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## CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES MUST RETURN TO THE CITIZENS THEIR RIGHT FOR INITIATIVE

**Centre for Civic Education (CCE), in the light of the announced changes of the Constitution proposed by the Government of Montenegro, calls to change the constitutional norm that defines the so-called “right of civic initiative”. As currently stipulated, this norm does not provide the development of active citizenship, which is an essential prerequisite for the democratization of our society.**

Namely, CCE calls for the change of the Article 93 of the Constitution of Montenegro, according to which *“The right to propose laws and other acts shall be granted to the Government and the Member of the Parliament. The right to propose laws shall also be granted to six thousand voters, through the Member of the Parliament they authorized.”*

By this definition, genuine civic initiatives are transformed into party initiatives. Instead of the citizens proposing initiatives, laws or other text in the Parliament, that must be done exclusively by a member of a particular political group, which inevitably leads to labeling the initiative itself and that is counterproductive within our social environment.

Civic initiative is a form of direct democracy, or the opportunity for citizens to directly propose to the national Parliament laws and other decisions that directly improve their lives by addressing the social problems that politicians ignore despite the mood of the public or particular groups of citizens.

CCE recalls that the Constitution of Montenegro in 1992 did not limit the citizens that they must choose members of the Parliament to proceed their initiative. **It remains unclear why during the drafting and adoption of the Constitution from 2007, decision makers took a step back, and with what right they deprived the citizens of Montenegro of one right they were already having and exercising.**

The constitutions of the neighboring countries (e.g. Serbia), or those who once shared our legal system now are in the EU (e.g. Slovenia), as well as countries with rooted democratic tradition, do not recognize these limitations for citizens submitting the draft law in terms of obligation to be supported by member of Parliament from any political party.

**CCE urges the Government of Montenegro and Prime Minister Igor Luksić, as well as Parliament of Montenegro, to initiate the changes of this omission made in 2007 through the upcoming constitutional changes.**

**CCE will send the initiative with a detailed explanation to the Prime Minister Igor Luksić and to all parliamentary clubs in the Parliament of Montenegro during the next week. Position towards such an initiative can be illustrative in assessment of the openness of institutions to their citizens and cooperation with civil society.**

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