



Government of Montenegro
Ministry for European Integration

**COMMUNICATION
STRATEGY
FOR INFORMING
THE PUBLIC ON
THE EUROPEAN UNION
AND PREPARATIONS
OF MONTENEGRO
FOR MEMBERSHIP
2010 – 2014**

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Today, **the European Union** is a community of 27 European states, where a population of around 500 million people lives on 4.3 million km² (7% of the world population that creates almost a third of the world GDP) and where official communication is conducted in 23 languages, where common policies are realised through a very spread mechanism of institutions which are unified and regulated by the EU Acquis Communautaire.

EU is the biggest world trader and a big market that also offers possibilities for the benefits of economic integration of smaller economies, and gives a framework for development of the rule of law, strong institutions and business environment arranged for the strategic development partnerships.

The Union symbolises stability, safety, economic prosperity and common values for all European nations. At last, integration into European structures is becoming the key leverage of growth of the life standard and prosperity of a country.

We can say that upon coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty **EU passed the test of institutional consolidation and** readiness to confront with the competition challenges brought by the 21st century. EU is a serious partner with a vision and who will be reliable in the international scene in the coming decades.

Several European countries are knocking at the EU door – and Montenegro is one of them. After five waves of enlargement, for the remaining European countries that are not in the EU, especially for the countries of the Region, integration into the EU represents a middle-term strategic priority.

For Montenegro, EU membership is a real and accomplishable goal. Therefore, citizens of Montenegro should be better informed about the European Union, in order to understand better, perceive, accept and "live". Hence, our task is to introduce citizens with the concept of the European Union and to explain to them what the obligations of Montenegro are, on the way towards a full membership in the Union. Since the communication is a two way process, it is also very important to obtain feedback from different target groups and to establish good cooperation with them.

Therefore, this Communication Strategy gives guidelines for better informing and education of the public, with the aim of accomplishing bigger degree of citizens' understanding of European integration reform and their active participation in it.

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INTRODUCTION

Accession to the European Union is an objective of the state policy of Montenegro, whose fulfilment requires implementation of intensive and comprehensive measures.

The Ministry for European Integration, as the one competent for managing the European integration process, recognises its role in this process and, led by the strategic objective of the Government of Montenegro and its 2010 Work Programme, committed itself to prepare the Communication Strategy for Informing the Public on the European Union and Preparations of Montenegro for Membership 2010-2014, thus responding to realisation of this important state project.

On 15 October 2007, just over a year after gaining independence, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Montenegro and EU was signed; it has been fully ratified by the EU Member States and it entered into force on 1 May 2010. First session of the Stabilisation and Association Council of the representatives of the Government of Montenegro and the European Commission was held in Luxembourg on 14 June. Implementation of SAA and other numerous activities related to association will enable achievement of European standards, in particular as regards strengthening of the democratic political system and further improvement of the economic system, ensuring free movement of goods, services, persons and capital, GDP growth, greater inflow of foreign direct investments and enhanced regional cooperation.

Montenegro submitted its application for EU membership on 19 December 2009. After the EU Council of Ministers on 23 April 2009 made the decision to implement the procedure laid down in Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, Mr. Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for Enlargement, presented the EC Questionnaire, containing 2178 questions, to Mr. Milo Đukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro, on 22 July 2009. Prime Minister Đukanović submitted answers to the Questionnaire to Commissioner Rehn on 9 December 2009 in Brussels. To 673 additional questions Montenegro answered on 12 April 2010.

Process of Montenegro's accession to the European Union requires ability of assuming not only the obligations and responsibilities arising from membership, but benefits of membership as well. Success in realisation of this process implies well-informed citizens of Montenegro and their support.

There is a general consensus in Montenegro regarding membership in the European Union. All important political and social entities, all parliamentary parties and the civil sector give their support to the European integration process.

In spite of the public's strong support to membership of Montenegro in the European Union, public opinion polls show that the majority of citizens do not have satisfactory knowledge about the European Union, integration process and Montenegro's position in this process, as well as that reasons for this could be found in inadequate perception and insufficient informing of citizens and expert public in Montenegro.

