



LONG JOURNEY TO TOLERANT SOCIETY

On the occasion of the International Day for Tolerance - 16 November, the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) uses the opportunity to invite all social actors to a greater degree of openness, understanding and mutual respect.

International Day for Tolerance was established by the Declaration of the United Nations on 16 November, 1995 at the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris. According to this declaration, tolerance is acceptance of the fact that "human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, position, speech, behavior and values, have the right to live and to be who they are". The high degree of tolerance and respect for human rights are the founding values of the European Union, and the European contracts prescribe that the membership in the EU may seek any European country that respect the common values. That value framework of EU member states enable their societies to be dominated by pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between men and women.

Montenegro has adopted number of regulations, which will contribute to creating a climate that will develop and foster tolerance. However, the gap between declared policies and laws on the one side and practice on the other side is still unacceptably high. So, Montenegro remains a society that is still far from tolerant one that respect diversity and in which all citizens are enjoying their rights. The examples of these practices are numerous, and the most exposed are persons with disabilities, LGBT population, Roma, ethnic minorities, women, the poor, those who are giving up addictions, HIV positive people, etc. These forms of intolerance have their expressions in social marginalization of these groups, discrimination in employment, access to health services or social protection, and often they are targets of verbal and even physical attacks which are based on hatred, and which requires an efficient sanction of the competent authorities and the society.

It is clear that these problems can't be easily or quickly resolved. **A persistent, systematic and organized work of different parts of society is necessary to really democratize society, and tolerance is an essential element of this process. Therefore, CCE urges the authorities to make additional efforts and actions to prevent any attempts of attacks on citizens, property, and other human rights, with the aim of developing a sense of caring for of others and different. This is especially important for our society in which democratic processes are only in the phase of establishing, and in which democratic institutions, even when these exist, are very fragile and susceptible to negative influences.**

Tamara Milaš
Programme associate