers and the real centre of power was the Government), but because of their strong symbolic meaning. For the first time the pro- and anti-Milošević camps clashed, with both having almost equal chances of victory. One thing should be emphasized here: the split of the ruling party was not a consequence of any ideological differences, but a direct consequence between the struggle for power and influence within the ruling party, and ideological differences were the field in which both sides would seek to establish their legitimacy. This "theme" would be repeated often in contemporary Montenegrin political history.

Assessing that their chances win this time were not so good, the DPS concluded the *Agreement on the Basic of Principles for Development of the Democratic Infrastructure in Montenegro* with the opposition parties, and this document enabled basic guarantees for free and fair elections, which were to be held from then on. In return, the opposition supported the DPS candidate Milo Đukanović, who won the elections, and therefore the SNP officially became the opposition.

The second political transition in Montenegro is considered to have ended after the fall of Milošević in October 2000 (Darmanović, 2007: 87). From that moment until the referendum in May 2006, the two main "blocs" changed their field of clashed, although not the subjects and characteristics: instead of being *for* and *against* Milošević, they became *for independence* and *for the union with Serbia*.

Basic characteristics of party system in Montenegro from 1990 until 2007

It is generally acknowledged that the number of registered parties, and even the number of parties that actually have seats in parliament is not enough to accurately describe the type of party system in one state. Many scientists tried to find more precise ways to calculate an index that would make the data comparable. Here we chose to use two that can, in our opinion, quite accurately describe party system in Montenegro – the index developed by Markku Laakso and Taagepera Rein and the classification devised by Jean Blondel (Source: Liphart, 2003: 119).

Table 1: Development of party system in Montenegro – Calculation of effective number of parties after elections

No.	Year of elections	Number of parties that won mandates	Effective number Of parties
1.	1990.	11	2.1
2.	1992.	4	2.8
3.	1996.	6	2.3
4.	1998.	7	3.1
5.	2001.	8	3.9
6.	2002.	9	3.9
7.	2006.	16	4.8

Table 2: Classification of party systems based on numbers and relative size of political parties

Party system	Hypothetical example of seat distribution	Effective number of political parties
Two party system	55-45	2.0
Two and half party system	45-40-15	2.6
Multiparty system with dominant party	45-20-15-10-10	3.5
Multiparty system without dominant party	25-25-25-15-10	4.5

Source: Liphart, 2003: 118

The first table shows how many parties entered the Montenegrin Parliament after each election, and column 4 shows the effective number of parties in specific terms. As can be seen, the total number of political parties varied from 11 at the beginning to four (the lowest number in 1992), and the latest number is 16. The latest figures show a fragmentation tendency in the Montenegrin Parliament, as can also be shown by the index of the effective number of political parties.

At the very beginning of the multi-party system, in Montenegro in the early 1990s, many political parties entered parliament. This was the case partly because of a very large coalition inside the Alliance of Reform Strengths of Yugoslavia, which comprised six parties, and the Democratic Coalition, which comprised three. The trend of building coalitions was more marked in the period after 1998 and reached its peak after the parliamentary elections in 2007, when 16 parties won seats in parliament through nine party lists.

After the parliamentary elections in 2006 there were 16 parties represented in the Montenegrin Parliament. According to a calculation based on Laakso and Taagepera's index, the effective number of political parties in Montenegro would be 4.8. The table shows that while number of political parties had fluctuated somewhat, their effective number continued to grow. However, the period until 2002 can be regarded without doubt as a multi-party system with a dominant party, according to Blondel's typology. The description provided by Andrew Heywood (2004: 490) of the main characteristics of a multi-party system with a dominant party through five main characteristics fits Montenegro quite well: 1) the urge to shift political attention from competition between parties into conflicts between factions within a dominant party; 2) internal struggles as a way of enabling discussion inside the system in which small parties are usually marginalized; 3) a long period of holding power which causes self-satisfaction, arrogance and corruption inside the dominant party; 4) weak and inefficient opposition; and 5) the weakening of a democratic spirit, which frightens voters away from any change and makes them stick to the "naturally" governing party.