Therefore, citizens and expert public should be provided with more information on rights and obligations arising from the membership, as well as on advantages, deficiencies, benefits and costs of EU membership, sector by sector. For that reason, strategic objectives of the Communication Strategy are primarily focused on the domestic public, in order to make them objectively informed on the European integration process, with emphasis on representatives of sectoral policies and all other public and private professional structures, simultaneously informing them and motivating them for further improvement of their operations.

Data obtained through public opinion polls conducted thus far have proved the necessity of developing a new communication strategy in order to keep the level of pro-European orientation of the domestic public, through full informing of citizens and professional and expert public.

Furthermore, apart from informing the domestic public as one of the main aspects of the Communication Strategy, its advantage also lays in its direction towards informing the international public on Montenegro's progress in adopting European values and standards, with the view to improving overall international image of the country as the final objective of this strategic document.

The first Communication Strategy on Informing the Public on Montenegro's EU Association Process was adopted in 2004. Implementation of this Strategy was characterised by significant cooperation with non-governmental organisations, which have, independently or in cooperation with the Ministry for International Economic Relations and European Integration, Secretariat for European Integration and other institutions at the local and state level, implemented their programme activities related to fulfilment of benchmarks defined in the Strategy.

In the meantime, dynamics of the EU integration process and obligations that Montenegro has fulfilled in accordance with requirements and criteria resulted in the need for preparing a new document, which will define guidelines for informing and communicating with the public on the process of Montenegro's accession to the EU.

In that sense, cooperation between the Ministry for European Integration and other state administration bodies and non-governmental organisations will be continued in the

forthcoming period, while guidelines for realisation of joint and separate programmes will be defined through Action Plans for implementation of the new Communication Strategy.

The new Communication Strategy represents the strategic document related to informing, promotion and mobilisation of the public (citizens, organisations, institutions, professional structures) in the process of Montenegro's integration into the EU.

In drafting this Strategy, significant cooperation has been established with representatives of the civil society in Montenegro (non-governmental institutions, media, business community and universities in Montenegro) as well as with representatives of the international community.

OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The **main objective** of the Communication Strategy is to raise awareness of the domestic public on all aspects of the EU accession process, to better understand rights and responsibilities arising from membership, to raise the level of professional knowledge within public and private organisations and institutions, as well as to inform the international public on the progress that Montenegro makes in adopting European standards and values.

The **concrete objectives** of communication about the EU are the following ones:

- provision of reliable, easily accessible and understandable information;
- overcoming of ungrounded and wrong stereotypes about the integration process;
- raising the level and quality of public debate;
- emphasising the advantages arising from the EU membership;
- emphasising the responsibilities and obligations arising from the EU membership;
- mitigating unreal expectations in the domestic public;
- raising the level of general and professional information of individuals and structures within the state administration, local self-governments and other institutions and organisations;
- raising the level of general and professional information of individuals and structures within the academic, economic and civil sectors (universities, academic circles, NGOs, media, trade union, professional associations).

Four basic aspects of the Communications Strategy are as follows:

- Informing
- Education
- Promotion / Public advocacy
- Mobilisation

Informing implies **dissemination of comprehensible information** on various aspects of the European integration process of Montenegro. The emphasis is put on broadening target groups' knowledge on EU, its institutions, decision-making process, its programmes of support, as well as on the activities carried out or planned by the Government of Montenegro and its partners in the process of EU association (universities, NGOs, media, trade union, professional associations) and work of the European institutions related to integration and EU enlargement processes.

Besides the general and specific (sectoral) topics, the communication will also encompass EU support programmes such as IPA which is primarily directed at the support for harmonisation

of national legislation with the EU *acquis communautaire*, institutional building and strengthening of administrative capacities for the process of European integration, development of civil society, improvement of the regional and cross-border cooperation, as well as the support to the preparation for using structural funds. Part of the IPA funds is intended for the infrastructural projects.

