



Centar za građansko obrazovanje
Centre for civic education

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FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN MONTENEGRO SHOULD BE INTENSIFIED

Youth Group of the Centre for Civic Education (YGCCE) congratulates the International Women's Day – 8th March to all women of Montenegro with the concern that the Montenegrin society has forgotten the true meaning and significance of this date. **International Women's Day is a day dedicated to women and their economic, political and social achievements that have contributed to the welfare of all humanity, and which are not yet sufficiently recognized as such.**

The beginning of celebration of eight March as International Women's Day is associated with a number of actions and protests organized by workers of textile and other industries, fighting to improve working conditions, for salary increases, and generally for better social position. One such protest was held on 8 March 1857 in New York. The protestants were attacked and dispersed by police. On the same month two years later, these women established their first trade union association and continued to protest on the same date demanding the right to vote, shorter working hours and better pay. In 1910, 'Socialist International' (organization of socialist and labor parties) organized the first international women's conference in Copenhagen. At this point it was declared International Women's Day (IWD), proposed by a prominent German socialist **Clara Zetkin**, but, nevertheless, the date of the holiday was not released. The next 1911 year, this day was celebrated by more than one million people in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, and then around the world.

The Montenegrin society in which there is still no full respect for human rights, which is often misogynist, extremely homophobic, a society that has not been properly confronted its wartime past, still struggling with its nationalism, divisions, misunderstandings of anything different, should talk about women's human rights struggle and the need to improve their compliance which is merely important.

All of the above are certainly not a good ground for the struggle for women's human rights. But that's not what should stop any attempt to deal with overcoming the situation in which the values of justice, prosperity, equality and peace, which the women's movement fought are still not part of the value system of society. Even the mention of the need for further affirmation of women's rights, gender equality, teaching of gender sensitive language in Montenegro is still viewed with suspicion, and often with ridicule.



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In Montenegro, the eight March has lost its true political value and became an opportunity for men to 'express their love' for close women by buying them: cooking books, irons and similar 'supplies' therefore letting them know how to take care of them and showing them their place (in the house and near the stove). **Thus eight March in Montenegro mimics patterns of social inequality, namely the subordinate position of women.**

YGCCE considers important the promotion of the significance of gender equality as a general social value for all. It's important to recall the plight of women in society, strong discrimination based on sex in public and private life, to a large number of women victims of violence and gender-based violence, women deprived of their basic economic, social, political and cultural rights. The traditional and aggravating roles, which are imposed on women (mother, housewife, patient, obedient, diligent, caring, sensitive and low) continue to hamper their progress in society.

Numerous studies on women in Montenegrin society are warning that the problem of representation of women in decision-making areas, in political structures, is 'below all international standards'. Although Montenegro on 2011 improved electoral legislation, it still remains in the tail of the region in terms of the number of women in constitutive and executive power. Only 10% of women participate actively, the number of MPs in the Parliament is in marked disproportion to the number of men, only one woman was part of the executive power.

On this day we need to reaffirm our commitment to respect, promote and protect women's human rights and gender equality, which is an imperative for economic and social development of every society. On International Women's Day we should take a critical look at the achievements reached so that we can build on and improve what we do and fix what we didn't. In addition, it is necessary to further strengthen the legal and institutional framework in this area, to work constantly on raising public awareness, education about these rights and their contents, in order to eradicate prejudices and stereotypes that lead to discrimination and violence against women.