

Montenegro

Ethnicity in Montenegro

Group selection

We identify the following politically relevant ethnic groups: **Albanians, Bosniak/Muslims, Croats, Montenegrins, Roma, and Serbs.**

With 44,9% of the population, Montenegrins are the largest ethnic group in the country. Serbs constitute the largest minority with 28,7%, followed by Bosniaks and Albanians (³⁴⁶⁴, ³⁴⁶⁵, 945). For the 2003 census, the term “Bosniaks” was introduced, but Muslims and Bosniaks are included in one single category, although there is a slight difference between Serbian speaking Muslims and Bosnian speaking Bosniaks. This is in line with Bieber (³⁴⁶⁶, 944), who also considers Bosniaks and Muslims in Montenegro as a combined ethnic group.

³⁴⁶⁴ [Census, 2011]

³⁴⁶⁵ [Bieber, 2010]

³⁴⁶⁶ [Bieber, 2010]

Power relations

2008-2016

In 2006, Montenegro declared independence from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. Montenegrins are the political majority and they dominate the government. They are mostly represented by the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), which has been in power from independence to 2020.

Serbs are represented by the party alliance Serbian List (Srpska lista), and more recently the Democratic Front, but Serbs also vote for other parties and approximately 30 percent of the parliament members, from the Serbian and other parties, considered themselves as Serbian (³⁴⁶⁷, 945). Yet, as the parties representing the Serbs are in opposition, and thus without governmental influence, Serbs are considered politically powerless according to the EPR coding rules.

³⁴⁶⁷ [Bieber, 2010]

In Montenegro, seats are allocated using the d'Hondt method. There is a three percent threshold to gain representation. If none of the lists of a specific minority group achieve a threshold of 3 percent, a lower threshold of 0.7 percent is used (for Croats, this becomes 0.4 percent) (³⁴⁶⁸). The Albanians, the Bosniak/Muslims and the Croats are politically powerless. Roma are discriminated because they often lack identity documents and therefore, access to basic social services. Prejudice against Roma is widespread, and local authorities often ignore or tacitly condone their intimidation or mistreatment (³⁴⁶⁹).

³⁴⁶⁸ [Election Guide, 2014]

³⁴⁶⁹ [U.S. State Department, 2006-2009]

Albanians were under-represented in public-sector employment and face some exclusion from economic life, as well as everyday indirect discrimination. While there is education in the Albanian language available at the primary and secondary level, and in some courses at the University of Podgorica, there are too few qualified teachers. Albanian community representatives also complain that even where classes are taught in Albanian, Albanian history and culture are not included in the curricula (³⁴⁷⁰).

³⁴⁷⁰ [Minority Rights Group International, 2014a]

Roma living in informal settlements, particularly those displaced from Kosovo, continue to face forced evictions by the authorities, and have nowhere to turn. In the July 2006 parliamentary elections there were no Roma candidates, and in all levels of Montenegrin government, there remains only one elected Roma office-holder (³⁴⁷¹).

³⁴⁷¹ [Minority Rights Group International, 2014b]

After the elections in 2012, a cabinet was again formed with the dominant party, the DPS. The Albanians were not represented in the government during this term, while the Bosniak and the Croat party were both represented, but through a token ministry without portfolio. All of these groups are therefore considered powerless, which makes the Montenegrin the dominant ethnic group. The Serbs still belonged to the opposition, and the Roma were still discriminated (³⁴⁷², ³⁴⁷³).

³⁴⁷² [CIA, 2013]

³⁴⁷³ [HSS, 2012]

2017-2020

The parliamentary elections of October 2016 were highly contested and seen by opposition parties to be conducted “under an atmosphere of a coup d’etat,” which subsequently led the opposition to boycott parliamentary procedures for a considerable amount of time (³⁴⁷⁴). Still, the socialist DPS retained their majority, and Prime Minister Markovic started to build a new cabinet. The Bosniak Party, the Democratic Union of Albanians as well as the Croatian Civic Initiative joined the executive again. The Bosniak Party is represented by three ministers, while the Democratic Union of Albanians and the Croatian Civic Initiative hold one cabinet position each. The Croatian minister, however, holds a position without assigned division, which is why the de facto policy influence is considered negligible. Therefore, the Croats are coded as being powerless, while the Bosniak and the Albanians are coded as junior partners. The Serbian minority is the only group not represented in the cabinet, while still being part of the parliamentary opposition (³⁴⁷⁵; ³⁴⁷⁶). The Serbs are therefore considered powerless.