The Ministry of European Integration will regularly inform target publics on calls of the EU for submitting project proposals. Special attention will be directed on training of different target groups for writing quality project proposals suitable for application for EU funds.

It is very important that target groups are familiar with positive as well as with “unpopular” aspects of the integration process (investments into integration obligations, more rigorous technical regulation for the goods market, etc.). This actually means that, besides the affirmation of positive values and benefits from the EU membership, special attention will be dedicated to reforms which Montenegro needs to carry out on the way of accession to the European Union, and which can be negatively perceived in the home public. These “unpopular” reform processes need to be presented in the broader context of improvement of life quality that will be brought by the membership in the European Union.

Furthermore it is necessary that, following the dynamics of the accession process, the mentioned reform processes are identified in continuity and that, accordingly, the content of messages and techniques of communications are regularly revised and adapted.

Education involves regular and alternative, long-term and short-term, general and specific programmes of education of citizens and individuals coming from various professional structures about different stages in the European integration process and all other more specific areas directly or indirectly related to the European integration process of Montenegro.

Promotion / Public advocacy is aimed at intensifying and keeping the level of pro-European attitude, through active dialogue with target groups, and responding to questions and challenges faced by citizens/stakeholders, which observe the European integration process with reserve, in order to develop the pro-European attitude among them as well. Therefore, it is necessary to continuously promote EU values, efforts made and results achieved by the Government of Montenegro as well as results achieved through joint activities of the Government, civil sector and other segments of the society in the process of EU association (universities, media, trade union, professional associations).

Mobilisation relates to motivating target groups to take active part in the process of European integration. It also implies professional preparations of participants for their roles in the integration process, establishment of networks of organisations, institutions and individuals that will actively participate in this process, mobilisation of the public and stimulation of

development of civic spirit and awareness, all with the purpose of strengthening responsibility of citizens that will themselves contribute to the quality of reform implementation process and democratisation of Montenegro.

Approach

Key principles of the Communication Strategy are **decentralisation, flexibility and dialogue**.

The Ministry for European Integration, as the institution competent for proposing and implementation of the Communication Strategy, will carry out communication activities in partnership with the civil sector and other national and international entities that will participate in various stages and aspects of implementation of this Strategy.

Since the EU association is a dynamic process and the reform focus and public attitude will change over the time, the Communication Strategy and its annual action plans will be subject to constant monitoring, evaluation and modification performed by an expert team composed of representatives of the Ministry for European Integration, the Government's Bureau for Public Relations and non-government, as signatories to the Memorandum on Cooperation¹.

Interaction in communication and dialogue will be the fundamental principles in implementation of the Communication Strategy, through which the target public will have the possibility to respond and shape the communication approach itself.

Communication objectives laid down in annual action plans must be concrete, measurable, objective and reliable.

Just like the former one, the new Strategy will be elaborated through **annual action plans prepared, year by year, by the Ministry for European Integration in cooperation with representatives of the civil sector**, signatories to the mentioned Memorandum.

The Strategy covers the period up to 2014, when Montenegro should be "internally prepared" for membership in the EU.

¹ Memorandum on Cooperation in the area of European integration was signed by MEI and representatives of 14 NGOs on 15 October 2009. Furthermore, the Memorandum on Cooperation in the area of European integration was signed with 16 NGOs from Bijelo Polje on 3 February 2010.

TONE, LANGUAGE AND MESSAGES

Overall communication of the Government and its institutions is based on objective and measured approach.

Communication should be based on principles of **openness, transparency and provision of timely, accurate and relevant information**. In that regard, communication should be adapted not only to the time dimension of the process but also to the needs of various target groups. Messages should be conceived for each individual case in order to address specific questions and requirements.

Bearing in mind that, apart from benefits, Montenegro's obligations and responsibilities should be emphasised as well, the **general tone** of communication should reflect a realistic optimism regarding the further association process and future position of Montenegro in the European Union.

