

## **REPORT**

### **on the mission to Montenegro**

**3-7 October, 2004**

In early October, within the framework of the Project “Polish Experience Meet Montenegro’s Challenges on Sustainable Development”, financed by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, I had an opportunity to spend five days in Montenegro. The main purpose of the trip was to make an assessment of the needs related to the faster and better implementation of the Constitutional provision on Montenegro as an ecological state. Another purpose was to identify the extent of the existing need to establish an independent center for sustainable development policy as an institution with a catalyst effect on the implementation of the aforementioned provision. The entire stay, in terms of both the choice of persons and institutions and the logistics of the stay, was professionally prepared by the UNDP Office in Podgorica. Due to this, I was able to become acquainted with the different points of view in the different parts of the country, which was the basic condition for the success of the trip to Montenegro.

In the course of my stay in Montenegro, I had 19 official meetings and several informal talks with representatives of UNDP and Bill Moody from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. There was also a summing-up meeting with the staff of the UNDP Office in Podgorica. In all, I had opportunities to ask the opinions and listen to suggestions of more than 35 persons who represented:

- the central government in the persons of Ministers of Environmental Protection and Spatial Planning, Agriculture, Forests and Water Management, and Tourism, with their staff;
- local governments in the persons of the Deputy Mayors of the Towns of Kotor and Kolasin, with their staff;
- the scientific community from the Montenegrin University and the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts;

- environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS), including local ones from Kotor, Kolasin and Pljevlja;
- other non-governmental organizations active in the fields of: strengthening civic organizations, education or promoting new governance in Montenegro;
- the authorities of the National Parks of Lake Skadar and Bjelasica;
- associations of entrepreneurs;
- the UNDP Office in Montenegro.

In addition, I met with an independent expert on environmental economics and the staff of the office of the Austrian Government Project designed to assist the northern part of Montenegro in the development of tourism. A list of the participants in the talks is given in Annex I.

In the course of all these meetings, it could be seen that everyone accepted the Constitutional provision on Montenegro as an ecological state. Practically everyone referred to the need to implement sustainable development in Montenegro. However, they understood this concept in a very different way. For the representatives of the public authorities or persons doing business, in practice, this was either a political slogan or political correctness, since it is simply bad form today to be against sustainable development. This may indicate their low awareness of what an ecological state can mean in practice. This fact was also stressed by all the representatives of ENGOS and the scientific community as well as by the independent expert and the staff of the UNDP Office, who said that there was an enormous need for the environmental education of the public, with emphasis on the understanding of the principles and essence of sustainable development. Indeed, the unawareness of what an ecological state really means leads to:

- the poor implementation of the idea of ecological state at the level of strategic documents, such as policies, strategies, plans or programs;
- the absence of practical ways and instruments of its implementation;
- the absence of public interest in, and civic pressure for, the implementation of the Constitutional provisions.

Such education is only conducted by environmental organizations, which is far from sufficient. The National Education Strategy makes practically no mention of the manner in which the idea of ecological state should be implemented in the processes of education.

At the same time, it was repeatedly emphasized that many of the measures conducted and planned by the authorities did not serve or would not serve the idea of sustainable development; and that, in the extreme cases, they might bring effects in complete contradiction with those provided for by the declaration adopted on the ecological state. In

particular, attention was drawn to the pollution of Lake Skadar, the mass-scale tourism of the Adriatic Sea coast or the proposed water dam which might contribute to the loss of part of the values of the Tara River. The most serious source of danger is the aluminum smelter in the area of Podgorica. The smelter is a plant which at the same time employs the largest number of workers and consumes one third of the total energy consumed in Montenegro, where energy imports are of the order of one fourth of its production by this country. Measures are taken to sell this plant to a foreign partner, while the state would bear the liability for the past pollution, for the elimination of which it has no resources. It seems that before the final decision is taken it would be well-advised to analyze alternative solutions (an integrated assessment of the economic, social and environmental effects), e.g.:

- the closure of the smelter, jobs recreated in the same area in other sectors;
- its closure, with jobs recreated outside of the site of the present smelter;
- the far-reaching modernization of the plant, along with the elimination of the past pollution and its effects.