³⁴⁷⁴ [BTI, 2020]

³⁴⁷⁵ [Konrad Adenauer Stiftung e.V., 2016]

³⁴⁷⁶ [CIA, 2017]

Even though being politically included, the minority groups complain that they are not represented enough on the national level. Albanians and Bosniaks in the North and the South of the country, for example, claimed that national policies intentionally discriminate them economically so that they would leave the country in search for economic opportunities (³⁴⁷⁷). Still, these issues cannot be interpreted as political discrimination, as is faced by the Roma. According to UNHCR, there were more than 3’000 stateless persons,

³⁴⁷⁷ [US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights & Labor, 2017]

mostly Roma, Ashkali and Balkan Egyptians in the country in 2015. A lack of birth and registration documentation keeps these people from gaining nationality and access to social services ⁽³⁴⁷⁸⁾.

³⁴⁷⁸ [US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights & Labor, 2015]

2021-

Parliamentary elections were held in Montenegro in August 2020. The elections were won with a slight majority of 41 out of the 81 seats for the three opposition blocks, namely the pro-Serbian “For the Future of Montenegro” coalition with 27 seats, the “Peace is Our Nation” with ten seats and the liberal “Black on White” bloc with four seats ^(3479; 3480).

³⁴⁷⁹ [Kajosevic, 2020]

³⁴⁸⁰ [ElectionGuide, 2020]

The new cabinet was voted in in December 2020. For the first time in three decades, the government is no longer dominated by the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS). Zdravko Krivokapic, the leader of the “For the Future of Montenegro” bloc was elected prime minister and the leader of the “Black on White” bloc, Dritan Abazovic, deputy prime minister. Thereby, Montenegro will be run by a so-called expert government with 12 non-party ministers ⁽³⁴⁸¹⁾. The “For the Future of Montenegro” is a broad catch-all, populist party, with a “heavy pro-Serbian, pro-Russian, anti-NATO, and Eurosceptic platform” ^(3482, 3483). The alliance is also closely connected to the Serbian Orthodox Church ⁽³⁴⁸⁴⁾. The “Black on White” bloc is a liberal coalition, mainly consisting of intellectuals. The leader Dritan Abazovic belongs to the Albanian ethnic minority and is the founder of a social-liberal and green political party ⁽³⁴⁸⁵⁾.

³⁴⁸¹ [Kajosevic, 2020]

³⁴⁸² [Ruge and Vukovic, 2020]

³⁴⁸³ [Utjesinovic, 2020]

³⁴⁸⁴ [Utjesinovic, 2020]

³⁴⁸⁵ [Utjesinovic, 2020]

In sum, the new government is headed by a pro-Serbian prime minister and an ethnic Albanian deputy prime minister. The remaining ministers are independent experts with no party affiliation. Yet, the majority of the 12 ministers are ethnic Serbs, and some are ethnic Montenegrins. Therefore, we code the Serbs as Senior Partners and the Montenegrins and Albanians as Junior Partners. The other groups are powerless, and the Roma remain discriminated in 2021.

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Political status of ethnic groups in Montenegro

From 2006 until 2016

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Montenegrins	0.45	DOMINANT
Serbs	0.287	POWERLESS
Bosniak/Muslims	0.119	POWERLESS
Albanians	0.049	POWERLESS
Croats	0.01	POWERLESS
Roma	0.01	DISCRIMINATED

From 2017 until 2020

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Montenegrins	0.45	SENIOR PARTNER
Serbs	0.287	POWERLESS
Bosniak/Muslims	0.119	JUNIOR PARTNER
Albanians	0.049	JUNIOR PARTNER
Croats	0.01	POWERLESS
Roma	0.01	DISCRIMINATED

From 2021 until 2021

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Montenegrins	0.45	JUNIOR PARTNER
Serbs	0.287	SENIOR PARTNER
Bosniak/Muslims	0.119	POWERLESS
Albanians	0.049	JUNIOR PARTNER
Croats	0.01	POWERLESS
Roma	0.01	DISCRIMINATED



Figure 696: Political status of ethnic groups in Montenegro during 2006-2016.



Figure 697: Political status of ethnic groups in Montenegro during 2017-2020.



Figure 698: Political status of ethnic groups in Montenegro during 2021-2021.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Montenegro

From 2006 until 2021

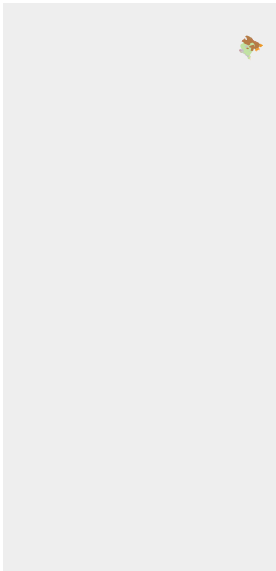


Figure 699: Map of ethnic groups in Montenegro during 2006-2021.

Group name		Area in km ²	Type
<div></div>	Montenegrins	12 458	Regionally based
<div></div>	Serbs	6499	Regionally based
<div></div>	Croats	1190	Regionally based
<div></div>	Bosniak/Muslims	843	Regionally based
<div></div>	Albanians	322	Regionally based
<div></div>	Roma	0	Dispersed

Table 260: List of ethnic groups in Montenegro during 2006-2021.