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THE REASONS FOR RTCG'S SILENCE CLEAR BUT UNACCEPTABLE

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) urges RTCG once again to objectively and professionally report on the serious problems in the functioning of the RTCG Council, regarding the illicit appointment of two Council members which compromises legitimacy of all decisions and actions by this body.

For more than two weeks, all Montenegrin media have been reporting on a daily basis on the events concerning breaking of the law on the part of the RTCG Council members, Branislav Čalić and Žarko Mirković. RTCG report on the issue came exactly 15 days after this intensive public initiative by CCE, and several months after the first CCE press releases on this problem! The manner in which it was done, i.e. attempting to divert the attention of the public to the Law on the Conflict of Interests from the existing and in this case directly applicable Law on Public Broadcasting Services RTCG is an obvious case of establishment and promotion of illegality as a principle, which is unacceptable from a medium which is supposed to act as a public service.

The question is, whose interests RTCG represents? Certainly not the public ones.

Why did RTCG – and we know that TV is one of the fastest electronic media - have to wait for so long to report on a scandal which is shaking the Montenegrin public? And why did the report, when it finally came, focus on justifying the breaches of the Law, ignoring the opinion of the author of this Law?

One of the answers could certainly be found in the fact that the very **editor Radojka Rutović finds herself in conflict with the Article 80 of the RTCG Statute**, which is directly subject to the Article 23 of the Law on PBS RTCG. As a reminder, the Article 23, paragraph 3 of the Law states that members of the RTCG Council cannot be persons “*elected, appointed and nominated in the Government of the Republic of Montenegro (ministers, their deputies, assistants, as well as heads of special organisational units under direct supervision of the Government or other officials)*”, paragraph 4 specifying “*officials of political parties (chairmen of parties, members of presidency, their deputies, members of executive and main boards, as well as other party officials)*”, and paragraph 7 adding to the list “*persons who are spouses of the persons mentioned in this Article or are related to them in the straight line, regardless of the level of kinship*”. According to



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the RTCG Statute, this article is directly applicable to the editors of the programme. In that context, it is necessary to inform the public that **Željko Rutović, high official of the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) and Deputy Minister of Culture, Media and Sports, is Ms Radojka Rutović's brother.** He also occupied these positions when Ms Rutović was appointed.

CCE notes that this is a sufficient explanation for why RTCG has ignored the issue for so long and treated the problem with utmost lack of professionalism, but this should and must not be enough to justify it.

CCE once again urges the competent authorities to immediately engage in resolving these important issue which represent an insuperable obstacle to the transformation of RTCG into a genuine public service. The appeal if first and foremost directed to the very Council of RTCG, as well as to the Parliament of Montenegro, and its president, Ranko Krivokapić.