

## **PICTURE STORY**

# **Post-modern Nation Montenegro one year after independence**

**September 2007**

# Post-modern Nation

## Montenegro one year after independence



With its mountainous geography and turbulent history Montenegro is a small Balkan. It is Europe's youngest state, gaining independence in summer 2006. Since then it has not been in the news much. This is in itself remarkable for a country that was once feared to turn into a failed state in a troubled region.

Throughout its history Montenegro was known in Europe for its fierce tribes and blood feuds. For centuries Muslim (Ottoman) and Catholic (Venice and Austria) Empires met on its territory. However, in recent years Montenegro surprised those who expected that it would be torn apart by internal conflict.

Montenegro was the only one of the six former Yugoslav republics that managed to avoid all violent conflict on its territory since 1989. It is a country without an ethnic majority, two Orthodox churches and no agreed name for the language most of its people speak. The national currency of independent Montenegro is the Euro. Its 620,000 citizens are Orthodox Montenegrins and Orthodox Serbs, Muslim Bosniaks, Catholic and Muslim Albanians, as well as some Croats and other minorities. Upon re-establishing statehood, Montenegro drastically downsized the armed forces it inherited from the joint state with Serbia to 2,500 and destroyed all except one of its 62 tanks. The adjective “wild” is no longer used to scare away potential invaders but to attract tourists.

In recent months ESI has taken a closer look at this post-modern nation, from the mountainous North to the Adriatic coastline, to see what independence has brought. What explains the relative success and character of the Montenegrin state-building experience?



## Table of contents

Fault line of civilisations? .....	4
Tribal reputation.....	5
Facing the past .....	6
The threat of civil war.....	7
Cold war with Serbia (1997-2000) .....	8
Fears of war.....	9
Building institutions.....	10
A short history of “Solania” .....	11
Independence .....	12
<i>First stop</i> : Europe’s youngest capital .....	13
Podgorica – centre of national politics.....	14
Near Podgorica: KAP and FDI .....	15
<i>Second stop</i> : the North after independence.....	16
Tribes and clans .....	17
Wild beauty.....	18
“Little Montenegro” .....	19
Northern politics in 2007 .....	20
<i>Third Stop</i> : the Adriatic Coast .....	21
Multiethnic Bar .....	22
Catholics and Orthodox in Sutomore.....	23
Montenegro’s economic motor: Tourism .....	25
Into the mountains – the end of Empire.....	26
<i>Fourth stop</i> : Cetinje .....	27
Symbols of statehood.....	28
The fight over orthodoxy .....	29

### Fault line of civilisations?



*Minaret in Stari Bar – Church overlooking Kotor*

In his 1993 essay on the “clash of civilisations” Samuel Huntington sought to explain (among other things) the roots of violent conflict in the Balkans:

“The great historical fault line that has existed for centuries separating Western Christian peoples from Muslim and Orthodox people... has been in roughly its current place for at least five hundred years... In the Balkans, of course, this line coincides with the historical division between the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. It is the cultural border of Europe.”

When the Roman Empire fragmented into western and eastern parts, centred on Rome and Constantinople, in the fourth century AD the new border ran through what is today Montenegro. The ecclesiastical schism of 1054 also put it at the border of the zone of influence of both Orthodoxy and Catholicism. The Ottomans then brought Islam to the region.

This history is, of course, typical for the Balkans. What is less typical is that despite numerous wars and Balkan campaigns of ethnic cleansing from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century until the 1990s Montenegro has remained until today an extremely diverse society. In recent years it has become even more diverse, as the number of Serbs has *increased*. And yet, contrary to Huntington’s analysis this mixed society has managed to avoid internal clashes.

#### Montenegrin diversity (2003)

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>%</b>
Montenegrin	43.16
Serbs	31.99
Muslims/Bosniacs	11.74
Albanians	5.03
Croats	1.10
Other and undeclared	6.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>

<b>Faith</b>	<b>%</b>
Orthodox	74.24
Islam	17.74
Catholic	3.54
Other, undeclared, no faith	4.48
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### **Tribal reputation**



Skrcsko Jezero

Historian Ivo Banac called Montenegro a “stone wilderness, whose forests, meadows and wildlife had been ravaged almost to nothing over the centuries by hungry highland clans and their herds.” Besides being poor, Montenegrins also had the reputation of being wild. Tennyson celebrated this wildness in a 19<sup>th</sup> century sonnet, praising these “smallest among peoples! Rough rock-throne of Freedom!”