Moreover, attention was drawn to illegal hunting and forest clear-cutting. This is aggravated by the very slow solution of traditional problems, such as the effective drinking water supply, wastewater treatment or municipal waste management. It was pointed out that no determined efforts were taken to use the natural and cultural values accumulated in Montenegro for more environmentally friendly economic development and ways of meeting the needs of the public. This was the case, in particular, with the sustainable development of tourism, organic farming and the related food processing, renewable energy sources, forest management or the use of national parks to strengthen local development. National parks are treated as a burden on the budget and this view is partly shared by the parks themselves. It should be noted, however, that the Government has taken preliminary steps in this respect, including e.g. the Act on the Development of Organic Farming, or its approval of the program for the sustainable development of tourism in the northern and central parts of the country. It is also envisaged that a program for waste management and wastewater treatment will be developed. As regards tourism, the prevailing view among the representatives of the central administration is that a mass-scale version of tourism should be developed on the coast, whereas much lesser efforts should be taken to ensure its development in the North of the country, although different studies and projects are conducted there, too. Still, many participants in the talks posed questions about the nature of the tourism and its users in the future, particularly given the fact that illegal buildings can be found on the coast and there is no control of compliance with laws and standards.

It seems that there is a serious shortage of independent studies and analyses, which would allow the Government to take decisions based on a long-term vision of the development of the country as an ecological state, as it would be able to choose from at least two options, if not more, or to take decisions which would be part of the process of education and strengthening of the Civil Society. The latter is especially important, since some people believe that the measures of the public administration have the nature of corruption designed to ensure benefits to a specific political grouping – which cannot really be reconciled with the implementation of sustainable development.

It is assessed that the knowledge and experience held by scientific and educational institutions are not utilized to a sufficient extent; and that, despite improvements, the activities of the Council for Sustainable Development are still too formal, rather than real and practical. At the same time, the activity of the scientific communities is insufficient, too. In addition to education, the representatives of the scientific communities believe that the most important aspects of sustainable development include: energy, prevention of pollution, particularly wastewater and municipal waste, biodiversity conservation, poverty, the monopoly of “Morsko Dobro” in the management of the coast as well as the strong implementation of the instrument of environmental impact assessment.

It is the environmental movement that should demand that the idea of sustainable development be implemented in practice. Unfortunately, this is not significantly present in Montenegro. The organizations do not co-operate and they are underestimated and ignored by the Government. Still, there has been the first promising change for the better, as the Ministry of Tourism has set up a desk for co-operation with NGOs. The organizations are weak and there are no leaders qualified to be NGO activists. The organizations are hardly transparent. The few stronger organizations are not interested in co-operation with the weaker ones, since they guard their achievements, authenticity and visibility. It is only a serious threat that mobilizes them to act together, such as the proposed construction of a dam in the neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina which would have adverse effects on the Tara River. Almost 50 organizations have supported the protest, but, in fact, only several of them take real action. It is unpopular to build networks and this process is not really understood, although some attempts have been made. The organizations rely on individual activists. They are based on one or two leaders and when they are not interested or unable to act the organizations cease to operate. Some of the persons involved in the movement work elsewhere, mostly at Government or Government-financed positions, which may cause a conflict of interests (more than 60% of the people work at Government positions). NGOs believe that certain organizations are too strongly connected with the Government or political parties. Too much

emphasis is laid on critical positions with respect to the Government and there is too little focus on positive proposals which are different from those of the Government. There is not enough trust between organizations and the people. The organizations are far from professional and they are weak in the area of politics and organization of campaigns. They make no use of synergies between activities. They have inadequate capacity to write applications, facilitate meetings etc. There are many interesting, often minor initiatives which deserve support and dissemination. NGOs have made an interesting proposal for establishing a professional unit which would deal with spatial planning as an instrument for environmental protection.

Neither the traditional, state-owned business, nor the new one, based on private ownership and market economy, understand and discern the opportunities for the implementation of sustainable development and the creation of an ecological state in Montenegro. Their attitudes are narrowly pragmatic and short-term. The concepts of some businesses rely on state aid for the state-owned sector, whereas the other, private ones are interested in ensuring here and now favorable conditions for the conduct of profitable business (e.g. lower taxes or custom duties).

