

**THE PARLIAMENT OF MONTENEGRO
DESERVES A BETTER SPECIAL REPORT ON DISCRIMINATION**

The first special report on discrimination in Montenegro is currently in procedure for being approved by the Parliament of Montenegro. The preparation of this important document was part of the planned activities of the Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms and of the Ombudsman for Human Rights and Freedoms.

The content and quality of this document does not correspond to the necessary and expected extent to the practical and political importance of this report, whose goal is to present the national and international practices with regard to discrimination, evaluate effectiveness of different anti-discrimination mechanisms and offer clearer, more precise guidelines to improve the overall practice of human rights in the country.

The report doesn't offer a sufficient number of recommendations with regard to the situation of persons with disabilities. Those recommendations that have been presented are insufficient to overcome the challenges which confront the persons with disabilities in their interaction with institutions and in everyday life. It would be essential for the general human rights practice to improve this part of the report as soon as possible, thus demonstrating the necessary respect and solidarity with organisations of persons with disabilities, who place an enormous trust in the institution of the Ombudsman for Human Rights and Freedoms, and especially Mr **Šučko Baković** and Ms **Marijani Laković**.

Gender equality and gender-based discrimination also received inadequate attention in the report, although this is an area of human rights which experienced little or no progress in Montenegro. The Ombudsman could provide a precious impulse to improve the overall human rights of women and help to attain gender equality.

Inclusion of minority nations received a negligible number of recommendations.

Cooperation with the civil society and the media was not well presented. It excludes a significant number of activities where the Ombudsman's office participated on the highest level and with visible contributions. It would be contradictory if these activities of the Ombudsman were to be registered by civil society organisations, but not by the Ombudsman's office. A more detailed analysis of the report and comparison with the reports of the media and the NGO sector could demonstrate that the Ombudsman gave up on some agreed solutions, i.e. that there is a different way of presenting these activities to the expert public, NGOs, media and international public from the way they are presented to the politicians and decision-makers, as evidenced by this report.

With regard to recommendations, contribution of the Ombudsman to reversal of discrimination against LGBT persons in their everyday life and work is particularly striking. It is neither acceptable nor does it contribute to Ombudsman's credibility to postpone executive solutions and programmes to protect and promote practical, essential and existential rights of these persons. On the contrary, Ombudsman should have been the first to

advocate implementation of international practices and campaign for improvement of the national legislation and reality.

With regard to discrimination, the civil society mostly maintained communications and highly cordial relations with Ombudsman's deputy, Ms Laković. However, there was never an official meeting between the organisations dealing with vulnerable groups and Ombudsman himself. There were also no consultations (usually practiced by all branches of the executive) between the Ombudsman and the civil society. Such exchange of opinions could have contributed a great deal to improving the quality of the first special report on discrimination in Montenegro.

We already demanded an urgent meeting between the Ombudsman and his deputies and civil society organisations, in order to discuss the content and quality of the special report on trends in discrimination which is to be adopted by the Parliament.

Until then, we believe it is absolutely essential to withdraw the said report from the parliamentary procedure.

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Aleksandar Saša Zeković, researcher of human rights violations

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Biljana Zeković, executive director of SOS telephone for women and children victims of violence

Goran Macanović, executive director of the Association of the Blind of Nikšić, Šavnik and Plužine

Ivana Vojvodić Vujović, president of Juventas

Milenko Vojičić, secretary of the association "Plegije" Nikšić

Biljana Alković, executive director of Roma Scholarship Foundation

Zdravko Cimbalević, executive director of LGBT Forum Progress

Ana Novaković, executive director of Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations

Zlatko Vujović, president of the Board of Managers of Monitoring Centre

Aida Petrović, coordinator of Montenegrin Women's Lobby

Stevo Muk, president of the Managing Board of Institute Alternative

Ljiljana Raičević, director of Shelter

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