<https://ss-cg.org/?p=4304>)

Reaction of the Union of the Blind of Montenegro and the Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro to a story aired in the central news show Dnevnik 2 and a text published in RTCG Portal

In accordance with the provisions of the *Law on Media* (Articles 48, 49 and 51) we require corrections of claims stated in the story broadcasted on June 1, 2023 in the central news show **Dnevnik 2 on RTCG**, and a text published in RTCG Portal. On that occasion, information published during the Press Conference organized by the **Union of the Blind of Montenegro** and the **Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro** was distributed. That conference was held **on the account of continuous negative propaganda in the field of work and employment of persons with disabilities (PWDs), with a focus on the alleged abuse of subsidies by employers of persons with disabilities.**

Chronologically, the following statement was incorrectly transmitted: “The **Association of the Youth with Disabilities** is aware that there is a possibility for abuse”. Executive Director of AYDM **Marina Vujačić** did not state that the Association as an organization representing PWDs is aware of the fact that the abuse existed, but she called on competent institutions to examine the situation in detail, and prosecute perpetrators and adequately penalize them, if the abuse is established. In this regard, the text under the heading “Possible Abuse of Subsidies, the State is to React” that was published in **RTCG Portal**, was of a tendentious nature. This whole story and this text we perceive as the attitude that made us organize the *conference* in the first place – that persons with disabilities are unworthy to have high income, so when it comes to their employment “it is about business or a sense of solidarity”, as outlined by the journalist.

The *conference* concerned was not organized “due to suspicions of the abuse of subsidies” and “through a very large amount of money allegedly paid to them”, but because of the media statements continuously published by media during the recent months, including Your media outlet as well.

Furthermore, Executive Director of the **Union of the blind of Montenegro** **Goran Macanović** was presented as a representative of the **Vocational Rehabilitation Fund** although he repeated several times, even at the very beginning of conference, that he was the president of the **Council of the Vocational Rehabilitation Fund**. As a reminder, the Vocational Rehabilitation Fund was founded as a part of the **Employment Agency of Montenegro (ZZZCG)**, while the **Council of the Vocational Rehabilitation Fund,** of which **Macanović** is the president, is an advisory body. Apart from representatives of the **Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare**, **representatives of employers and trade unions**, two representatives of PWD organizations participate in the work of the Council. Therefore, the views expressed by **Macanović** were not, and could not be, the views of state institutions. It was about his personal views which he expressed as a representative of that body, that is the **Council of the Fund**, and as the executive director of the **Union of the Blind of Montenegro.**

 Besides that, the statement that each employer hiring a person with disability, receives a wage subsidy rate of 75% of gross wage was also incorrect. On the contrary, if an employer hires a PWD, he/she **receives a wage subsidy of up to maximum of 75% of gross wage, depending on the disability percentage of the hired person with disabilities.**

Another piece of incorrect information is that “**Vocational Rehabilitation Fund** has received 800 requests for hiring persons with disabilities since January”, because it was about 800 requests for wage subsidies, of which 300 have been requests for hiring new employees with disabilities, and 500 requests have been related to wage subsidy extension for already employed PWDs.

And last but not least, we have to comment on the concluding statement by the journalist and author of the story regarding the *conference*. She said that “stigma does not seem to discourage employers”, which only implied that she, in fact, came with the belief that the abuse exists, and that she got arguments during the *conference* that supported her beliefs.

Because of the above mentioned, we require a full transmission of this Reaction and broadcasting by the same media, i.e. in the same show/portal formats.

**The Union of the Blind of Montenegro and the Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro**