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IN DEFENSE OF

AUTONOMY OF

THE UNIVERSITY

OF MONTENEGRO

93 DAYS OF COMBAT. WHY?

IN DEFENSE OF AUTONOMY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTENEGRO

93 days of combat. Why?

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**IN DEFENSE OF AUTONOMY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
MONTENEGRO**

93 days of combat. Why?

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93 days of combat

For the first time in the history of Montenegro, the Government has organized and implemented a replacement of the Rector of the State University.

As it will turn out in further systematic chronology of events published in this book, through the conflict with the University of Montenegro resulting from the decision of the Government of Montenegro, the lawful decisions of the Faculty of Medicine Council, the Senate, the Steering Committee and the Council for Higher Education were canceled and modified.

Verbal delict, i.e. publicly stated disagreement of the Rector with a political decision of the Government was the basis for the Initiative submitted to the Steering Committee by five members representing the Government to replace the Rector Radmila Vojvodic.

After a series of pressures and changes to the personal composition (Government representatives), the Steering Committee, even for the third time in less than two months, changed their previous position supporting the Rector's work, and on such premises of five representatives of the Government in the Steering Committee (Natasa Pesic, Mubera Kurpejovic, Vladan Jokovic, Goran Jovetic and Milanko Damjanovic) filed an Initiative to replace the Rector. On the basis of this Initiative, and without obtaining the necessary statement of the Senate, the Steering Committee adopted the decision on removal.

In this context, during the second mandate of the study year and reformed teaching by the new University accreditation, actions taken

by the Rector in defense of the legality of the procedures and work of the University of Montenegro and the protection of autonomy of the University of Montenegro was qualified by the Government as “failing to fulfill the tasks envisaged by law” and, bizarre enough, incriminated as “demonstrating an extremely negative attitude towards the policy of the Government of Montenegro “.

This did not happen in 1947, but in October 2017. In other words, it looked like political times in which the arguments were worthless a priori, dialogue was impossible, and the political will was decisive. As if the actors, principals and executors were coming from the same epoch.

Why?

There was a ninety-three days long struggle for the autonomy of the University because of an illegal decision by the Government of Montenegro, an election-party-political decision made under the guise of pretended development strategic reasons: Study Program Higher Medical School must remain in Berane, contrary to the legally accredited study program, manipulating the license of the accredited program and the Law on Higher Education, defying the official standards of an European regulated profession and the credibility of the diploma, violating the competencies and decisions of the University bodies to implement accredited education programs.

After the removal of the Rector, political capture of the University of Montenegro continued by the dismissal of professors - in spite of the reference and success in the work of the University of Montenegro bodies during a comprehensive reform - those people who remained consistent in support for defense of autonomy and the Rector Vojvodic.

Signing support for members of the academic community was censored

from the website of the University of Montenegro (79 signatures found on a list of support during one day), as well all the activities related to the case of the Higher Medical School between the University and the Government.

The acting Rector **Danilo Nikolic**, withdrew the lawsuit filed to the Administrative Court for the unauthorized licenses in Berane and appealed to the Constitutional Court for the University of Montenegro's autonomy violation, and the Senate of the University of Montenegro remained silent after the modification of their position on the autonomy violation which they had unanimously and firmly supported during the mandate of the Rector Radmila Vojvodic.

Will the Constitutional Court protect the University of Montenegro and act upon the law suit *ex officio* - the court word is still awaited.

Appeal to the Administrative Court filed by Prof. Radmila Vojvodic for Illegal removal and the request to delay the execution of the decision on the election of the new Rector had an epilogue in the announcement of the Administrative Court that it was not competent and the case was submitted to the Basic Court - even though the Rector's position was not a job position, but it was based on the Rector's regular job placement as a full professor. The decision of the Administrative Court was appealed and confirmed by the Supreme Court, while in the meantime the acting Rector Prof. Dr. . **Danilo Nikolic**, as the only candidate at the competition, was elected as the new Rector.

For the University of Montenegro and the Montenegrin community, some open questions certainly remain where there is no room for them:

First, whether the care for the foundation and the ideal of knowledge and good quality of higher education can be separated from the spirit of autonomy and academic freedoms, and secondly, how other than through the consistent development of the value system inside the

University one can positively influence the system of values in society and represent the position of deterministic factor of economic, political, and cultural development of Montenegro, as it is appropriate for universities?!

How to achieve the institutional capacity?

Publication *In defense of Autonomy of the University of Montenegro*, containing a chronological review of conflicts between the University of Montenegro and the Government in connection with the study program of the Higher Medical School, finalized with the removal of the Rector, recorded a unique event in contemporary social practice.

Although at first glance it could be concluded that it was futile to oppose the centers of power and that the struggle for autonomy was condemned to failure in advance, we believe that it is only right to remain loyal to the universal academic values and show resistance to everything that prevented the institution from maturing.

Speaking of the autonomy of the University of Montenegro is speaking about people, about the problem of academic and moral integrity. Actually, when it comes to integrity, every person, every individual makes a difference, regardless of being a student or professor, line minister or Prime Minister - it is necessary comply with and apply the law and institutional standards, preventative and protective mechanisms for the recognition of interests and political – party lobbying and pressures, and publicly and courageously defend the autonomy of the University because it rests on responsibilities, without which there is no genuine institution development or society development, no democracy - no progress.

The University of Montenegro is also bound by *Magna Charta*

Universitatum, whose membership was *manu propria* signed by Rector Vojvodic, what a paradox, on 30 August 2017, right in the midst of the hurricane of events that led to the collapse of the autonomy of our institution.

Replacement of the Successful and not the Irresponsible ones?!

This chronology additionally sheds light on settling the accounts with key actors of the implemented reform (from August 2014 to October 2016) within which the University successfully implemented the modernization of the institution and through accreditation solved a huge number of issues since the introduction of the Bologna Declaration.

Therefore, for a more comprehensive understanding of the circumstances in which the conflict between University and Government occurred, we consider it important also to demonstrate the state in which University of Montenegro was when the Government compromised its autonomy and decided to remove its Rector from office. At the same time, at least, we should point out the results achieved in the mandate of the Rector and her closest associates, from entering office in August 2014, until politically instructed removal, in October 2017.

The facts confirm that from August 2014 until October 2017 the University of Montenegro underwent the largest structural, normative and management reform since its establishment.

The entire reform process, all the way to successful accreditation, was implemented with the consent of the Government of Montenegro. During the reform process when the model of studying was changed (University of Montenegro had an internationally incompatible model, unknown in European practice 3 + 1 + 1 + 3), there were both structural and qualitative curriculum changes comparable with at least two study

programs at reference European Universities, by introducing defined learning outcomes and introducing 20% of practicum - therefore, in the field of improving the quality of study and study, or acquiring knowledge and skills, as well as in accordance with the standards of advancement of scientific research and art research activities. Reform activities and principles, listed in the program document *The Reformed Structure of the University of Montenegro for Accreditation in 2017*, were approved by the Government of Montenegro in July 2016. Accreditation of the University of Montenegro in the new model of studying 3 + 2 + 3 (basic + master + doctoral studies), was successfully completed on 10 May 2017. New structure was made viable, stopping the hyperinflation of study programs that were reduced from the existing 270 to 160 study programs, and 445 specialized studies were turned into 154 modules. In this way, the workload of teachers was reduced aiming to achieve the European standard in terms of the student-to-teacher ratio which promoted the quality of student education and opened space for teachers to focus on scientific research and cooperation with economy and society.

In the University reform process, the overall legislative framework was changed, the new Collective Agreement and Code of Ethics were drafted and adopted, and a clear hierarchy was established in applying the rule that protected the academic honor and ethics, the University of Montenegro Internationalization Strategy was adopted, in addition to a series of rulebooks harmonized with standards in the European area in higher education. At the same time, new bodies and services were established affirming the standards of quality of higher education, goals of internationalization and anti-corruption measures, representing the legal and value system and necessity to respect the autonomy of the University. Through intra-institutional measures the Scientific Committee was established, the work of the Center for Studies and

Quality Control was improved through the Master's Studies Committee, a new Center for Doctoral Studies was established - just as a guarantor of the implementation of the measures and the rules of transparency on the way to decision-making by the highest body of the University of Montenegro - the Senate. All in order to further protect the quality of teaching at all levels of study, to have a further strengthened and measurable international reference and supported healthy competition in the acquisition of academic and scientific titles of teachers, scientists and artists, or provide our students with international credibility of diplomas.

In addition to a unique financial platform, a new functional Integrated Web Platform of the University of Montenegro was created, which raised the quality of university information system and provided complete transparency of the work of the University of Montenegro in the spirit of belonging to the European family of universities and the scientific research community, as well as for the purpose of more comfortable and efficient internal communication and connections with different public, businesses, society and the media.

Overview of the events in the publication titled *In defense of Autonomy of the University of Montenegro*, unfortunately, inevitably points to parallels with the pattern of political actions from the unpleasant past of dismemberment and degradation of Montenegrin institutions. This pattern in the history of Montenegrin institutions consists of three stages: the reform and modernization of the institution, settling the accounts with those who conducted the reform, and finally, settling of accounts with those who created it. That is how it happened this time as well. The University of Montenegro, through a combination of political and legal violence, compromised both inside and out, with the best chance of being in character, range and academic spirit equal to the Higher Medical School in Berane, because of which it all started.

The price of autonomy in relation to the mission of uncritical enforcement of the Government's decisions, without dialogue on quality standards, was obviously not important for the executors of this legal and political violence, belonging to the academic community. Institution with political mentorship, not an autonomous University, is reflected through the measure of particular interests and calculations and ambience in which these members of the academic community do not feel inferior.

In any case, it is easy to conclude that such a University is acceptable to their political mentors in the Government of Montenegro, as they neither care for the difference between the University and a study program for nurses and midwives – nor between the University in the mission of reaching the knowledge society and short-term political goals and interests.

In Defense of Autonomy of the University of Montenegro is a collection of publicly disclosed documents. This is our debt to the history of the transition of a Montenegrin institution, a testimony of political violence and those who enforced it, but also of those who defended the University.

In an indirect way, it will also be a testimony of those who were silent and opportunistic

and yielded in front of “force,” who were members of academic or political - party community, belonged to the executive or judicial authority, who were convinced or persuaded that there was much ado about nothing and that a small town should not be disturbed while sleeping.

overview of events

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The Beginning of the Conflict

After the two-year reform process at the University of Montenegro, the Council of the Faculty of Medicine adopted a study for accreditation, under which the study program Higher Medical School in Berane was realized in Podgorica and the Clinical Center as a teaching base. The Study for accreditation of the Faculty of Medicine was accepted by the Senate and the Steering Committee and sent to the Council for Higher Education of Montenegro, which carried out the accreditation process. On 10 May 2017, the Higher Education Council, on the basis of the positive opinion of the International Commission of Experts, accepted the study on the accreditation of the Faculty of Medicine. This is how the proposal to move the Higher Medical School was also accepted, based on the reasons of the profession, the need for high-quality teaching and the international standards of this regulated European profession.

June 30th

Already in late May, there were more politicized media announcements on dissatisfaction of the local community and informal student groups due to the Higher Medical School relocation to Podgorica, which culminated on 30 May by announcing the protest and blockade of the road Berane-Bijelo Polje. The University issued a statement on the same day reading that political pressures and petitions were not appropriate for regulating the standards of higher education, or interfering with the internal organization of higher education institutions.

June 1st

Not even two days later, there was a surprising decision of the Government of Montenegro, the founder of the University of Montenegro, which abolished the position of the Faculty of Medicine Council, the Senate, the Steering Committee and the Council for Higher Education.

The Government of Montenegro decided: Higher Medical School remained in Berane! The meeting chaired by Prime Minister **Dusko Markovic** did not give consent to the Steering Committee of the University of Montenegro on the proposed relocation of the Higher Medical School from Berane to Podgorica. The Prime Minister, explaining the Decision refusing the consent, said he had not heard any adequate reasons to support such a request of the University, and that the need to harmonize with the European Union directives could not be a reason that would

make the Government grant approval at the time. The Prime Minister said that he saw the request as opposed to the Government's strategic policy on the development of the north, adding that the medical capacities had to be strengthened in that part of Montenegro and not the other way around. It was concluded that the Higher Medical School had a long tradition, and more than 350 awarded diplomas also confirmed the quality of teaching, and a large number of students. This institution already has a well-equipped and adequate space, and the quality of practical teaching had to be worked on by the Ministry of Health in cooperation with health facilities in Berane. The Prime Minister said that no declarations were needed for the north, but real politics.

On the same day

In a statement titled "Step Back", a disagreement with that decision was expressed by the Rector of the University of Montenegro, Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic**. She assessed that the Government of Montenegro's decision rejecting relocation of the Higher Medical School from Berane to Podgorica confronted the unanimous decisions of the Faculty of Medicine Council, Council for Higher education as a government expert body, the report of international experts on the accreditation and unanimous position of the Senate of the University of Montenegro on the study, which was endorsed by the Government itself in July 2016. Recalling that the University of Montenegro addressed the Ministry of Education, seeking approval of the Government as the founder for changing the seat of that higher education institution, and in a timely manner, on 26 May 2016, the Steering Committee of the University of Montenegro decided that the study program of applied studied at the Faculty of Medicine - Higher Medical School headquartered in Berane, would continue working under the same name but headquartered in Podgorica, starting from the academic year 2017/2018.

