

NATIONAL RESEARCH: “MONTENEGRIN LGBTIQ COMMUNITY IN THE EYES OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES”



RESEARCH REPORT

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PODGORICA

APRIL 2018

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INTRODUCTION

Aware of the fact that the LGBTIQ community is one of the most discriminated against and the most vulnerable groups in Montenegro, NGOs **LGBT Forum Progress** and **LGBTIQ Social Center** have, through a partner endeavour, conducted a research among the candidates for the President of Montenegro, along with a detailed analysis of their political programmes/campaigns.

The presidential elections, scheduled for 15 April 2018, bring together a total of seven candidates, with various platforms and messages, both in terms of political and socio-economic issues, as well as in terms of the human rights of minority groups, including LGBTIQ persons.

The **aim** of this research is to provide an objective, impartial and factual overview of the views and opinions of the presidential candidates in Montenegro, to all LGBTIQ people in Montenegro, in the domain of issues of importance for LGBTIQ community. The results of this research can in no way be interpreted as support or lack of support for any candidate, but only and solely as means of informing and observing all facts.

Guided by the fact that the large number of LGBTIQ persons are part of the electoral body in Montenegro, and that their votes are almost equally distributed to all existing political options; but also by the fact that LGBTIQ persons were neglected in positive discourse among political subjects, we initiated this research project.

Our idea is that, in addition to analysing the Presidential programmes/campaigns and collecting information about the specific attitudes and opinions of the candidates, we also convey the particular messages they had for their potential LGBTIQ voters. These messages are in the continuation of the Report, in their integral form.

It is also important to emphasize that this research, as well as its next phase, or specifically the research of the views of political subjects in the upcoming local elections in the municipality of

Podgorica, is the first undertaking of this type and scale in Montenegro when it comes to the human rights of LGBTIQ persons.

One of the primary ways for Montenegro to achieve equality, respect and acceptance of LGBTIQ persons is precisely through an open and respectful political dialogue. All efforts that are invested in the process of accepting and protecting LGBTIQ persons are not sufficient by themselves, unless there is a political will to achieve specific and visible changes in this field.

We are confident that the future President of Montenegro will be dedicated to all citizens of our country, among which there is a large number of LGBTIQ persons of all ages and profiles, and that their efforts will result in visible, positive changes for all LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro.

Finally, we owe special gratitude to all the candidates who took part in this research, their election teams on the communication and coordination of all details; as well as the **ILGA-Europe**, which recognized the significance of this project and supported it financially.

Bojana Jokic, **LGBT Forum Progress**

John M. Barac, **LGBTIQ Social Center**

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out in two phases, which followed each other, so that all available data and the overall picture of the views of presidential candidates on issues of importance for the Montenegrin LGBTIQ community could be transferred to LGBTIQ people, but also to the general public.

The first phase of the research involves **analysing** of the programmes/campaigns of presidential candidates, in the context of topics relevant to the LGBTIQ community, such as legal protection, education, legal status of same-sex couples, adoption of new legal and sub-legal acts, as well as the response to the existing discrimination and marginalization of the LGBTIQ community in Montenegro.

In the case of presidential candidates who did not create a specific presidential programme, the research team based its primary analysis on party programmes, that is, the political groups represented by the presidential candidates. An additional component of the analysis of presidential campaigns includes appearances in the media, speeches at conventions and political events held during the campaign, in which the issues of importance to the Montenegrin LGBTIQ community are addressed.

The questionnaire, as a research form, was used in the second phase, in order to gather answers to research questions from the candidates. The questions themselves have been formulated so that there is no space left for two-sided and unclear answers, nor for answers that are not related to the content of the issue. The questionnaire contains 16 questions, of which 10 are multiple choice, 2 are of a combined type, and in 5 the text is entered into the designated fields.

Also, the questionnaire itself is divided into 3 logical parts, which follow each other. In the first part are the questions related to the candidature and the basic information about it. The second part consists of questions related to the overall support to the issues of relevance to LGBTIQ

persons, while in the third part, the focus is on specific problems faced by the LGBTIQ community in Montenegro. Finally, space has been left to send a message to all LGBTIQ voters.

The research questionnaire was submitted to all presidential candidates on March 28, 2018, in electronic form, with a deadline of seven days for submitting a reply. Within the deadline, two candidates submitted their responses, while after the expiration of the deadline two more submitted theirs.

Out of the total of seven candidates to whom the questionnaire was submitted, **Bojanic Mladen, Dedic Dobrilo, Djukanovic Milo and Vuksanovic Draginja** submitted their answers.

The candidates **Kalac Hazbija, Milacic Marko and Milickovic Vasilije** did not submit their answers.

After receiving the completed questionnaires, they were processed professionally using the **IBM SPSS Statistics** 22 software and transferred into textual and visual results (tables and graphs).

OVERVIEW OF THE QUESTIONS FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

In **the first logical part** of the questionnaire, the candidates entered:

- a) Name and surname,
- b) The name of the political subject that provided them with support for the candidacy,
- c) The answer to the question: “Will your upcoming campaign for presidential elections in any way focus on the problems and needs of the LGBTIQ community, as one of the most endangered and most discriminated groups in Montenegro?” If the answer to the question was “It will”, then there was space designated for them to explain how.

