

## **India - Montenegro Relations**

### **Political relations**

India's relations with Montenegro have traditionally been close and friendly since the days of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) of which it was a constituent republic. India recognized Montenegro as an independent sovereign state on August 2, 2006 and also established diplomatic relations with Montenegro thereafter. India's Ambassador in Vienna is concurrently accredited to Montenegro.

Some bilateral visits and exchanges took place while Montenegro was still a part of FRY/Union of Serbia and Montenegro. After Montenegro became independent, the first incoming ministerial visit was that of Minister of Finance, Dr. Milorad Katnic, who visited India from February 8-15, 2011 to attend a Conference "India as a Global Power: practicing Liberal Values at Home and Abroad" organised by Mont Pelerin Society. He took the opportunity to meet Minister of State for Finance, Shri Namoo Narain Meena.

Montenegrin Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration Milan Rocen visited India from April 10-12, 2012 at an invitation extended by External Affairs Minister Shri S. M. Krishna. It was the first high level visit from either side since Montenegro's independence in 2006. The aim of the visit was to establish political contacts at high level.

Minister of State for External Affairs, Gen (Dr.) V.K.Singh (retd.) visited Montenegro on September 2&3, 2014. It was the first ever visit to Montenegro by an Indian dignitary after Montenegro's independence. During his visit he met President Filip Vujanovic, Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic and DPM and Foreign Minister Mr. Igor Luksic. While the main focus of discussions was on expansion of cooperation in the field of investments and economy through exchange of visits and organization of presentation, however, boosting overall cooperation, especially in the areas of education, culture and science was also discussed.

The first round of Foreign Office Consultations was held in Podgorica in July 2009. Both sides emphasized the need to build upon the close and traditional bonds of friendship and to avail opportunities for economic and commercial cooperation for mutual benefit.

### **Bilateral Agreements**

- MOU on Cooperation in Tourism
- MOU on Cooperation between Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi and the Diplomatic Academy, Podgorica.

### **Economic relations**

Major economic activities in Montenegro, which may be of interest to Indian investors, are tourism and hospitality, agriculture, dairy, fisheries and food processing. Montenegro is also upgrading its basic infrastructure in areas such as roads, electricity transmission, renewable energy, ports etc. Some of these may also be of interest to Indian investors. A delegation of Montenegrin businessmen also participated in the India International Trade Fair in New Delhi in 2008.

**Trade with India (in million EUR):**

|                 | 2008  | 2009  | 2010  | 2011  | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| India's exports | 5.777 | 4.263 | 4.918 | 7.013 | 7.054 | 5.130 | 5.645 | 6.472 |
| India's imports | -     | -     | -     | -     | -     | -     | 1.026 | 0.766 |
| Total trade     | 5.777 | 4.263 | 4.918 | 7.013 | 7.054 | 5.130 | 6.671 | 6.549 |

***Data based on information by Montenegrin Statistics Office***

India's exports were Coffee, tea and other food items, tobacco, textile yarn, fabrics and ready made garments, electric /electronic parts, machinery, medicaments, and pharmaceuticals.

**Culture and Education**

India has included Montenegro under its Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC). Short duration training courses are offered to the officials of the Government of Montenegro under this programme in diverse areas such as audit, public expenditure management, WTO etc. Professional courses for foreign diplomats conducted by the Foreign Service Institute in New Delhi have also been availed by the Foreign Ministry of Montenegro to train its diplomats.

Several dance and music performances by Indian artists have been held across major cities in Montenegro. Indian films have been also screened in Podgorica. Various Indian television serials (like Balika Vadhu) are telecasted in Montenegro and said to have a wide audience. A photo exhibition of Mahatma Gandhi was organized in Montenegro to coincide with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of Montenegro's Independence, in cooperation with Sri Chinmoy Centre of Montenegro.

Exhibitions of paintings of Dr. Tatjana Burzanovic, a Montenegrin national was held in Podgorica in 2007 and in April 2014. President Vujanovic was also present for the inaugural event in April 2014. In 2016, her exhibition were hosted by ICCR in New Delhi (inaugurated by Prof. Lokesh Chandra, President of ICCR) and in Kolkata. Through her paintings, Dr. Burzanovic has painted illustrations from Bhagvad Gita and teachings of Tagore. The Mission has brought out a coffee table book in Montenegrin and English, with the paintings of Dr. Tatjana Burzanovic based on her thesis and work done on her artistic interpretations of

Bhagvad Gita.

A 6-member, ICCR sponsored, Kathak dance group led by Ms. Rujuta Soman visited Montenegro and performed in two Montenegrin coastal cities Tivat and Budva in May 2014 respectively. The performances were highly appreciated by the audience of Montenegro. Transport Minister, Ivan Brajović, attended the event in Tivat.

An Indian Bollywood event was organised at the KIC Budo Tomovic Centre, Podgorica in October 2014. Three Indian movies with Serbian subtitles were screened and received a tremendous response.

A three member santoor group led by Pandit Nityanand Haldipur performed in Niksic and Podgorica in 2015. This was the first ever Indian classical music concerts in Montenegro and was well received by the audience.

**Useful Resources:**

1. Embassy website: [www.indianembassy.at](http://www.indianembassy.at)
2. Embassy Facebook: [www.facebook.com/IndianEmbassyVienna](https://www.facebook.com/IndianEmbassyVienna)

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**10<sup>th</sup> December 2016**