Moreover, by this decision, the Government of Montenegro ignores European directives and standards of regulated professions, but also the quality standards of education for which the University of Montenegro, as an autonomous institution, is responsible.

June 2nd

The University of Montenegro proposes to the Steering Committee not to enroll the students to the Higher Medical School in the academic year 2017/2018, arguing

that it is done because of the collision between the Government's decision and valid procedures for accreditation of this study program. Additionally, the Senate turned to the Government of Montenegro, inviting them to recognize the arguments of the profession and standards of the quality of teaching and proposing the establishment of study programs in the field of agriculture and tourism, important for the strategic development of the north, for the next academic year.

The Senate also urged the Government to align its decision with the applicable accreditation and licensing procedures, while complying with academic standards and the constitutional principle of autonomy of the University.

13-14 June

The Senate's reasons were decisive for the Steering Committee, which unanimously accepted the Senate Decision at their meeting and sent it to the Government, to determine the number of students for enrollment by the procedure. By law, the Steering Committee is in charge of announcing the competition.

June 23rd

The Prime Minister and representatives of the Government of Montenegro were addressed by the **European Federation of Nurses (EFN)** with the signature of Secretary General **Paul De Raeve** supporting the Senate of the University of Montenegro, which referred to the Decision of the Government of Montenegro on the study program Higher Medical School at the Faculty of Medicine. An open letter highlights concerns, pointing out that a candidate country for EU membership was expected to accept the Acquis before joining the European Union, including Chapter 3, that EU legislation had to be integrated into the Montenegrin national legal order by the date of accession, from when it would have to be applied. EFN appealed to politicians and decision-makers in Montenegro to support education standards, while guaranteeing the sustainability of health care workforce and results for patients.

July 6th

On July 6, the Government of Montenegro issued a Conclusion, contrary to the proposal of the Steering Committee, that there would be no student enrollment in Berane, and determined a quota of 70 students for enrollment at the Higher Medical School in Berane.

The Government's Conclusion did not take into account at all that there was some controversy between the accredited study program and its implementation in Berane, and that the University, according to the procedure, requested a license in Podgorica.

July 7th

Already next morning, the Steering Committee re-unanimously, regardless of such a decision of the Government, based on its statutory powers, made a Decision on the announcement of a competition for enrollment, but not including the enrollment for the Higher Medical School study program. The explanation of this body finds that, according to the existing accreditation report for this study program, the necessary conditions are not fulfilled, and the enrollment is only possible in Podgorica.

Minister Launches Repressive Apparatus

July 10th

The insistence of the University to respect the accreditation in the case of the Higher Medical School provokes a reaction of the Government, which through the Ministry of Education orders the Administration for Inspection Affairs to take control of the University. On July 10, an education inspection visited the University and requested information on the Higher Medical School from its representatives. The inspection got all the required information, including information that the Ministry had not yet issued a license for accredited study programs, including for the Higher Medical School, for which a license was requested in Podgorica.

July 11th

The Ministry of Education, after twenty-four hours from the control by the education inspection, sent a license to the University, dated 3 July, reading that the Higher Medical School was licensed for teaching in Berane - although no license for Berane was applied for by the University, or even could have been applied for, since there was an accredited program for HMS in Podgorica!

The Rectorate informed the public about these events, apostrophizing that it was

not legally possible to issue a license that was contrary to the licensing requirements. A meeting of the Senate was scheduled for 12 July to re-examine or confirm the position of the University.

The Ministry of Education, however, publicly stated that the HMS had the required license to announce a competition for enrollment of students in the next academic year, and that it was not an obstacle for the University of Montenegro to implement the Government's decision.

On the same day

The University of Montenegro was supported by the **International Council of Nurses (ICN)** for the accreditation defense conducted in accordance with the criteria of a regulated profession and in compliance with the European Commission directives. The ICN called the Prime Minister and members of the Governments to ensure that Montenegro fulfilled international educational recommendations for training medical nurses and midwives, with the assessment that "the current training program for nurses in Montenegro not only failed to comply with European directives and professional standards, but was even incompliant with the quality standards of education"!

The letter was signed by the President and Chief Executive Officer, **Annette Kennedy and Dr. Frances Hughes**.

July 12th

A day later, the University received the Record of Inspection, which fully relied on the license to Berane (which, during the inspection two days earlier, did not exist). Because of this, the University representatives refused to sign the record.

The pressure on the Rector continued day after day. Rector Vojvodic received a Decision ordering her to eliminate irregularities by announcing a competition for HMS in Berane, although the competition announcement was not under the competence of the Rector, but of the Steering Committee!

The University therefore appealed the Decision, contesting it as unlawful, and proposing a delay in the execution of the decision until the Decision on Appeal was made.

On the same day

There was also a special Senate sitting. The Senate called for the protection of diploma credibility and autonomy of the University of Montenegro. They protested for manipulation of legal institutes at the Ministry of Education and the Administration for Inspection Affairs, noting that the University did not seek to confront, but only defended the quality and profession.

In this regard, the Senate took the view that the conditions for quality teaching at HMS existed only in Podgorica, at the Clinical Center and other health care institutions, which was also envisaged by the Decision on Accreditation and Directives for the profession. The Senate expressed the belief that the position of the highest academic body, the University of Montenegro, would be reconfirmed by the Steering Committee, and that the University would preserve the constitutionally guaranteed autonomy.

Soon after the session of the Senate, a meeting was held - scheduled by Deputy Prime Minister **Milutin Simovic** - attended by representatives of the University (with the Rector, **Jelena Pajkovic**, MSc, Secretary General of the University of Montenegro, Prof. Dr. **Radoje Korac** and Prof. Dr. **Goran Nikolic**) and the Ministry of Education. The arguments presented by the University provoked no reaction, and no dialogue was established. For the public, the meeting was presented as a conversation behind closed doors. Deputy Prime Minister **Simovic** announced the resumption of the talks after the 13th July holiday, but that did not happen. Why – it remained unknown until 17 July, when new measures were taken by Prime Minister **Dusko Markovic**.

July 17th

The University filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court to revoke the Ministry of Education's decision and the license issued.

After the Government failed to convince the representatives of the University to adhere to its decision, Prime Minister **Dusko Markovic** organized a meeting with representatives of the Government to the Steering Committee and, separately, with the Chairman of the Steering Committee Prof. Dr. **Dusko Bjelica**. The meetings discussed the measures to be taken to implement the Government's decision to keep the HMS seat in Berane.

Under the Guise of Student Interest and Development of the North

July 18th

During his visit to Berane, the Prime Minister announced that the school would stay in Berane, and that enrollment would be done by 25 August.

On the same day

A Steering Committee meeting was held, where, despite the instructions of the Prime Minister, most of the members voted in favor of the previous position of the Steering Committee - that there were no conditions for the HMS to enroll a new generation of students in Berane because according to the valid accreditation study it was only possible in Podgorica!

When most of the Steering Committee members supported that solution, the chairman of that body, Prof. Dr. **Dusko Bjelica**, as he pointed out, made a compromise solution by suggesting for enrollment in the HMS to take place in Berane according to the license, and to conduct the teaching in Podgorica, according to the accreditation. His proposal was not endorsed by the Steering Committee, after which Bjelica announced that he resigned from his position as the chairman.

July 19th

Chairman of the Steering Committee **Dusko Bjelica** officially resigned as the chairman of the Steering Committee.

July 20th

The Government decided to change its representatives to the Steering Committee, including those who did not vote for its proposal (Professor **Zeljko Jacimovic** was removed from office, while **Velimir Mijoskovic** and **Radule Novovic** were replaced) and appointed three new members: General Secretary of the Government of Montenegro **Natasa Pesic**, General Director of the Directorate for Higher Education at the Ministry of Education **Mubera Kurpejovic** and State Secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration **Goran Jovetic**.

On the same day

The University was also supported by the National Association of Nurses, which appealed for the separation of professional reasons from the local-patriotic, social or political ones, and as a serious society to build education and health systems according to the standards known by the modern world. They appealed that the issue of HMS seat had to be treated as an academic issue.

On the same day

The Ministry of Health did not share the same opinion, and gave the statement trying to relativize the problem and support the Government's decision.

The Ministry claimed that the Berne hospital provided patients with a secondary level of health care, like the Clinical Center of Montenegro for the municipalities of Podgorica, Danilovgrad and Kolasin, so that they, like the Primary Health Care Center in the city, met the conditions to be the teaching center of HMS. Incredibly, but Health Minister **Kenan Hrapovic** claimed that tertiary level specialist services, which were provided at the Clinical Center of Montenegro (cardio surgery, neurosurgery, pediatric surgery, some sub-specialist areas, interventional radiology) aware not covered by the curriculum of the Higher Medical School in Berane, and that there was no need to carry out practical training in those areas at the Clinical Center of Montenegro!?

The statement also emphasized that the social dimension of keeping the HMS in Berane should not be neglected, pointing out that serious states elaborated strategies for stopping migration of residents from less developed environments and strengthen capacities for equal development. It is strange that such efforts, as they said, were not recognized by academic community members who were exactly expected to have a more comprehensive view of aspects of an issue. At the end of the communication, the Ministry of Health believed that the generation of students to be enrolled in the studies of the Higher Medical School in the academic year 2017/2018 could partly have their training in the Clinical Center of Montenegro, if needed. The Ministry expresses the willingness, in cooperation with the Medical Faculty and the Clinical Center of Montenegro, to contribute to the organization of such a "model of mobility and education of students" in having part of the practical training in the Clinical Center of Montenegro.

On the same day

The University reacted to the Ministry of Health's statement, questioning the capacity of the Ministry of Health to assume the role of the Faculty of Medicine Council, other university bodies and independent bodies and commissions in the accreditation process. The University referred to the fact that the Clinical Center was a tertiary level institution and that only such a curriculum was suitable for teaching and credible diplomas.

On the same day

Expectedly, synchronized with the statement by the Ministry of Health, there was a reaction of the director of the Clinical Center **Zorica Kovacevic**, who advertised that the Clinical Center of Montenegro employed graduated nurses from the Higher Medical School in Berane, and that their professional and expert work was not subject to any objections by doctors and senior management of the clinic. The Clinic-Hospital Center was the teaching base of the Faculty of Medicine in Podgorica, and its doctors provided practical training for students of medicine, and for students at the HMS in Berane, the statement read. Expressing the will to continue to provide education support to all students, in accordance with the needs of study programs at the Faculty of Medicine, director **Kovacevic** especially referred to the students of the HMS in Berane.

On the same day

The University reacted to the above statement of director of the Clinical Center of Montenegro. The communication recalled that 72 members of the Faculty of Medicine Council supported the proposal for the HMS to be in Podgorica.

On the same day

In an interview for the daily newspaper *Pobjeda* under the heading *We need a Cultural Jump, and not Populism*, Rector **Radmila Vojvodic**, among other things, clarified "Paradoxically or not, those who should encourage us to quality and establish institutes for quality control, they push us to the *grey zone*. The development of the north, so important for Montenegro, which was politically motivated in the current issue, should be best achieved, when education was concerned, if true professionals were educated."

She claimed that the current event was testimony to the declarative commitment to reform, because manipulation of the instruments of power was faced during their implementation. It was repeated that in Berane nothing changed during “an artificial polarization between the Government and the University” to be able to implement the accredited program there. No unaccredited program in Berane could be realized because the University had accreditation for the program in Podgorica. She pointed out that the University was responsible for realization of study programs and that it was solely its competence and responsibility to deal with organizing classes, guarantee the learning outcomes and credibility of the diploma, and that it had always been so, “and now it so at every university in the world, because governments are not involved in academic issues.”

The reforms “exhorted in Berane” by the Ministry, as emphasized, using common language, could be described as “whitewashing the grave”.

July 21st

In order to protect autonomy, the University submitted a Constitutional Appeal to the Government’s Decision on enrolling in a non-accredited study program – HMS in Berane, considering that it was denied the right to independently determine the study programs, in accordance with professional needs and established international standards.

On the same day

On that occasion, Prof. Dr. **Aleksandar Vujovic**, Director of the Center for Studies and Quality Control, who warned the public that there had to be agreement between the report of the International Commission for Accreditation, the Decisions of the Council for Higher Education and the Decision on Licensing.

On the same day

The Minister of Education **Damir Šehovic** was warned about the importance of complying with the academic principles and standards in an open letter by Rector **Radmila Vojvodic**, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine Prof. Dr. **Goran Nikolic**, a member of the Senate from the Medical Faculty, Prof. Dr. **Ranko Lazovic** and Prof. Dr. **Aleksandar Vujovic**, Director of the Center for

Studies and Quality Control. They stated that the University’s only reason to accredit the program Higher Medical School in Podgorica, and not in Berane, “improving the quality of teaching process and clinical practice - acquisition internationally comparable and competitive diplomas”. They expressed astonishment at brutal manipulation by a ministry in the Government of Montenegro and reminded the public that the license had to be in agreement with all the contents of the accreditation documentation! Therefore, the University claimed that they did not apply for a license in Berane, but in Podgorica, as the Higher Medical School program was accredited, and where classes had to take place by all regulations. By the decision of the Ministry to issue a license for the HMS in Berane, and not in Podgorica, the licensing process was being falsified, the University was pushed into lawlessness and its autonomy was endangered.