Finally, if the candidate did not personally fill in the questionnaire, there was room for the name and surname of the authorized person who did so on behalf of the candidate.

In **the second logical part** of the questionnaire, the candidates responded to the following questions, through a possibility of multiple choice:

- a) Do you currently support the efforts made towards the achievement of human rights and equality of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegrin society, carried out by the participants such as civil society organizations, the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and others?
- b) Are you prepared to publicly support, as President of Montenegro, efforts that are being made towards the achievement of human rights and equality of LGBTIQ persons in the Montenegrin society?
- c) Are you prepared to publicly support, as President of Montenegro, events, manifestations and gatherings that are relevant for the process of accepting and respecting the human rights of LGBTIQ people?
- d) Are you ready to take specific steps, as President of Montenegro, with the goal of achieving a higher level of equality, protection and acceptance of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro?

(The candidate who answered with “I am” on this question was left the space to indicate what steps they are prepared to do.)

In **the third logical part** of the questionnaire, candidates were asked to answer the following questions:

- a) On a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 is “Very bad” and 4 “Very good”, to grade:
 - the current overall position of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro,
 - the current state of the human rights of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro,
 - the current level of protection that LGBTIQ persons receive from the institutions of the system in Montenegro, and
 - the current level of security and safety of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro.
- b) Do you consider discrimination to be a problem with which the LGBTIQ community in Montenegro is being faced?
- c) Do you consider violence to be a problem with which the LGBTIQ community in Montenegro is being faced?
- d) Do you consider hate speech to be a problem with which the LGBTIQ community in Montenegro is being faced?
- e) Do you consider homo/bi/transphobia to be a problem with which the LGBTIQ community in Montenegro is being faced?
- f) Do you consider current disempowerment to be a problem with which the LGBTIQ community in Montenegro is being faced?

In **the closing part** of the questionnaire, candidates were asked the following:

- a) Since all LGBTIQ people with the right to vote in Montenegro are your potential voters, do you have the message you want to send them?

ANALYSIS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PROGRAMMES/CAMPAIGNS



BOJANIC MLADEN – “YES, TOGETHER WE CAN”

Bojanic Mladen was introduced as a presidential candidate of a major part of the Parliamentary opposition, including political entities – Democratic Front (Demokratski Front), United Reform Action (URA) and Democratic Montenegro (Demokratska Crna Gora). Bearing in mind the fact that candidate Bojanic represents 90% of opposition MPs, with different political ideologies and previous various media statements in relation to the LGBTIQ community, the question is whether a unified and coherent attitude can be drawn from current media statements and political programme of candidate Bojanic, when it comes to human rights of LGBTIQ persons.

At the very beginning of his presidential campaign, candidate Bojanic has made it very clear that he shapes attitudes to be represented to the public on his own and that those attitudes will, if he wins in the election, be put into practice. Casting a glance at the political programme of candidate Bojanic’s campaign, although not directly, elements beneficial for the LGBTIQ community can be identified. Even though the programme of candidate Bojanic is brief and concise, the research team holds that at least four items of the overall ten directly include the issues significant to the LGBTIQ community.

In the very first item of his Programme, candidate Bojanic states:

“1. I advocate the essential democracy and society without corruption and nepotism. In that light, I will fight against (...) the violations of human rights and discrimination on any basis.”

The violations of human rights and freedoms represents key problems of the LGBTIQ community in Montenegro. Beside certain improvements, one cannot conclude that social situation with regard to this matter has significantly changed. For that reasons, we consider the problems of discriminations and violation of human rights put at the first place of this candidate’s programme to be encouraging.

Item five of the Programme, is dedicated to the availability of justice and says:

“5. My mission is to establish the rule of law, so that Montenegro becomes a legal state in which justice will be available to everyone.”

Given the fact that crimes committed out of hatred, hate speech, domestic violence and discrimination in different forms represent essential problems that LGBTIQ persons come across on a daily basis, we believe that the rule of law and availability of justice to all the citizens of Montenegro are a significant message of this candidate.

Item eight of the Programme is dedicated to the institution of the Protector of human rights and freedoms of Montenegro:

“8. I will propose the Protector of human rights and freedoms respecting attitudes of scientific and professional institutions and NGOs. That person will have personal and professional courage to, on their own initiative, take specific measures for the protection of human rights and freedoms, as well as discrimination.”

The proactive approach and more interference from the Institution of Ombudsman surely can only positively influence the improvement of life standards of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro.

Item ten of the Programme is dedicated to the matter of national interest being resolved at the referendum.

“10. That is why, I will entirely use my right of the President, on behalf of the citizens, to ask from the Parliament to hold a referendum when it comes to deciding on the sale of state property and other issues bearing national interest.”

Despite the fact that the research team generally concurs with the concept of direct democracy through holding the referendum when it comes to matters of national interest, one must indicate to the potential issues that such system of decision making bears. To be more precise, one can very easily get into a situation when, led by the desires of majority, the decision on human rights of specific groups – in this case LGBTIQ persons, is made in the referendum. As a reminder,

one does not decide on human rights – one claims them by birth. The research team holds that this item of the Campaign Programme of candidate Bojanic must be more precise and thus protect the potential future abuse that may lead to constraint or deprivation of human rights in Montenegro.

Candidate Bojanic **did** take part in filling out the research questionnaire.

