



Orchestrated Campaign by Montenegrin PM against the CCE and Daliborka Uljarević Sparks Regional Concern

The Western Balkans 6 Strategy Group, working under the auspices of the Heinrich Boll Foundation, express grave concern regarding the orchestrated campaign against Daliborka Uljarević, the Executive Director of the Centre for Civic Education (CCE), initiated by the outgoing Prime Minister of Montenegro, Dritan Abazović, through an authored article in the daily newspaper *Vijesti*. In recent period, this situation has taken a dangerous turn, with Abazović labeling all those who do not support him as enemies of the state and collaborators of organised criminal clans. This campaign has quickly spread via pro-Russian and related portals in Montenegro and the social media platforms.

Daliborka Uljarević has been a member of the Western Balkans Strategy Group since its inception and her significant contribution to the group's policy papers aimed at accelerating the European integration process of the Western Balkans region. The group consists of prominent civil society representatives from each of the WB countries.

The objective of Abazović's article targeting Uljarević and the CCE, as one of the most influential Montenegrin NGOs, is to undermine the credibility of the critical segment of the civil sector committed to Europeanisation, hence to produce a chilling effect on entire civil society, which plays a crucial role in Montenegro's polarized and tense political context.

After approximately 100 days in office as Prime Minister, Dritan Abazović, lost the confidence of the Parliament of Montenegro and has been operating in a technical mandate for almost a year. Throughout this period, significant deviations from the EU path have been confirmed by the increasingly critical assessments from EU institutions. Moreover, his actions have sparked turbulence with the media and NGOs that question his decisions. In recent period, this situation has taken a dangerous turn, with Abazović labeling all those who do not support him as enemies of the state and collaborators of organized criminal clans.

In response to this attack, civil society organizations, freethinking individuals, diplomatic missions, and international organizations in Montenegro and the region have expressed their solidarity and raised their voices. This case highlights the pressing need for stronger support for civil society's efforts towards EU integration, firmly anchored in progressive, green, and gender-sensitive values.

We will closely monitor the development concerning this case and keep other stakeholders in the region and EU informed.

Members of the Western Balkans 6 strategy group