However, deeply engrained traditions of blood feuds were a curse, not a cause of celebration, for most Montenegrins. Milovan Djilas, the Stalinist turned Yugoslav dissident in the 1950s, wrote in his autobiography “Land without Justice” about his own family:

“The men of several generations have died at the hands of Montenegrins... generation after generation and the bloody chain was not broken. The inherited fear and hatred of feuding clans was mightier than fear and hatred of the enemy, the Turks. It seems to me that I was born with blood on my eyes. My first sight was of blood. My first words were blood and bathed in blood.”

## Facing the past



Milo Djukanovic and Momir Bulatovic with Montenegrin soldiers in 1991

In 1991 it looked as if Samuel Huntington was right: Orthodox Montenegrins participated in the shelling of Catholic Dubrovnik. Orthodox Montenegrin police officers deported Muslims who had fled to Montenegro to be killed by Bosnian Serbs.

“Rat za mir” (“war for peace”) was the slogan under which Montenegro backed the Yugoslav Army’s campaign in southern Croatia. It is also the name of a controversial film by Montenegrin filmmaker Koca Pavlovic made in 2003. It was only in 2007 that the film was shown for the first time in public in Montenegro. As Paul Hockenos and Jenni Winterhagen have written in May 2007:

“One year after declaring independence, a controversial film is forcing a visibly reluctant Montenegro to wrestle with the legacy of its role in the bloody conflicts of the early 1990s.

In 1991, as part of Serbia’s war against Croatia, Yugoslav Army units led by Montenegrin officers and full of Montenegrin reservists ravaged many of the villages in the southernmost tip of Croatian Dalmatia and shelled the historic port city of Dubrovnik, causing millions of euros in damage and hundreds of civilian deaths. Throughout the duration of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, Montenegro remained in a federal state with Serbia until 2003 when the two countries formed a loose state union. In 1997, Montenegro expressed regret for its part in the wars and the consequent atrocities. However, the process of coming to terms with the past has been selective and superficial, say opposition critics.”

Another Montenegrin film, Alen Drljevic’s “Karneval”, describes the deportation of some 80 Bosniak refugees in 1992 to Bosnian Serb camps where most of them died. It was distributed for free by Vjesti, the country’s largest daily paper.

### The threat of civil war



Slobodan Milosevic - Milo Djukanovic

The turning point in recent Montenegrin history came in 1997, when Montenegro's young prime minister Milo Djukanovic, in power since 1990, distanced himself from Slobodan Milosevic and, in late 1997, defeated his former ally, Milosevic-backed Momir Bulatovic, in presidential elections.

Djukanovic did so by a tiny margin, thanks to Albanian and Bosniak voters. Supporters of Milosevic and Bulatovic took to the streets. On 14 January 1998, one day before Djukanovic's inauguration, they attempted to take over the government building. They failed. The police – contrary to Bulatovic's expectations – stood by Djukanovic. The Yugoslav Army refused to become involved.

### Cold war with Serbia (1997-2000)



Yugoslav Army roadblock in Montenegro in 1999 – Djukanovic with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in 2000

From that moment Milosevic excluded the Montenegrin government from all meaningful participation in the institutions of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

In April 1998, Milosevic appointed Djukanovic's defeated rival, Momir Bulatovic, federal prime minister of the common state. In May 1998, Belgrade did not allow newly elected Montenegrin deputies of the FRY Chamber of Republics to take up their seats. In February 2000 Serbia banned the trade of agricultural produce with Montenegro. One month later it extended the trade blockade to all goods except aluminium and steel.

On 6 July 2000, Milosevic changed the constitution of the FRY to exclude the Montenegrin government from all federal decision making. Podgorica rejected these changes. The institutions of the FRY ceased to function.

#### **Further reading:**

ESI, *Autonomy, Dependency, Security: The Montenegrin Dilemma* (August 2000)



## Fears of war



Montenegrin special police, Kosovo refugees at the Montenegrin border

The most dangerous moment in the cold war between Serbia and Montenegro came with the 1999 Kosovo war and its aftermath. The Montenegrin government had declared itself to be neutral in the conflict. It had also given sanctuary to some 40,000 Kosovo Albanian refugees. This put Montenegro on the side of the West against Milosevic's Serbia.

