

Podgorica, November 10, 2009

Government of Montenegro
Prime Minister Mister Milo Đukanović

Dear Mr Prime Minister of The Government,

Concerning the latest public statement of a member of your cabinet, Minister of human and minority rights, Mr Ferhat Dinosha, we state our protest as regard to his publicly expressed position towards sexual minorities, which entirely disqualifies him as a person which should be in charge for further development of human rights of all Montenegrin citizens.

We remind that during his appearance on November 6, 2009 in a interview for TV "Vijesti" programme, Minister of human and minority rights stated that existence of homosexuals "is not good news for our country", however, "even if we shall not make wide enough room for breathing, we are not to let them suffocate". From the perspective of human rights, it is all the same whether the Minister stated that existence of Albanian national minority, or DPS voters, or gays is not good news for Montenegro. Noted manners show that the Minister does not have basic respect for the fundamental principle of human rights – equality of all people, regardless of their gender, nationality, ethnicity, political views or sexual orientation.

After several days, following strong and argument based reactions of domestic and international public, your Minister of human and minority rights issued a statement on your Government's website, in an attempt to provide explanation, albeit not offering an apology for his initial remarks.

We consider that the Minister of human and minority rights proved his insufficient capacities for this very responsible position, which was given to him by you and the Parliament of Montenegro on the behalf of all Montenegrin citizens.

We are positively certain that such attitudes do not suit the Minister for human and minority rights, a member of the Government pledging to protect human rights based on its membership to UN, Council of Europe, etc., including the ratification of statement of the UN on ban of discrimination of sexual minorities. These attitudes do not correspond with international nor domestic obligations in the field of protection of human rights and our road to the EU accession. We especially turn your attention to the fact that the European Commission in its Progress report on Montenegro for 2009 stressed that persons of LGBT (*lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender*) orientation are marginalized and discriminated within Montenegrin society.

Because of the noted, we expect that, in the interest of advancement of human rights of all the Montenegrin citizens, without discrimination, Minister Dinosha resigns from office, or that you decide to propose his removal to the Parliament of Montenegro.

Apart from this issues, based on information made public by the President of State Mr Filip Vujanovic, Minister Dinosha is professionally responsible for tardiness in alignment of the Law on Ombudsman with the Constitution.

Expecting your appropriate actions on this matter, please accept our regards

Human Rights Action

Centre for Civic Education

Centre for Women and Peace Education "Anima"

Shelter

Institute Alternative

Centre for anti-discrimination „Ekvista“

Expeditio

Youth Cultural Centre Juventas

European Movement in Montenegro

SOS hotline for women and children – victims of violence Niksic

Youth Forum and Non-formal education

Centre for Monitoring

Network for Affirmation of NGO Sector

Aleksandar Saša Zeković, researcher of violation of human rights