The 2006 parliamentary elections brought change in the sense that the number of effective political parties increased to 4.8, which, apart from indicating fragmentation,

indicates a slight weakening of the dominant party, which can also be tracked by some qualitative indicators such as the blocking of some DPS decisions by the other coalition partner, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), which was almost unimaginable before.

There is another point to be made – the engine that drove all the changes until 2006 was in fact conflicts within the dominant party, which polarized society concerning two basic topics (one can argue that it is the same topic with two variations): 1) support for the régime of Slobodan Milosević (until 2000); and; 2) support for an independent Montenegro (from 2000 until 2006).

The opposition tried to unite in order to change the government but was not successful because it was weak and divided. An additional reason was the fact that voters were for more than a decade "blackmailed" by major issues that "only the main parties could solve". There were, however, two interesting brief moments in the opposition's strategy, when it managed to moved beyond the issues on the agenda set by the ruling party. The first was already described –formation of the coalition People's Agreement (*Narodna sloga*) which united pro-independents and pro-unionists with one goal – to change the government and put the DPS out of power. This pattern was repeated again when the Movement for Changes[5] avoided giving its opinion publicly on whether Montenegro should be independent; therefore giving it space to form a broad front in order to change the government after this issue was resolved by the referendum.

Once the country's status was decided by the referendum, Montenegrin voters were "liberated" from major issues, creating space for more realistic political debate, which included questions related to social and economic development. European integration also appeared on the political agenda; however, the question remained whether the public discourse about this issue among political parties could be called a debate at all.

Europeanization of the party system in Montenegro – Is there truly a consensus on integration?

Democratization and Europeanization are strongly connected processes in Montenegro. In its current position, the European Union served and serves even now as a very effective "carrot" for all political subjects in the country. The urge for integration into the EU was very strong, before independence was gained, and there was and is a silent "consensus" among all political parties about this goal, although this was not the case in the 1990s.

Polarization is one of the basic characteristics of Montenegrin society in almost every aspect. The strong divisions that appeared in the 1990s, which implied different

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[5] The Movement for Changes (*Pokret za promjene*) was established in 2005 from a non-governmental organization called Group for Changes, which worked with the goal of changing the dominant state status debate with social and economic related issues.

attitudes related to the war, became apparent in other subjects and issues that were being debated in that period. The question of war in the Former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia divided the public and political activists on the issue of cooperation between Montenegro and the European Union. For a long time the EU, together with other western countries, was an issue that did not enjoy good reputation among a clear majority of the political parties until 1997.

At the same time as the Democratic Party of Socialists was breaking up (1997) and the Socialist People's Party was being established, the process of formulating an official change of stance towards European values and EU politics began. The biggest challenge for certain political parties' relationships with the EU was the period during the bombing of former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by NATO. The bloc of parties that supported Milošević's political stance towards the other republics of the former Yugoslavia significantly reorganized its politics. Although on the side of Milošević's government (Serbian People's Party and Socialists People's Party), their stance should have had suggested confrontation with the EU; instead, these parties argued for European integration.

The change of régime in Belgrade in 2000 changed attitudes of sections of political parties in Montenegro towards this question but also many other issues as well. Certain sectors of opposition parties with a pro-Serbian orientation changed their attitude towards the international community and looked for an ally in finding a solution for the state status of Montenegro. The section of the international community opposed to Montenegrin independence at that time supported unionist forces, which suddenly became proponents of European integration. The fight for the support of the international community in the Montenegrin referendum pushed the unionist opposition towards the European Union, which was an interesting shift. Defeat in the referendum and the search for a new political identity forced some of the parties to move from merely saying declaring they would adopt European values to actually doing so. Modifications to the opposition political scene, the formation of a new strong opposition (Movement for Changes) as well as strong positioning with the coming of a new leader of the Socialist People's Party, once an associate of Milošević, according to the platform of European integration, made the political scene when considering the same pretty homogeneous.

Until the parliamentary elections in 2006, no political party in parliament declared itself against European integration in any way. The affirmation of these intentions was shown in the Declaration of the Parliament of Republic of Montenegro that was, based on the initiative of non-governmental organizations[6] passed in parliament in 2005. At

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[6] The Declaration on Accession to the EU was adopted within the regular session of Montenegrin Parliament on 8 June 2005. The Text of the Declaration was made on the initiative of European Movement in Montenegro as well as some other NGOs in Montenegro (Centre for Citizen Education, Centre for the Development of NGOs, CEDEM, Group for Changes and The Monitoring Centre (CEMI).

that time, the declaration, which was supported by all parliamentary parties, showed the readiness and resolution of parliament to do everything in its power to accelerate the process of joining Euro-Atlantic integration.