Special attention should be devoted to the **language** used in communication.

The language, messages, contents and scope of communication will be adjusted to target groups and individual programmes and activities. For particular target groups, the language and contents of communication should be simple, i.e. adequate and graspable for those to whom it is addressed. Moreover, unified terminology should be used.

Since the communication is based on **target messages**, they should be attuned to the dynamics and target public, simultaneously meeting the specific requests and needs of the public.

TARGET GROUPS²

Considering the comprehensiveness and importance of the EU accession process, the new strategic approach will be focused on establishing communication with as wider spectrum of domestic and international target public as possible.

Communication with the public will be developed at the national and international level.

NATIONAL LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION

The national level of communication relates to target groups in Montenegro. Due to the fact that the process of Montenegro's integration in the EU affects all social groups, target groups and adequate communication channels and forms should be precisely defined.

Therefore, main target groups in Montenegro are the following:

- Multipliers (public opinion shapers);
- Youth;
- Changes-sensitive groups.

Multipliers

Multipliers are target public which has a **significant influence on mobilisation of other target publics and formation of their attitudes**. Therefore, they should be involved in the process also as partners in communication.

We consider the following to be multipliers:

1. media
2. members of the Parliament
3. political parties
4. trade unions
5. commercial and professional associations
6. education institutions (of all levels)
7. non-governmental organisations
8. religious organisations
9. state institutions
10. local self-government
11. local associations

² Having in mind dynamics of the accession process and taking into consideration principles of flexibility and rationality, this principal division into target groups will be more precisely defined in annual communication plans, on the basis of public opinion polls.

Y o u t h

This target group includes the part of population for which the accession to the EU is of the special importance and which will have the greatest benefit of it. The young will influence the involvement of their families, friends, colleagues and all who they have contact with.

Communication activities will be focused on concrete needs and expectations of young people. **The basic objective** of the communication with this target public is **raising awareness of European values and stimulation of the young to take active participation in the process of European integration.**

The young include as follows:

1. pupils of elementary schools
2. pupils of secondary schools
3. students

C h a n g e s - s e n s i t i v e g r o u p

This target group includes those categories of population **that are hard to reach and that especially need explanations on the reasons of accession.**

The group includes the following categories of population:

1. retired persons
2. farmers
3. rural population
4. unemployed persons
5. employed in the SME sector
6. management structures of bigger economic systems
7. disabled persons

I N T E R N A T I O N A L L E V E L O F C O M M U N I C A T I O N

Further progress in European integration in Montenegro, especially after acquiring the candidate status and opening of pre-accession negotiations, will need significant support of public in the EU member states, which will require further efforts in **improving the image of the country in international public and promoting its success in acquiring EU standards and values.**

Two target publics in international level:

1. creators of international public opinion and decision makers
2. general public in EU member states

Creators of international public opinion and decision makers

This target public includes **foreign diplomatic missions to Montenegro, Delegation of the European Union, EU institutions and officials, representations of international organisations in Montenegro, foreign academic institutions, international non-governmental organisations and foreign media.**

Creators of international public opinion and decision makers represent an important target public considering that their positions have **crucial influence** on formation of public opinion in EU member states as well as on process of making the political decisions within the EU.

The aim of communicating with this target public is **raising awareness of progress** that Montenegro has achieved in fulfilling the requirements for accession to the EU, creation of network of EU contacts as well as other activities on promoting and building positions and capacities of Montenegrin institutions and organisations.

Montenegrin diplomatic missions and consular posts to EU member states play significant role in representation of the state abroad. In coordination with line authorities, through concrete activities, they will contribute to the promotion of the country's positive image and will present to target foreign publics the achievements of Montenegro in various phases of the association.