DEDEIC DOBRILLO – “THE SERBIAN COALLITION”

Dedeic Dobrilo is a presidential candidate of the political alliance the Serbian Coalition (Srpska koalicija). Taking into account that this presidential candidate does not have a specifically created Programme for presidential elections, the research team has analysed a public statement that candidate Dedeic has made and which completely reflects his attitudes related to the LGBTIQ population.

“The law on the prohibition of homosexual propaganda should be adopted in Montenegro, similar to the model already in application in the Russian Federation.”

“The Russian model also entails the prohibition of holding so called “Pride Parades” lasting for 99 years, modalities not to threaten internal individual rights of gay population members, but also to prevent from social decadence and anarchism.

Candidate Dedeic also states that the aggressive LGBT propaganda in Montenegro is a step away from adoption of the law that will have homosexual marriages as a legal consequence, resulting in child adoption in such communities.

“Open spread of homosexuality through the educational system is connected to the application of supposed “Western standards” that the vassal regime of Milo Djukanovic calls upon in every occasion and selectively applies them in Montenegro. Since they do not apply the principle of the rule of law, since the institutions do not function, since justice ad a social principle is paralyzed, then the democratic regime reaches the matters through which it builds the “mosaic” of the “alleged European standards” stated Dedeic.

Presidential candidate Dedeic points out that *“only through the Russian model we will preserve the grounds on which Montenegro of Nemanjic, Petrovic and Karadjordjevic families is based.”*

“In order to have the future generations of Orthodox Serbs and Christians in Montenegro, in order to respect moral norms which are not opposed to the teachings of Catholics and Islamic religion community, the support to “the Russian model” on resolving the moratorium issues on homosexuality propaganda is needed” concludes Dedeic.

Candidate Dedeic has very clearly and precisely expressed his attitudes in relation to the LGBTIQ population, that rely on declaring moratorium on NGOs’ operations in the area of improving life standards of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro, prohibition of the inclusion of LGBTIQ topics in the official educational system of Montenegro, the prohibition of regulation of the same sex unions, as well as the matter of child adoption by the same sex couples, and the prohibition of public events organized by the LGBTIQ persons.

Candidate Dedeic **did** take part in filling out the research questionnaire.

DJUKANOVIC MILO – “FOR STABILITY AND PROGRESS OF MONTENEGRO”

Djukanovic Milo is a presidential candidate of the Democratic Party of Socialists (Demokratska partija socijalista). Candidate Djukanovic did not create a specific programme for the needs of presidential elections in Montenegro. Instead, his campaign relies on the adopted Priority Programme of the Democratic Party of Socialist; that is, the politics personified by him. The analysis of the presidential campaign in candidate Djukanovic’s case relates to the programme of the Democratic Party of Socialists – DPS, as well as the public performances of this candidate throughout his presidential campaign.

While analysing the Priority Programme of the DPS, the research team has found several elements that can be of interest for LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro.

In a part of the Programme, titled “WE WANT MONTENEGRO – THE STATE WITH THE RULE OF LAW” it is stated:

“The DPS will remain fully committed to the goal that, in Montenegro, all must be equal before the law. For this principle to be fully respected it is not enough to have European laws, but they should be applied unselectively and without delay. Montenegro must ensure legal security for all who live and build in it.”

“Independent and responsible judiciary – that is the aim we want to achieve. The strengthening of judiciary must be followed by strengthening of its efficiency, because delayed justice is deprived justice. “

The research team holds the fact that DPS insists on the principles of comprehensiveness in the application of laws as exceptionally important, as well as their insisting on Montenegro to ensure legal security for all who live and build in it. The everyday life of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro is abundant in violence, both verbal and physical, as well as in discrimination in majority

of life and work spheres. Therefore, legal security is surely one of the priorities when it comes to the LGBTIQ communities. Additionally, in the other extracted quote, the problematics of long legal procedures has been processed, and that such procedures may be interpreted as a justice deprivation. This problem is also very conspicuous when it comes to the criminal and misdemeanour cases involving LGBTIQ community, even nowadays, considering the fact that the one waits for the solution of certain cases, or even scheduling hearing for several months, often years as well.

The third item relevant for the LGBTIQ population states:

“For democratic societies it is not enough for everyone to be equal before the state. It is necessary for all of us to have equal chances in the society. That is why our party will contribute to the improvement of anti-discriminatory politics, particularly when it comes to the sensitive categories of citizens: people with disabilities, women, Roma people, as well as the persons with different sexual orientation. That has been and remains to be one of our top priorities. For one country to be successfully integrated in wider communities, its society must be integrated from within.”

The research team holds the fact that the sexual orientation is directly mentioned in the Priority programme of DPS extremely relevant. The persons of “different sexual orientation”, although not persons of minority gender identity, are directly mentioned in the context of anti-discriminatory politics, which is considered important by the DPS. It is stated that the internal integration of society is necessary, so that the society is integrated in wider communities, which the research team hold as a good message.

While discussing the Priority programme of the DPS, in the area of education, despite the fact that the significant space has been given to the pre-school, primary, as well as the secondary and high education, the research team has not found elements that might indicate to creating new, as well as the amendment of the existing educational contents, to make them more inclusive for the LGBTIQ persons as well. Instead, the proposed amendments are characterised by the principle of the economic competition.

