

Social Card in Montenegro - Social Welfare Information System High hopes?

December, 2012

SUMMARY

Through the realisation of the project "Social Card - Social Welfare Information System", the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare will set up a system for keeping records on socially vulnerable population for the first time, which will be the basis for adjusting the normative framework prescribing the conditions and criteria for claiming rights and access to social services. Strengthening expert capacities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare for analytical and research work is a precondition for creating a social welfare policy at the national and local level, but also for the rationalisation of funds which represent the largest part of the budget of Montenegro.

Work on this project is hampered by the fact that the normative framework in the area of social welfare has not been established yet. Bylaws which regulate the manner of creating the social card have not been adopted. Non-governmental organisations as well as the profit sector, although recognised as providers of extra-institutional social services, are not obliged to exchange data with the centres for social work. This leaves room for inclusion errors and brings in contradictions in the social welfare reform, which actually prioritises provision of social services.

In order to achieve the targeted routing of social assistance payments, to rationalise planning of social policy and to increase trust in the social welfare system, it is necessary to address the problems which render the needs of socially vulnerable population still a space for abuse. In the first place, this means ensuring valid data by regulating illegal construction and suppressing grey economy. It is necessary to establish a system for keeping records on illegally constructed objects and to intensify work on suppressing grey economy. Establishing a protocol of cooperation and enabling exchange of data through the development of strategy for interoperability between the relevant institutions, is a precondition for creating the social card as a useful instrument for targeted routing of payments. It is worrying that this phase of the project requires the deadline which matches the final deadline of the entire project. Work on this project should be intensified, especially as regards further planning on upgrading and maintaining the system. Still, it is a longterm project of strategic importance for the social welfare system, which is why it is necessary to consider extending the deadline for the completion of the project.

INTRODUCTION

By creating a single database on (potential) beneficiaries of the social welfare system, through the project entitled "Social Card - Social Welfare Information System", the Government of Montenegro intends to manage funds from the budget in this area more efficiently; to standardise the decision-making procedure in the field of social rights; to minimise abuse and to ensure a more efficient planning of different programmes intended for use by socially vulnerable population. Not only does the success of reorganisation of work of the centres for social work depend on the implementation of this project, but also the entire reform of the social welfare system.

The goal of this analysis is to indicate the expected effects and challenges of establishing a social welfare information system, as well as to provide recommendations for enhancing the realisation of this project, to which the comparative practice of the countries in the region has contributed partially.

What is the Social Card?

Multiple attempts and delays of the Government of Montenegro to introduce the social card have made an impact on changing the very concept of the project. The differences are related to the manner of gathering data, set priorities and the basic purpose of the project.

The decree on social card from 2001 defined social card as a "collection of data on households in the Republic of Montenegro, their property, income, specific expenditures, social needs and health protection

needs.”¹ The basic goal of the project was to define the social status of households and to carry out a more transparent and fairer redistribution of funds to the poorer strata of population, on the basis of a reliable record on the number of socially vulnerable persons.

Underdevelopment of information technology and mechanisms of inter-institutional cooperation, conditioned the need for developing social card “from door to door”², which is time and money consuming.

The Government of Montenegro replaced the priority of creating social cards for all citizens by the priority of setting up a social welfare information system. During the renewed deliberation on possibilities about the realisation of this project in 2007, *social card was defined as an electronic database about the beneficiaries of the social welfare system, which came into being as a consequence of setting up an information system which links and enables automatic exchange of data between the relevant social welfare institutions.* Legal, organisational and financial conditions for the implementation of the project (or the absence thereof) caused another delay - instead of 2009, the Government planned to finish the project in 2011.³

The Government of Montenegro has been trying for 12 years to realise the project of Social Card.

Unsuccessful procurement tenders for an integrated information system and the lack of reliable records on beneficiaries of social assistance payments⁴ conditioned another delay in the realisation of the project.