Creators of public opinion and decision makers should be provided with due, accurate and objective information on progress that Montenegro has achieved in the following areas, crucial for the European integration process.

a) Fulfilling the *key criteria* of accession

- Democracy and rule of law
- Human rights and protection of minorities
- Regional cooperation and fulfilment of international obligations
- Affirmation of good-neighbourly cooperation in the areas of common interest
- The existence of functional market economy
- The ability to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU

b) Adoption of European standards

- Harmonisation of national legislation and policies with Community law in the area of internal market, sectoral policies and Justice, Freedom and Security.
- Development of administrative capacities for adoption and enforcement of European standards.

Also, following the principle of dialogue, the information obtained in communication with this target group will have significant part in formation of further communication activities.

General Public in EU Member States

This target group is actually conglomerate of great number of various target publics. The adoption of communication approaches for each individual target public, within this extremely various target group, would require engaging significant financial and human resources. Therefore, it is necessary to identify communication priorities and messages of general character.

In this respect, the communication activities should be developed in **two directions**:

- **improvement of the country image**, that is raising the awareness in EU member states of general civilisation, historical, cultural, economic and natural values and features of Montenegro and
- **communication of concrete areas** for which there is an interest of public in certain EU member states

The Strategy does not tend to address the area of public diplomacy in detail as well as the *nation branding* of Montenegro, but it is evident that specific activities in creation of *competitive identity* in international public are certainly needed, for better perception of Montenegro in EU member states and greater support of international public in its accession to the EU. This certainly implies the need that all the activities envisaged within this Strategy should be linked to broader efforts devoted to building the international image of Montenegro and Development strategy of its public diplomacy.

Concrete areas of informing the general foreign public have been defined on the grounds of public opinion poll in the EU member states on further enlargement, conducted in February 2009³. The survey identified the number of areas, perceived by the citizens of EU as especially important when considering the future EU enlargement.

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³ Flash Eurobarometer Series #257, February 2009- The results of poll vary among countries. Basically, it indicates the areas on which the research of public in EU member states will be focused on (in some countries it is the issue of democracy, whilst in others cultural and religious meters are central to the polling).

In accordance with the results of this survey, informing the public in EU member states will be focused on following general areas:

1. freedom and democratic values
2. economic issues
3. emigration issues
4. cultural and religious issues

Dialogue and flexibility

Accession of Montenegro to the EU is dynamic and complex process. The implementation of necessary reforms shall result also in swings in public opinion's mood regarding the EU membership. Following the principles of dialogue and flexibility, the continuous review and adjustment of messages' content and communication techniques are of utter importance, complying to future international public opinion polling and information obtained from concrete target groups and having in mind the extreme heterogeneity of this target group and dynamic change in circumstances and subject of communication.

In accordance with the principle of flexibility, the content of communication must be adjusted to specific interests of public in certain countries⁴.

⁴ For example: Public in Italy, Malta and Great Britain find the issue of immigration very important, while the stability in EU borders is important question in Slovenia, Estonia, Greece and Finland- Flash EB Series#257).

PARTNERS

The accession to the European Union is **priority** objective of the state of Montenegro. For this reason, all state authorities and local self-government authorities, Parliament of Montenegro, judicial and prosecution authorities and other institutions should assume the responsibility for raising the public awareness in their scope of work. This implies the establishment and building of inter-sectoral cooperation and decentralisation of informing.

Partners in communication include vast spectrum of institutions, organisations and individuals which influence, through their activities, the formation of public opinion and consequently they are treated in this Strategy as target publics i.e. multipliers (communicator) of messages.

The Government partners in communication with citizens are national and international.

PARTNERS IN MONTENEGRO

1. Institutions of Montenegro

During the process of association, institutions of Montenegro will bear the greatest part of responsibility for successful implementation of necessary reforms. They also represent the key partners in communication, especially when forming and communicating the concrete messages to sectoral target publics.

Diplomatic, consular, cultural and commercial representations of Montenegro abroad represent very important partners in the process of communicating to foreign public. In this regard, it is necessary to provide the appropriate training of diplomatic representatives in the area of communication- public relations and public diplomacy as well as the smooth flow of necessary information and good coordination between holders of communication activities in Montenegro and diplomatic, consular, cultural and commercial representations of Montenegro abroad.