Speaking of the analysis of statements for the public, as well as the speeches held on conventions during the presidential campaign, the research team notices usual consistency of the DPS to strengthen the ideas of European and Euro-Atlantic integrations, economic policy and comparison between the policies of DPS with the policies of the counter-candidates. There was no direct mention of the LGBTIQ community neither from the DPS nor from the other processed candidates, from their public performances, media statements and posts on social networks, as well as speeches at the conventions.

Candidate Djukanovic **did** take part in filling out the research questionnaire.

KALAC HAZBIJA – “IT IS YOUR CHOICE”

Kalac Hazbija presented the candidacy for the President of Montenegro in front of the Justice and Reconciliation Party (Stranka pravde i pomirenja). Candidate Kalac is the first presidential candidate to officially hand over the signatures necessary for the candidacy to the State Election Commission (DIK). Candidate Kalac did not create a specific programme for the needs of the presidential elections in Montenegro, but his campaign relies on the Programme of his party, specifically the politics it represents. An analysis of the presidential campaign in the case of candidate Kalac will refer to the Programme of the Justice and Reconciliation Party, as well as to the media appearances of this candidate during the presidential campaign.

The first item of importance for the LGBTIQ population is related to the commitment of the Justice and Reconciliation Party, and by the extension its presidential candidate Kalac, to Euro-Atlantic integration. The quote from the programme is conveyed integrally:

“The Justice and Reconciliation Party in Montenegro strives for Euro-Atlantic integration, which is in the interest of all people in this region.”

The research team considers the commitment of presidential candidates to Euro-Atlantic integration to be important, due to the adoption of various positive standards, both legal and practical, that can positively reflect on the protection of LGBTIQ people against discrimination, violence and marginalization in society.

The next item from the Programme of the Justice and Reconciliation Party, which can be considered relevant to the LGBTIQ community, from the aspect of education is:

“Education is the foundation of freedom, dignity and development, making it an irreplaceable investment for the future. The Justice and Reconciliation Party in Montenegro is committed to multiplying budget allocations for all educational levels.”

Increasing budget funds at all levels of education can certainly be reflected in greater professionalism, better scientific coverage, creation of new contents and textbooks that, with the appropriate involvement of the LGBTIQ community in their content, can proactively affect both the reduction of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic attitudes, as well as to raise awareness about everyday problems and negative phenomena that the Montenegrin LGBTIQ community encounters.

The additional item contained in the Programme refers to the reform of the official education system, which can also be interpreted as a space for the inclusion of LGBTIQ topics in textbooks.

“An urgent reform of the official education system is necessary, with the raising of the ethical and professional standards of the teaching staff.”

The next item contained in the Justice and Reconciliation Party’s Programme, although not in a direct way, makes it very clear that the opinion of candidate Kalac about insulting, i.e. expressing negative attitudes and endangering safety and dignity on any ground is inadmissible:

“It is inadmissible to offend on any ground, especially national or religious.”

The last item in the Justice and Reconciliation Party’s Programme, recognized by the research team, is in the field of social justice and protection. We convey the item in whole:

“Social justice is the condition of the welfare of every society. The Justice and Reconciliation Party in Montenegro is committed to increasing budgetary allocations for the reform of the social system.”

The research team recognizes the importance of increasing budget allocations for the social system, taking into account the fact that non-governmental organizations in the field of the representation of human rights of LGBTIQ persons have advocated for years to create sustainable solutions when it comes to social services intended for LGBTIQ people such as LGBTIQ Shelter, LGBTIQ Centre, psycho-social and legal support.

Candidate Kalac **did not** take part in filling out the research questionnaire.

MILACIC MARKO – “BRAVELY! NO MORE WAITING”

Milacic Marko is a candidate of the political party True Montenegro (Prava Crna Gora). As an integral part of the campaign, a detailed presentation of the attitudes of candidate Milacic was also presented. It was divided into thematic areas, from which the attitudes concerning the LGBTIQ persons, both direct and indirect, can be derived.

The views of candidate Milacic are divided into 19 different categories, thoroughly covering the attitudes that the candidate advocates. After a detailed analysis of all categories, the research team found elements in 4 categories, which are directly or indirectly related to LGBTIQ persons.

In the first category, titled “State Policy”, only one item was detected that could indirectly affect the quality of life of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro.

“Strengthening the criminal policy in the field of fighting against corruption and organized crime, (drug production and trafficking), gender-based violence and domestic violence.”

LGBTIQ persons are one of the most abundant categories of the wider population. In almost all surveys they hold highest place on the ranks of groups that have endangered physical integrity and security. The author team appreciates candidate Milacic's initiative to strengthen the criminal policy, among other things, in the field of gender-based and domestic violence, since this is an environment where often the primary violence against LGBTIQ persons is occurring. However, taking into account the fact that the presidential candidate has never positively mentioned LGBTIQ population in his programme, nor recognized this group as endangered in any way, there is no reason for this indirect statement to be considered inclusive for LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro.

The second item that the research team considered relevant for the LGBTIQ population is in the category “Education, Training and Employment”.

“Create new science and teaching programmes at faculties. Scientific teaching programmes at the university are obsolete, and as such it is impossible to apply them in modern practice and it is necessary to introduce new ones. Knowledge quickly expires, new knowledge is quickly adopted, and it is necessary to adopt and apply them.”