Concrete advances in the realisation of the project

- 1 Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Decree on social card (Official Gazette of the RoM, No. 41/01)
- 2 The *decree* foresaw that the data for social card be gathered by filling out a form, through citizens’ application to the centres for social work and by downloading the data from the records of competent state bodies.
- 3 This was foreseen by the Action plan of structural reforms in the areas of healthcare, education and science, labour and social welfare, for the period 2010-2011, *Report on the work and state of play in the administrative areas of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare for 2009.*
- 4 Non-existence of a single system for keeping records on the beneficiaries pushed the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, via centres for social work, to assess the grounds for using social benefits and child allowances, even before the start of the project, with a view to examining whether there was an error of inclusion or not.

Social Card were made by the UNDP representation in Montenegro. In cooperation with the Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister for economic policy and financial system, UNDP defined the project tasks, its budget and its participation in the project.⁵ The priority of the project is the establishment of a social welfare information system, not the creation of the social card. *Social welfare information system is an electronic version of the social card which will support business processes in the social welfare system and provide precise insight into personal and other data of users which are necessary for accessing the programmes of social protection.*⁶ The difference in relation to the previous concept is reflected in the manner of keeping records and in the creation of social cards for all applicants claiming certain rights in the social welfare system, and not just for the current beneficiaries.

Price of the project

The total value of the project⁷ *Social Card - Social Welfare Information System* is EUR 4 million.⁸ For the time being, the only certainty is the realisation of the first phase of the project which foresees social and child protection payments, services provided by the centres for social work, subsidy programmes for electricity as well as the programme of agricultural pensions. The second phase is related to processing rights of combatant-disability protection and establishing special information systems in institutions of social and child protection. The first phase, according to the project plan, should be completed in November 2014. The second phase, if realised, should be completed in 2016.

The total value of the first phase of the project

- 5 Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of the Government of Montenegro and the representation of UNDP in Montenegro, signed an *Agreement on the implementation of the project Social Card - Social Welfare Information System*, in May 2012.
- 6 Government of Montenegro - *Information on the activities related to the project “Social Card”, 2012.*
- 7 EUR 400.000 was designated in the budget of Montenegro for 2009 for the Social Card project, while in 2010, it was EUR 900.000. *The total value of the project is estimated to EUR 1.92 million, Minutes from the 33rd session of the Committee for health, labour and social welfare of the Parliament of Montenegro, held on 29 November 2010.*
- 8 Project “Social Card” - Expert insight into the assessment of the situation, UNDP document.

“Social Card - Social Welfare Information System” is EUR 1.279.979, with UNDP participation amounting to EUR 127.979.⁹

Why and for whom is the social card necessary?

One of the key problems of the social welfare system is the impossibility to cover all socially vulnerable inhabitants of Montenegro with an appropriate form of protection.¹⁰ A reliable record-keeping of this category does not exist, nor about the beneficiaries of the social welfare system. There are only records enabled by the SODIS system - IT system of social and child protection. SODIS contains a database about the number of beneficiaries of social assistance and child allowance.¹¹ The shortcoming of SODIS is that the errors made while calculating and forming files are corrected manually. In other words, entering incorrect data cannot be prevented, which leaves room for abuse. Since the centres for social work in Montenegro (a total of 10) and 8 sub-units of centres of social work (out of the total of 11) use different softwares¹² which prevent mutual exchange of data in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, it is clear that the exchange of information between the databases at the national and local levels is hampered. This opens the possibility for potential use of the same right on the territory of multiple units of local self-government and causes imprecise reporting of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

In addition, if we take into account the existence of inclusion error, i.e. the possibility of abuse of rights by those who are not entitled to claim the right to social assistance payments, which they still do because formally and legally speaking they satisfy all the legal criteria, we get a clear picture of the complexity of the project *Social Card*.

When defining the current model of the project Social Card, the Government of Montenegro fore-

saw that the social card should be assigned to all those who would have contacted centres for social work, as primary institutions dealing with social problems. All denied requests will be registered, while the causes for exclusion will be periodically examined, which will foster reforms of the social legislation. Such record-keeping will be the basis for scientific research and analytical work and for the creation of social measures, programmes and services tailored to the needs of end-users.

How is the project “Social Card - Social Welfare Information System” conceived?

Social Welfare Information System will connect databases of the institutions relevant for claiming rights stemming from the social welfare system, most notably: centres for social work, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Employment Agency, Ministry of Education and Sports, Real Estate Directorate, Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, Health Insurance Fund and Tax Administration.

Social card will contain data related to the current status (social anamnesis¹³), measures already taken (social right and/or services used) as well as the change in status (suspension of right/service). Social welfare information system will introduce the rule according to which the record-keeping of (potential) beneficiaries is maintained in an electronic form.¹⁴ Information system will contain all data, in an electronic form, which are a product of the implementation of laws, relevant for the work of centres for social work: Law on protection from domestic violence, Criminal Code (part related to juvenile delinquency) and Family Law.

The first step in creating social cards is the submission of a request claiming a certain social right. By entering the unique citizen number, an

9 Government of Montenegro - *Information about the activities related to the project “Social Card”*

10 Strategy for the suppression of poverty and social exclusion for the period 2007 - 2011

11 2009 Report on the work and state of play in administrative areas run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

12 http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media_16426.html

13 General data, data on material, family, real estate, health conditions of the social rights beneficiaries, along with the proposal and opinion of a social worker as regards overcoming a disadvantageous situation.

14 Personal card, monitoring sheet and the user file are kept in paper format, while the forms for claiming rights (prescribed by relevant rulebooks), as well as reports on the number of social rights beneficiaries are kept in an electronic format. Centres for social work run electronic record-keeping on the number of beneficiaries receiving social assistance payments and child allowance, while the records on beneficiaries of other rights of social and child protection are kept in excell tables.

authorised official of a centre for social work initiates the process of automatic data gathering, by examining the databases of institutions relevant for claiming social rights.¹⁵

Automatisation of the process of gathering, processing and updating data will significantly save time and money, both for (potential) beneficiaries and for the experts of centres for social work. By establishing an information system, efficiency and the routing of social assistance payments will be increased through the *reduction* of inclusion and exclusion errors.

Information system facilitates the process of reorganisation of work of the centres for social work, because it will enhance the administrative procedures and facilitate business processes, but also the quality of services by allowing experts of centres for social work to deal with the actual problems of their clients, rather than dealing with paperwork. Expert of a centre for social work will be able to decide on whether an applicant is entitled to claim social rights the same day that the application is submitted. It will facilitate the process of reporting of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare on the implementation of the social welfare programme and will enhance the system for planning measures, programmes and resources in general in this area.

Challenges for establishing a social welfare information system

Although the project of creating the social card is ongoing, there is no legal provision regulating clear division of responsibilities, nor the obligations of the competent institutions.¹⁶ Creation of the social card, and the record-keeping thereof,

must be regulated by a special bylaw, while not even the Law on social and child protection has been adopted yet. Unfortunately, the draft of the new Law on social and child protection does not prescribe clear division of responsibilities between the centres for social work and competent bodies of the local authorities either, in order to avoid parallel record-keeping about the same beneficiaries.¹⁷

The principal challenge for establishing a social welfare information system is solving the problem of *determining the factual state of play* as regards the material status of applicants claiming these rights. Grey economy and informally built objects¹⁸ continue to leave room for abuse of rights. Inheritance procedures require efficiency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and of the competent courts, which is a precondition for timely and quality assessment of the real property status of citizens, i.e. for objectivity of data contained in the social card.

There is no data on inclusion error estimates about the beneficiaries of family allowances who live in unregistered or illegally built objects, or who are actual owners of immovable and/or movable assets which are, formally and legally speaking, the property of another person.

A whole set of national and local documents in the system of social and child protection emphasises the development of social services.¹⁹ Centres for social work will provide so-called institutional services, while the network of those social services which are a priority for the local population, will be developed at the level of local communities. Among others, NGOs are recognised as service providers. Abuse of rights is also possible because of the non-existent legal basis which would oblige NGOs, as well as other service providers, to cooperate with centres for social work, as regards delivering data

15 According to the current procedure for claiming a right on a certain social assistance payment, a potential beneficiary gathers several documents from the relevant institutions. If it turns out that he/she is not entitled to that right, while the circumstantial conditions, which are significant for claiming the right, change, in order to claim that right again, the documents must be gathered anew as documents must not be older than 6 months, since there is no record indicating that the same person had previously applied for that same right.

16 Draft Law on Social and Child Protection which represents the basis for adopting the bylaws necessary for regulating this issue, has been in the parliamentary procedure since July this year.

