



Montenegro — Va-PoReg Country Report

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03/13/1852 Start Autocratic Monarchy: In 1878, Montenegro gained independence de jure due to the Treaty of Berlin.¹ It became a principality on 03/13/1852. The first Montenegrin constitution was proclaimed in 1899 by Danilo II., the ruling Prince of Montenegro from 1851 to 1860.² On 08/28/1910 Nikola I. proclaimed a kingdom and became King of Montenegro.³ Officially it was a constitutional monarchy, but absolutist in practice.⁴ According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held until 1904, from 1905 to 1914 only multiparty legislative elections were held. However universal male suffrage was absent during this period (LIED). Moreover, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, and V-Dem's PCLI is also classified by us as indicating that political liberties are absent until 1914 and as not really present afterwards. LIED does not provide information for the rest of the period. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent or no value given as no parliament existed.

12/01/1918 End Autocratic Monarchy/Start Part of Other Country [of Yugoslavia, Constitutional Monarchy]: On this date Montenegro became part of the new Kingdom of Serb, Croats and Slovenes, later Kingdom of Yugoslavia. On 12/01/1918, Montenegro ceased to exist as an independent state and became part of the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later known as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This development followed the Corfu Declaration of 1917, signed by the Montenegrin government in exile and the Yugoslav Committee, which ceded governmental authority and laid the foundation for unification.⁵ Because the transfer of power was based on a formal agreement between representatives of the old regime and the emerging Yugoslav leadership, the event is best coded as a negotiated transition. At the same time, it constitutes a borderline case, since the Montenegrin side entered negotiations from a position of weakness and faced significant domestic opposition to unification.

04/18/1941 End Part of Other Country [of Yugoslavia, Direct Rule Occupation Regime]/Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Italy, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]: On this date Montenegro was occupied by Italy and on 07/12/1941 the Italians proclaimed the Kingdom of Montenegro as sovereign, independent, constitutional monarchy under Italian Protectorate.⁶ However, according to our data we classify it as a period of occupation.

09/12/1943 End Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Italy, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]/Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Germany, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]: Following Italy's surrender on this date, German forces swiftly occupied Montenegro, maintaining control until their withdrawal in December 1944. The occupation was marked by significant resistance from both communist-led Partisans and pro-Serbian monarchist groups. In response to the growing anti-fascist movement, the State Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Montenegro and Boka was established on 11/16/1943, serving as the highest governing body of the resistance. This council was integrated into the broader Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia, led by Josip Broz Tito, and played a pivotal role in the formation of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro under President Nikola Miljanić. The German administration in Montenegro faced challenges in maintaining control, relying on local collaborators, including certain Chetnik factions and

separatist groups. Despite these alliances, the Partisans' persistent resistance undermined German authority. The occupation period was characterized by harsh reprisals against civilians, economic exploitation, and efforts to suppress the burgeoning liberation movement. The resilience and organization of the Montenegrin resistance were instrumental in the eventual liberation and the establishment of a socialist government aligned with Tito's vision for Yugoslavia.⁷

12/15/1944 End Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Germany, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]/Start Communist Ideocracy: On this date the Germans withdrew from Montenegro, defeated by partisan troops, and evacuated towards Austria. The liberated Montenegro reinstated the parliament in the form of the 'Montenegrin Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation' resulting from the 'State Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Montenegro and Boka'. At the same time, the fascist leader Sekula Drljević attempted to create a de facto puppet government-in-exile in the neighboring 'Independent State of Croatia' (NDH), which was a German quasi-protectorate. The government-in-exile, known as the „Montenegrin State Council“, was dissolved after the fall of the NDH government on 05/08/1945.⁸

03/07/1945 End Communist Ideocracy/Start Part of Other Country [of Yugoslavia, Communist Ideocracy]: On this date, and during the retreat of the German forces, a government dominated by Tito and the communists was established (Petrovich 1947: 508-9, Van Dyke 1947: 375). On 11/29/1945, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was officially proclaimed. Montenegro became one of the six constituent republics and was on 07/07/1963 renamed in the Socialist Republic of Montenegro.⁹ General elections were held in SR Montenegro on 12/09/1990, with a second round of the presidential election held on 12/23.¹⁰ Momir Bulatović of the League of Communists won the presidential election, whilst his party emerged as the largest in Parliament, winning 83 of the 125 seats.¹¹ In 1991, following the first multi-party elections, the League of Communists of Montenegro underwent a name change to become the Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro, resulting in the removal of the adjective „Socialist“ from the republic's title.¹²

04/27/1992 End Part of Other Country [of Yugoslavia, Communist Ideocracy]/Start Part of Other Country [of Yugoslavia, Electoral Autocracy]: Unlike Croatia and Slovenia, Montenegro decided to stay part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with only Serbia as other member. This event represents a change in the reference country rather than an independence movement or a regime change within Montenegro itself. On 10/12/1992 Montenegro changed its name to Republic of Montenegro. On 03/04/2003 Serbia and Montenegro formed a state union.¹³ On 05/21/2006, an independence referendum was held and approved by 55.5% of voters.¹⁴ From 1998 until 2006, V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as indicating that political liberties are somewhat present. Between 1915 and 2006 Montenegro does not appear in LIED's data. V-Dem does not treat Montenegro between 1918 and 1998.

06/03/2006 End Part of Other Country [of Yugoslavia, Electoral Autocracy]/Start Electoral Democracy: On this date, Montenegro declared its independence, which was recognized by the Serbian parliament two days later (Marshall 2018d).¹⁵ On 09/10/2006, elections for the Constitutional Assembly under universal suffrage were held. The DPS had been in power since 1991, which has provided it with significant structural advantages over opposition parties. Opposition parties have long claimed that the political framework is seriously flawed. An extensive patronage system and widespread corruption can be observed.¹⁶ However, based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. The country's elections are classified as competitive according to LIED. V-Dem's CEI scores ambiguous cleanliness from 2006 to 2012 and 2021 to 2020. Since 2013, the elections are not really clean. Moreover, V-Dem's EF&FI declares the elections as somewhat free and fair from 2006 to 2012 and in 2023. For the remaining years ambiguous outcomes are achieved. In addition, according to LIED political liberties were absent. Whereas V-Dem's PCLI scores somewhat political liberties until 2018. Since 2019, political liberties are present. Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive was either equal to or subordinate to other institutions, demonstrating strong constraints on decision-making authority. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were comprehensive in 2020 and robust otherwise, while V-Dem's LCE is

classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate 2013-2014 and 2016-2019 and otherwise robust. The country was not ranked in Transparency International's 2006 Corruption Perceptions Index, but some international officials believe that corruption is an even greater problem in Montenegro than in neighboring Albania, which was ranked 111 out of 163 countries surveyed. To boot there are frequent reports that the threat of fines for libel forces journalists to engage in significant self-censorship. The Montenegrin judicial system lacks independence from political authorities, and judicial corruption remains a significant problem.¹⁷ The case lies on the borderline between an electoral democracy and an electoral hybrid regime, it is a stable regime that combines democratic and authoritarian elements. FH rated Montenegro as partly free with a score of 6 during the period 2007–2008. Following this, the rating improved from 2009 to 2014 to a score of 5 and the status free, reflecting a phase of more stable liberties. Since 2015, however, conditions have worsened again, placing the country back into the partly free category with scores between 6 and 7. These fluctuations in the FH ratings, oscillating between free and partly free, reflect the borderline nature of the regime between an electoral democracy and an electoral hybrid regime, which is a stable regime that combines democratic and authoritarian elements. We interpret the entire period of the regime as rather free.

Electoral Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Notes

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenegro#History>

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenegro#Demographics>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principality_of_Montenegro

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Montenegro

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corfu_Declaration; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Montenegro

⁶ <https://www.worldstatesmen.org/Montenegro.html>

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German-occupied_territory_of_Montenegro;
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenegrin_Anti-Fascist_Assembly_of_National_Liberation

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German-occupied_territory_of_Montenegro

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_Republic_of_Montenegro

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1990_Montenegrin_general_election

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1990_Montenegrin_general_election

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_Republic_of_Montenegro

¹³ <https://www.worldstatesmen.org/Montenegro.html>

¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_Montenegrin_independence_referendum

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_Montenegrin_independence_referendum;
<https://www.britannica.com/place/Montenegro/Independence>

¹⁶ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/montenegro/freedom-world/2022>

¹⁷ <https://www.refworld.org/docid/473c55e221b.html>

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