The role of local governments is not significant in Montenegro. They depend too much on politics and decisions of the central government. Where towns or cities are ruled by opposition parties the additional strong factor of hostility toward the central authorities emerges. In such circumstances, it is difficult to imagine that the local governments would be interested in implementing the idea of ecological state. There are significant differences between the South and the North. In the South, on the Adriatic Sea coast, there are clear concerns about the effects of mass-scale tourism and modest actions are taken to counteract or limit these negative effects. In contrast, in the North there is no understanding of the opportunities offered by its unique values for the integrated and sustainable rural development in connection with small towns. The idea of partnership (between the local government, NGOs, local business, a national park etc.) is very poorly developed.

## **Conclusions**

1. Although Montenegro was established as an ecological state more than 10 years ago, to date neither a program has been drawn up, nor have wide measures been taken to implement this decision. Still, there is continued interest in, and support for, this idea at both the levels of central and local governments, and those of entrepreneurs and the scientific community. However, there is a need for measures which would act as a

catalyst and build partnerships, serving to work out the ways of implementing this decision in everyday practice which would be accepted by the overwhelming majority of groups representing different interests – starting with measures in the range of education and awareness, through the development of policies, plans, programs and strategies for different fields and levels, to investment and institutional measures. The latter would be broadly understood to include legal and financial instruments.

2. To build the stable foundation for ecological state is necessary to make deep education reform oriented on sustainable way of living by individuals, families, communities, enterprises, regions and the whole state. The first two steps are needed. Developed comprehensive curriculums of education for elementary, secondary and university with new text books and simultaneously to training teachers. The most important is not focus on new subject but on greening (in sustainable sense but not only environmental one) education system at all. As a result of education on whole level the students need to understand the sustainable development concepts and ways of thinking and acting. The reform needs to include post-graduated studies specially for media people as well as different type of foreign fellowships for the best students in leading in sustainable particle solutions communities, organizations, companies, regions or public administration.
  
3. A determined start of the implementation of this decision requires the establishment of an institution which would fulfill the catalyst/accelerating/strengthening functions and build a platform for joint action to implement the idea of sustainable development in Montenegro. It would be a non-governmental institution, a non-profit “think tank” or a Public Policy Research Center (T-T), e.g. the Sustainable Policy Center for Montenegro.<sup>1</sup> Base on the experience of many T-T all of the world and specially in CEE these kind of institution are characterized by:
  - ◆ Driven by values, mission and principles;
  - ◆ Independent point of view and non profit orientation;
  - ◆ No relation to political parties;
  - ◆ Broad policy issues as a core part of activity to build democratic balance for public administration;

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<sup>1</sup> Temporary name.

- ◆ Platform for independent debates, sources of innovative ideas, solutions and recommendations;
- ◆ Alternative sources of information, studies and opinions.

It would be a professional institution, which would, on the one hand, provide strong arguments to the environmental movement so that it could become to a greater extent a partner for the Government and would be more visible for the public and business. On the other hand, it could prepare, on commissions from the Government or local governments, multi-option solutions or present solutions alternative to those proposed. At the same time, it would be a platform for co-operation, integrating different interest groups round a single idea, solution or proposal. By providing professional studies and expertise-based arguments following the idea of sustainable development, this institution would indirectly contribute to raising the environmental awareness or to creating leaders, particularly those of the environmental movement. It could draw on the international experience of institutions of a similar type, particularly those from the Central and Eastern Europe. This Center should initiate in-depth debates, provide a channel for communication and identification of the challenges faced in the implementation of sustainable development. It is important to emphasize that – with the exception of representatives of private business – everyone supported this idea and was very interested in it. A multi-option proposal for such an institution is given in Annex 2, along with the proposed timetable for its establishment.

4. Critical for the new institution will be based on CEE experience:
  - ◆ Credibility among broad public,
  - ◆ High quality of products based on scientifically knowledge;
  - ◆ Understanding of finance/budgets, economic activity, social issues and natural science – holistic point of view,
  - ◆ Ability to communicate with different types of audiences,
  - ◆ Ability to be perceived as professional by government and business,
  - ◆ Ability to work with NGOs on partnership base.
  
5. It is particularly important to create such an institution as would not duplicate the present activities of the environmental movement and would not compete with it for the resources enabling it to operate. It is also important to prevent this institution to becoming, under the disguise of a non-governmental, non-profit institution, more of a

consultancy rather than T-T – one that would be guided primarily by the profit and interest of the customer rather than by the general public interest.