17 Records about certain rights of social and child protection are kept by the competent bodies of the local self-government, which is responsible for providing combatant-disability protection as well.

18 The Law on Legalisation of Informal Objects will be adopted in Montenegro for the first time. An informal object, as defined by this draft law, is an object or a part thereof, built without a construction permit, i.e. contrary to the construction permit.

19 Strategy for the development of the social and child protection system for the period 2008 - 2012, new draft Law on social and child protection, local plans for the development of social services.

on their beneficiaries. This is needed for updating and completing the social card data.

The project document²⁰ does not guarantee that the establishment of a social welfare information system will harmonise the procedures for claiming *all* rights which depend on the property and income of applicants.

Linking with the bases of local administration is planned only during the second phase, which is not certain yet. Until then, there is a risk of using the same right on the territory of multiple local self-governments. Linking with the database in institutions of social and child protection is not certain. Without it, a social welfare information system may not be completed.

Centres for social work largely use the database on children²¹, but the project plan does not indicate whether that database will be integrated, and to what extent, into the social welfare information system.

Today, the development of IT allows for greater chances of realisation of this project, but the development of information infrastructure and capacities remains a challenge for enhancing the entire process of informatisation of the state administration. The current situation in the centres for social work and the short deadline for establishing a social welfare information system require immediate action in terms of raising the level of information literacy, as well as informing experts of the centres about the project and the ways in which it will facilitate everyday work.

One of the challenges when establishing the informatisation of the state administration is the establishment of an inter-operability framework²²

and the enabling of automatic exchange and use of data stored in state registers and other information systems at the national level (so-called Enterprise Service Bus System - ESB)²³. When the national ESB is established, the social welfare information system will have to be modified which will require additional financial investment.²⁴ Until then, link-

"It is the opinion of our expert (...) that 4 years are needed for the realisation of the first phase of the project, since a minimum of 2 years are needed for monitoring and potential upgrading of the system, from the moment of establishing an information system."

Aleksandra Višnjić Bojović, UNDP project manager "Social Card - SWIS"

ing the databases of institutions relevant for the exercise of social rights and the establishment of cooperation mechanisms and inter-operability which could facilitate downloading of the data, will represent a challenge.

Record-keeping about all applications represents a challenge for strengthening the capacity of the Department for Analytics in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, because apart from reporting, these records represent the basis for creating a social policy at the national and local levels.

Comparative experiences – what can we learn?

Comparative experience of the countries of the region demonstrates the common goals of establishing a social welfare information system: to ensure successful implementation of the laws in the areas of social transfers, to accelerate and standardise decision-making procedures, to enable routing of the funds to those who fulfill the legally-prescribed conditions, to create a single database on all applicants wishing to receive social transfers, and to ensure the use of certain

20 Project document is an integral part of the *Information on the activities related to the Social Card project*.

21 The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, in cooperation with UNICEF, worked on creating a single national database on children covered by the system of child protection (children from poor families, children victims of violence, children in conflict with law, children placed in institutions, children placed in foster families, etc.), in order to monitor their access to services, prevent and solve current problems, monitor changes and enhance forms of child protection. The base became operational in January 2012.

22 "Interoperability is the capacity of unequal and different organisations to cooperate mutually for the generally useful and commonly agreed goals (...) through business processes which they support via data exchange between their ICT systems", National interoperability framework,

Ministry of Information Society and Telecommunication, December 2011.

23 *Strategy for the development of information society for the period 2012 - 2016*, Ministry of Information Society and Telecommunication.

24 According to the estimates made by A. Višnjić, circa EUR 20.000 is needed for integrating SWIS into the national ESB, which is not a lot of money compared to the price of the first phase of the project, and bearing in mind the nonexistence of the necessary information infrastructure which would facilitate the implementation of the project.

data available to other institutions which are significant for claiming social rights. Furthermore, comparative experience shows that ***this process is extremely demanding and that it requires not only financial, but organisational preconditions too.***

By examining the experiences of Croatia and Slovenia, the goal is to prevent the difficulties, which these countries faced, while working on the establishment of a social welfare information system in Montenegro.

Croatia

Initially, the Republic of Croatia intended to establish an information system which would link all institutions of social and child protection (SocSkrb²⁵ programme). In the end, however, Croatia adopted a programme which would enable data exchange with institutions relevant for the exercise of social welfare rights (e_Razmjena programme). Unlike Croatia, Montenegro decided to follow the second scenario when establishing its information system. Although the priority is the same - establishment of a social welfare information system - Montenegro is introducing social card as a comprehensive database on all (potential) beneficiaries as a special service of the system.

The goal of E_Razmjena (E_Exchange) was to link the centres for social work and the Ministry of health and social policy with 8 Ministries²⁶, Employment Agency, Pension Insurance Agency, local and regional self-government units, as well as with social welfare homes.²⁷ However, there was no possibility of linking with the Tax Administration, which was changed in 2012. By connecting with the Tax Administration database, the plan is to create a transparent control system with the help of a personal ID number, which would

prevent individuals with significant income and valuable property from accessing rights of the social welfare system.²⁸ Croatia was exceedingly

Unlike Croatia, when planning the project, Montenegro foresaw linking with the Tax Administration, since income and property are the basic indicators of the applicant's social status.

oriented towards the informatisation of the system rather than targeting the routing and planning of resources. Even after 8 years, an information system in Croatia has not been established, while the entire sum of EUR 5.3 million loan from the World Bank, aimed at its establishment, has been spent.

Slovenia

In Slovenia, an information system of the centres for social work (IS CSD) has been in place since 2002.²⁹ The system was cumbersome, the criteria for exercising rights to material benefits were diverse and diffusely distributed in 14 laws, while the procedure for claiming the rights was run by different state bodies. That had an impact on insufficient dedication to measures for activating users who may be included in the labour market.³⁰

Slovenia's experience demonstrates that the information system serves the purpose of reforming the system of social benefits and reducing the number of social welfare beneficiaries. The goal is not just to simplify the procedures, but also for the state to pay greater attention to those beneficiaries who are compelled to receive assistance due to objective reasons. By implementing this project, Montenegro has an opportunity to apply the principle of work activation of material beneficiaries, and to reroute those resources to those who need permanent care of the state.

Benefits for those who were unable to work or who needed permanent care of the state were smaller due to a large number of users. The shortcoming

25 SocSkrb software is applied in 18 out of the total of 80 centres for social work and 27 subunits; *Strategy for the development of the social welfare system in the Republic of Croatia 2011-2016*.

26 Ministry of Internal Affairs; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Management; Ministry of Families, Veterans' Affairs and Inter-Generational Solidarity; Ministry of Construction, Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection; Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

27 Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Croatia, *Strengthening IT-management system of social welfare, November 2010*

28 <http://www.24sata.hr/24express/milanka-opacic-za-24express-izbrisan-cu-laznu-socijalu-257004>

29 IS CSD was used by 62 centres of social work and by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, while it was connected to 37 different databases. It consisted of 18 modules dealing with 26 different rights.

30 Making the national transition to a one - stop shop in social care: Reform of the Slovenian financial social assistance system, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Republic of Slovenia, 2011

of IS CSD was *incomplete automatisation* of data processing because of a cumbersome system. A lot of information used to be entered manually during the submission of applications, which is why their authenticity had to be crosschecked. This was time-consuming, having in mind the large number of data in the base. Delays varied, depending on the size of the centre for social work, structure of users in a particular area, and slow functioning of the information system, which is why several days were needed for an application to be processed.³¹

That is why in 2011, Slovenia adopted the Law on public funds which harmonised the criteria for 4 types of social benefits and 9 types of subsidies which depended on income and property. All rights are accessed through the centres of social work, thereby simplifying the procedure for exercising those rights which require most resources.³² IS CSD 2 which became operational in January 2012, reduced the number of errors, solved the backlog of cases and reduced the overloading of the system. The number of databases from which data is “withdrawn” is limited to 24. IS CSD 2 is complex and requires extraordinary technical knowledge on databases, data management from external sources, as well as good knowledge of business processes in all interlinked institutions. That is how, on the basis of verified data from official sources, decisions are made in a quicker way. The system allows for decisions to be made simultaneously on several rights (on each according to the legally prescribed rules) for multiple members of the same family, but it also automatically controls the calculation and payment of funds stemming from these rights.