The research team partly agrees with the fact that knowledge, not only at faculties, but also at the level of high school or elementary education, is subject to new scientifically established facts, researches and discoveries, and the contents need to be supplemented, but also it is necessary to change obsolete and overstated content, so they also respect the existence of gender and sexual minorities, and all other minority groups. Once again, we consider that candidate Milacic's programme, due to the negative observation of the LGBTIQ community, did not take this group into account.

The subject of the family brings us to the fourth category that was analysed, within the official positions of candidate Milacic. The next category is called "Family" and is also the only category of this presidential candidate which directly, although in a negative way, treats the LGBTIQ population.

“Prohibition of adopting children or fostering children for members of LGBT population.”

The research team sees this as an indicative fact - the only mention of LGBTIQ topics in a direct way, in the very detailed programme of candidate Milacic, was expressed in a negative way, that is, in the form of additional limitation of the equal rights of members of the LGBTIQ population. The question of fostering or adoption of children in the Montenegrin LGBTIQ movement is not current issue. The mention of the concept of the prohibition of the adoption and fostering of children by the members of the LGBTIQ population can be seen, at least, as the populist approach for adapting to a wide spectrum of homophobic members of the voting body. Spatial setting of this paragraph is also indicative, since it was placed immediately after the stance that talks about the intensification of penalties for paedophiles, which in the average citizen mind

can create additional misconceptions about the interference of the LGBTIQ population with the criminal punishable phenomenon of paedophilia.

Candidate Milacic **did not** take part in filling out the research questionnaire.

MILICKOVIC VASILIJE – “INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE”

Milickovic Vasilije, an entrepreneur, was proposed for the presidential candidate by the Party of Pensioners, Disabled Persons and Restitution of Montenegro - PIR, Citizens' actions from Budva, several non-governmental organizations, intellectuals, businesspeople, independent councillors (led by a municipal councillor in Budva, the architect Stevan Dzakovic), as well as many other individuals and sympathizers.

Candidate Milickovic based his presidential campaign on social networks and through media coverage, and did not have a specifically prepared elections Programme.

The research team analysed media appearances, and other forms of public address by candidate Milickovic, with the aim of finding elements and attitudes that may be of interest to the LGBTIQ community. It has been noticed that the presidential campaign of candidate Milickovic mostly focuses on socio-economic issues, issues of corruption, and the increase of living standards and social benefits.

When analysing the presence of candidate Milickovic on social networks, the publication of interviews and the statements he gave in various media, a coherently presented programme could not be found. An additional fact that makes this analysis shorter than the others lies in the fact that the research team did not find any reference or elements contained in its public media coverage, which in any way treat issues of interest to the LGBTIQ community.

Candidate Milickovic **did not** take part in filling out the research questionnaire.

VUKSANOVIC DRAGINJA – “PRESIDENT FOR CHANGE”

Vuksanovic Draginja is the presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokratska partija). Through a detailed programme presented on the website of her campaign, candidate Vuksanovic presented several different categories. During the analysis of her presidential campaign, research team found several elements that are of significance for LGBTIQ people.

The first in a series of analysed categories is the “Foreign Policy”. Within this category, candidate Vuksanovic obliged herself to work on:

- *“improving the system of protection of human and minority rights and freedoms in accordance with EU and international standards;”*

The research team highly appreciates the commitment of candidate Vuksanovic, as well as her dedication for improving the system of protection of human and minority rights and freedoms. Non-governmental organizations committed to improving the quality of life of LGBTIQ people in Montenegro have made the adopting of legal solutions, by-laws and strategies as their priority, in order to essentially affect the general sense of security and the acceptance of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegrin society.

The second category of the proposed Programme of the candidate Vuksanovic is entitled “Citizens decide”. The text of this category, which the research team considers it might have an impact on the Montenegrin LGBTIQ community, is listed below.

“I will pledge to call a referendum on certain major issues from the public sphere of activities and thus enable citizens to decide about topics that have a significant impact on their lives.”

“I will organize regular consultations with the civil sector and citizens' associations and open my office through the “Open Days” Institute for all citizens who want to discuss the problems they face. Following the example of some old European democracies, I will establish the institute

of public letter, in which I will inform the public about certain important social issues and problems, and demand from the competent institutions their timely resolution and information to the public.”

Similar to other presidential candidates, candidate Vukanovic is in favour of calling a referendum on certain major issues in order to allow citizens to be directly involved in deciding on topics that affect their lives. Once again, the research team points to the need to use precise terminology and clarify on which specific topics and areas can be decided by referendum, and which issues will be reserved for authorized representatives of citizens in Parliament. We will repeat, one does not decide on human rights – one claims them by birth. In addition, we appreciate the initiative for the establishment of the “Open Days” Institute, so that all citizens of Montenegro can point to the problems they face, which includes LGBTIQ persons.

The following category of candidate Vuksanovic’s Programme is entitled “Constitutional Patriotism – the Way to Civil Unity”, which states:

“The differences are the essence of democracy, and they are desirable, because new ideas for the organization of society and the state are born out of differences.”

The research team agrees with the statement that the differences are desirable and that they represent the essence of democracy because societies are not a homogeneous unity and often the voices of minority communities cannot be adequately heard, nor can their needs and problems be solved well. The research team considers it important that the Programme of the candidate Vuksanovic recognizes and represents this attitude because it enables action needed in order to achieve the integration of all minority communities in the broader context of society and thus influence the reduction of social distance, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in Montenegro.