Ministerial Tricks

July 22nd

The Ministry of Education reacted to the open letter explaining that the Government of Montenegro, and not the Ministry of Education, at the meeting held on June 1, unanimously passed the decision for the Higher Medical School to remain seated in Berane. Such a decision was made, among other things, respecting a twelve-year-long successful tradition of the school, as well as educational and wider social needs, both of Berane Municipality, and the North of Montenegro. In addition, the statement read that making such a unanimous decision, the Government had taken into account the fact that the State invested about 4 million euros in building a student complex in Berane, which should officially start operating in September of the current year. By moving the Higher Medical School from Berane, that complex for accommodating more than 200 students would lose its purpose, and a multi annual effort of the state to successfully bring the project to an end, would be done in vain. For that reason, when deciding to keep the seat of the school in Berane, the Government, expressed their full readiness to create all the necessary financial and other preconditions for the students of that school to attend some of the practical classes at the Clinical Center and other health care centers, if necessary. As the conditions in terms

of seat, space, places, personnel, equipment and other are the subject matter of the licensing process, and since the Government issued a Decision for the Higher Medical Schools to remain in Berane one month before the end of the process, in accordance with such a decision and law, the Decision on Licensing was issued. The Government's decision, according to the Ministry of Education, was obligatory for the University, which was also confirmed by the educational inspection in their findings. The University was only expected to do implement the decision, and not to discuss it.

July 23rd

This reaction of the Ministry of Education was interpreted as an order by the Rector of the University of Montenegro, Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic**, claiming that the Ministry exclusively followed the political and party interests and disavowed the public, especially students. She repeated that the Higher Medical School program was accredited, but in Podgorica, at the Faculty of Medicine and in the training center of the Clinical Center. In that context, the minister's insistence on Berane was overwhelming and only corroborating the impression on the machiavelistic manners in relation to the University. Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** wondered whether anyone could believe that the Faculty of Medicine with four amphitheatres, laboratories, libraries, ICT infrastructure, the capacity of the Clinical Center for theoretical and practical-clinical teaching and other available healthcare institutions in Podgorica could have a rival in the General Hospital in Berane, in terms the teaching process and study conditions, supported by the so-called University Center with 200 beds in the student dormitory, several classrooms, two lecture rooms and a kitchen?!

She believed that the minister's response, from which counter-arguments were expected, was a shot from an empty party and political rifle at the most important institution of a society with almost 21,000 members. The University of Montenegro, said Rector **Radmila Vojvodic**, had never been controlled by any government for the recent 40 years, so the only thing the Minister of Education **Damir Sehovic** could do was to resign.

The University of Montenegro Short of Time at the Prime Minister's Hour

July 24th

About the dispute between the University and the Government regarding the location of the HMS, as well as about his interpretations in public, Prime Minister **Dusko Markovic** spoke at the Prime Minister's hour in the Parliament of Montenegro. **Markovic**, claiming that autonomy was not compromised, called the controversy in connection with the HMS meaningless and impassioned, and he said that the reactions of the University were "below the limits of good taste". The Government was unreasonably attacked, said **Markovic**, though its policy was absolutely devoted to the development and advancement of higher education and the University of Montenegro, and that it took all steps in that area in coordination with the University of Montenegro, which enjoyed plentiful financial support of the Government. He pointed out that three months before the Government, through its five representatives in the Steering Committee of the University, supported the reelection of **Radmila Vojvodic** as the Rector, because that was a proposal that came from the University. The Prime Minister detailed that there was a dramatic change in the University's attitude towards the Government in early June, when the Government, within their competence, and in accordance with the founding powers, decided for the seat of the Higher Medical School to remain in Berane. Prime Minister **Markovic**, accordingly, called on the Steering Committee to implement that decision, and that way, as he emphasized, to enable young people from northern Montenegro to attend school, and afterwards remain in their area. The University's management was expected to understand and support the strategic state policy and thus contribute to faster development and the prosperity of the north. According to his opinion, the Government follows the continuity of the efforts of several previous governments, which worked to create better conditions for life, learning, studying and education in the north of Montenegro. He promises that the Government will begin to create conditions for the opening of the Faculty of Tourism and Faculty of Agriculture in Berane and Bijelo Polje. However, if the Steering Committee of the University refuses to accept the Government's decision, Prime Minister called upon the students who planned to enroll in the first year of study at the Higher Medical School to be enrolled where possible, and the Government would provide them with the necessary financial support.

At the same time, Prime Minister **Markovic** stated that: “If the Steering Committee of the University denies the Government’s request, I want to make it clear, we will not insist on the legal option for t the Government, as the founder of the University, to introduce special measures for realization of public interest. I believe that the University, when time goes by and heads are cooled, will understand what the strategic state interests are and support the Government’s efforts to implement them.”

Prime Minister **Markovic** also said that the University implied that “for them, suddenly overnight, the nurses studying in Berane became ignorant and incompetent to do an important job in the health care system, so they needed to be moved to Podgorica to be trained at the Clinical Center “.

Despite the fact of an accredited study program in Podgorica, at the Faculty of Medicine and at the base of the Clinical Center of Montenegro, not in Berane, **Markovic** assured that “there is no dilemma that the University has provided any valid documents that would make the Government decide to support the HMS relocation from Berane to Podgorica!”

He further stated that the Government would not allow the University Center complex in Berane to lose its purpose, and that the Government would continue to invest in that building and make the hospital in Berane capable of providing the tertiary level of health care” (i.e, a new Clinical Center!?! o.a.).

The Montenegrin Prime Minister also called upon “individuals managing the University to let media campaigns go and to go back to their work”.

Miodrag Radunovic, a member of the Parliament from DPS, who asked the Prime Minister in the Parliament a question on the position of the Senate and the Steering Committee of the University of Montenegro related to the HMS, and claimed that the quality of knowledge of graduate nurses was unquestionable listing the names of specialists, super specialists, mentors, etc. **MP Radunovic**, also a professor at the Faculty of Medicine, did not take into account the arguments of the accredited study program in Podgorica, at the Clinical Center, nor the recommendations and support of the relevant international associations of that regulated European profession, but insisted that the “story” about the quality of the school in Berane was “tendentious and not well meaning”.

Prime Minister Marković supported his presentation, announcing to the academic community that it was comfortable to work in Podgorica, “not to be taken wrongly by the citizens of Podgorica - it is nice to have an academic job in a space of 1

kilometer, have apartments and offices, and provide academic teaching, but it is not the interest of Montenegro, that is not our state policy, or the Government’s policy.”

In the controversial final, Prime Minister **Markovic** promised the University that the Government would provide all the necessary means for the quality of teaching and training in Podgorica to be provided within the Clinical Center, “paying for accommodation and all other expenses of students during this training”. With the conclusion: “So let’s understand what are the national interests, what is the long-term need of the country and society, and not what is a short-term vision or conformity requirements. We will not follow them no matter how it looks like and no matter how painful it is, because we work in the interests of the State and that is why we got a mandate in this Parliament.”

On the same day

While the Prime Minister spoke in the Parliament, the Senate of the University, at an extraordinary session, once again remained consistent with the decisions they had made earlier, trying to prevent the Government’s interference with academic issues and thus protect the three - year work on reforms ensuring full international comparability.

The Senate proposed to the Government to allow student enrollment at HMS, and for the Ministry of Education to withdraw the illegal license and issue a new one, in accordance with the law. Acknowledging the need for development of the northern region of Montenegro, the highest academic body of the University suggested to the University of Montenegro to elaborate study programs for agriculture, forestry and water management in Berane, and accredit them for the next academic year.

On the same day

The Medical Practitioners’ Union and President Milena Popovic Samardzic sent a letter to the Minister of Health Kenan Hrapovic as a reaction to his position and in support to the University and the National Association of Nurses.

They find that the Minister ignored the fact that there was no health care without doctors or schools without teachers, which led him to an open conflict with both of them. The Medical Practitioners’ Union supported no operating principle based on violence against the institutions and organizations that had to have autonomy in every democratic society. Referring to the special suspension of the Chamber

of Pharmacists and the demonstration of operating methods requiring obedience, they pointed out that Montenegrin healthcare required a large number of educated, satisfied and well-paid health workers, and “a smaller number of overpaid public officials, directorate directors, their deputies, advisors, chiefs of cabinet, PR persons and other idle party affiliated administration!”

July 25th

The day after the session of the Senate, the Administration for Inspection Affairs issued a Conclusion imposing a fine of EUR 500 to the University of Montenegro, as a legal person, because of the failure to implement the Education Inspector’s Decision, and a 50-euro fine for the Rector, as the responsible natural person.

Steering Committee as a Voting Machine

July 26th

A Steering Committee meeting was held to confirm the membership of new members representing the Government, **Natasa Pesic**, **Mubera Kurpejovic** and **Goran Jovetic**.

The Steering Committee of the University of Montenegro confirmed the appointment of three new members representing the founder of that body.

After extensive discussion of whether it was legitimate for a vote on resignation or if it was morally a professional act, the Chairperson of the Steering Committee was invited to justify a potential withdrawal of resignation, representatives of the SP (student representative **Mihailo Djukanovic**) stood for refusing it by voting. The resignation of the Steering Committee’s Chairperson Prof. Dr. Dusko Bjelica was refused by majority vote.

Student representative **Mihailo Djukanovic** then presented a request for compromise solution and announced a visit to Prime Minister **Markovic** where the SP would seek certain “guarantees of the Government” in the event that the HMS students would travel for classes from Berane to Podgorica and vice versa.

After the session of the Steering Committee, the Rectors’ Collegium addressed the public, stating that the Decision of the Steering Committee was in force since

18 July 2017, indicating that the HMS study program could only be realized in Podgorica, where it was accredited.

This consistent apposition of the Rector’s Collegium, based on the decisions of the Senate and the Steering Committee, pointed out that there was no compromise for the University management regarding the HMS seat, and not even the compromise proposed by the Chairperson of the Steering Committee **Bjelica**.

Students Back up the Government during Vacation

July 31st

During a collective vacation (started on July 24), in the direction of implementing the decision of the Government, the “key” actions of the leadership of the Student Parliament. There was a meeting with the Prime Minister. During that meeting, the Rector’s Collegium position was assessed as preclusive by the SP leadership which called for dialogue and compromise, without entry into the standards of accreditation of the HMS and the arguments of quality of teaching and regulated profession. Their proposal to Prime Minister **Markovic** was the so-called compromising solution for students to enroll in the HMS in Berane (note that the same students’ representatives did not vote for such a solution in the former composition of the Steering Committee), and for the classes on the tertiary level of health care to take place in the Clinical Center of Montenegro, i.e. in Podgorica, and to request the Government to provide guarantees for the transport and accommodation of students.

The position of the Student Parliament’s leadership was presented to Prime Minister **Markovic**, which was above all marked as an interest of students and supported by the Prime Minister, so it became the supreme argument in the further decision-making of the Steering Committee, and their role became crucial in finding a solution to enroll in Berane, not in Podgorica as determined by the accreditation - which would turn out to be the case in the future events.

This position was further synchronized with the factually non-existent Student Council of the HMS. In their press releases, they pointed out the opinion that the University complex, together with Berane General Hospital, was a good base for gaining quality knowledge, and that in Berane all the necessary conditions were fulfilled for all theoretical as well as most of the practical classes. The Student Parliament’s leadership

was supported by the Student Council of the Faculty of Medicine. That Council also stood for a compromise solution in the interests of the HMS students. Their suggestion was also to have only part of the practical training done in Podgorica.

Referring to the synchronized support of student councils, the Student Parliament addressed the Steering Committee with a request to make “a decision in the interest of students and in accordance with these requirements.”

On that occasion - with a proposal to announce enrollment at the HMS seat in Berane, with some training in Podgorica - a session of the Steering Committee was scheduled to decide again between the position of the Senate (and the Rector) and the Government’s request. At that moment, the Steering Committee included new members representing the Government, student representatives who after the talks with Prime Minister **Markovic** publicly declared their support to keeping the school in Berane, but also members of the academic community who, as well as student representatives, changed their earlier position, even without any valid arguments based on accreditation standards, etc.

August 18th

The Steering Committee, after the third attempt, succeeded in adopting the Decision on the announcement a competition for enrollment in the first year of study at the HMS in Berane. The reasoning of the decision read that the decision had been issued in accordance with the license of the institution and with the prior consent of the founder. Rector, prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** and members of the Steering Committee - academic community representatives, Prof. Dr. **Vladimir Pesic**, Prof. Dr. **Gordana Paović-Jeknic**, Prof. Dr. **Tatjana Dlabac** and Dr. **Martin Calasan** left the session..