Parliament in Montenegro became very fragmented after the 2006 parliamentary elections; 16 parties entered it, and nine of them had only one representative, and we could argue that the support of some of the new parties in parliament for Euro-Atlantic integration is, at the very least, debatable. For example, through the pre-electoral coalition named Serbian List, led by the Serbian People's Party, two parties that had and are presumed to still have negative attitudes towards the EU entered parliament. The Serbian Radical Party of "Vojislav Seselj", which is part of the Serbian Radical Party in Serbia, firmly opposes ideas of European integration, and argues for the concept of a single Serbian state in the Balkans. Other members of this coalition: the Serbian People's Party; the Democratic Party of Unity; and the People's Socialist Party, have very similar attitudes. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the Serbian People's Party, as the strongest party in this coalition, has declared that it supports the successful finalization of the process of Montenegrin accession to the European Union, which is in a way proved by the programme it adopted after the establishment of Montenegrin independence.

The Declaration of independence and first elections results in the independent country raised the question of distinction between the European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The Liberal party, which followed the former and through its own decision disbanded Liberal Alliance of Montenegro, supported European, but was against NATO integration. One can also emphasize the fact that all five larger parties support European integration, and just a few parties with one representative all publicly or off the record opposed this process. If under the consensus we consider the support of the majority, which in this case could amount to over 90 percent of Montenegrin MPs, than we can conclude that there is a consensus in Montenegro. To what extent it corresponds to the true acceptance of values, and to what extent is motivated by political pragmatism in order to increase voter support is a separate question which will be considered in the section concerning the manifestations of consensus.

Rationalization of EU rhetoric

Now that we have determined that there is a basic consensus among the political parties about the inevitability of European integration, we will look more closely at the reasons behind this consensus in Montenegro. They can be divided into two main groups: 1) "common" reasons that are likely to be found in all countries joining the EU and: 2) reasons that are more specific for the Montenegrin context. Common reasons could include: 1) a generally high support among the population for EU integration; 2) a process of integration that included all countries in the neighbourhood; and 3) the lack of information that citizens and political parties have about the level of change

that is expected in different structures of society. Reasons that are more specific to Montenegro include the context in which it gained its independence and in which the European Union, being a key important subject, became willingly and unwillingly a place where all political parties found common ground.

Popular support for European integration as a reason for "consensus"

The third common subject which was used in the campaigns of all political parties (the first would be state status and the second related to the social and economical status of the country) was EU integration. All political parties in Montenegro supported the integration process in some form. However, in the pre-referendum period pro-independence parties believed that Montenegro could faster integrate as it was independent, and pro-union parties believed that the process would be faster with Serbia. This was how the same goal was "used" in political debate, especially before the referendum, as a crucial argument for attracting voters on both sides. This campaign was again deployed during the 2006 parliamentary elections. Each political party argued that it offered a more secure and faster road to the EU. Therefore voters were offered basically the same goal – integration into the EU, and the only difference was that the roads leading to integration differed according to each of the political parties, as seen in their campaigns and although this is debatable. This contributed to the public support for the process and vice versa overwhelming public support generated through campaign encouraged and strengthened the consensus among political parties to be in favour of the process. This was a very good tactic regarding public opinion that exists in Montenegro about this issue. The 2006 and 2007 public opinion researches showed exact figures (CEDEM[7]).

Table 3: Results of public opinion poll in 2006 and 2007 conducted by CEDEM on question whether Montenegro should enter EU

Whether Montenegro should join EU?

	2006	2007
Yes	76,5 %	74 %
No	5,6 %	8,4 %
Doesn't know	17,9 %	17,6 %

Source: CEDEM, report August 2006 and February 2007

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[7] The Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM) is a Montenegrin non-governmental organization which periodically conducts public opinion research in the field of politics. It has enjoyed success in its work.

Table 4: Results of public opinion poll in 2006 cross tabulated with information about party affiliation conducted by CEDEM

Whether Montenegro should join EU? CEDEM 2006

Party affiliation	DPS-SDP	Liberal and Bosniaks party	Movement for changes	SNP-NS-DSS	Serbian list
Relation towards independence issue	Pro-independent	Pro-independent	Neutral	Pro-unionist	Pro-unionist
Yes	92.4 %	95.9	77.2	62	57.8
No	1.8 %	–	5.7	13.4	16.9
Doesn't know	5.9 %	4.1	17.1	24.6	25.3

Source: CEDEM, report August 2006 and February 2007

From the acquired data, we can see that one of the reasons that political parties support European integration can be found in the fact that a clear majority of people in Montenegro support it. From the information gathered in 2006, which is cross-tabulated with information about party affiliation of voters, one can see that in the period before the referendum supporters of all political parties, regardless party of position on the issue of independence were in majority in favour of integration. This majority was larger when it comes to pro-independence voters. These figures slightly changed in 2007, and the number of people against integration increased. This trend is partly to be expected to continue, as in integration progresses. However, importantly, most people still support integration. There are several reasons for this, one of them being the desire to belong to modern and wealthy societies, and this is very often believed to be synonymous with EU membership.

The other reason could be the low level of understanding among people about what integration actually entails. We can offer one argument supporting this theory. It is related to the question of cooperation with the Hague Tribunal (see Tables 5 and 6). Opinion polls conducted by CEDEM showed that a significant percentage of people do not understand that cooperation with The Hague Tribunal is one of the preconditions for European integration.

Table 5: Results of public opinion poll in 2006 and 2007 conducted by CEDEM on question whether Montenegro should cooperate with The Hague Tribune

Whether there should be cooperation with The Hague Tribune?

	2006	2007
Yes	50 %	45,3 %
No	27.4 %	32,6 %
Doesn't know	21.7 %	22.1 %

Source: CEDEM, report August 2006 and February 2007

Table 6: Results of public opinion poll in 2006 cross tabulated with information about party affiliation conducted by CEDEM

Whether there should be cooperation with The Hague tribune? CEDEM 2006

Party affiliation	DPS-SDP	Liberal and Bosnians party	Movement for changes	SNP-NS-DSS	Serbian list
Relation towards independence issue	Pro-independent	Pro-independent	Neutral	Pro-unionist	Pro-unionist
Yes	78.7 %	83.7 %	42.3 %	17 %	10 %
No	4.7 %	10.2 %	27.6 %	66 %	72 %
Doesn't know	16.6 %	6.1 %	30.1 %	17 %	16.5 %

Source: CEDEM, report August 2006 and February 2007

Table 7: Results of public opinion poll in 2006 and 2007 conducted by CEDEM on question whether Montenegro should cooperate with The Hague Tribune

Whether Montenegro should join NATO (CEDEM, 2007)?	
Yes	36,6%
No	34,6%
Doesn't know	28,8%

Source: CEDEM, report August 2006 and February 2007

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from these figures. First of all, there is a lack of information and understanding of the integration processes among citizens, who do not understand that this issue is strongly connected to the integration process. Also, it is evident that this is the area in which politicians start to differentiate their policies. An example of this could be the referendum campaign, when pro-union parties used two arguments, which were in fact contradictory. On one side they supported EU integration and on the other they sought to mobilize voters through a campaign against supporting the Hague Tribunal. This strategy in fact worked quite well. In addition, as could be seen before, some political parties do not support accession to NATO. This could be also explained by the fact that the percentage of people supporting NATO integration is significantly lower than those supporting EU integration. Some political parties are searching for their identity in this field (see Table 7).

The role of EU in organization of Referendum as a reason for "consensus"

The union of Montenegro and Serbia was established in 2002 by the "Belgrade Agreement" after which the Constitutional Treaty was signed. Article 60 of the Treaty

contained a provision that three years after signing The Belgrade Agreement member states can call for a referendum and reach a decision about their state status. In 2005 the Agreement on the Amendment to the Treaty was signed, introducing a provision that a referendum should be held according to democratically *recognized international standards which are in line with European Union*. This provision opened the doors wide for EU intervention. This intervention, from today's perspective, was very important and had an important role in the peaceful resolution of the Montenegrin state problem. However, that does not make it uncontroversial.

