

CIVIC

Legalised corruption

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Based on its review of public information, Centre for Civic Education (CCE) recently reported that the dean of the Law Faculty of the University of Montenegro **Ranko Mujović** earned 6 349.59 € per month throughout 2010. Almost the entire sum had been transferred from the budget of the Law Faculty, often under vague headings, and does not include the income from sales of books.

This simple piece of information can be analysed from various angles, each of them equally inspiring.

The most interesting news for the readers is probably the fact that Mujović earns twice as much as the rector of the University, or about the same as the President of the Republic, President of the Government and President of the Parliament put together. One wonders whether the work of these public officials who head the University or the State is less worthwhile than that of the Dean. Also, his monthly income is about 13 times the average wage in Montenegro. And we nearly believed that like **Robin Hood** he fought to enrol new students from less affluent families, even though large part of his income is derived from their tuition. From a series of items which, for the Montenegrin circumstances and for a public institution, amount to a fascinating figure, it is remarkable to know that 1083.33 € per month come from membership in various committees, which wouldn't be all that strange if anybody, including the State Audit Institution, could tell what kind of committees these are and for what purpose they exist.

The second interesting piece of information concerns Mujović's academic references. From the website of the Law Faculty one can't tell what were the subjects of his master and PhD degrees, and the insider claim that his original specialisation was in the subject of general people's defence and social self-defence, followed by a shift to international public law. Two monographs and a textbook in the making are the entire academic opus mentioned in the official CV, with a note that Mujović is also "a co-author of several books on genocide and crimes on the territory of former Yugoslavia". Internet search yields several thousand links with loud titles denouncing numerous, unspeakable scandals and unresolved affairs at the Faculty he manages, including information on criminal charges raised against him. On the other hand, works published in internationally acclaimed journals or presentations at the international events, participation at the academic researches, statements within the profession or achievements at his home department are conspicuously absent, although they are common enough for his colleagues in the region and beyond. Is Google ganging up on Mujović to obscure his intellectual achievements?

But the point is not in Mujović's income or in the absence of his references and results in the field he is paid for, or for that matter in his proximity to the officials and local power-holders, for whom he is the favourite supervisor at the Law Faculty, although that too should be investigated. All this has been allowed to Ranko Mujović by the existing legal framework which in line with his nature and value system, he (mis)used to the maximum. This is the framework for development of systemic corruption, where the names and personalities are but illustrations of a problem which demands a serious, purposeful action.

Ranko Mujović is nearing the end of the term of office and won't be a visible issue any more. It wouldn't be good if he was allowed to leave without accounting for his results. It also wouldn't be good if we stayed with the framework which is likely to churn up another Ranko Mujović for us to lament in a similar way.

Often, concentrating on individuals makes us neglect the causes and miss out on the chance to influence the change of the system. Without doubt, everybody is responsible for his or her deeds. But we shouldn't underestimate the systemic shortcomings in the legal framework which allows the public

officials everything we hold against them and which keeps us in a vicious circle while these despicable characters are strolling through the system or, sometimes, disappearing from it.

More broadly put, **Milo Đukanović** isn't the Montenegrin Prime Minister any more. Does this mean we have completed the process of democratisation and Europeanisation? What changed, and in which areas? And will anything really change if we keep concentrating on the prominent figures who are good at swimming through this mud, lead by their personal interests and political orders or incentives, without ever focusing on systemic changes? How many times have we ran into the wall where the writing says everything is legal, while an ever greater mass of citizens thinks it's just another fairy tale without an end or a beginning, and especially without any potential to improve their lives.

There's no doubt that many levers of this government have been shaken. Without a skilled, committed and comprehensive effort, however, this in itself will not make its own collapse. It is up to us to deconstruct the system gradually, while at the same time building up another on healthy foundations, narrowing down the space for individual manipulations and broadening the missing areas of freedom and responsibility. The changes should include not only those who, by the nature of their office, have been and should be exposed to public criticism. The changes are also necessary among those who have been questioning the dominant power projects, because it has become clear that complaints about our troubles can't replace the lack of quality, feasible and sustainable alternative solutions.

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