Tensions in the country ran high. Supported by western governments, the Montenegrin authorities build up their police forces. Estimates put the number of Montenegrin police at 10,000-15,000 police, including up to 1,500 well-equipped special police.

They faced the Yugoslav army stationed on Montenegrin territory: 7,000 troops, mostly conscripts but including some 1,100 men of the 7<sup>th</sup> military police battalion. President Djukanovic described these in March 2000 as a paramilitary unit loyal to Milosevic "to overthrow the government." Yugoslav army troops conducted house-to-house searches and threatened political allies of Djukanovic. A series of smaller incidents happened through 1999 and 2000:

"On the night of 8-9 December 1999, the Yugoslav Army seized the civilian part of Podgorica airport, after Montenegro had declared it to be Montenegrin government property and had started to build hangars for police helicopters. ... On 24 February, a Yugoslav Army checkpoint was established on the Albanian border at Bozaj, after Montenegro opened a border crossing without consulting the federal authorities. On 7 March, a grenade exploded at the police station in Bijelo Polje at the same time as two off-duty members of the VJ 7<sup>th</sup> battalion were driving past. ... In May 2000, General Milorad Obradovic, the commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army (based in Montenegro), issued an order warning that the Yugoslav Army would act decisively against 'separatist, certain opposition and other enemy forces' which together with foreign enemies were seeking to destroy Yugoslavia."

(ESI Report, 2000)

### **Building institutions**



Nebojsa Kaludjerovic, Montenegrin ambassador to the UN, in his improvised office – the bedroom of his son – in New York

Financial transfers between the federal and the Montenegrin budgets stopped at the end of 1998. Montenegro took control of its borders: in spring 1999 it waived visa requirements for foreign visitors and in August 1999 it began to collect customs duties. Serbia also had customs posts on the border with Montenegro. In November 1999, Montenegro introduced the German Mark as its official currency. It also created its own foreign service. In 2000 there were Montenegrin representation offices in Washington, Brussels, London, Rome Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Berlin.

Milosevic was toppled in Belgrade in October 2000. By then Montenegro had built most of the institutions of an independent state. In fact, the only federal institutions that continued to operate in Montenegro were the Yugoslav army and Yugoslav air space control.

### **A short history of “Solania”**



Montenegro's Milo Djukanovic and Serbia's Kostunica looking glum

The fall of Milosevic did not solve the problems of the dysfunctional Yugoslav federation. Federal president Vojislav Kostunica, Montenegrin president Milo Djukanovic and Serbian prime minister Zoran Djindjic concluded on 26 October 2001 that the positions of Belgrade and Podgorica were irreconcilable. “We have tried today to bring our two positions closer, and we concluded that this is not possible”, Kostunica announced, adding that “the Montenegrin public should vote on the issue in a referendum”.

Montenegro's population, however, remained divided over this issue, as did the international community. The European Union's High Representative Javier Solana embarked on intensive shuttle diplomacy to get an agreement for a continued joint state. Under EU pressure Serbia and Montenegro agreed in spring 2002 to establish a loose “state union”. Montenegro would not call a referendum on independence for three years.

“Solania”, as the state-union soon came to be called, never really worked. It took a year to agree on a “constitutional charter” which was then not implemented. Disagreements on fiscal issues, on joint customs tariffs and on the future of the army were never resolved.

The end of the state union was farce, not tragedy: a quarrel on the selection of the representative to the Eurovision song contest in 2006 on the eve of Montenegro's referendum led to the disqualification of Serbia-Montenegro. The last football game of Serbia-Montenegro in the 2006 World Cup in Germany brought a 0:6 defeat against Argentina.

#### **Further reading:**

ESI, Politics, interests and the future of Yugoslavia: an Agenda for Dialogue (2001)  
ESI Background Material: The Road to Independence

## Independence



Independence celebrations

On 21 May 2006 86 percent of Montenegrin voters cast their ballot in a referendum on independence. 55.5 percent voted in favour. This was above the 55 percent threshold which all sides had accepted following the mediation by Miroslav Lajcak, a Slovak diplomat and EU envoy. The Montenegrin parliament declared independence on 3 June 2006.