Rector **Radmila Vojvodic**’s reaction to the Steering Committee’s decision followed. She claimed that the said body had changed the earlier decision, and that under the masque of subsequent *ad hoc* student proposal, as an alleged compromise solution, only the Government’s instruction on enrolling in an unaccredited study program in Berane was implemented. She also warned students that choosing an unaccredited program could not be called a compromise solution. As a result, it could be difficult to gain knowledge and practical-clinical practice and diploma of suspicious credibility. Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** also said that the decision was a violation of the authority of the University of Montenegro and its autonomy, and that such a solution witnessed the short-term triumph of political-populism abuse of higher education and turning the University into a province institution.

Unlike the University of Montenegro Rector, the leadership of the Student Parliament was satisfied with the decision of the Steering Committee, assessing that it represented a great success. Students and teaching, the SP leadership decisively claimed, “will not suffer because of the lack of agreement between the Government and the minority of the University of Montenegro.”

August 23rd

Five days after the decision of the Steering Committee, the Ministry of Education which had sent an inspection to the University of Montenegro, refused the University of Montenegro’s appeal against the education inspectors’ decision ordering the University to remove any irregularities made in the process of announcing the competition for student enrollment in the first year of basic studies, by announcing a competition for enrollment of 70 students in the first year of study on the study program Higher Medical School, Berane, Faculty of Medicine Podgorica.

In accordance with this decision of the Steering Committee, and according to her powers, the Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** established a reference Working Group - Dean of the Faculty of Medicine Prof. Dr. **Goran Nikolic**, Senator from the Faculty of Medicine, Prof. Dr. **Ranko Lazovic** and Director of the Center for Studies and Quality Control Prof. Dr. **Aleksandar Vujovic** - tasked to make a proposal for realization of teaching in new circumstances of enrollment at the HMS, in Berane and Podgorica.

Berane shall not Fall – Long Live the Decision!

August 28th

The Steering Committee announced a competition for the second enrollment period including the study program “High Medical School, Berane” - 70 students.

September 3rd

Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** in the context of the interview (*Real Truth, TV Prva*) stated that after the decision of the Steering Committee on enrollment at the HSM in Berane, the Working Group, working based on the accreditation study and EU directives,

defined the standards for the duration of clinical practice of accredited program, so it was imperative for the students to have one, possibly two days of theoretical classes per week in Berane, and mandatory practical classes in Podgorica, at the Clinical Center of Montenegro, as a tertiary level health care institution. She repeated that the implementation of high standards in education was the responsibility of the University, and that the model of realization of the reformed and accredited study program of the HMS designed by the Working Group - in the new circumstances of enrollment in Berane and Podgorica – was the only possible measure of “compromise”.

Conflict Escalation, Pressure on the Rector to Resign

September 12th

Relations between opposing sides at the University - the Rector and the Steering Committee – were additionally sharpened after the rejection of the Rector’s proposal for the Vice-Rector team. Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** submitted a proposal for the appointment of a Vice-Rector for the next three year period, in accordance with her rector program. Nominated Vice-Rectors included: Prof. Dr. **Predrag Stanisic**, Prof. Dr. **Zeljko Jacimovic**, Prof. Dr. **Sasa Milic**, and Prof. Dr. **Natasa Kostic**. Six days after the submission of the proposal, the Steering Committee held the related meeting. The vote was held without debate and four members voted for the first proposal to appoint Prof. Dr. **Predrag Stanisic** as the Vice-Rector of the University of Montenegro, while the others were against or did not vote providing no arguments, after which the Rector and three members of the Steering Committee left the meeting. The proposal for appointment of the other three candidates was supported by seven out of ten members of the Steering Committee, so that none of the proposed candidates received the necessary majority.

This unusual decision motivated by non-academic reasons was marked by the Rector of the University as a new attack on the autonomy of that higher education institution. She attributed the introduction of personal animosity to the Chairperson of the Steering Committee, who implemented a political instruction and, by organizing the non-election of the Rector’s cooperative team, contributed to the deepening of the management crisis at the University of Montenegro. In the end, such work of the Steering Committee, she believed, had only one goal - her resignation or removal from office.

One of the nominated Vice-Rectors, Prof. Dr. **Predrag Stanisic**, said on the occasion of the Steering Board’s decision that their majority attitude did not have much to do with him personally, but it was about the continuation of the campaign against Rector **Vojvodic**, who unmasked the campaign conducted by the Government of Montenegro, in a coalition with “impassioned mediocrities”, against the University. It is about disciplining the academic freedom of the academic community, he pointed out, in order to bring the obedient to the position of the Rector. He considered it sad that some individuals who unfortunately made decisions on behalf of Montenegro, “not even after three decades of transition obviously understand or accept the principles and values of the West civilization, relying on the model of society from some other space and time “. He announced that his conscience was calm, and that he was proud of what the team had done headed by the Rector **Vojvodic**. Comprehensive and complex reform of the University is something that by its scope and importance overcomes everything that has been done in the creation and development of institutions in Montenegro. Obviously, the state administration has no capacity to understand such a modern, professional and avant-garde approach, stressed **Stanisic**.

September 20th

In the statement titled *I do not give up the Vice-Rector Team*, the Rector confirmed her Resolution to work with the team she had chosen, on a clear development program for the second mandate, supported by the University of Montenegro Senate, whose flywheel was exactly a successful and comprehensive reform that the management team had carried forward in the previous three years of painstaking work. She pointed out that she would not resign, and that only her struggle for academic honor and integrity of the state university was irreversible.

A meeting of the Senate was also held to discuss the crisis of governance caused by disrespect of reform and accreditation of the University of Montenegro regarding the Higher Medical School study program in Berane, about the endangered autonomy of the University of Montenegro which escalated by the Decision of the Steering Committee contrary to the Senate and the academic standards of higher education, as well as on the Decision of the Steering Committee which disputed **Radmila Vojvodic’s** Vice-Rector Team without explanation.

The meeting presented the Proposal for changes in the way of teaching in extraordinary circumstances (following the Decision of the Steering Committee

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of the University of Montenegro dated 18 August 2017 for the enrollment to take place in Berane, and not in Podgorica, as it was reformed and accredited) with the aim of implementing accredited study program Higher Medical School of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Montenegro for the academic year 2017/2018. The proposal of ways for conducting classes both in Podgorica and Berane was forwarded to the Faculty of Medicine on the basis of the Decision of the Senate of the University of Montenegro dated 2 June 2017 on the adoption of the organization of classes for all study programs at the Faculty of Medicine and the University of Montenegro Decision of 5 July 2017 on the adoption of plans and programs for practical training programs at the Faculty of Medicine.

The statement from the Senate meeting also read that the Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** emphasized the role of the Chairman of the Steering Committee Prof. Dr. **Dusko Bjelica** in causing a crisis of governance at the University, and there were also critical tones about rejecting the proposal of the Vice Rector Team.

There was a reaction to those statements by the Chairman of the Steering Committee, arguing that those issues had neither been discussed at the meeting of the Senate, nor did the Senate state their position on those issues.

Rector **Radmila Vojvodic's** response followed reading that the senators discussed the realization of teaching at the study program of the Higher Medical School, as well as the collision between the Senate and Steering Committee decisions. She also presented the fact that in the debate on challenging the proposal for the Vice-Rector team before the Steering Committee, and the Rector's request to justify his position as a senator, Chairman of SC **Dusko Bjelica** did not pronounce a single word.

However, in print media, Bjelica said that he advocated dialogue and was "against any exclusivity or division," and made a blanket statement that the body he chaired and "he personally, since the first moment of all misunderstandings both out and in the University of Montenegro, have been open for negotiations and aligning positions" and that they worked legally.

Commenting on the Rector's statement that the move by the Steering Committee had deepened the management crisis at the University, whose goal was only one scenario - her replacement or resignation, **Bjelica** claimed that no management crisis existed.

At the electronic session, at the initiative of Prof. Dr. **Dusko Bjelica**, the Steering Committee appointed a new coordinator of the History Institute, removing from office Prof. Dr. **Zivko Andrijasevic**, who had been appointed to that position at the beginning of August for the purpose of implementing reforms in that oldest scientific institution in Montenegro.

The reasoning of the Decision reads that the Vice-Rector mandate of Prof. Dr. **Andrijasevic** expired in the meantime, and that it was necessary to ensure the regularity of the Historical Institute operation in the period until the appointment of the director. Dr. **Radoslav Raspopovic** was appointed as the new coordinator who, as stated, "has already served as Director of the Institute has the experience to run this process". At Steering Committee meeting did not accept the proposal of the Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** to appoint Dr. **Tatjana Koprivica**, a scientific associate of the Historical Institute, as the coordinator.

His appointment as the coordinator provided **Raspopovic** with the opportunity to get the necessary majority for election to the Senate in the institution itself. Shortly after taking office, he organized a procedure for selecting the Institute's representative to the Senate, and was himself a candidate member of the Senate. He won the necessary majority at the meeting of the Institute Council, thus becoming a member of the Senate. Thus the pro-Government group in the Steering Committee got another supporter in the highest academic body.

September 25th

The academic year started on all of the study programs of the University of Montenegro, including the HMS in Berane and Podgorica, following the adoption of amendments to the implementation of teaching.

Before the beginning and during the first week of classes, the media, especially electronic ones, raised the issue of sustainability of the way of teaching at two distant locations, as well as the issue of guarantees promised by Prime **Minister Dusko Markovic** for covering study costs, primarily accommodation and transportation. Students enrolled and their parents had television interviews, where they protested the manner in which the transport was organized, so the Ministry of Education announced in the media that transportation costs and accommodation organization would be refunded.

Removal of the Rector as a Political Execution

September 26th

Two days after the beginning of classes at the University of Montenegro, five representatives of the Government to the Steering Committee suddenly called for the removal from office of the Rector of the University of Montenegro.

The initiative was filed on the basis of an article of the University of Montenegro Statute, stipulating that the Rector could be removed from office even before the end of the mandate if, inter alia, he or she failed to perform the tasks provided for by law and the Statute or acted contrary to them, and if his or her powers were exceeded thus causing damage to the University to a greater extent. The proponents believed the Rector had not respected the Government Decision of 6 June on enrollment at the Higher Medical School in Berane. Rector refused to implement a decision of the Administration for Inspection Affairs ordering the University to remove the irregularities in the process of announcing a competition for students enrolled in the first year of basic studies at the University of Montenegro for the academic year 2017/2018, by announcing a competition for enrollment of 70 students in the first year of study in the study program Higher Medical School, Berane, Faculty of Medicine, Podgorica. The initiative also read during the entire procedure of enrollment in the Higher Medical School in Berane, for several months, Rector of the University, Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic**, both at the meetings of the Steering Committee and the Senate of the University of Montenegro, in her oral announcements, as well as in her continuous written communications in the media, “she expressed an utterly negative attitude towards the policy of the Government of Montenegro”. Failure to comply with and enforce Government decisions was also reflected in Rector **Radmila Vojvodic**’s request submitted to the Steering Committee of the University on 7 July 2017 “commenting on the Government’s Decision and Conclusion by proposing to follow the position of the Senate and the Steering Committee in the competition published for enrollment, which was contrary to the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of the University”. Disrespect for the Government and its decisions is also demonstrated by a series of press releases in which the Rector directly opposed the decisions of the Government, and the decisions of the Steering Committee of the University, commenting them extremely negatively. The applicants also believed that the Rector thus harmed the students of the University. As a whole, her actions damaged the University “to a large extent” exceeding her

powers, and for a longer period of time she failed to fulfill the tasks envisaged by the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of the University of Montenegro, and acting contrary to the founder’s interests (the Government). Because of that representatives of the Government in the Steering Committee requested a decision on her removal from office.

September 27th

As soon as she received a request for removal from office, the Rector of the University, Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** sent an open letter to Prime Minister **Dusko Markovic**, telling him that a rector could not be silenced or humiliated, “at least not her”.

She said that the pressure implemented by the Government of Montenegro for several months through the Steering Committee of the University of Montenegro was, in fact, a settlement of accounts with the Rector, so for her the initiative was not really a surprise.

As she said, she responded to the allegations from the initiative simply by the facts. First she claimed that it was not true that she did not perform the tasks envisaged by the Law and the Statute or caused damage to the University. On the contrary, in the course of both mandates, she acted academically and professionally, devoted to reforms, to the promotion of higher education and the internationalization of the University of Montenegro, which was witnessed by clear and measurable results. Government Decision on enrollment to the study program Higher Medical School in Berane, was considered to be adopted contrary to legally accredited study program in Podgorica, and the University was obliged to realize only accredited study programs. By changing and replacing their representatives to the Steering Committee, after the third attempt, the Government changed the already adopted SC decisions, which were aligned with the Senate’s decisions, as the highest academic body. As for the criticism that her statements for the media demonstrated disrespect of the Government’s decisions, Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** said that the Senate’s announcement, as well as her public appearances, only aimed to put forward facts, which, as a Rector, she was obliged to do under the Statute prescribing openness to the public and ethical principles of responsibility towards the institution. She pointed out that the alleged Government’s protection of interests of the Higher Medical School students in Berane and the Government’s strategic interests for the development of the northern region, was nothing more than a masquerade for the purpose of party and political interests.