The last of the categories that may be of interest to the Montenegrin LGBTIQ community is called “Gender Equality”. In addition to the apparently clear intention of establishing genuine

gender equality, candidate Vuksanovic emphasizes the adaptation of the protection mechanisms to the norms of the binding Istanbul Convention, which also directly influences the realization of the rights of the transgender and gender-based community. The Istanbul Convention in its definition section treats gender as a social construct, not as a biological determinant.

Candidate Vuksanovic **did** take part in filling out the research questionnaire.

OVERVIEW OF THE INDIVIDUAL REPLIES OF CANDIDATES



BOJANIC MLADEN

- Personally filled out the research questionnaire.
- Stated that he is a „non-party candidate supported by 90% of opposition MPs”.

Candidate **Bojanic Mladen**, when completing the research questionnaire, gave the following answers:

1. When asked whether his upcoming campaign for presidential election will in any way focus on the LGBTIQ community, candidate Bojanic stated that it **will**, with the following explanation¹:

“Of course, my policy is clear - all citizens of Montenegro must have equal rights. In today's Montenegro, the vast majority of citizens are discriminated on a single basis – belonging to a political party. Today, we have a membership card of the DPS at the same time to serve as our student ID, and insurance against dismissal in the state business, and a basis for one-time social help. However, this type of discrimination, whose victims are all without this party membership, does not by any means exclude other types of injustice, blackmail, pressure and discrimination that individual groups of our fellow citizens face each day - I am speaking, above all, of chauvinism whose victims are national and ethnic minorities, of the sexism that suffers our female citizens, and, of course, of homophobia that undermines the constitutional rights of members of the LGBT community. Bearing all this in mind, my campaign focuses on the problems of all citizens, including the problems of the LGBT community.”

2. Candidate Bojanic stated that he **currently supports** the efforts that are being made towards the achievement of human rights and equality of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegrin society.

¹ We transmit all the messages of the presidential candidates in an integral manner, without prejudice and with full respect for all political views.

He also stated that he **is prepared** to, as the future President of Montenegro, publicly support these efforts.

3. Candidate Bojanic stated that he is **mainly willing** to publicly support events, manifestations and gatherings that are relevant for the process of accepting and respecting the human rights of LGBTIQ people.

4. Candidate Bojanic also stated that he **is ready** to take specific steps in order to achieve a higher level of equality, protection and acceptance of LGBTIQ persons, and stated the following:

“When I agreed with Djukanovic’s assertion that the European policy would win, I was not even a bit ironical - European policy will win, and the European policy I am committed to is a policy of unconditional defence of the basic constitutional rights of every citizen. I firmly believe that the basic problems of the LGBT community today have nothing to do with any "special" rights - the right to walk on the street without any fear, not being fired from work because of your sexual orientation, the right to free assembly and, in general, the right on protection against discrimination based on the sexual orientation are simply the rights I consider as fundamental, and which, as mentioned before, our Constitution guarantees to everyone. When I become a president of Montenegro, the LGBT community will have an honest ally in the realization and protection of the rights that our Constitution guarantees to all citizens. I support all activities aimed at combating discrimination against all vulnerable groups and individuals. However, the way this fight is (not) pursued by certain institutions is the issue that I will deal with when I become the President of Montenegro. For example, I consider that the institution of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms is of the utmost importance for the protection against discrimination. As a President, I will use my right to propose to this function a person who will have personal and professional courage and initiative to take concrete measures, taking into account the views of scientific and professional institutions and the non-governmental sector.”

5. Candidate Bojanic assessed as **bad** the current overall position of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro, the current state of human rights of LGBTIQ persons, the level of protection of LGBTIQ by the institutions of the system, and the current level of security and security.

6. Candidate Bojanic stated that he **considers** discrimination, violence, hate speech, homo/bi/transphobia and current disempowerment to be the problems that the LGBTIQ community faces.

7. Finally, candidate Bojanic sent the following message to his potential LGBTIQ voters:

“Montenegro must choose the path of mutual tolerance and solidarity. As a President, I will fight against violations of human rights and freedoms and against discrimination on any ground. I will be ready to listen and I will protect everyone who suffered from this system. I will fight for all rights of citizens, personally and through all the institutions of the system. These elections are an opportunity to make Montenegro a modern state in which all human rights will be respected.”

DEDEIC DOBRILLO

- Personally filled out the research questionnaire.
- Stated that he is a candidate of the Serbian Coalition.

Candidate **Dedeic Dobrilo**, when completing the research questionnaire, gave the following answers:

1. When asked whether his forthcoming campaign for presidential elections will in any way focus on the LGBTIQ community, candidate Dedeic stated it **will not**.
2. Candidate Dedeic stated that he **currently does not support** efforts that are being made towards the achievement of human rights and equality of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegrin society; and that he is **not prepared**, as the future President of Montenegro, to publicly support these efforts.
3. Candidate Dedeic stated that he was **not willing** to publicly support events, manifestations and gatherings that are relevant for the process of accepting and respecting the human rights of LGBTIQ people, and that as the future President of Montenegro he is **not ready** to take specific steps in order to achieve the higher level of equality, protection and acceptance of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro.
4. Candidate Dedeic assessed as **very good** the current overall position of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro, the current state of human rights of LGBTIQ persons, the level of protection of LGBTIQ people by the institutions of the system, and the current level of security and safety.