Despite some tensions the whole process had remained peaceful. The new state was first recognised by Iceland on 8 June, followed by Switzerland, Estonia and Russia. The EU and the USA extended recognition on 12 June and Serbia on 15 June.

Montenegro joined the OSCE and the UN in June 2006, Nato's Partnership for Peace in December 2006, and the IMF, the World Bank and the Council of Europe in the first half of 2007. Today Montenegro has 10 embassies, a mission to the EU and 2 missions to international organisations (the OSCE in Vienna and the UN in New York).

### **Further reading:**

ESI Background Information: Montenegro and European Integration  
OSCE/ODIHR, Referendum on State-Status 21 May 2006 – final report (August 2006)  
ESI Background Information: The Road to Independence

### ***First stop: Europe's youngest capital***



Central Podgorica –the new airport

Let us begin our journey in the city the “Lonely Planet” calls “Montenegro’s most unattractive spot”: its capital Podgorica. The description is a bit unfair: in fact, economic growth and investments are transforming the youngest European capital.

A pedestrian area was constructed, and the main square completely redesigned. It was also renamed from “Ivan Milutinovic square”, a communist partisan, to “Republic’s square” last year. The new “Millenium bridge” over the Moraca river has been opened in 2005. A new airport followed in May 2006. Numerous modern apartment buildings have sprung up, transforming the city’s socialist suburbs.

Podgorica is the undisputed administrative and trading centre of the country. The city has grown from 118,000 inhabitants in 1991 to 136,000 in 2003. It hosts the headquarters of most companies, banks, and insurance companies. The parliament and almost all governmental institutions are located here.

#### **Further reading:**

Homepage of Podgorica: [www.podgorica.cg.yu](http://www.podgorica.cg.yu) (in Serbian/Montenegrin only; English version under construction)

### Podgorica – centre of national politics



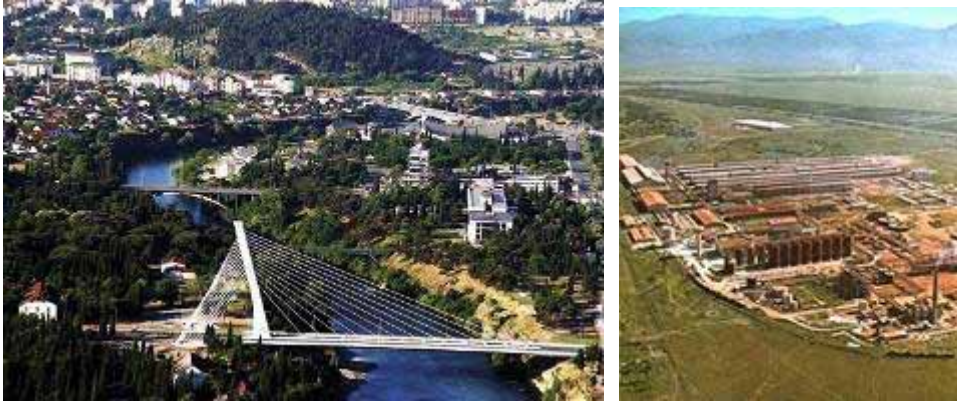
Montenegro's parliament

Podgorica is also the political centre. Montenegro's political scene has for many years been dominated by two blocks: one block made up of Djukanovic's DPS, the Socialdemocratic Party and small ethnic Albanian parties, all pushing for independence; the other, unionist block of pro-Serbian parties led by the Socialist People's Party. The third, smaller force were Liberals arguing for independence, but strongly critical of government policies.

These blocks still exist, although politics has changed with independence. As Milka Tadic, a prominent journalist, puts it: "Now no one can blame Belgrade any more. We are finally responsible for ourselves".

In the parliament elected in 2006 only the **Serb List** says that it wants – one day – to renew joint statehood with Serbia. The **Socialist People's Party**, once the main force advocating union with Serbia, repositioned itself. Srdjan Milic, its new leader, is trying to give his party a more progressive image focused on the European Union.