September 28th

At the electronic session on the initiative of the Government representatives to remove from office the Rector of the University, the Steering Committee presented their position. By majority of votes they accepted the initiative of the Government representatives and according to the procedure requested the statement of the Rector and the Senate on the initiative.

Pursuant to Article 55 of the Statute, it was necessary to schedule a meeting of the Senate within a reasonable time, to take a position on the initiative. If the Senate meeting was not scheduled within a reasonable time, the Steering Committee had the right to consider the initiative and make a decision without consulting the Senate. Also, in case the Senate or the Steering Committee refused the initiative for removal from office, no new initiative could be filed before the expiration of six months.

September 29th

Immediately upon receipt of the Decision of the Steering Committee, the Rector Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic**, scheduled a meeting of the Senate already on the first working day, on Monday, October 2.

On the same day

The Rector of the University of Montenegro submitted her statement to the Steering Committee on the occasion of the removal initiative.

Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** believed that the Initiative for her removal from office stemmed from the obvious ignorance of signatories - government representatives in the Steering Committee of the University of Montenegro - about what was the role and responsibilities of the governing body of the University, but also because of misunderstanding the principle of partnership in the mutual competences of Steering Committees, Senate and Rectors in managing the work and operations of modern European Universities, where the Rectors, according to tradition and law, were obliged to respect the recommendations and opinion of the Senate when executing decisions of Steering Committees. She characterized the statements in the Initiative as legally problematic and politically motivated. **Vojvodic** also asked: according to what law or other norm the Rector was obliged to show only a positive attitude towards the Government policy, or that at no cost he or she could have a

“negative attitude”, even when as a sound-minded citizen he or she recognized the illegality of that policy? Are there any legal instructions and standards to express a positive attitude towards wrongful government policy decisions? Are Rectors subject to any other rules compared with the other citizens of Montenegro? Was the “proposal to follow the Statute of the Senate and the Steering Committee” by the Rector a violation of or compliance with the norms? Was commenting on the Government’s decision made, according to her, under the pressure of the latest stereotyped decision of the Steering Committee, in an “extremely negative way as known to the whole Montenegrin public through all written and printed media”, an inadmissible civil offense when it came to rectors as well? Concerning the specific objections, she replied that it was not true that she as the Rector did not perform the tasks prescribed by the Law and the Statute, or that she performed them contrary to the Law and the Statute. Also, she claims that she did not exceed the authority, or caused damage to the University of Montenegro.

On the contrary, she was convinced that she performed the role of a rector advocating and expanding the democratic culture of public institution management, the value and dignity of the academic profession, as well as respecting the autonomy of the University of Montenegro, protecting high quality standards of education and principles of autonomy of the academic community from political and legal violence by the centers of power. Regarding the Government’s Decision of 1 June 2017 on enrollment in the Higher Medical School study program in Berane, she said that it was made contrary to the legally accredited study program in Podgorica, and the University was only obliged to implement accredited study programs. She also considered the accusation on the rector’s liability for not implementing the Government’s decision of 1 June and 6 June of the current year on the enrollment of 70 students in the HMS study program in Berane, because publishing the competition for enrollment was not the responsibility of the Rector, but of the Steering Committee. That is why she believed that there was a basis for asking a logical question - who acted lawfully and who acted unlawfully in the case of the HMS? The fact that students enrolled studied at the HMS according to the accredited study program and in adequate clinical conditions for practical training, is a proof of the legality of the work of the Rector and the Senate of the University of Montenegro. The “bill” for an obviously disputed Government Decision and political humiliation, which essentially only worsened the conditions for studying due to unnecessary travel to Berane for classroom-theory teaching – could not be sent to the address of the rector by the initiative for removal from office.

Rector **Radmila Vojvodic**, in her statement on the initiative, said that she did

not understand the accusations by the signatories of the initiative. “For the non-compliance with the Government’s decision to implement the non-existent or unaccredited study program in Berane?! For the only possible legal approach to the realization of teaching by the accredited study program in Podgorica, after the decision on enrollment in Berane made through political violence?! For a compromise solution Podgorica – Berane whereby the decision makers in the Steering Committee silently gave up their own decision?” For that reason she viewed the resolution initiative as a bizarre political-provincial retaliation for academic success. On the second accusation, for the alleged failure to act according to the decision of the Administration for Inspection Affairs, said that it was not legally based because the announcement of the enrollment competition was not the responsibility of the Rector but of the Steering Committee, which had not adopted such decision until 18 August.

Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** also mentioned that it should be clear to the members of the Senate and the Steering Committee that “the Government had a lawful right to make decisions on performing activities outside of the registered office of a public institution, but they were not authorized to deny the University, which fulfilled all the statutory requirements, their consent to change the seat of a study program, especially when such a proposal complied with the accreditation of the study program. It is not, of course, about whimsical behavior of the rector or the Senate to have the HMS study program in Podgorica. The University requested the seat to be moved to Podgorica in 2016, after the analysis about the seat in Berane had been returned from the Higher Education Council for failure to meet the conditions prescribed by the European Directive. “It is therefore concluded that the Government has no authority to made a decision to abolish autonomous rights, i.e. the University’s obligation and responsibility to realize a publicly valid (accredited) curriculum.

The initiative noted that she made public her views on the dispute over the HMS seat, and Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** answered that she had only consistently complied with the principles laid down in the Statute, the one which established the openness of the University towards public. Summing up her work and results as Rector of the University, in her replay to the initiative, Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** said that she was systematic and committed, in accordance with her legal powers and, in observance of the statutory obligations, and consistently represented the decisions of the Senate of the University of Montenegro as the highest academic body. Finally, she implemented “as the Rector, the decision of the Steering Committee of the University of Montenegro of 18 August 2017 for enrolling students at the accredited

program High Medical School - Berane at the Faculty of Medicine”. That is why she called the initiative for her removal from office a political pamphlet, written in a machiavelistic manner, almost a caricaturistic content for civilization in which we lived and worked as an institution. The seriousness shown by the signatories of the initiative would be a parody had it not been obvious that they were led by immense enthusiasm of executors in breaking the basic values of the institution in whose management they were involved. Unfounded charges were just a shelter for political execution executed under the form of defending the lawfulness, and the Steering Committee was just an instrument to eliminate the Rector in that execution. Since the dispute between the University and the Government regarding enrollment at the HMS was completed back on 18 August, all that followed was a personal settlement of accounts between Prime Minister of Montenegro and the Rector.

Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** stated in her reply that undisputed results had been achieved at the University of Montenegro during her management. The institution was financially stable, structurally innovated and rounded up in terms of norms. A comprehensive reform was implemented in accordance with the recommendations of the European Association of Universities, and we were successfully accredited in the new and an international credible model. In total, in all areas, there was a huge qualitative progress confirmed by the Government of Montenegro and, as the most relevant, by international institutions for university ranking. She believed that her multi-annual work as the rector improving the University, including the Higher Medical School study program, would be confirmed as successful, and that she affirmed the mission of the University of Montenegro and its position in the Montenegrin society through her activities.

September 30th

The Medical Practitioners’ Trade Union reacted to the racing execution at the University, for the second time. They wondered why the academic community was silent, sharply criticizing students why they were not the carriers of reform and why they did not express and did not build integrity by the standards of intellectuals. The lack of response from the academic community, they believed, sent the wrong message to the public that it was a personal conflict between the individuals, the Rector and the Prime Minister, and asked whether the professors were waiting for the situation to be resolved to join the camp that would keep heading the University of Montenegro.

They called upon the professors to explain to the Montenegrin public what was happening at the University of Montenegro in the way in which doctors explained how the powerful policy involvement in the Montenegrin health system led to its decline to the lowest level in Europe. They advocated autonomy in the work of institutions, particularly the University, calling upon the Faculty of Medicine and their representatives at the University of Montenegro to defend the accreditation of the Higher Medical School and qualify the Government's measures as repressive. They regretted that students did not care about the consequences of poor quality education. They appealed to the Montenegrin courts to resolve the incident in an emergency procedure.

Academic Hypocrisy - Silence or Rebellion?

October 2nd

A meeting of the Senate was scheduled to be convened, to comment on the Initiative for removing the rector from office, but it was not held due to the lack of quorum.

The meeting was attended by: Prof. Dr. **Zarko Pavicevic**, Prof. Dr. **Igor Radusinovic**, Prof. Dr. **Veselin N. Ivanovic**, Prof. Dr. **Ljubinko Dedovic**, Prof. Dr. **Ljiljana Kascelan**, Prof. Dr. **Dusko Bjelica**, Prof. Dr. **Radoje Korac**, Prof. Dr. **Vesna Kilibarda**, Prof. Dr. **Dragan Bogojevic**, Prof. Dr. **Ranko Lazovic**, Prof. Dr. **Sladjana Krivokapic**, Prof. **Marija Perovic**, Prof. Dr. **Bojan Martinovic**, Dr. **Miomir Jovanovic**, Prof. Dr. **Goran Barovic**.

The meeting was attended by senators: Prof. Dr. **Danilo Nikolic**, Prof. Dr. **Milan Vukcevic**, Prof. Dr. **Igor Vusanovic**, Prof. Dr. **Tatjana Novovic**, Prof. Dr. **Milan Markovic**, Prof. Dr. **Zarko Radovic**, Prof. Dr. **Goran Sekulic**, Prof. Dr. **Djurdjica Perovic**, Prof. Dr. **Nenad Soskic**, Dr. **Aleksandar Joksimovic**, Prof. Dr. **Svetislav G. Popovic**, **Jovan Gardasevic** MSc, representative of associates, and representatives of the Student Parliament, **Sara Arianna Serhatlic**, **Milan Tomic**, **Mirko Vujicic**, **Maksim Janicic**, **Radovan Lalovic**, **Djordje Vucevic**, **Bogdan Racic**, **Pavle Malovic** (noting that the composition of the Senate was incomplete due to absence of the four-member Vice-Rector team, for which the Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** had not been given consent by the Steering Committee).

Members of the Senate, who on several occasions unanimously supported the HMS accredited program seated in Podgorica and the University's appeal to the

Constitutional Court for the violation of autonomy, were expected to stand in defense of autonomy and oppose the manipulated removal of the Rector. But most senators had chosen differently - they decided not to come to the meeting.

Due to the lack of quorum, the meeting was not held, so the Senate could not vote on the initiative for Rector's removal.

In accordance with the Statute of the University of Montenegro, Rector Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** scheduled a new Senate meeting on 6 October 2017, within the time limit set by the University Rules. After that meeting, the Steering Committee was supposed to have the position of the highest academic body on the initiative, and only then, according to the Statute of the University of Montenegro (Article 55) they could decide on the status of the Rector.

On the same day

The Steering Committee did not want to wait for 6 October - Prof. Dr. **Dusko Bjelica**, even before the actual meeting of the Senate, scheduled for the next day (3 October) the SC meeting to decide on the Initiative for removal of the Rector.

On the same day

On the same day, the Rector Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** reacted to the expressly scheduled meeting of the Steering Committee, sending a letter to the members of that body. She reminded them that, in that case, any decision without the Senate's position was contrary to Article 55 of the Statute of the University of Montenegro and ultimately illegal.

The day before the Steering committee meeting, a professional interpretation of Article 55 of the University of Montenegro Statute had been provided by lawyer **Nikola Martinovic**, in the capacity of a legal expert, whose opinion was also submitted to the Steering Committee by the Rector.

Attorney **Martinovic** stated that first through a language analysis, one of the methods in the interpretation of the legal norm, it could be concluded that the Senate and/or five members of the Steering Committee were designated as authorized proponents for filing an initiative to remove the Rector from office. On this basis, he considered that norm to be clear enough and that it was possible to conclude unambiguously, only by language interpretation, that the Steering

Committee could, only and exclusively, in case of not scheduling a meeting of the Senate, review the initiative and make a decision without the stipulated voting by the Senate. Therefore this norm grants the right to the Steering Committee, without the Senate's opinion on the initiative to remove the Rector, make a decision if the meeting of the Senate was not scheduled, because the Rector had the right to schedule the Senate meeting. In this way, the norm obviously prevents the Rector from abusing his or her right to scheduling a meeting of the Senate and refusing to schedule the meeting in a reasonable time and thus disable the Steering Committee in deciding on the initiative for removal. Article 55 paragraph 5 clearly indicates that the initiative must be accepted by the two bodies of the University, the Senate and the Steering Committee, because the norm includes a conjunction, and that the rejection of the Initiative for the removal from office of the Rector by one of the two designated bodies of the University consequently leads to termination of the removal procedure, and time-limits the possibility for submitting a new initiative before expiry of the six-month deadline.

On the same day

The Chairperson of the Student Parliament, **Sara Arianna Serhatlic**, as titled, through "A joint statement by student members of the Senate of the University of Montenegro" stated that representatives of the Student Parliament announced their position on the Initiative for removal of the Rector by not coming to the Senate meeting that day. That way, as they said, they confirmed what they had "announced when asked by the media what would be the position of the Student Parliament regarding the initiative submitted by Government representatives to the Steering Committee of the University of Montenegro," meaning how they explained their absence in the Senate's controversial meeting, and they said that they would declare their "position at the level of the competent authorities, not in the media." The communication was published on October 3rd, although it read that it was published on 2 October 2017.