5. Candidate Dedeic stated that he **does not consider** discrimination, violence, hate speech, homo/bi/transphobia and current disempowerment to be the problems that the LGBTIQ community faces.

6. Finally, candidate Dedeic sent the following message to his potential LGBTIQ voters:

“Your sexual orientation is your private thing, and the bedrooms are space for the realization of ideas. The propaganda you promote is the abuse of individual human rights and media terror over the majority of Montenegrin citizens.”

DJUKANOVIC MILO

- Research questionnaire filled out by a certified individual.
- Stated that he is a candidate of the Democratic Party of Socialists.

Candidate **Djukanovic Milo**, when completing the research questionnaire, gave the following answers:

1. When asked whether his upcoming campaign for presidential election will in any way focus on the LGBTIQ community, candidate Djukanovic stated it **will**, with the following explanation:

“Yes, within the framework of human rights.”

2. Candidate Djukanovic stated that he **currently supports** efforts that are being made towards the achievement of human rights and equality of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegrin society; and that he **is prepared**, as the future President of Montenegro, to publicly support these efforts.

3. Candidate Djukanovic stated that he **is willing** to publicly support events, manifestations and gatherings that are important for the process of accepting and respecting the human rights of LGBTIQ people, and that as the future President of Montenegro he **is ready** to take specific steps in order to achieve a higher level of equality, protection and acceptance of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro.

4. Candidate Djukanovic assessed as **partially good**² the current overall position of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro, the current state of human rights of LGBTIQ persons, the level of protection of LGBTIQ people by the institutions of the system, and the current level of security and safety.

5. Candidate Djukanovic stated that he **considers** discrimination, violence, hate speech and homo/bi/transphobia to be the problems that the LGBTIQ community faces, while he **does not consider** current disempowerment to be a problem that LGBTIQ community faces in Montenegro.

6. Finally, candidate Djukanovic sent the following message to his potential LGBTIQ voters:

“Respecting the differences and tolerances according to the convictions of all social groups, are the basic postulates on which the policy of respecting human rights in the Democratic Party of Socialists is based. In addition, the multi-ethnic and multicultural harmony have become the leading values of Montenegrin society, precisely thanks to the dominant efforts and policy of the DPS on the political scene of Montenegro. The equality of all citizens before the law are guarantees provided by the Constitution of the state of Montenegro, equally to all citizens, and consequently towards vulnerable groups. As the President of the state, I will resolutely fight against all forms of discrimination against any citizen of Montenegro, which is the obligation of all, as the relevant Montenegrin laws have unambiguously set it as a solution.”

² Candidate Djukanovic has given “partially good” as answers to the given questions, while for the needs of statistical analysis and following the form of the questionnaire, these answers were classified as “good” within the statistical software.

VUKSANOVIC DRAGINJA

- Research questionnaire filled out by a certified individual.
- Stated that she is a candidate of the Socialdemocratic Party.

Candidate **Vuksanovic Draginja**, when completing the research questionnaire, gave the following answers:

1. When asked whether her upcoming campaign for presidential elections will in any way focus on the LGBTIQ community, candidate Vuksanovic stated it **will not**, with the following explanation:

“The programme of candidate Vuksanovic is focused on problems that citizens face in their everyday life. Her previous engagement in politics as an MP, and now as candidate for the president, is marked with the commitment for the equality and freedom of all citizens of Montenegro.”

2. Candidate Vuksanovic stated that she **currently supports** efforts that are being and that she **is prepared**, as the future President of Montenegro, to publicly support these efforts.

3. Candidate Vuksanovic stated that she is **mainly willing** to publicly support events, manifestations and gatherings that are important for the process of accepting and respecting the human rights of LGBTIQ persons.

4. Candidate Vuksanovic also stated that she **is ready** to take specific steps in order to achieve a higher level of equality, protection and acceptance of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro, and she stated the following:

“Human rights and the right to freedom of expression, assembly and action are rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Montenegro and as such must be respected and promoted. No one should be discriminated against for any of their characteristics.”

5. Candidate Vuksanovic assessed as **bad** the current overall position of LGBTIQ people in Montenegro and the current state of human rights of LGBTIQ people. She assessed as **good** the current level of protection of LGBTIQ by the institutions of the system, while assessing as **very bad** the current level of security and safety.

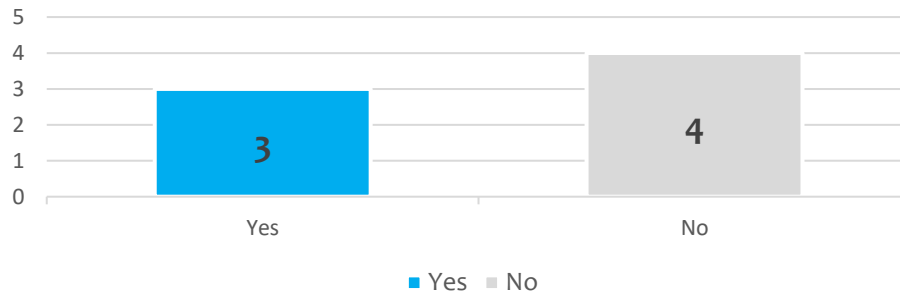
6. Candidate Vuksanovic stated that she **considers** discrimination, violence, hate speech, homo/bi/transphobia and current disempowerment to be the problems that the LGBTIQ community faces.

