



Kotor, 12 November 2020

Open letter to designated Prime Minister Zdravko Krivokapić

Dear designated Prime Minister,

After watching the video of the round table "[The position of women in Montenegrin society](#)" organized by the NGO "We do not give Montenegro" moderated by Dr. Vesna Bratic, proposed on your list for the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, we got an opportunity to get acquainted with the standpoints of candidate Bratic concerning this important issue. As long-term activists and fighters for women's human rights, we are obliged to point out the reasons why we believe that the proposed candidate is an unacceptable and inadequate solution for these departments, especially for education.

Candidate Bratic chooses to inform the public through a round table about her views on the position of women in Montenegro, although, as far as we know, she has not done that in her successful academic career so far, and there were many opportunities for that because women in Montenegro were and are endangered and attacked based on gender - from domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence, through attacks on female journalists, protests of mothers, insufficient political participation of women to systemic gender discrimination that strongly entails Montenegrin society and its institutions.

The views she expressed, within her short introductory speech, are extremely problematic and deeply worrying. The statement that "women have a position of their own choice" demonstrates a high degree of ignorance and lack of awareness about the position of women in modern society. Furthermore, this statement reduces the complex position of women conditioned by many social, political, racial, gender, cultural and class (to name just a few) factors to individual achievement and responsibility. This claim is malicious as it is based on the same logic as the claims of the previous government that the losers of the transition, who represent the majority of the impoverished and humiliated Montenegrin population, "have not been skillful" during the economic transformation of society and that it is only their loss and their responsibility. This also shows a very limited capacity for solidarity and concern for the common good in a country where candidate Bratic is to lead one of the key ministries that merges science, education, culture and sports, and it is even more dangerous given the fact that there will be no Ministry for human rights in the new government.

In her introductory address, she states that she is not a feminist. It is not disputable that the candidate for the position of a minister is not a feminist, nor have they been so far, although we hope there will be one at some point. However, it is disputable that there is a complete misunderstanding of feminism as a theory and social movement and that is also a "luxury" that future ministers must not have. Namely, feminism is not about "special discounts and privileges", but about the struggle for emancipation, human dignity and equality and the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence. Exactly the efforts of those who did not hesitate to declare themselves as feminists enabled the



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candidate Bratic the right to vote, have property, to have protection from violence and access to education, the labor market and women's participation in political life.

Last but not least, we remind you that the use of gender-sensitive language is a legal obligation of all citizens of Montenegro and that the laws should be respected by all, especially those who aspire to lead key ministries of the new government. The expressed lack of understanding of discrimination against women in language and readiness to violate mandatory legal norms confirms the suspicion that the achieved level of women's rights may be endangered by personal convictions of holders of the highest public positions who cannot understand women's rights as the basis for democratic change and the realization of equal rights for all.

For these reasons, as an organization that has been dealing with gender equality for many years, we consider her candidacy for the leading position of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports unacceptable and we ask you to withdraw this appointment and to propose a woman who is sensitive to gender equality issues and fully aware of legal obligations in this regard.

Anima – Centre for Women's and Peace Education, Kotor

The letter is supported by:

Montenegrin Women Lobby, Podgorica
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