### Near Podgorica: KAP and FDI



Podgorica – KAP

The aluminium company KAP near Podgorica has long been a symbol of the problems of the Montenegrin economy. Aluminium has been Montenegro's dominant industry, accounting for more than 70 per cent of exports in 1999. In 2000 ESI wrote about "the most important enterprise in Montenegro":

"KAP is the republic's largest company, with some 4,000 workers. It is also the biggest customer of a whole range of Montenegrin businesses, placing it at the head of a production chain... It is the largest customer of the Montenegrin railway, and one of the largest of the port of Bar. It pays more than US\$1 million per month to *Jugopetrol*, and is by far the biggest customer of the electricity utility, *Elektroprivreda Crne Gore*. Given this dominant position, it is not surprising to find that there are no hard budget constraints on the company, which despite chronic unprofitability is able to survive and even expand through huge indirect state subsidies."

However, things have since changed a lot since 2000. Privatisation, restructuring and the rise in world market prices of aluminium have brought an increase in output and profitability. Russian Oligarch Oleg Deripashka bought KAP and the Montenegrin bauxite mines, and thus controls a considerable share of the country's economy.

### ***Second step: the North after independence***



On the Zabljak mountain plain

Leaving Podgorica heading north one enters a rather different world. A majority of the Orthodox population here sees itself as ethnically Serb, not Montenegrin.

About a third of the total population of Montenegro – slightly less than 200,000 – live in the North. However, the North contributes only 18 percent to Montenegrin GDP (down from 25.5 percent in 1990). In May 2007 a newspaper found that the budget of the coastal municipality of Budva with only 16,000 inhabitants (EUR 44 million) was higher than the budgets of all 11 Northern municipalities taken together (EUR 42.5 million).

<b>Region</b>	<b>Share of population</b>	<b>Share of GDP</b>	<b>population below poverty line</b>
North	31.5 %	18.0 %	14.9 %
Central	45.1	55.5 %	6.5 %
South	23.4 %	26.5 %	6.8 %

*Source: UN Human Development Report 2005*

### **Further reading**

UNDP Human Development Report Montenegro (September 2005)



## Tribes and clans



Tara Canyon – Skrcko Jezero

When the Ottomans conquered the medieval Balkan states in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, they made little effort to control these remote and poverty-stricken mountain lands of Montenegro.

Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, central control of the Montenegrin rulers did not extend very far. Society was organised in tribes (*pleme*) that controlled a certain territory. Beneath the tribe were smaller units of families that traced their descent to a common ancestor (clan or *bratstvo*). A clan could number as many as 250 members and was usually headed by the oldest member. Every tribe had its chief and an assembly of elders. Many Montenegrins still today can recite the line of ancestors to the originator of the clan.

By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century an all-tribal general assembly was formed to provide guidance of behaviour among neighbouring tribes. Although this body had no executive or judicial powers, until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century it was practically the sole “governing body” in Montenegro.

Similar structures existed also in Eastern Hercegovina and Northern Albania. The ethnographer Jovan Cvijic counted 21 tribes in “old Montenegro”, 76 in the Highlands, 16 in Eastern Herzegovina and 2 on the Montenegrin coast. Blood feuds survived until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century).

### Further Reading:

ESI Picture Story – Realm of the Black Mountain. A History of Montenegro

## Wild beauty



The “Black lake” (crno jezero) – Radovan Bojovic’s family at a gathering in their native village Zminica in the 1930s

The North remained remote well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1943, Tito and his partisans camped at the “Crno Jezero” (black lake) close to Zabljak. Today the lake is part of the Durmitor National Park. A sign points out the place where Tito once took refuge. In the socialist period there were ski centres, but most of them need urgent investments or do not function at all. None of the manufacturing companies built during socialism is working. Only recently this remote region, with its canyons, mountains and isolated villages, began again to attract some visitors.

**Radovan Bojovic** runs a small hotel in Zabljak, a small mountain town, together with his wife Jelena. Sometimes he takes visitors to his native village Zminjica, where his family has lived for 350 years. Irish and Russian investors wanted to buy houses and land in the tiny village, but the family did not sell.

Zabljak is still among the poorest Montenegrin municipalities. Radovan complains about the lack of transport and tourist infrastructure. Tough winters make life and movement difficult. Agriculture is difficult and other employment opportunities are scarce. People have long been leaving this area, going to Podgorica, the coast or abroad. In 1953 the municipality’s population was 6,773. By 1991 it has decreased to 4,914 and by 2003 to 4,204.