31 That is why municipalities urgently approved single use assistance for beneficiaries in the state of social need, while employees of the centres for social work worked even during the weekends.

32 Child allowance, social assistance payments, support for pensioners and those unable to work and state scholarships.

Recommendations as regards enhancing the normative framework relevant for the social welfare system

- Adopt the Law on social and child protection and the necessary bylaws as soon as possible. The Law on social and child protection is the basis for drafting the bylaw on social card which would regulate the manner of gathering data, and on keeping records on (potential) beneficiaries;
- Establish a normative framework which would generate clear division of responsibilities between local self-governments and centres for social work, in order to avoid parallel record-keeping on the same beneficiaries but also to prevent the exercise of the same rights on the territories of multiple local self-governments;
- Bylaw on licensing should oblige providers of extra-institutional services to exchange data with the competent bodies of the local administration and the local centre for social work. Bearing in mind that Montenegro is just introducing the practice of licensing, in the beginning, local self-governments should oblige extra-institutional service providers to exchange data through a contract;
- Centres for social work should strengthen their cooperation with the Employment Agency by jointly working on the activation of beneficiaries with a view to including them on the labour market. That entails cooperation in terms of developing programmes for this target group, in order to prevent informal employment and abuse of rights;
- Adopt the Law on legalisation of informally constructed objects as soon as possible, in order to establish records on informally built objects and reduce the error of inclusion of those who have no right to assistance from the social welfare system.

Recommendations as regards enhancing further implementation of the project “Social Card - Social Welfare Information System”

- Inform representatives of all centres for social work and subunits of institutions relevant for the exercise of social rights, about the meaning, importance and further steps of the implementation of the project Social Card - Social Welfare Information System;

- Begin with the training for expert personnel on the use of information system with a view to increasing the level of technical knowledge on databases, managing data from external sources, as well as getting to know business processes in all related institutions;
- Based on the recommendations of experts from centres for social work, consider the extent to which the database on children is to be integrated into the social welfare information system;
- Define protocols on inter-institutional cooperation with a view to committing all relevant institutions to exchange data;
- Develop an interoperability framework with concrete plans and ways of establishing data exchange between institutions;
- Strengthen the capacities of the Department for Analytics of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare by employing personnel competent not only for reporting on reasons for exclusion of those individuals whose applications were rejected, but also for adjusting the normative framework and defining strategic ways of developing the social welfare system, as well as concrete programmes intended for use by socially vulnerable population;
- Carefully plan budget allocations for upgrading and maintaining the social welfare information system. Planning should be based on a defined strategy for the development of the system;
- Extend the deadline for establishing a social welfare information system by at least one year, in order to test the system and fix potential irregularities before the official launch of the system;
- Information system needs to be expanded by establishing an electronic database on (potential) beneficiaries of the social and child protection system, beneficiaries of services provided by all social institutions and rights guaranteed by the local self-governments.

Literature

1. Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for the development of information society for 2012
2. Report on the work and state of play in administrative areas run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare for 2009 and 2011
3. Information on activities related to the Social Card project
4. Making the national transition to a one – stop shop in social care: Reform of the Slovenian financial social assistance system, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Republic of Slovenia, 2011
5. National framework of inter-operability, Ministry of Information Society and Telecommunication, December 2011
6. Decision on formation and composition of the Council for the realisation of the “Social Card” project, Official Gazette of the RoM, No. 58/00
7. Strengthening the development of IT-managerial system of the social welfare system, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Croatia, November 2010
8. Draft Law on Social and Child Protection
9. Social Card project - expert insight, UNDP document
10. Agreement on the realisation of the project “Social Card - Social Welfare Information System”
11. Strategy for the development of information society 2012 - 2016, Ministry of Information Society and Telecommunication
12. Strategy for the development of the social welfare system of the Republic of Croatia for the period 2012 - 2016
13. Strategy for the suppression of poverty and social exclusion for the period 2007 - 2011, Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare
14. Decree on Social Card, Official Gazette of the RoM, No. 41/01

Interviews:

1. Interview with Vesna Stojanović, director of the Centre for Social Work Podgorica
2. Interview with Aleksandra Višnjić Bojović, project manager for the Social Card project, UNPD in Montenegro

Media sources:

- <http://www.vijesti.me/vijesti/neophodni-socijalni-kartoni-video-70370>
- http://www.monitor.co.me/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3483:iz-upljeg-u-prazno&catid=2382:broj1126&Itemid=3611
- <http://www.24sata.hr/24express/milanka-opacic-za-24express-izbrisan-cu-laznu-socialu-257004>

About Institute Alternative

Institute Alternative is a non-governmental organisation, established in September 2007 by a group of citizens, experienced in civil society, public administration and business sectors.

