



CENTAR ZA GRAĐANSKO OBRAZOVANJE
CENTRE FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

Podgorica, 13 December 2008

KNOWLEDGE IS THE ONLY DIPLOMA

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) expresses its dismay at the reaction of Predrag Miranovic, rector of the University of Montenegro to the recently published research on the citizens' perception of corruption at the University, conducted jointly by CCE and CEMI with support of the German government.

CCE expected this research, which for the first time offers empirical confirmation of the previously pervasive rumours, to be welcomed by the Rector and other University officials as a useful overview of the situation and to serve as a motivation for them to undertake all necessary measures which are in their power to remedy the identified problems,

Unfortunately, once again we are forced to realise that the institution of accountability is completely missing in Montenegro. We should therefore not be surprised if our graduates shirk from own responsibility in their future work, as they will only be following the example of the Rector of the University of Montenegro.

Parallel to the said research and in the framework of the same project, CCE has been trying for months to collect data on the finances of the faculties, contracts between faculties and third persons whose value is above 10 000 EUR, open calls for the appointment of teaching and research assistants, lists of assistants, salaries of the University employees etc. In this process, we have encountered enormous efforts invested by the deans to avoid disclosing the required documents, together with consultations among the deans and between them and the rector. In the end, and most often after the legal deadline has expired, CCE was only able to extract more or less standard responses from the faculties claiming they were only organisational units of the University of Montenegro and urging us to request all the information we need directly from the University. CCE has subsequently addressed the University in a request submitted on 27 November 2008 (attached). **In spite of the provisions set forth in the Law on Free Access to Information, the Rector failed to respond to our inquiries, and CCE thus has no other choice but to appeal to the higher instance on Monday.**

Rector did find the time and energy, however, to attack our partner organisation and its president without sound arguments and in a manner inappropriate for his position. His act has certainly not contributed to greater



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transparency of the University he leads, nor does it serve to eliminate those negative perceptions of the citizens that prompted his rash response.

“Corruption in Education” project conducted by CCE and CEMI contributes to the fight against one of the key obstacles to democratisation of Montenegro and its road to EU – endemic corruption that corrodes our entire society. This project tackles one aspect of this issue that was not yet dealt with, and which we believe to be of crucial importance. We are very grateful to the German Foreign Affairs Ministry for their support to our approach to the problem.

The goal of the project is to prompt all parties involved to reduce the extent of corruption in education and to create sustainable mechanisms for the fight against corruption at the University. We are convinced that this action will have a multiplier effect on raising awareness among various social groups about this problem and the potential preventive actions. In the absence of serious efforts to fight widespread and all-pervasive corruption, whose presence is confirmed precisely by the perceptions and experiences of citizens, this phenomenon is likely to be self-perpetuating and ever-expanding. Corruption in education necessarily involves a number of different actors, and the formative impact this environment has on the student population will end up absorbing a system of values where corruption is not only reality but most often a socially acceptable phenomenon. The next problem is the doubtful expertise and knowledge that this system can pass onto our students, precisely in the moment when Montenegro ought to work harder than ever on building its capacities to meet the requirements of the European integrations process.

Corruption is not our unique cultural jewel to be brought to Europe. It is a problem that must be resolved before we can even get close to Europe. It is a complex, demanding task which requires participation of all social sectors, since only a comprehensive, systemic approach can yield tangible results.

The Rector and the deans ought to accept their own part of the burden and apply themselves to fighting corruption in higher education instead of fighting, in public and less public ways, those who are trying to draw their attention to the problem. **It is their responsibility to set up a system where only knowledge can bring diplomas!**

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