2. Media

Media have strong influence on formation of public opinion (especially TV, according to public opinion poll). Due to this reason, cooperation with media is especially important in respect of dissemination of information on EU and Montenegrin integration to the EU. The Government will cooperate with electronic and print media, on national and local level.

Cooperation with editors and journalists should develop the sectoral approach, which will enable better information of citizens on specific matters related to certain areas (e.g. economy, environmental protection, education and the like).

3. Non-governmental organisations

When it comes to **conveying the idea of European integration and promotion of its values**, in great number of new EU member states non-governmental organisations had a major role in the process. On the other hand, their resources are extremely important with regards to more efficient fulfilment of the Strategy's objectives. Considering the accession experience of new EU member states as well as the significant contribution that NGOs make to the process, we may say that non-governmental organisations in Montenegro are recognized as an important partner who will help achieving the objectives of the Strategy, through their initiatives, programmes and projects.

4. Commercial sector

Bearing in mind the significance of the EU accession process as well as the changes it introduces into business environment, **the participation of representatives of commercial sector** as active partners in implementation of communication activities is important.

In this respect, it is necessary to establish cooperation with representatives of Chamber of Commerce, Association for Consumer Protection, professional associations, trade unions and entrepreneurs.

5. Academic community

Universities with their professional capacities represent indispensable partners. They may be bearers of set of activities directly connected to the Communication Strategy. The role of universities is important also because of the influence they have on formation of values in young people.

6. Local self-government and organisations

Cooperation with local self-government, communities and organisations represent an important **element of decentralisation**, one of fundamental principles of Communication Strategy.

7. Religious communities

Because of the influence they have on formation of domestic public opinion, religious communities should also be involved, as partners, in implementation of communication activities.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

1. Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro – diplomatic mission of EU institutions

Delegation of the EU represents an important contact for Montenegro with the EU institutions, through which the EU policy towards Montenegro is realised. Regular contacts, exchange of information and dialogue with this partner are necessary so that administration and decision making level in the EU could have real perception of situation in Montenegro. The assistance and support of EU institutions, in professional, organisational and financial aspect, are of the extreme importance throughout the accession process.

It is important to emphasise the EU assistance available to Montenegro through IPA funds, participation of Montenegro in Community programmes, regional projects and initiatives as well the organisation of joint conferences, round tables and regular meetings with representatives of European institutions and member states and with the EU Delegation in county.

2. Diplomatic, consular, commercial and cultural missions of EU countries to Montenegro

Through embassies, consulates and other missions of EU countries to Montenegro another significant communication channel with the EU is established, bearing in mind the role that governments of member states have in creation of policy of the Union towards Montenegro.

3. International institutions and organisations

International institutions and organisations, through international experts, may provide significant professional assistance in realisation of Communication Strategy.

4. International foundations

International foundations represent important partners concerning the realisation of the Communication Strategy. Besides the regular budgetary funds and direct financial support from EU funds, the support of international foundations would additionally provide better implementation of planned activities.

5. Foreign media

Foreign media have the **crucial influence** on formation of the international public opinion. The first task of the communication is the stimulation of interested foreign media for the developments in Montenegro, where care should be taken of the relevancy (*newsworthiness*) of launched information for the international public and specific interests of the concrete targeted publics.

In that sense, the annual Action Plans should contain special media plans for informing the international public.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND FORMS

1. Electronic media: Television and radio

Television and radio represent a medium most accessible to the greatest number of defined target groups. Apart from this, television and radio are imposed as the most suitable media for initiating **discussions and debates** relating different aspects of Montenegro's EU accession, and therefore offer the possibility of **presenting to the citizens the arguments for the positive sides and advantages of EU accession**.