The **mission of Institute Alternative** is to strengthen the democratic processes in Montenegro by identifying and analysing public policy options.

The **strategic aims** of Institute Alternative are to: increase the quality of development of public policy, contribute to the development of democracy and the rule of law, and to contribute to the protection of human rights in Montenegro.

The values we adhere to in our work are dedication to our mission, independence, constant learning, networking, cooperation and teamwork.

Institute Alternative acts as a **think tank**, i.e. a research centre, and its activities focus on the domains of good governance, transparency and accountability. Topics covered by the Institute's research activities, in which it exercises influence by providing its own recommendations are: parliamentary oversight of security and defence sectors, oversight role of the Parliament and its role in the process of European integration, public administration reform, public procurement, public-private partnerships, state audit and control of the budget of local authorities.

*To date, Institute Alternative published the following **reports / studies**:*

- *Parliament and civil society organisations - partners in budget control*
- *Development of PIFC in Montenegro - From the civil society perspective*
- *Committee for Anticorruption - cure or placebo? i*
- *Corruption and Public Procurement in Montenegro*
- *Montenegro and negotiations in Chapter 24 - Justice, Freedom and Security*
- *Montenegro and negotiations in Chapter 23 - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights*
- *Secret Surveillance Measures in Criminal Procedure - Neglected control*
- *National Security Agency and Secret Surveillance Measures - Is there any control?*
- *Parliamentary inquiries in Montenegro - Control mechanism without political support*
- *The Parliament of Montenegro in the process of European integration - observer or active participant?*
- *Law on Parliamentary Oversight in the Security and Defence Sectors - First Year of Implementation*
- *Montenegro under the watchful eye of Đukanović and the EU*
- *Analysis of RIA effects in Montenegro - toward 'good legislature'*
- *Control of the local self-government's budget*
- *State Audit in Montenegro - proposals for strengthening its influence*
- *Think Tank - the role of independent research centres in public policy development*
- *Public Administration Reform - between high ambitions and limited possibilities*
- *Public-Private Partnerships in Montenegro - Accountability, Transparency and Efficiency*
- *Public Procurement in Montenegro - Transparency and Accountability*
- *Assessment of the Legal Framework and Practice in the implementation of certain control mechanisms of the Parliament of Montenegro: Consultative Hearing, Control Hearing and Parliamentary Inquiry*

- *Parliamentary oversight of the defence and security sector: What next?*
- *The Lipci Case 2008: How not to repeat it*
- *The Case of the Prva Bank - Lessons for the supervisor and other decision-makers*
- *Public Administration in Montenegro: salary schemes, reward system and opportunities for professional advancement*

Institute Alternative is a member of the NGO self-regulatory body and has disclosed full details of its financial affairs in line with Activity Code for NGOs, to which Institute Alternative is a party. In its hitherto activities, Institute Alternative was supported by: the European Fund for the Balkans, Foundation Open Society Institute - Representation in Montenegro (FOSI ROM), Open Society Institute - Think Tank Fund, Foundation Friedrich Ebert, the Parliamentary Commission for the distribution of resources for NGO projects, European Commission. The Institute cooperates with the European Stability Initiative from Berlin, which carried out a capacity building programme for IA associates. Institute cooperates with a number of national organisations, numerous institutions and state bodies such as: the State Audit Institution, Public Procurement Agency, the Parliament of Montenegro (especially its Committee for economy, budget and finance as well as the Committee for security and defence), the Ministry of Finance, Concessions Commission, etc.

All publications / research reports are available online:

institut alternativa

www.institut-alternativa.org

Više o Institutu alternativa možete saznati na:
www.institut-alternativa.org