### “Little Montenegro”



Rada Tomcic in the village “Mala Crna Gora” – Plain around Zabljak

Some 20 km from Zabljak one reaches the small village of Mala Crna Gora (*little Montenegro*). It is inhabited by some 70, mostly elderly, people. The village is so remote that allegedly Ottoman forces never entered it. With the first snow, the mountain road becomes impassable. Depending on the ferocity of the weather the village cannot be reached for four to six months in winter.

**Rada Tomcic**, in her 60s, lives here with one of her sons. She has six sons and five daughters, but all except one have moved elsewhere. Her husband died in 2006. Like the other villagers she spends summer to prepare for winter, preparing pickles and other food, before the mountain pastures and the picturesque village are isolated from the rest of the world by snow and ice. In some winters she and her son only manage to dig a small path through the snow connecting the house and the stables where they keep five cows and some sheep. At such times even visiting a neighbour is impossible, as is seeing a doctor or getting to school. Even during summer there is no postal service to the village.

### Northern politics in 2007



Café owner Dzermal Suljevic

Of 11 municipalities in the North 8 had majorities *against* independence in the 2006 referendum (of between 60 and 70 percent). The only majorities *for* independence were found in the three municipalities with strong Bosniac/Muslim and Albanian populations. Muslim dominated Rozaje was the most pro-independent municipality in all of Montenegro (91.3 percent in favour), followed by Albanian-dominated Ulcinj at the coast (88.5 percent in favour).

Initially, in summer 2006, the referendum vote for independence led to high emotions and some anger among supporters of union with Serbia in the North. At the time **Stanoje Stijovic**, living in the village of Seoce, told Balkan Insight:

“As soon as I sell my property, I will move to Serbia. We plan to buy a whole village in Serbia and rename it Seoce out of love for our native land.”

In other villages and in the town of Plijevlja the mood was similar. As Albanians and Bosniaks/Muslims were strong supporters of independence, the referendum result threatened to upset inter-ethnic relations. While people traditionally mingle in cafés and shops following the referendum interethnic relations cooled. Serbs started to avoid Bosniac-owned shops cafés like that of **Dzermal Suljevic** in the village of Unevina.

But these tensions and the fears they gave rise too proved short-lived. One year later little animosity remains. “The Serbs were simply upset by their defeat at the referendum, but now we only joke about this. It was over after a couple of days,” café-owner Dzermal Suljevic told ESI in August 2007.

In fact, most municipalities in the North have not registered a single property transaction of people moving out of Montenegro. Even in the village of Seoce, whose inhabitants wanted to move collectively to Serbia, not one house was sold.

#### Further reading:

Sead Sadikovic, “Poll Result Estranges Bosniaks and Serbs”, BIRN, 23 June 2006  
Bojana Stanisic, “Disappointed Serbs Sell Up and Go”, BIRN, 23 June 2006

### ***Third Stop: the Adriatic Coast***



Church door in Stari Bar (old Bar)

The city of Bar on the Adriatic is a good place to examine local traditions of inter-ethnic and multi-confessional co-existence. Bar hosts the country's most diverse population.

Like other towns on the Montenegrin coast it also boasts a rich history. The origins of the city go back to Roman times. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century it was known as "Antibar", meaning 'opposite of the (Italian) city of Bari'. Bar was ruled by Byzantium, Venice, and the Ottomans before it became part of Montenegro in 1878. During socialism a railway line was built connecting this city and its port with Belgrade. Following a horrendous earthquake in 1979 the city had to be completely rebuilt.

The population of the town includes Montenegrins, Serbs, Albanians, Muslims/Bosniaks, a few Croats and other minorities. 60 percent of the population is Orthodox, more than a quarter Muslim, less than 10 percent Catholic.

## Multiethnic Bar



Suljo Mustafic – Stari Bar (old Bar) – Rumija Mountains

**Suljo Mustafic** is the editor in chief of “Radio Bar” and the head of the local Islamic Community. He takes pride in the town’s multi-cultural tradition. He points out to ESI that there are no cafés separated according to nationality or religion as can be found in many other places in the Balkans.