The European Union, through the Council of Europe and The Venice Commission and negotiation process, set the rules for the referendum. What was at the beginning perceived as impossible actually happened. In the end, all the political parties except the Serbian National Party agreed to participate in the referendum, according to all the rules, which were partly set before the "game began". They included some strange criteria, such as a 55-percent majority, a Slovak citizen appointed as the Head of the Republic Referendum Commission – a figure who had very important powers,[8] etc. There was a true consensus because no party had all its demands met and therefore nobody was completely satisfied, although they all agreed upon the rules at the end. There can be two main explanations of how political parties that refused to communicate at the beginning of the negotiation process agreed to these imposed rules. One was external and included strong pressure hinted at by EU bodies, and the second was internal and related to the perceived chances to win (for the first time, both sides actually had the chance to win; in fact pro-union bloc at the end lacked only 2000 votes for victory) which were priority to formal rules for political parties. In this sense they agreed to accept certain strange rules implied by EU in order to achieve their final goal – victory. Although the formal side of the process ended up the strongest legitimization pillar, at the beginning it was almost neglected from the side of political parties.

Although at the time perceived as dangerous tactic (what would had happened if the result was in a "grey zone?"[9]), EU on behalf of international community was the factor that enabled swift movement forward for Montenegro by resolving one of the most important issues – state status. As a result, Montenegro became the unique example of a country resolving, through a peaceful ballot, such an important issue that divided society into two. From this perspective, the role of the European Union was crucial, and it brought the political parties in Montenegro closer to the process of Europeanization.

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[8] One of the powers was the "golden vote". Referendum commissions on all levels, including the Republic Referendum Commission, consisted of an equal number of members from both sides, and if the decision-making process was blocked decisions would be take at a higher level. The highest level was the Republic Referendum Commission, which was made up of eight members from each block. The Head of the Commission had a "golden vote" to actually decide if voting is blocked.

[9] The expression "grey zone" was used for description of possible result between 51 and 55 percent of people voting for independence, in which a very strange situation would occur: the pro-independence movement would win a majority of votes and yet lose the referendum. It was perceived that such a situation in which winners would be losers would lead to possible civil unrest and deepen conflict instead of being a solution.

Manifestations of consensus

In our attempt to identify different signs of party consensus related to EU integration we will look only at the parties that had more then two members in parliament after the 2006 elections. This means that we will consider the two governmental parties – the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) and three opposition parties: the Movement for changes (PZP), Serbian National Party (SNS) and the Social National Party (SNP).

The first positive results appeared from the efforts made by the political parties that supported Milošević in the past. They started to change as a result of Euro-integration; the best example would be the SNP. After failing to win in the referendum and a number of elections, this party started seeking a new political identity in the promotion of European values. Although at the beginning there was an impression that this stance was merely rhetoric, after the election of the new leader, the actions of the SNP became more and more trustworthy. The new leader was someone who had been in the past in charge of EU related issues in this party. A significant movement forward was made also in the educating the SNP's members, who traditionally had a negative attitude towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

The second party in the unionist bloc, the SNS, which after referendum became the strongest Serbian party in Montenegro, did not move towards European issues. Although formally supporting European integration, as it claimed in its programme, its strong coalition relationship with Serbian radical parties and a number of controversial extremist attitudes so not speak in favour of any substantial change. In its programme the SNS states also that it is in favour of Euro-Atlantic integration if there is a general popular consensus on it. If not, a referendum should be called. It is interesting that in its programme the SNS states that it sees itself in future as a part of the European conservative family of parties, especially the European People's Party.

The Movement for Changes dedicated part of its programme to European integration, although this party is strongly pro-European. The NGO (Group for Changes) from which this party emerged was one of the authors of Pro-European declaration of NGOs, which was adopted by the Montenegrin Parliament in 2005. The Programme of the Movement for Changes includes clear statements about its goal – integration to EU and draft of the strategy for European integration of Montenegro.

