PRESS RELEASE:

On September 15th 2017, Statistical Office of Montenegro organized, in the EU Info Center, the conference regarding closure of IPA 2013 National and IPA 2014 multi-beneficiary project, supported by the European Commission, which contributed to its development in the process of European integration.

The conference was held with the aim of presenting the results achieved by Statistical Office in the period from October 2015 to August 2017, in the field of macroeconomic statistics, agricultural and business statistics, social statistics and statistics of research and development.

The conference was opened by Director of Statistical Office, Ms. Gordana Radojević, Minister of European Affairs, Mr. Aleksandar Andrija Pejovic, and High Representative of Delegation of the European Union in Montenegro, Mr. Hermann Spitz, Head of the Sector for Cooperation.

Director of Statistical Office of Montenegro welcomed the audience, expressing satisfaction with the organized conference on the occasion of the closure of IPA 2013 National and IPA 2014 multi-beneficiary project, by which Statistical Office managed to improve all fields of official statistics and therefore achieve an enviable quality level, approaching to the full harmonization with EU standards. She pointed out that over 30 different activities were implemented, engaging total staff involved in the production of official statistics that improved their expert knowledge in the field of macroeconomic statistics, agricultural statistics and business statistics, social statistics and research and development statistics. As a special contribution to the fulfillment of the final benchmarks of chapter 18. Statistics, Director Radojević pointed out the following results. Increased availability of data by improving and introducing new surveys on almost all economic activities that significantly participate in GDP. In addition to business surveys which follow the labor market, inflation, research and development have also been improved. Attention has also been paid on surveys which follow the quality of life of citizens in accordance with EU methodologies. Pointing out the fundamental results, she highlighted that mentioned was only initial input on the fulfillment of the first final benchmark concerning the delivery of key national account tables.

Mr. Hermann Spitz, expressed his satisfaction regarding the organization of this conference for the first time when it comes to the official statistics and at the same time highlighted the crucial importance it has for the European integration process. He expressed his compliments to the progress of Statistical Office, with the expectation that the trend of progress will be continued, particularly in the implementation of the next Population Census 2021 and the establishment of the Address Register, where the full support of the Montenegrin Government is expected. Mentioning Law on Official Statistics and the System of Official Statistics and the legal basis on which work Statistical Office is based, as the best in the region, Mr. Spitz congratulated to Montenegro, the first candidate country which started process of signing Commitment on confidence in official statistics, which will guarantee professional independence and provide greater trust in official statistics. Mr Spitz expressed concerns about the inadequate solution
regarding the office building and insufficient staff in Statistical Office that should respond to the negotiating process's obligations, highlighting them as possible reasons for stagnation in further development.

Minister of European Affairs Mr Aleksandar Andrija Pejovic pointed out the importance of official statistics for the EU accession process, stressing that there is almost no negotiation chapter that does not need statistics. He said that statistics is an important segment of financial policy when it comes to improving financial accounts and implementation of methodology of the European accounting system ESA 2010, and that in the field of agriculture statistics is crucial for the development of the agricultural register, data on pesticides and marine fish.

“The database produced by official statistics will measure progress in all areas of the negotiation process, as well as determine the financial obligations of our country towards the EU, as well as the financial obligations of the EU towards us. In addition, good statistical data is of great importance in measuring the impact of projects that will be financed by the European Structural Funds and Investment Funds after membership, “minister said.

He expressed expectation that successfully implemented projects will help the Statistical Office in harmonizing official statistics with European standards and methodologies, which, he said, leads to the realization of the fundamental goal of the negotiations in Chapter 18.

1 Maintaining negotiations is as piloting an aircraft which depends on a whole range of very advanced and complex instruments. One of such the most necessary, precise navigation instruments is statistics. It depends on it, how successfully we will manage this most important process for Montenegro', said Minister Pejovic.

Other speakers at the Conference were:

- Branka Šušić Radovanović, Assistant Director for sector of macroeconomic statistics, national accounts and prices,
- Jelena Zvizdojević, Assistant Director for the agricultural, fishery, business statistics, environmental and forestry statistics,
- Vuk Čađenović, Assistant Director for the Sector of Social Statistics and Demography,
- Jelena Marković, Coordinator of multi-beneficiary project IPA 2014,
- Majda Savićević, Coordinator of the national project IPA 2013,
- Clementina Ivan Ungureanu, Key expert in the national IPA 2013 project,
- Branka Žižić, Independent Advisor I, Ministry of Science.

Key results achieved in the field of macroeconomic statistics are:

- A detailed description of sources and methods (GNI Inventory) was prepared in accordance with ESA 2010,
• Improved supply and use tables,
• Improved governance finance statistics, by classification of institutional units in the state sector according to the ESA 2010 methodology,
• Established a model for estimation of non-observed economy for legal and illegal parts,
• Improved purchasing power parity methodology,
• Experimentally calculated harmonized index of consumer prices,
• Established model for calculating the index of market prices of houses and apartments,
• Improved external trade statistics on goods, by invoiced value by currency and company characteristics.

Key results achieved in the field of agricultural statistics and business statistics are:

• Improved structure and content of the Register of Agricultural Holdings,
• Conducted pilot survey on the structure of agricultural holdings,
• Conducted pilot survey on crop production statistics,
• Improved methodology of animal statistics,
• Established economic accounts in agriculture,
• Revised methodology of production of forestry statistics,
• Improved methodology of waste statistics,
• Improved methodology of service statistics,
• Calculated producer price indices for air traffic and postal services,
• Calculated price index in the field of construction,
• Prepared Report on the quality of retail trade research,
• Calculated industrial turnover index,
• Improved road freight methodology,
• Created all instruments for carrying out research on national tourism.

Key results in the field of social statistics are:

• Created Strategy for Implementation of the register based Population Census,
• Prepared the concept of establishing the Address Register in order to create the preconditions for the Registration Census,
• Established and implemented ESSPROS survey,
• Improved EU-SILC research methodology,
• Created Strategies for the implementation of new methods of data collection,
• Improved sampling methodology for labor force survey,
• Introduced new sampling techniques,
• Introduced DEGURBA classification and GRID statistics,
• Fully harmonized methodology for survey on use of information communication technologies,
• Implemented new research on the web portal,
• Established a system for the production of research and development statistics,
• Created all instruments for carrying out survey on innovations.
Large number of high representatives of national and international institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations, attended the conference, which was opened for media.

The conference was closed by director of Statistical Office, Ms. Gordana Radojević, who expressed full commitment to further improvements of official statistics and strengthening cooperation with national and international institutes. She agreed with the fact which Mr. Spitz, High Representative of the European Delegation in Montenegro, highlighted, that the key challenge for Montenegro is and will be in the next period the necessity of increasing the number of employees and permanently providing adequate working space for Statistical Office.