On the same day

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Steering Committee, Prof. Dr. **Dusko Bjelica** and Prof. **Miran Begic**, commented on the foregoing statement saying the support to the Initiative provided by representatives of the Student Parliament was of special importance, "while the Senate meeting scheduled by the Rector did not

have the required quorum, which speaks enough about the opinion of that academic body on this issue."

They explicitly stated that there was no need for other legal interpretation, "keeping in mind the fact that the Senate meeting was scheduled, and that the members of that body had the opportunity to attend the meeting and declare their position on the Initiative, which they did not do, the conditions were met for scheduling a meeting of the Steering Committee of the University of Montenegro, which will be in full capacity to make a decision on the Initiative".

Order - Execution

October 3rd

In spite of the norm of the Statute – that the Rector's removal from office cannot be decided without the Senate's position, the Steering Committee held a meeting and adopted the decision on Rector **Radmila Vojvodic's** removal from office by majority vote,

The Steering Committee noted that all the conditions for the decision had been previously fulfilled: The initiative was submitted by an authorized proposer (5 members of the Steering Committee); the initiative was explained in writing; the initiative was delivered to the Rector and the Senate for opinion.

The reasoning for the removal from office reads the Rector of the University of Montenegro is removed from office because of her failure to perform the duties stipulated by the Law and the Statute, or acting against them, exceeding her authority and causing damage to the University of Montenegro to a greater extent. It is stated that the facts show that the relationship and actions of the Rector Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** in performing duties, as well as her relationship to the Steering Committee and the founder, may qualify as non-execution of legal obligations, i.e. acting contrary to the founders' interests, arbitrary behavior and exceeding her powers. Additionally, she was continuously making public statements in both electronic and print media, opposing the decisions of the Government and the Steering Committee, commenting them extremely negatively. Thus she caused damage to the University and ruined its reputation.

At the end of the meeting, the Steering Committee nominated Prof. Dr. **Danilo**

Nikolic as acting Rector.

The closing of the Steering Board meeting was marked by the threat of the Chairman Prof. Dr. **Dusko Bjelica**, member of the SC and president of the Scientific Committee of the University of Montenegro, Prof. Dr. **Vladimir Pesic**. **Pesic** immediately announced that he was threatened by **Dusko Bjelica** saying that his career in the Steering Committee ended. Prof. Dr. **Pesic** stated that there was “classical political violence against the University of Montenegro”, but not just against the University of Montenegro but also against the academic community.

On the same day

The removed Rector **Radmila Vojvodic**, together with his associates, held a press conference, declaring that she did not speak in defense of her own position, or as a removed Rector, but as an unlawfully removed Rector. Also, she claimed to speak in defense of the highest bodies of the University of Montenegro and autonomy of the University, against lawlessness coming from the very center of the Government of Montenegro. She also emphasized that there were no personal conflict between the Rector and the Prime Minister, or any party-political conflict, but there was political violence by the Government and its commissioners in the Steering Board against the University of Montenegro, and non-respect of the jurisdiction of an institution founded by the Government, and yet not the property of the ministers, or the current Governments, but the property of the State of Montenegro. According to her opinion, the Decision of the Steering Board was legally unfounded and showed a lack of credibility of that body, as well as the lack of credibility of the Ministry of Education and even the Government. There was legal violence, instrumentalization of the University and political abuse of students, which was an example of a triumph of profane Stalinism.

Dr. **Ranko Lazovic** also spoke at the press conference, who as a member of the Senate in name of the Faculty of Medicine and full professor, but also as a member of the Council for Higher Education was directly involved in the accreditation process of the faculty and the HMS. He revealed that the Decision on Accreditation of the Higher Medical School in Podgorica, with a teaching base at the Clinical Center, had been unanimously adopted - at the Council of the Faculty of Medicine and at the Council for Higher Education. He explained that out of 4,500 hours, or the duration of education for nurses, at least 2/3 had to take place in an institution that could cover all segments of medicine. It meant that the hospital in Berane did

not meet such conditions. He also recalled that at three meetings of the Senate, the senators individually positively supported the school's seat in Podgorica, and the teaching center at the Clinical Center. Then the decision of the Ministry of Education and Government followed, to have the headquarters of the school in Berane and to have the enrollment there. Such a Decision is unacceptable, according to Prof. Dr. **Lazovic**, as a member of the profession. The Dean of the Faculty of Philology, prof. Dr. **Dragan Bogojevic**, spoke at the conference as well stating that the decision of the Steering Board, rejecting the proposal of the Vice-Rector team disabled the continuation of the most comprehensive and most thorough reform at the University of Montenegro. Instead of being proud of this kind of Rector and such a reform, the Steering Committee discontinued the development path of the University, which was a rare occurrence in academic practice. **Bogojevic** considered that it was bad for Montenegro, bad for our society, sending a bad message and announcing the twilight of the institution.

Prof. Dr. **Goran Barovic**, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, recalled the fact that the Senate had discussed the accreditation of the University three times, i.e. the Faculty of Medicine and the Higher Medical School, and that body was unanimous three times. The Chairman of the Steering Committee also agreed, as a member of the Senate. And now, when it was time to re-establish consistency in that position, by declaring support to the Rector who only implemented Senate's decisions, support was missing.

Prof. Dr. **Zdravko Krivokapic**, director of the Center for Doctoral Studies, found those events surprising. At a press conference, he said the Rector's team was working perfectly clearly and in accordance with all quality principles, complying with the standards and recommendations of the European Association of Universities. For the first time a PhD program was established at the University of Montenegro, the reformed model of 3+2+3 was adopted, 17 new study programs at doctoral studies were created. Instead of continuing the reform, some events that caused fear for the future of the University followed. Professional ethics, academic culture, and quality culture were gone. He believed that the autonomy of the University had to be protected, and that was certain what would happen if the academic community were overwhelmed by obedience.

Prof. Dr. **Vladimir Pesic**, president of the Scientific Committee of the University of Montenegro, believed that it was about the University's reorganization, as a cultural phenomenon, but also an obvious legal violence. As a member of the Steering Committee, he believed that the Decision of the Steering Board was adopted

contrary to the law

and in an inexperienced manner. His message to his colleagues from the Steering Committee, those who tried to frighten, silence and discipline him, was that he would continue to fight for academic principles, but also for the benefit of the University and the State of Montenegro.

At the press conference Prof. Dr. **Predrag Stanisic** said it was a brutal aggression at the University of Montenegro, but also a disagreement between part of the University and the Government about fundamental academic, democratic and civilizational values. In his opinion, the University of Montenegro was brought into the biggest crisis since its establishment. Finally, by removing the rector from office, not only a personnel shift was made, but the reform process at the University was stopped. Just over a three year ago, the new leadership found a neglected institution, dysfunctional and disorganized, without norms and regulations, and in difficult financial problems. During three years of work, the model of studies was changed, all study programs were reorganized, the institution was financially consolidated and stabilized, the principle of internal allocation of funds was changed, hyper-production diplomas and uncontrolled enrollment were stopped, academic and scientific activity was improved, procedures for election and advancement in academic titles were harmonized, the Center for Doctoral Studies was established, a modern web platform was created, a new collective agreement and systematization of job positions was adopted, etc. All the problems that were encountered were resolved in a major reform moment, which was clearly not respected by the founder (Government). All of this now falls into the water, everything is destroyed due to the founder's lack of understanding that this is a new University of Montenegro. If we want science and if we want a profession, he says Prof. Dr. **Stanisic**, if we want to affirm European values, and not society based on the imperviousness of authority, such as some Eastern European societies or Latin American societies from the second half of the 20th century, then it is not good to treat the University in this way.

Prof. Dr. **Zivko Andrijasevic** assessed the removal of the Rector of the University of Montenegro as illegal and absurd act of the Steering Committee, which was executed on the basis of the instructions of the Prime Minister. It was an unusual practice in democratic countries and systems. He believed that this act had caused damage not only to the University of Montenegro but to the reputation of Montenegro as a democratic country, and the Government could profit from this settlement of accounts with the University of Montenegro.

Supporting the views of his colleagues, Prof. Dr. **Sasa Milic** said he was a visiting professor at several European universities and that based on that experience it could be said that there were systemic problems in the field of higher education. He was of the opinion that the Ministry of Education did not fulfill their legal obligation, with the aim of establishing the Agency for the quality of higher education in Montenegro, and that it was demonstrated at all levels of education that the Ministry was inconsistent in the implementation of the basic principles of quality education policy.

And Prof. Dr. **Aleksandar Vujovic**, Head of the Center for Study and Quality Control, said it was a wonder that after three very successful years, aiming at the orientated, systematic, conscientious and honest reforms, currently about the alleged removal of the Rector was discussed, because of the Higher Medical School whose study program at the Medical School was only one of 160 reformed programs at the University. He pointed out that, like any other, the study program concerned was reformed on the basis of European standards and guidelines written in the report of the European Association of Universities, and not on the basis of someone's personal will. Prof. Dr. **Vujovic** emphasized that the program, as well as the whole reform, was implemented in accordance with the Action Plan adopted by the Government of Montenegro, concerning aligning regulated professions with relevant European directives.

Answering the journalists' questions about the next moves, Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** responded that a lawsuit and an appeal had already been filed: a lawsuit to the Administrative Court because of the license illegally issued by the Ministry of Education in Berane, and the appeal before the Constitutional Court for a violation of autonomy. No answer to any of those still arrived. Regarding the very act of the Rector's removal from office on that day, she replied that, in addition to her statements, an independent legal opinion of the Law Office **Martinovic** was sent to the media as well.

Responding to the question on whether her removal was influenced by politics, Prof. **Vojvodic** said that there was apparent fabrication of conflicts between the University and the Government, or the Rector and the Prime Minister, or more or less, between the University and the political party represented by the Prime Minister. Not wanting to encourage media speculations, she pointed out that she had only implemented unanimous decisions of the Senate of the University of Montenegro, as the highest academic body, and the moment when the political violence triggered outvoting of the already adopted decisions of the Senate and

the Steering Committee, the downfall and crisis of the University of Montenegro started. In the process of the Rector's removal from office, the Steering Committee was entrusted with the role of the executor, functioning as a commissary body. They caused a crisis of management themselves, violated the decisions of the highest academic body – the Senate, and put pressure on members of the Senate and the Student Parliament, she said. The Steering Committee was a body that worked, as she said, according to the principle of profane Stalinism, and as such, did not deserve to bear the name that formally belonged to it either.

Post Festum - Revanchism and Silence in the Academic Community

On the same day

After the Decision of the Steering Committee on the Rector's removal from office, a letter of support to the removed Rector of the University Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** was published.

The letter was signed by 79 professors and associates of the University.

They protested because of the unlawful decision of the Steering Committee, endangering autonomy and integrity of the University by executive authorities, as well as undermining the reputation of the University of Montenegro as a democratic society. Those members of the academic community were of the opinion that political violence against the highest institution of education was committed and legal regulations of the University were violated by the Decision on removing the Rector from office. Also, there was an impact on the integrity of the University, retaliation against the rector and inaugurated practice that existed in undemocratic systems – Prime Minister organizing and executing the removal of the Rector.

Prof. Dr. **Ranko Lazovic**, Academician Prof. Dr. **Goran Nikolic**, Prof. Dr. **Žarko Dasic**, Prof. Dr. **Snezana Crnogorac**, Prof. Dr. **Ljiljana Vuckovic**, Prof. Dr. **Goran Barovic**, Prof. Dr. **Dragan Bogojevic**, prof. **Marija Perovic**, Prof. Dr. **Živko Andrijasevic**, Prof. Dr. **Predrag**

Stanicic, Prof. Dr. **Maja Bacovic**, Prof. Dr. **Sasa Milic**, Prof. Dr. **Zeljko Jacimovic**, Prof. MSc. **Janko Ljumovic**, Prof. Dr. **Vladimir Pesic**, Prof. Dr. **Ugljesa Jankovic**,

Prof. Dr. **Ivan Vukovic**, Prof. Dr. **Olivera Komar**, Prof. Dr. **Borko Vujicic**, Prof. Dr. **Tatijana Dlabac**, Prof. Dr. **Zdravko Krivokapic**, Prof. Dr. **Aleksandar Vujovic**, Prof. **Angelina Atlagic**, Prof. **Larisa Dasic-Simovic**, Prof. Dr. **Sinisa Jelusic**, Prof. **Branislav Micunovic**, Prof. **Stevan Koprivica**, Prof. **Srdjan Koljevic**, Prof. **Ferid Karajica**, Prof. **Sanja Garic**, Prof. Dr. **Zoran Koprivica**, Prof. MSc. **Sehad Cekic**, Prof. **Petar Pejakovic**, Assistant Professor **Dubravka Drakic**, Assistant Professor Dr. **Vuk Vukovic**, Assistant Professor Dr. **Edin Jasarovic**, Assistant Professor MSc. **Relja Erakovic**, Assistant Professor **Mirjana Živkovic Kurdadze**, Assistant Professor Dr. **Dragutin-Drasko Djurovic**, Assistant Professor MSc **Branko Ilic**, **Danijela Rakocevic-Medojevic**, Dr. **Tatjana Koprivica**, Dr. **Slavko Burzanovic**, **Vladimir Perovic**, **Ivan Zirojevic**, **Sandra Vujovic**, **Dusan Vulekovic**, **Jelena Filipovic**, **Jelena Miseljic**, **Bojana Mijovic**, **Jovana Bojovic**, MSc. **Boban Batricevic**, **Andjelija Rondovic**, **Danijela Radovanovic**, **Julija Milacic**, Prof. Dr. **Dejan Jontes**, Prof. Dr. **Slavica Vujisic**, Prof. Dr. **Filip Vukmirovic**, Prof. Dr. **Rajko Todorovic Todor**, Prof. MSc. **Slavica Gvozdenovic**, Prof. Msc. **Predrag Milacic**, Prof. MSc. **Anka Buric**, Prof. MSc. **Ana Matic**, Prof. **Lazar Pejovic**, Prof. MSc. **Ratko Odalovic**, Prof. **Drasko Dragas**, Prof. MSc. **Suzana Pajovic**, Prof. MSc. **Vladimir Djuranovic**, MSc. **Marija Kapisoda**, MSc. **Milena Jovicevic**, MSc. **Marko Markovic**, MSc. **Željko Reljic**, **Zdravko Delibasic**, **Adela Zejnilovic**, **Maja Sofranac**, **Sandra Djurovic**, **Milutin Daric**, Prof. Dr. **Dragan Koprivica** and Prof. Dr. **Vesna Jankovic**.

