



CORRUPTION MUST NOT BE TOLERATED

On the occasion of the international day for the fight against corruption, the Centre for Civic Education highlights the need of a systematic and decisive fight against widespread corruption in Montenegrin society. Apart from an evident political will to create conditions for a safe and sound reporting on corruption, this includes a professional work by police, judiciary and prosecution, as well as a systematic raise of public awareness on negative consequences that corruption brings to the overall society.

The international day for the fight against corruption has been celebrated since 9 December, 2004. One year before, the United Nations had adopted the Convention against corruption, whose objectives are to improve and strengthen measures to efficiently and effectively prevent and combat corruption. In the Convention it is stated that corruption is not a local issue of only one country, but that this goes beyond borders and it affects other societies and economies. Montenegro ratified the Convention in 2006.

CCE emphasizes that in order to successfully fight corruption in Montenegro, it is necessary to have primarily political will, then professional investigations and judiciary institutions, as well as ongoing education and encouragement of citizens through special mechanisms to identify and report this delinquent behaviour and not to be professionally or personally threatened by that. **It is fundamental to lower the level of corruption at a minimum level in the judiciary, education and health as these are the pillars of every society, including of Montenegrin one.** According to the index of the international organisation Transparency International, the perception of corruption in Montenegro has worsened for 9 positions (Montenegro is positioned 75th in comparison to 66th position of last year, 38 positions worse than Slovenia, one of the new members of the EU). This underlines a significant alarming signal of corruption that the European Commission has been criticizing for years in its reports. However, the fact that more citizens recognize corruption is encouraging, as it is a significant step to the change of mindset in Montenegro, where corruption was once socially accepted and therefore there was no sufficient developed perception of its spreading effects.

The CCE has been focusing for years on corruption in education. We do consider that in a country with very limited resources, as ours, knowledge and not just title can be the engine of a qualitative and sustainable social change. Therefore, there is a need of zero tolerance by the same society regarding every kind of corruption that citizens recognize in the education system, as well as by the same bodies that are in charge of investigating all allegations in this regard. Our surveys show that citizens believe that the highest degree of corruption concerns the distribution of places in the students' dorms (44%); it follows the enrollment at faculties (39%) and rewarding to successful students (38%). That this "shady practice" is ongoing concerning enrollment in high schools, it is believed by more than 1/5 of citizens, and concerning primary school enrollment by less than 10%. The majority of citizens



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in Montenegro is of the opinion that there are evidences of kinship, party and other links in education, in relation to grades, passing of exams (58%) and given marks to students without the real credit (51%). Almost half of the population thinks that in Montenegro you can buy a diploma of high school or of university (46%). All these forms of corruption that are present in the Montenegrin education system are not and cannot be seen as something which is part of our tradition, but they must be punished, through appropriate judiciary sentences and through social disapproval. This is the only way to affect and to reduce the number of people ready to bribe. However, according to our research, which was carried out in cooperation with the NGO CEMI and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, a quarter of population –if they had to- would offer and eventually bribe teachers and professors in order to get better scores, to pass classes or exams; this is even higher among students (41% of students vs 23% of population) as a way to solve problems in education.

The same research shows that one third of the population would not report cases of bribes and corruption, in case they were witnesses of this phenomenon. This is the reason why we need more effective awareness campaigns and actions, along with effort of competent organs to prosecute these cases and restore confidence of citizens in institutions.

The CCE will also in future point out any form of corruption in all areas whenever there will be reasonable doubts, in particular in the field of education.

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