6. In the course of the meetings, many issues were proposed for the basic scope of the tasks of this institution. After they have been synthesized and similar suggestions have been compiled, the proposed list contains 10 projects. These proposals are given in Annex 3.

List of participants in the meetings

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35.	No data		Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Spatial Planning		
36.	No data		Ministry of Environmental Protection and Spatial Planning		

**SUSTAINABLE POLICY CENTER FOR MONTENEGRO**  
Primary draft concept

**Legal framework**

- a) A foundation created by several countrywide-known individuals with high public reputation, including international persons.

OR

- b) A foundation created by institutions from different interest groups (central and local governments, NGOs, business, academia).

OR

- c) An association of many persons from different circles.

**Structure of power**

- a) Foundation
- The Board of Founders (BoF), nominates the members of the Board of Trustees (BoT) and appoints the Executive Director after a positive opinion from BoT.
  - The Board of Trustees includes individuals with high reputation nominated by BoF for several years (normally three) as a decision-making body to approve each year's action plans and reports (narrative and financial). The Board approves the strategy on institutional development as well.
  - The Executive Director, appointed by BoF for several years (normally three), is responsible for daily management, including preparation of action plans and reports.

OR

- b) Association
- The General Assembly (GA) includes all members of the association and approves action plans and reports (narrative and financial) for several years (normally three). GA elects members of the executive committee, including its president and the auditors' committee.
  - The auditors' committee reviews the activity of the Association every three years and proposes that GA vote to accept it or not.
  - The Executive Committee (EC) supervises activities based on one-year plans and reports. EC hires the Executive Director for several years (normally three).
  - The Executive Director is responsible for daily management, including preparation of action plans and reports.

### **Operational activity**

- a) The Center hires permanent staff, consisting of highly qualified experts, with some support staff, and only occasionally uses short-term external contractors.

OR

- b) The Center is a small institution and hires for each project highly qualified experts based on managerial contracts.

### **Main outputs**

- ◆ In-depth reports;
- ◆ Position papers;
- ◆ Bulletin for general public;
- ◆ Conferences, seminars, workshops;
- ◆ Preparation of strategic documents based on the idea of Agenda 21 or the roundtable discussion concept or other technique to involve public (different stakeholders) in the planning process;
- ◆ Information desk about sustainable development solutions;
- ◆ Occasional trainings.

**Draft steps to establish  
THE SUSTAINABLE POLICY CENTER for MONTENEGRO**

	2005												2006					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI-VIII
Identify potential sponsors of the Center	x	x	X	x	x	x												
Prepare a legal analysis		x																
Develop a list of potential initiators of the Center		x	X															
Invite a minimum of 5 people/institutions to establish the foundation or association				x														
Select a committee of persons responsible for establishing the Center (initiators, UNDP, RBF, ISD)					x													
Provide a small fund for the technical set up of the Center					x													
Appoint (a person) persons responsible for establishing the Center					x													
Prepare: the status, a proposal to set up the Center, including a strategy for three years and the first-year working plan, along with a financial plan, draft the Center Charter laying down principles and values						x												
Organize an informal workshop with many interested participants and present the status, strategy, working plan in draft form							x											
Legally establish the Center								x										
Organize the first meeting of Board of Founders or General Assembly, to approve Board of Trustees or Executive Committee, strategy and working plan, Center Charter laying down principles and values									x									
Provide financial support to the Center										x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Appoint Executive Director									x									
Hold the opening event with a press conference											x							
Hire the staff											x							
Conduct training for the start of the Center											x	x						
Assist in the first year of activity									x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

### **List of potential projects**

- 1) An annual assessment of progress in implementing an ecological state.
- 2) An alternative energy strategy with focus on energy efficiency, energy saving and development renewable energy sources as well as on energy safety of the country.
- 3) Potential environmental/ecological, social and economic losses related to the Buk Bijela dam construction and operation.
- 4) Support for household budgets by implementing energy and water efficiency and saving measures.
- 5) Policy level opportunities and threats for Lake Skadar.
- 6) Local Agenda 21 for Lake Skadar, including the surrounding areas.
- 7) Forest as a key factor in nature conservation and local sustainable development – policy analysis.
- 8) Entrepreneurship and local sustainable development.
- 9) Implementation of Strategic Environmental Assessment as a policy tool.
- 10) The regional dimension of the declaration - Montenegro is an ecological state