The unlawful removal of the Rector was protested on the same day by the Minister of Culture in the Government of Montenegro **Janko Ljumovic**, who was also a professor of the University of Montenegro and member of the Council for Higher Education. He first signed a letter of support to Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic**, and then resigned as Minister of Culture.

October 4th

After Prof. Dr. **Danilo Nikolic** assumed the position of the rector, one of his first decisions was to remove from the University website all the content related to the HMS events, the removal of the rector and the support that was open to signatures.

October 5th

On the second day of acting as Rector, Prof. Dr. Nikolic received representatives of the Student Parliament of the University of Montenegro (SPUMNE). The

HMS was discussed at the meeting in order to, as the communication read, as soon as possible start addressing the resolution of current problems at the University of Montenegro, “which prevented regular classes and other academic activities”. During the meeting, members of the SPUMNE Assembly stressed that the new administration of the University was expected to resolve the issue of higher education at the Higher Medical School as soon as possible, considering the current model unsustainable as the students had to travel. Referring to the activities of the University of Montenegro, the Student Parliament and the Ministry of Education, they requested the elaboration of solutions that would make the organization of classes at the Higher Medical School, as they said, more efficient. It was also stressed that the competent state bodies were expected to accelerate activities and complete the construction of the University Center complex in Berane! Acting Rector **Nikolic** informed SPUMNE that he had already had some talks with Minister of Education Dr. **Damir Sehovic** and Chairman of the Steering Committee Prof. Dr. **Dusko Bjelic** about the issue of the Higher School of Medicine, and in the next days he expected to work on the realization of that important issue, and the Student Parliament expressed satisfaction with the new management’s position.

Troubles - How to Hide the Difference between the Politics and Interests of the Higher Medical School Students?

On the same day

A letter from Prof. Dr. **Bjelica** to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine Prof. Dr. **Goran Nikolic** came from the Steering Committee office. The Dean was asked to schedule a meeting of the Faculty of Medicine Council without delay, regarding the organization of the first year of theoretical and practical classes at the study program of the Higher Medical School, for the academic year 2017/2018. Announcing the work of the Working Group for the realization of classes at the accredited study program null and void (whose member was Dean **Nikolic** as well), realization of classes at the HMS in Berane and Podgorica was requested. Prof. Dr. **Bjelica** insisted on the new decision of the Council, although already back in May the Faculty of Medicine Council adopted the Decision on organization of classes at the HMS accredited program in Podgorica, upon the decision of the SC on enrollment in Berane based on the proposal of the Working Group.

On the same day

Removal from office of Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** also caused reaction of **Prof. Dr. Dragan Koprivica**, a full r professor at the Faculty of Philology. He said that as a professor at the University of Montenegro, already two months before, he had written about the Government’s dictatorship and repressive measures against the allegedly autonomous and free University. Then he pointed to disastrous politicization of the University of Montenegro by the Government and the Prime Minister, who only collected cheap political points by the decree on keeping the HMS in Berane, and contributed to the University of Montenegro’s fall on the European list of universities. Making the farce even bigger, Prof. Dr. **Koprivica** said, the HMS remained in Berane anyway, and the rector was removed from office only because she had not obeyed the Government’s order obediently. Such a settlement of accounts served to teach all those who would dare to think differently in relation to the position of the Government, which publicly demonstrated its strictness. In addition, Minister Ljumovic resigned from the Government, just because he fought for autonomy and dignity of the University of Montenegro, had his own attitude and was against single mindedness. Thus, Prof. Dr. **Koprivica** claimed, it was demonstrated that nothing had been learned since 1948 and that everyone who dared to think differently were already in advance the enemies of the State and nation. He believed that such a “rigorous-peasant policy of the Montenegrin Government” was extremely contributed by the “duty” inquisitor at the University of Montenegro, ready to settle accounts with all and everybody pointed at by the Prime Minister. It was an extremely unfriendly gesture and beneath any academic level, being a dark picture of the Montenegrin University. Regarding the attitude of the Government, **Koprivica** believed that such events showed that some intellectuals from the Government did not move away from the vision of the University of Montenegro that was closest to the vision of the farmer’s co-operative in Mojkovac. He saw disciplining the University as a part of primitive government policy. Also, he interpreted the relationship between the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Steering Committee as a joint attack of two gentlemen against one lady, which did not seem like the behavior of a knight.

October 6th

Chairman and member of the Scientific Committee, Director of the Center for Doctoral Studies and Chairman and a member of the Committee for Doctoral Studies and Director of the Center for Study and Quality Control, Prof. Dr.

Vladimir Pesic, Prof. Dr. **Zdravko Krivokapic** and Prof. Dr. **Aleksandar Vujovic** resigned from their positions.

Their explanation reads: “With a feeling of belonging and absolute conviction that the Rector Team of Professor **Radmila Vojvodic** worked properly, we inform you that we are not in a position to perform our functions. We rest assured that the autonomy and established reform course is the only guarantor of the successful University and society sharing European values.”

October 11th

Soon after the proposal of the Institute for Marine Biology, the Senate and the Steering Committee to initiate the procedure for removal of Prof. **Vladimir Pesic** from the Steering Committee followed. The threat of the SC Chairman **Dusko Bjelica** to Prof. Dr. **Pesic** thus came true. Sanctions for verbal delinquency were introduced at the University.

Director Dr. **Mirko Djurovic** signed that proposal, reading that the publicly stated positions of Professor **Vladimir Pesic**, “are profoundly contrary to professional principles” of academic engagement and the obligation to respect the official views of the University and the decisions of its bodies, as well as that any disputed issues had to be resolved within the University of Montenegro, by official bodies, using legal mechanisms”, and it was no official position of the Council of the Institute for Biology according to the educational and business policy of the University and the overall operation of that institution.

Due to that “misdemeanor”, the Council of the Institute for Marine Biology agreed for the bodies of the University to carried out the procedure and elect a new member of the Steering Committee, an expert in natural and technical sciences, instead of Professor **Vladimir Pesic**!

On the same day

Minister **Sehovic**, meeting the decision of the Faculty of Medicine Council, stated that he wanted to believe that “the Faculty of Medicine will come out with a new proposal, which will comply with the legitimate demands of the Student Parliament and the decision of the Government to keep the HMS seat in Berane, and have most of the classes in Berane thus contributing to improving the quality of education in Montenegro, to which the current Government has been dedicated since the very beginning”. **Šehovic** even specified how classes should be organized - students would be in Podgorica for two weeks during the semester attending classes at the Clinical Center, due to lacking capacity in Berane. He also finally commented on the Rector’s removal from office, which, as he said, had been caused by incompliance with the Government’s decision by the Rector. He assessed the Government’s controversial decision, without any arguments, as legitimate and responsible, which in no way endangered the autonomy of the University?!

And the Professionals Say:

What must be done will be done willingly?!

October 11th

A meeting of the Faculty of Medicine Council was held to adopt the recommended model of teaching in Berane and Podgorica. They voted on two proposals, the one of the Working Group and the new “compromise”, and none of them got the majority!

Dean **Nikolic** was concerned and proposed that, if not adopted, such a decision would cause drop out of a number of students. Also, since for some students the Ministry of Education paid for accommodation, food and transport during their stay in Podgorica, **Nikolic** said that, in order to reduce the costs, the new proposal would be far more efficient. The costs of only one arrival and departure would be paid, he said, and not every week, which was currently the case. The ultimatum lasted, and the Council’s meeting had to be scheduled again to present their position for the fourth time (?!).

October 13th

The Council met again and decided to support the new proposal by majority vote. The decision was submitted to the Senate which, let us recall, had previously supported a different implementation of the HMS, starting from a reformed proposal for accreditation to appeal to the Constitutional Court for autonomy violation by defending the realization of the accredited program, contrary to the Government's decision and the curriculum proposed by the Working Group, which was established by the Rector. According to that model classes in Podgorica would be held only for two weeks per semester, 150 hours in continuity, which failed the reform principles of the University of Montenegro regarding continuous teaching, quality standard of European regulated profession and the HMS diploma.

On the same day

The HMS students expressed their satisfaction, as they “professionally” explained, because of the “solution that meets the strict criteria that make their diploma credible “and, in particular, due to taking into account the need for regional development and preservation of the student standard, as well as the fact that “it is necessary not to leave the north, but to remain and live in that part of our country.”

Since almost half of the students of the HMS are not from the north of Montenegro (?!), they made a solidarity request even to resolve “the accommodation issue of their colleagues who do not come from the cities in the north of the state” in the forthcoming period.

The University of Montenegro Defended Berane?!

In Berane, Minister **Damir Sehovic**, in an inspired political speech, not dealing with any facts, said that he was satisfied with the decision to have classes at the Higher Medical School fully (!) taking place in Berane, and publicly minimized the practical teaching of a regulated profession in health care, which, as he emphasized, would take place in Podgorica Clinical Center “in a 15-day course during one semester”. The decision of the Senate that was to be adopted on the matter was qualified as a formality by **Sehovic**.

In his political speech in Berane, Minister **Sehovic** announced putting into service

the building of the so-called University Center on October 23rd, calling the HMS study program of the Faculty of Medicine an institution (!) to be moved to the new University building”. The minister emphasized that currently, when a multi-month fight around the High Medical School had been completed, the building met all conditions to have a boarding school, i.e. to accommodate the students from other areas, as well as to organize a mess room for students.

Minister **Sehovic** also untruthfully stated that, “after DPS had lost government in Berane in 2014, six faculties were moved to Podgorica with the excuse that they were not profitable - and the truth was that those were just relocated study programs, not faculties, and not six, but two of them, with the consent of the Government and a proven and autonomous position of the University of Montenegro about it!

Management Fever

October 16th

Already at the first meeting of the Senate after the removal of the Rector Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic**, chaired by acting Rector **Nikolic**, the Senate of the University of Montenegro finally changed their opinion of the HMS previously supported on several occasions and - adopted a dictated teaching organization model at the HMS.

At the beginning of the session, a senator and member of the Working Group which made the proposal for conducting classes at the HMS in the exceptional circumstances in relation to the accredited study program in Podgorica, as well as a member of the Higher Education Council, Prof. Dr. **Ranko Lazovic**, submitted an irrevocable resignation to membership in the Senate due to political and managerial dictatorship at the University of Montenegro. He had previously informed accordingly the dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Prof. Dr. **Goran Nikolic**, denying him any explanation for his unprincipled conduct.

By removals and new appointments, at the proposal of the acting Rector, the Senate changed the composition of the Scientific Committee and the Committee for Doctoral Studies. With the appointment of new managers: Prof. Dr. **Irena Orovic** and Prof. Dr. **Predrag Miranovic**, instead of Prof. Dr. **Vladimir Pesic** and Prof. Dr. **Zdravko Krivokapic** who resigned, Prof. Dr. **Zeljko Jacimovic** and Prof.

MSc **Janko Ljumovic** were replaced by the Scientific Committee without any explanation, as well as Prof. Dr. **Sasa Milic**, Prof. Dr. **Danijela Jacimovic** (wife of the resigned member of the Steering Committee Prof. **Željko Jaćimovic**) and Prof. Dr. **Goran Nikolic** in the Committee for Doctoral Studies.

Also, the meeting promptly initiated the procedure to remove from office Prof. Dr. **Vladimir Pesic**, as a representative of academic staff with an academic title at the Steering Committee of the University of Montenegro, and a commission was appointed to review the conditions for removal.

A Lawsuit in Memory of Frederick I Barbarossa

October 17th

A lawsuit was filed with the Administrative Court for annulment of the Steering Committee Decision on removing the Rector Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** from office due to the substantial violation of procedural rules, incorrectly and incompletely established factual situation and erroneous application of substantive law.