The leading coalition (DPS-SDP), in its own programmes as well as a number of other statements, supports European integration and says there is no alternative. However, the comments of people close to the ruling coalition, who have a considerable amount of economic power and whose financial interests would be jeopardized in process of integration, started speaking in public against integration in a measured way. Because of their very strong influence on society and the ruling party these informal centres of power could in future put obstacles in the way of EU integration in Montenegro. Conflicting interests surrounding privatization, and lobbying for interests of owners of capital outside the EU, which are interfering in the ruling coalition could

also have an influence on future integration. The linkage between party politics and the grey economy is very strong in Montenegro, especially in the incumbent parties. In the above description of the its party system it was said that in fact there has been one party in power in Montenegro since the multi-party system was introduced. Its clear majority and time in power over time resulted in its involvement in corruption and enabled the creation very powerful centres of informal economic power which are now strongly influencing political processes.

The DPS clearly defines its goal – integration into the EU, without mentioning Euro-Atlantic integration specifically. In its programme the SDP states it believes that it is strategically important for Montenegro to be included in European integration processes and other integration important to for the country's development. Also, the SDP argues for Montenegro's inclusion in European and Euro-Atlantic military structures.

The poor staffing of political parties as well as a high level of non-professionalism in dealing with many issues, as well as integration, are characteristic of the Montenegrin party system. Apart from a few examples, parties are not making significant efforts in the field of EU integration. The poor work inside parties can also be described by the fact that only one political party changed its programme after independence. EU integration is not even mentioned in several political parties' programmes, although it is present in their rhetoric.

The consensus between political parties about the Montenegrin goal of joining the EU does not mean that there are palpable elements of Europeanization of the party system in Montenegro yet. Most programmes of the political parties include a mention of the EU or Europe in different contexts, mostly as a vision or goal that should be realized.

In addition are no changes in the internal structure and organization of the political parties in Montenegro, which can be described as overwhelmingly oligarchic. In 2003 a new law on political parties was passed, and one of its provisions introduced obligatory elements of each party internal acts. A number of political parties that made any changes to their programmes can be neglected. Parties still strongly oppose women quotas in Parliament or free mandate for example which are all changes they will have to accept once the EU accession process accelerates. Two parties – SDP and PZP have introduced gender sensitive language in their internal acts. Not one political party has set up special bodies working only on EU issues.

As for acting supranational, Montenegro has so far had delegations in Parliamentary *Assemblies* of Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly. These delegations are being chosen by a special Committee gathered around the President of the Parliament. According to the electoral results, standing members of the delegations include two members from Government (DPS and SDP) and one member of opposition, who is appointed by the opposition. These are the first steps towards participation in decision making at supranational level, and we cannot still see any significant shift of power in the members' direction; moreover, the parties choose very important and high positioned members and because their power within Parliamentary Assemblies is low.

Table 8: Areas of political party Europeanization in Montenegro according to Mair (2000) and Ladrech (2002)

AREAS OF POLITICAL PARTY EUROPEANISATION	Research findings in Montenegro
Political parties	
Policy/programmatic content	Very modest modification of programs can be observed. Traces of program support are clearly definded in Declaration about European integrations which was adopted in Montenegrin Parliament.
Organization	No changes can be observed in this field.
National party system	
Format	Marginal impact at the moment. One can expect that little political parties might look for legitimacy into radicalisation of EU and NATO accession in future and therefore form stronger front against it.
Patterns of party competition / mechanics of interactions between parties	Topics related to EU integrations are only partly subject of true debate. This is the case only with NATO accession, which is indirectly connected to EU accession. Debate is superficial and mostly includes criticizing government of being too slow. As said before, little parties might seek for legitimacy in euro sceptic field in the future. At the moment this is only case with NATO accession.
Party-government relations	Until recently there was no constructive relation considering European, as well as any other questions, between the Government and the opposition. The situation is slowly changing within the field of European integrations, after constructive positioning of two leading opposition parties.
Transnational	
Relations beyond the national party system	Currently, the scene is witnessing the increase of the number of contacts with factors outside Montenegro related to this question. Although not numerous the existence of contacts with parties outside Montenegro is noticeable as well as cooperation expanding related to this question.