Recommended as the most suitable TV communication forms are thematic programmes, guest shows, short movies, clips, contact programmes and animated movies. When radio is concerned, the important forms are thematic programmes, guest shows, contact programmes, guises and jingles. Their goal is the education of the broadest public, and they provide fast transmission of important messages and the promotion of certain undertaken activities. TV and radio shows provide the possibility of presenting real and comprehensive picture of the process through documenting or reporting approach, whereas contact programmes and guest shows provide a dialogue, direct communication, confrontation of opinions and participation of citizens in the debate.

2. Printed media

In the communication process, printed media should be used to give **more complete** information relating the EU and its functioning system. Furthermore, printed media can be useful for providing information, in regular time intervals, to certain population groups (e.g. entrepreneurs, students, the employed) on the direct impact which the EU accession would provide for them.

What is recommended here is making and distribution of flyers, brochures, books, bulletins, special publications, articles in newspapers, postcards, stamps, etc. All these forms represent an important source of information for the great part of the population and are useful for the communication with special target groups.

3. Internet

Internet must be one of the **main communication channels** in the EU integration process. This communication channel provides the possibility **of interactivity and bilateral**

communication which needs to be present in all phases of the implementation of the strategy. Furthermore, Internet is a medium which in one place provides the consolidated, relevant information on Montenegro's accession to the EU.

Through the already "traditional" internet communication channels such as web portals, presentations and electronic mail, the attention should be also directed to more and more popular **platforms web 2.0** (internet communities, sites for social networking, platforms for the exchange of video and photo materials, wikis, blogs, etc.), especially in the communication with the youth and international public. Because of the extremely fast technological development of this area, it is very important to continually harmonise the communication approach with the current developments and innovations in the information and communication technology.

4. Public events

Public events represent an important channel of direct communication with target groups. They provide the **full communication and feedback on the needs of target groups**.

Public events include seminars, competitions, public performances and celebrations, workshops, panel discussions, roundtables, debates and different manifestations. All these events provide the promotion of European standards and have influence on the conception of the EU and Montenegro in it. They are also important for the education and stating different proposals and opinions regarding Montenegro's EU accession.

5. Info points and info centres

Info points and info centres represent a place where all interested citizens can get more information on the integration process.

6. Personal contact

Personal contact with citizens, representatives of different social groups and international representatives is an important precondition of effective communication in the integration process, whereas the data directly obtained from the experts, for those who are not informed enough about the integration, have the special importance for their positive opinion on the EU.

Apart from the expert public, this form will also imply the communication through public figures from the areas of sports, music, acting and the like.

FINANCING

Funds for implementation of the Communication Strategy will be defined in accordance with the annual action plans.

Implementation of the communication strategy will be financed from the following sources:

1. Budget of Montenegro

It represents the basic source of financing for the implementation of the Communication Strategy and the Action Plan for its realisation on the annual level, in respect to those activities initiated by the Ministry of European Integration. In every budgetary year, the Ministry shall, in accordance with its possibilities, plan the funds exclusively for implementation of communication activities. In other words, planning of communication activities is followed by budget planning process.

2. International support

International support is based on financing certain activities through international donors. Aiming at providing adequate international support, the Ministry for European Integration will continue with the present practice of support for partners in the implementation of the Communication Strategies, through technical and professional support, as well as giving recommendations in line with the established criteria for the representatives of the civil sector in the area of the European integration. Significant part of communication activities will be financed under IPA projects i.e. EU funds allocated to civil society for this type of activities. Support to civil sector is usually provided also by embassies of EU member states as well as international non-governmental organisations.

3. Non-governmental foundations

Non-governmental foundations represent the potential source of financing for projects/ parts of projects, which derive from the Communication Strategy, and which can be in line with their programme goals.

4. Non-governmental organisations

One part of the activities defined by the Communication Strategy and the annual Action Plans for the implementation of the strategy can possibly be realised through mutual projects with non-governmental organisations, as well as through independent projects of NGOs. In that sense, the Ministry for the European Integration will continue the practise of stimulation and improvement of the cooperation with partners, aiming at the better implementation of activities from the Communication Strategy, as well as the Action Plans for its implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Ministry for the European Integration, in cooperation with non-governmental organisations and other partners, needs to prepare a proper annual Action Plan for each year (which will be adopted by the end of the current year), so that the implementation of the Communication Strategy would be in accordance with the real needs. It will contain a detailed presentation based on the results of public opinion research of the activities, communication forms and tools, target groups, description of activities, project holders, potential partners and the manner of financing.