Attorney **Nikola Martinovic**, as the proxy, stated, inter alia, that unlike some members of the Steering Committee of the University who in the 21st century believed that “the attitude towards the founder may qualify as non-fulfillment of legal obligations”, the emperor Frederick I Barbarossa already 860 years before (1158) issued CONSTITUTIO HABITA (privilegium scholasticum), which unconditionally and fully protected the academic integrity of the University of Bologna from any kind of political influences. It is unfortunate and problematic for the Montenegrin society that some prominent Montenegrin intellectuals in the 21st century did not succeed in adopting the principles established by Frederick I Barbarossa as the foundation of the University back in XII century. Those basic cultural, spiritual and intellectual differences caused filing of the lawsuit.

He stated that the binding statutory norm read as follows: studies at institutions of higher education shall be realized on the basis of an accredited study program (...), the publicly valid study program is the accredited study program! Rector just respected and followed the positions, conclusions and decisions of the Senate and the Steering Committee that no enrollment in a non-accredited study program

could be done. Government decision of June 1st and 6 July 2017 on the enrollment of 70 students to the study program of the Higher School of Medicine in Berane was contrary to the legally accredited program under European directives for regulated professions. By decision of the Higher Education Council of 10 May 2017, the program was accredited at the Faculty of Medicine and in the teaching based of the Clinical Center in Podgorica. That is why such a license was requested by the University back on May 12th in Podgorica, according to an accredited study program, which had properly and successfully passed all previous procedures of the Government of Montenegro, i.e. the Council for Higher Education.

The illegal, so-called compromise solution (Berane - Podgorica), which was currently implemented at the University – adopted after factually unlawful removal of the rector – did not reflect the accredited study program, therefore served no purpose of the quality of knowledge to be achieved by students following the curricula of that European regulated profession - which clearly confirmed who exceeded the powers and worked to harm the University. It was certainly not the Rector.

Because of the unlawful and politically dictated acts, with manipulation of procedures for accredited study program and breach of the removal procedure of the Rector – only the Steering Committee could be charged for exceeding powers and causing damage to the University. In the end of the lawsuit, before proposing to abolish the Decision of the Steering Committee and adopt the lawsuit, he stated: “To prevent our Rector from sharing the fate of thousands of people under Henry VIII, we expect the Court to review this case as soon as possible and acting with special care “(integral text of the lawsuit in the documents listed on page 223).

October 17th

The working visit to the HMS in Berane included the acting Rector Prof. Dr. **Danilo Nikolic**, Chairman of the Steering Committee of the University of Montenegro Prof. Dr. **Dusko Bjelica**, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Prof. Dr. **Goran Nikolic** with associates, and President of the Student Parliament of the University of Montenegro **Sara Arianna Serhatlic**, student commissioner of the Faculty of Medicine **Bogdan Racic** and representatives of the HMS students.

During the visit, the importance of the HMS seat in Berane was declared, and readiness of the University of Montenegro and the State of Montenegro to provide all the conditions for quality education of students attending that study program, but also, as they promised, opportunities for their employment after graduation.

October 18th

The University of Montenegro published a competition for the election of a rector.

October 18th

The proxy of Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic**, lawyer **Nikola Martinovic**, submitted a request for delayed enforcement to the Administrative Court. Bearing in mind that Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** exercised her legal right to file a complaint against the Decision of the Steering Committee dated 3 October 2017 within deadline (noting that the University had also initiated a procedure for the election of a new rector before the expiry of the deadline for initiating the dispute), the conditions set out in Article 15 paragraph 2 of the Law on Administrative Disputes were fully met to allow the University of Montenegro to suspend the legal effect of the administrative activity regarding the election of a new rector until the end of the dispute under the filed suit.

October 19th

Although he did not say so during the delegation's visit to Berane on October 17th, Dean of Faculty of Medicine Prof. Dr. **Goran Nikolic** did not dispute in the media the fact that a part of the decision brought was against the norms of the Statute, he stated that teaching "is not in accordance with the Statute". "We have no other solution. If students already come to Podgorica, we thought to use more than eight-hour working hours", he said. "The optimum workload for students is 40 hours per week. The total number of classes in the basic studies cannot be less than 20 hours, or more than 30 hours per week", as stated in the Statute.

October 27th

The recent Vice Rector of the University of Montenegro Prof. Dr. **Predrag Stanisic** reacted in the media saying that a multi-month crisis related to the Higher Medical School operation in Berane had led to a seriously oppressed autonomy of the University of Montenegro, and that it was a test of emancipation that society did not pass due to the lack of public dialogue. He warned that we should not trade in the knowledge, professional standards and health of the Montenegrin population. He emphasized that it was a system of values and that many had not understood

that, and asked whether it made sense to talk about hyper-production of bad diplomas, uncontrolled enrollment, improvisation in the classroom up to the level of its absence, extra-profiteering, and many other negative phenomena, especially on applied studies and at locations outside the faculty seat, which had been suppressed in the past three years of reform.

Revanchists do not Sleep

27-30 October

An electronic session of the Senate voted for new revenge-motivated replacements of members in the Center for Study and Quality Control. The decision of the electronic session of the Senate, with the Chairman Prof. Dr. **Aleksandar Vujovic** who resigned, without any discussion, appointed a new composition of the Steering Committee for Quality System Management at the University – and without explanation the mandate of Prof. Dr. **Ljiljana Kascelan** and Prof. Dr. **Zarko Dasic** was terminated.

Senate membership of Prof. Dr. **Goran Nikolic**, as a representative of the Faculty of Medicine at the Senate of the University of Montenegro, was verified instead of Prof. Dr. **Ranko Lazovic**.

Is Justice Reachable?

November 2nd

Attorney **Nikola Martinovic** received a decision of the Administrative Court reading that the court was actually incompetent for handling the lawsuit of the removed Rector Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic**, and that the case files were submitted for further processing by the Basic Court.

November 3rd

A reaction of lawyer **Nikola Martinovic** followed after the Decision of the Administrative Court, which was self-declared as incompetent to act upon

the lawsuit of Rector of the University of Montenegro **Radmila Vojvodic**, who sued the University, seeking annulling the Decision of the Steering Committee based on which she had been removed from office. He said the court believed that the position of the rector was a single position, not the election to a managerial function from which the University was managed. Employment of each rector was based on his or her regular work as a professor which in the specific case was not changed, or decided upon. Obviously the Administrative Court erroneously equated the professorship at the University with the function of the rector. In such a way, in his opinion, encountering the truth was only postponed, and the truth was that the rector was unlawfully removed, announcing that he would appeal to the Supreme Court.

November 6th

The University of Montenegro Senate considered the removal procedure in several counts - the report of the Commission for examining the conditions for removal, the new agreement of the Institute of Marine Biology on **Pesic's** removal and the statement of Prof. Dr. **Vladimir Pesic** himself, and made a decision on his removal from the Steering Committee.

In his statement **Pesic** pointed out that no material evidence was provided that he had violated the principles of academic action and concluded that the above mentioned proposal was based on the premise that public expression of opinion by itself was a violation of professional academic activity which was unthinkable in the 21st century on the ground of Europe.

Reference was made to the University of Montenegro Code of Ethics, Article 4, Responsibility to the Institution: "Though the rules of the institution are complied with, this does not limit the academic freedom of staff to criticize and change the rules"; and Article 5, Corporate Responsibility: "Members of the University community in their work and activities shall care about the welfare and interests of the University and the State of Montenegro in the spirit of the academic freedom of nurturing arguing debates, criticism, tolerance, and responsible and honest search for the best solutions." **Pesic** asked for the stenographer from the Senate meeting dated 16 October 2017 to be made available to him, in order for him, as an interested party, as well as the public, to be informed about the real reasons for launching the initiative, referring to media writings reading that Prof. Dr. **Aleksandar Joksimovic**, senator, said at

a scheduled session that "they (Institute) launched the initiative because they are closely related to the Government and a number of their projects depend on the Government, and that it is simply not in their interest to have **Pesic** representing them and publicly stating such positions", as well as that "they are afraid for the future projects they could have with the Government". Regarding those members of the society, academic community and especially students who thought that a university professor did not need to publicly and fairly present his or her position, Prof. Dr. **Pesic** said, "Happy slaves are the greatest opponents of freedom!" "Only free people," he said, "can be of benefit to society and Montenegro."

Explanations of Prof. Dr. **Vladimir Pesic** made no particular impression on the members of the Commission for examining the conditions for removal. The Commission, whose members included Prof. Dr. **Milan Markovic**, **Sara Arianna Serhatlic**, Prof. MSc. **Nenad Soskic**, was explicit in their opinion that the requirements were met for the Senate to decide on the proposal of the authorized proponent, the Institute for Marine Biology. Quite expected, Senate removed Prof. Dr. **Vladimir Pesic**.

Immediately afterwards, Prof. Dr. **Pesic**, on the occasion of the execution of the threat "that his career in the SC was finished", as he was told by Prof. Dr. **Bjelica** at the meeting when the rector was removed, said with regret that the "the revanchist regale on the collapse of academic unity and denial of autonomy of the University" continued. He said that "one should not blame those who protected their small personal interests at the University of Montenegro, who passionately implemented the Stalinist cleansing of all who thought differently", and that it would be better both for them and Montenegro if they "instead of blushing on the cheeks and keeping their eyes down, could force themselves to bravely defend the basic principles of democracy and academism, regardless of the force they fear or which is used to frighten them."

November 8th

The Steering Board meeting noted the removal of the full professor of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics Prof. Dr. **Vladimir Pesic**, whose membership in that governing body had been cancelled, and "initiates the case of Professor **Pesic** before the Court of Honor of the University of

Montenegro for his qualifications declared on the account of members of the Senate and the Steering Committee, which will be subject to final judgment by the Court of Honor”, a statement issued after the University Steering Committee meeting read.

November 10th

The media reported that on October 24th, acting Rector **Danilo Nikolic** withdrew the appeal to the Constitutional Court and the Administrative Court, filed by the Rector **Radmila Vojvodic** on behalf of the University.

The lawsuit filed to the Constitutional Court against the decision of the Government read that the Government violated the autonomy of the University in case of solving the issue of the Higher Medical School in Berane, while the lawsuit filed to the Administrative Court related to contesting the validity of the license which was issued to the Higher School of Medicine in Berane. The Constitutional Court confirmed that on October 24th, “the authorized proxy (the University of Montenegro) submitted a proposal to withdraw the constitutional complaint.”

Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** reacted to the news that the University of Montenegro withdrew the lawsuits to the Constitutional Court and Administrative Court, concluding with regret that such an act showed that the autonomous space of knowledge, as the University should have been, become a space of no freedom. First, the University’s decisions expressed the position that their autonomy was violated, and then the opposite was decided. Instead of protecting its autonomy and the freedom of academic and critical thinking, the University became a place for settling accounts and persecution of those who thought differently. As stated by Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic**, in all bodies of the University, people who did not follow unanimity were removed - a professor who was the wife of a removed professor, a member of the Steering Committee, was also removed from a committee, a minister who resigned because of the force exercised against the University where a professor was quickly replaced in the Scientific Committee with an obedient senator from the “brotherly lobby”, and a student from the Student Parliament was threatened that, despite his reputation of the awarded excellent student, his nomination as a research fellow would be disabled...

In her reaction, Prof. **Radmila Vojvodic** stated that, if it had the authority

of the Constitutional Court and enough awareness of its mission, the court would demonstrate its capacity and the appeal would be reviewed *ex officio*, she believed. According to her, the institution would thus protect the Constitution, as the most important foundation on which the State rested. Still, she expressed a reserve that it would happen, because she herself experienced the reference of the judiciary through the proceedings before the Administrative Court, where her lawsuit for illegal removal was returned for re-trial in the Basic Court.

Political Repulsion

November 28th

After the Senate had supported the program of Prof. **Danilo Nikolic**, the only candidate for the rector, he was appointed by the Steering Committee as the Rector of the University of Montenegro.

93 DAYS OF COMBAT / WHY? / HOW TO ACHIEVE THE
INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY? / REPLACEMENT OF THE
SUCCESSFUL AND NOT THE IRRESPONSIBLE ONES?! / THE
BEGINNING OF THE CONFLICT / MINISTER LAUNCHES
REPRESSIVE APPARATUS / UNDER THE GUISE OF STUDENT
INTEREST AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH / MINISTERIAL
TRICKS / THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTENEGRO SHORT OF TIME AT
THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUR / STEERING COMMITTEE AS A
VOTING MACHINE / STUDENTS BACK UP THE GOVERNMENT
DURING VACATION / BERANE SHALL NOT FALL — LONG LIVE THE
DECISION! / CONFLICT ESCALATION, PRESSURE ON THE RECTOR
TO RESIGN / I SHALL DO TO YOU, WHAT YOU DO TO ME - EYE
FOR EYE, TOOTH FOR TOOTH / REMOVAL OF THE RECTOR AS A
POLITICAL EXECUTION / ACADEMIC HYPOCRISY - SILENCE OR
REBELLION? / ORDER - EXECUTION / POST FESTUM -
REVANCHISM AND SILENCE IN THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY /
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