There are many traditions that express a deeply embedded culture of co-existence. One of these traditions, says Suljo, is the cult of St. Vladimir. For centuries in spring, on St. Trinity’s day, local people of all faiths leave the tiny village of Mikulic in the early morning hours for Mount Rumija, carrying St. Vladimir’s cross. Allegedly it was this cross that St. Vladimir, a prince of the medieval Balkan state of Duklja, held in his hands when he was killed in 1016 by Vladislav, a nephew of Tsar Samuil of Bulgaria. While the origins of the cross remain disputed, the cross has been guarded for the last 700 years by the Orthodox Andrović family. Suljo’s friend, Ilija Andrović, tells ESI that during World War I, when the two most senior family members left to fight and were afraid to leave the cross behind, they entrusted the cross to distant relatives who at some point in the past had converted to Islam.

In 2005 the Serbian Orthodox Church constructed a small church on Mount Rumija with assistance from the army without consultation. This, says Suljo, has led to a drop in the number of Catholics and Muslims participating in the procession on St. Trinity’s day.

### Catholics and Orthodox in Sutomore



The Church of St. Tekla in Sutomore, hosting both a catholic and an orthodox altar

Not far from Bar, close to Sutomore, one finds the church of St. Tekla. The small church has two altars, one Catholic, the other Orthodox.

There are other such churches in the area. The Catholic explanation for the two altars is as follows: when Catholic settlements at the coast were under attack they sometimes took in orthodox villagers from the hinterland, and then allowed them to practice their religion in one of their churches. Orthodox priests see it differently and claim that these were originally orthodox churches.

Despite different views about the origins of these churches priests of both faiths still have the key for St. Tekla. Both Catholic and Orthodox mass is read in this little church. In front of it one also finds a mixed graveyard.

### Kotor between East and West



Catholic and Orthodox Church in Kotor – view on St Tryphon's Cathedral

In the small Adriatic town of Kotor one also finds signs of coexistence of the Catholic and Orthodox faiths. Traditionally here in mixed marriages partners keep their respective faith. In earlier times there existed the habit to baptise the sons according to the faith of the father and the daughters according to the faith of the mother. Godfathers and best men are still often of different confession than those who marry. Although many Catholics emigrated in the past century the town still hosts a sizeable catholic population (12 percent).

On 3 February traditionally both Catholic and Orthodox Kotorans participate in the celebrations and the procession of St. Tryphon's day, the patron saint of Kotor's Catholic cathedral. Relations between the churches have suffered recently due to the politics of Montenegrin independence. The Catholics complain about the visible political role of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its nationalism, and the Orthodox were offended when Catholics rang church bells after the Montenegrin parliament proclaimed independence.

However, as the photographer **Stevan Kordic** points out to ESI, this is not the first time that relations between the two churches are strained in many centuries of co-existence. "Sometimes relations are very good, sometimes there are some problems, like in a marriage." Kordic, son of an Orthodox father and a Catholic mother, says: "I believe in the unity of East and West. I feel at home in Rome as well as in Istanbul."



### Montenegro's economic motor: Tourism



The bay of Kotor

What one can clearly see in Kotor and along the rest of the coast is how much Montenegrin economic growth is being driven by tourism. Tourism in turn boosts services and construction. According to the Ministry of Ministry of Tourism and Environmental protection, tourism generated EUR 322 million of revenues in 2006, 23.5 percent more than in 2005.

According to the government, in 2006, 952,000 tourists chose Montenegro as their holiday destination, amounting to a 16 percent increase compared to 2005. This includes 382,000 foreign tourists, a 38 percent increase from the previous year.

<b>Year</b>	<b>visitors</b>	<b>o/w foreign</b>
1987	~1,300,000	~400,000
1992	405,000	8,000
1997	663,270	59,349
1999	297,905	27,886
2002	541,699	136,160
2004	703,484	188,060
2005	820,457	272,005
2006	952,000	382,000

*Sources: BIRN, Monstat, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Protection*

#### **Further reading:**

Ministry of Tourism and Environment Protection, Tourist results 2006

### Into the mountains – the end of Empire



St. Ivan's fortress above Kotor – the former border checkpoint operated by Austro-Hungary – water reservoir at the checkpoint

Montenegro in its current form took shape only after the Balkan wars of 1912-1913. While it had expanded in the previous centuries, parts in the North belonged still to the Ottoman Empire and the Northern part of the Coast was part of Austria-Hungary.

In 1900 Balkan traveller Edith Durham worked her way up on the road from (Austro-Hungarian) Kotor to (Montenegrin) Cetinje.

“After nearly three ours of climbing we passed the last black-yellow Austrian post. The driver, a real son of the mountains, pointed to the ground and said ‘Grna Gora’ [Montenegro]. Crna Gora, dark, grey, sombre, a chaos of inextricably intertwined limestone rocks, the naked wind-lashed bones of a dead world. The first glance on this country was shocking. The horrors of despair, the endless series of naked mountain tops, and the inhospitable wilderness of the bare rocks in their rough solitude told centuries of suffering. The next moment filled me with respect and admiration for those people who preferred the freedom of this wilderness to the slavery in the abundant valleys.”

Still today one can stop at the border checkpoint operated once by Austro-Hungarian gendarmes.

### ***Fourth stop: Cetinje***



The Austrian Delegation – details of the Austrian, Russian and Italian Delegations

Cetinje, the former capital, has always been central to the idea of Montenegrin statehood. After the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans only a small area around Cetinje was governed by a Montenegrin prince-bishop. While Montenegrin rulers in Cetinje maintained that Montenegro was independent, the Ottomans insisted that it was an integral part of their Empire. In any case, after Napoleon abolished the Republic of Dubrovnik in 1810, Montenegro claimed that it was the only Balkan polity that continued to enjoy *de facto* independence.

Given its small size and poverty, Montenegro gained a remarkable position in international politics and was finally recognised as an independent state in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin. As the historian Barbara Jelavich pointed out “it was to be a common witticism in Europe that Cetinje consisted of thirteen foreign consulates and a hotel”. Today the former delegations host governmental institutions, music and drama academies, museums and a restaurant.

## Symbols of statehood



Old hospital – the old government building

A stroll through Cetinje today shows the former consulates that are reminders of this state tradition. There is the old hospital (fallen into decay), King Nikola's Palace, and the old government building.

However, despite Montenegro's statehood and its long tradition of resistance to Ottoman rule, the Montenegrin population had not developed a national consciousness in the modern sense. Like all his predecessors and most of his subjects, Nicholas I (1841–1921), Montenegro's last ruler, considered himself Serb.

He pursued Serbia-friendly policies and the two entities were never at war. Already before World War One, the idea of union with Serbia enjoyed considerable support, but due to Austro-Hungarian opposition it was not a real option. Nicholas himself was also reluctant, but after World War I –with Nicholas in exile in France – Montenegro was merged with Serbia and immediately incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. To this day the legality of this process remains hotly disputed.

Nevertheless, the concept of a Montenegrin nation, fostered during socialist times, is popular in Cetinje. Unsurprisingly it was a pro-independence stronghold ever since the debate about Montenegrin statehood resurfaced after the disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia.

### **The fight over orthodoxy**



Cetinje Monastery, former seat of Montenegrin rulers,  
current seat of Serbian Orthodox bishop

The Serbian Orthodox bishop's seat is in the Cetinje Monastery that has been the seat of Montenegrin rulers until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, in 1993 a "Montenegrin Orthodox Church" was founded, claiming to be the rightful successor to the Church that was merged into the Serbian Orthodox Church after Montenegro's incorporation into Serbia following the First World War.

The Church, registered in 1997 as an NGO, is not recognised by other Orthodox churches or the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul. It only owns two church buildings, one in Cetinje and one in Kotor. Its 24 priests perform services in some 50 villages in the vicinity of Cetinje where the local flock has decided that the Montenegrin Orthodox Church's priests are welcome. The Montenegrin Church claims a significant part of the property managed by the Serbian Orthodox Church. When, in summer 2007, the Montenegrin parliament debated a new constitution the status of the two competing Orthodox Churches was one of the most contentious questions in these discussions.

There are still followers of the Montenegrin church. Even many Montenegrins who supported independence are loyal to the Serbian Orthodox Church and its 220 monks and priests and 700 churches and monasteries in Montenegro.

#### **Further reading:**

Nikola Doncic, "Rival Church Battle for Front-row Place in New Constitution",