Source: a synthesised view presented at Slovenian Political Science Conference and Central European Political Science Association in Portoroz, Slovenia, may 2007

Concluding remarks

No Eurosceptic party has been established in Montenegro yet among parties with strong voter support, and all parties have declared themselves to be pro-European Union. There is, however a difference among political parties when talking about accession to NATO. Most political parties support joining NATO, however, one is strongly against this kind of decision – the Liberal Party. Certain sections of the Serbian nationalist parties are also sceptical about NATO integration, but are not publicly against it. The People's Party, one of the Serbian parties, has slowly become an opponent of NATO integration. It could be expected that fragmentation of the Parliament would influence radicalization of part of the political parties in their quest for identity. This could lead to the establishment of true Eurosceptic parties. In this article we analysed only political parties with more then one MP, however there are other nine parties with one MP which might take a negative attitude towards security and European integration. Some of them could become significantly stronger at the next elections, and this could especially be the case with the Serbian Radical Party which in 1992 had 9.4 percent representation in Parliament and whose central headquarters – the Serbian Radical Party in Serbia is having significant successes. Apart from getting stronger, this party might strongly influence the SNS, leader of the Serbian list and this could cause shift of this strong party regarding EU and Atlantic integration.

The work of the small parties might sow seeds of Euroscepticism in Montenegro, since there are grounds for it in the light of the strong empathy of a part of the population with Kosovo This issue may again become topical in the near future, bombing of Serbia and which can once again awake negative relation towards western values and integration.

A significant part of the population supported the EU because the EU supported the union with Serbia. Now that the issue is off the agenda, their support might decrease. The other danger comes from some strong and influential informal economic centres of power close to ruling party, which are announcing their disagreement with fast integration to EU in order to protect their existing financial monopolies.

Apart of the above stated, a significant number of political subjects believe that accession to EU will not happen in the near future so that they are not putting any effort into better informing themselves about this process. Thus, their statements about this issue are more a signal of political inertia than a manifestation of concrete interest.

If the results of CEDEM's research before the referenda in 2006 and 2007 are compared, a slight trend of decrease in support for Montenegro's membership of the EU can be seen. Support fell from 76.5 percent to 74 percent, and the number of those opponents increased from 5.6 percent to 8.4 percent, while the number of those with no opinion on the matter remained more or less unchanged, at 17.9 percent in 2006 and 17.6 percent in 2007. It could be expected that this trend will continue but that it will not jeopardize the accession process. As Montenegro approaches accession, the level

of information among citizens will increase and this will affect party rhetoric, which will continue to adjust to public attitudes in the quest for voter support. This will be the most visible in the opposition parties.

The process of stronger Europeanization of the political parties' system could become stronger once Montenegro becomes a candidate country. When this happens it will be able to send a delegation to European Parliament with observer status, and this possibility might open the door to stronger influence of European party system on Montenegrin parties. The expected consequences are as follows: 1) more clear ideological profiles; 2) ideologically close parties working together more closely; 3) better understanding of work of European institutions; 4) improvement of the work of party administrations; 5) improvement of the work of members of parliament and their clubs in parliaments; and 6) connecting and receiving support for improving party resources from partners outside Montenegro.

The integration of political parties at the European level would more strongly affect the Europeanization of the Montenegrin party system. Moreover, in this regard, we must not neglect the possible influence of Eurosceptic MPs from the European Parliament.

As a final conclusion one can expect clearer positioning of political parties regarding the question of European integration, which will be accelerated in the future, when Montenegro gains EU membership status. This will be followed with better information, closer contacts and an understanding of what membership of the EU really means. This might in the future more strongly influence their internal structures.

Such a process might also lead to a clearer definition of supporters and opponents of European integration between political parties and might also reflect in general Montenegrin public and these two processes might mutually affect each other. One could expect that this might weaken support for integration in time in relation to current statistics; however this might not jeopardize the process in general.

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Statute of the Social Democratic Party
Statute of the Socialist People's Party

Abbreviations:

DPS – Demokratska partija socijalista – Democratic Party of Socialists
PzP – Pokret za promjene – Movement for Changes
SDP – Socijaldemokratska partija – Social Democratic Party
SNP – Socijalistička narodna partija – Socialist People's Party
SNS – Srpska narodna stranka – Serbian People's Party

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