Activities envisaged by the Action Plan will be carried out by the Ministry for the European Integration and partners, whereas the analysis of successfulness of the implementation of particular activities will be based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of success indicators, feedback from partners and target groups, ad hoc focus groups and public opinion research.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation, as integral part of the Communication Strategy, represent mechanisms for appropriate monitoring and analyses of achieved results so the possible mistakes could be duly identified or the existing capacities for implementation of planning activities could be strengthened.

Monitoring and evaluation will be performed by the work team that has participated in preparation of the Communication Strategy and which will also prepare the action plans for its implementation. During the preparation of action plans, the work team will define also the concrete measures for evaluation of achieved results (indicators).

Monitoring and evaluation will be performed in parallel with implementation of activities envisaged by annual action plan and at the end of each year. Thus, the achieved results will be measured and assessed so the final results could be managed more efficiently. To this end, monitoring will provide indicators of achieved progress and results or their potential shortcomings.

On the other hand, the work team will, through evaluation, systematically and objectively evaluate progress in achieving final results of the Strategy.

Monitoring will be performed in accordance with indicators defined by the work team. Report shall be prepared for each year and will be available on MEI's web page. Evaluation will be internal and will be performed by members of the work team.

Public opinion polling will be performed periodically as an important indicator of success.

INFORMING ON THE COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ON EU MEMBERSHIP

Informing on the course of negotiations, as well as fulfilment of obligations from the Stabilisation and Association Agreement should provide that the public is **timely and comprehensively informed** about the process. Therefore, regular communication activities should be directed in the following way:

- 1. towards the general public** – through media programmes, public debates, interactive communication tools, publications, special internet pages dedicated to negotiations etc.
- 2. towards the sectoral interest target groups that are particularly interested for negotiations in certain areas** – economy subjects (employers, firms, trade companies, professional societies, chamber of economy) nongovernmental organisations, agriculture workers, representatives of the local self-government, academic community, trade unions, etc.

During the negotiation process it is necessary to provide the following:

- Holding **regular press conferences and thematic conferences** dedicated to particular negotiation chapters
- Holding **public debates via TV, radio and other public discussions**
- Creating and maintaining of a **special internet page** for the purpose of informing about the negotiations
- Establishing **interactive communication tools** (web 2.0, info-telephone, electronic mail, in written form, etc.)
- Issuing **publications for the general public**, as well as the **sector publications** meant for particular target groups
- Implementation of different media activities which contain **public debates** on TV, thematic TV shows, radio shows, cooperation with printed media in publishing relevant printed contributions
- Organisation of **public events** which are the convenient tool for realisation of personal contacts with target publics.

CONCLUSION

This Strategy contains the communication framework with national and international public on Montenegro's accession to the European Union, preparations for the membership and rights and obligations deriving from the EU membership.

Successful preparation and realisation of the Strategy will ensure that Montenegro and its citizens face the challenges more easily on their way to EU integration, it will help raising the level of public awareness on the benefits, as well as responsibilities deriving from the membership, and it will also provide the stronger support of the international public for Montenegro's EU accession.

The Strategy will be developed in annual action plans prepared by the Ministry for the European Integration, in cooperation with partners from domestic public sector, civil society and international community. Action plans will be prepared by the end of the calendar year for the following year and will be published on MEI's web site.

In cooperation with partners from domestic public sector and civil society and in line with the dynamics of the accession process, the Ministry will continually monitor the implementation of the Communication Strategy for Informing the Public on the European Union and Preparation of Montenegro for the Membership, and timely revise and amend it by including new communication methods and corresponding subjects.