7. Finally, candidate Vuksanovic sent the following message to her potential LGBTIQ voters:

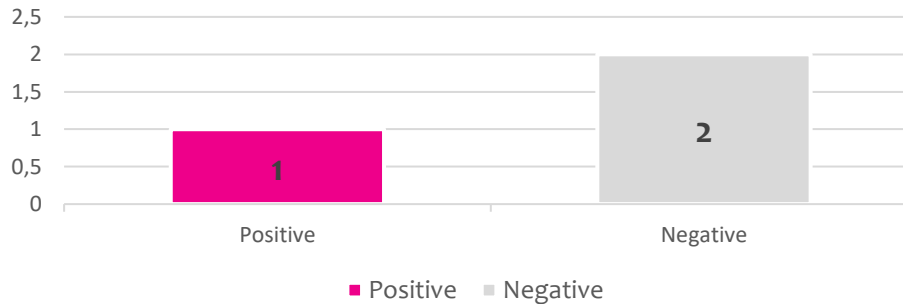
“I am in favour of the freedom of expression of all citizens of Montenegro and all rights that they are entitled to by the Constitution of Montenegro.”

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMMES/CAMPAIGNS

Do programmes/campaigns of the candidates, in any way, directly mention the LGBTIQ community and/or SOGI?

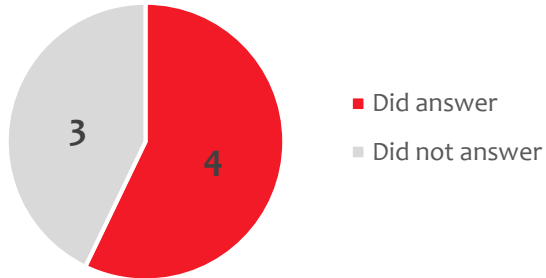


In relation to programmes/campaigns that mention the LGBTIQ community and/or SOGI, in which context are they being mentioned?

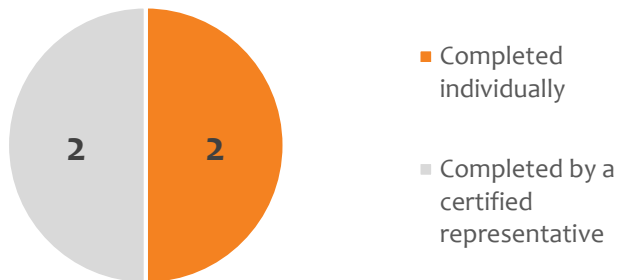


STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE REPLIES

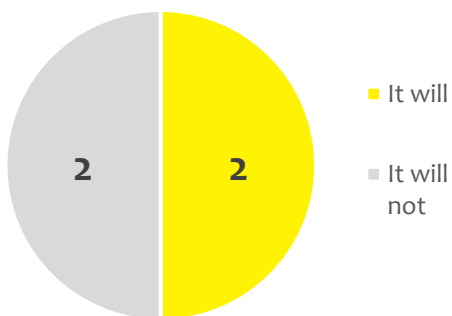
Candidates in relation to submitted responses:



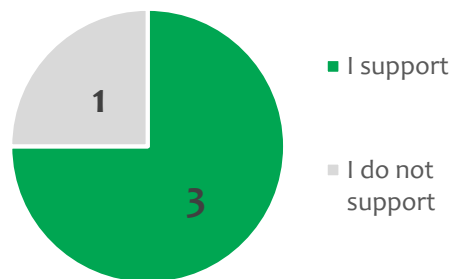
Candidates in relation to completing the questionnaire:



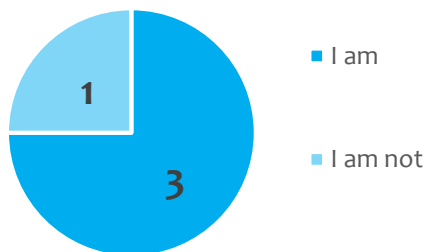
Will your upcoming campaign for presidential elections in any way focus on the problems and needs of the LGBTIQ community



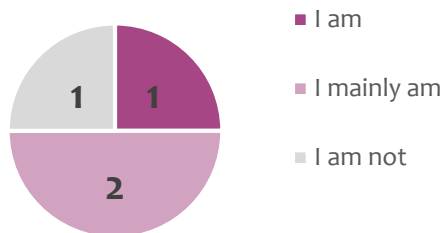
Do you currently support the efforts being made towards the achievement of human rights and equality of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegrin society



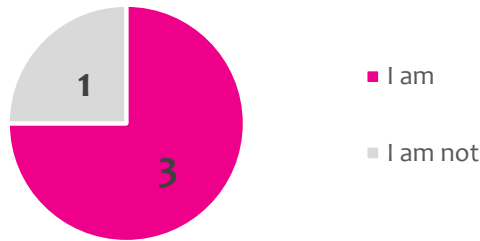
Are you prepared to publicly support, as President of Montenegro, efforts that are being made towards the achievement of human rights and equality of LGBTIQ persons in the Montenegrin society?



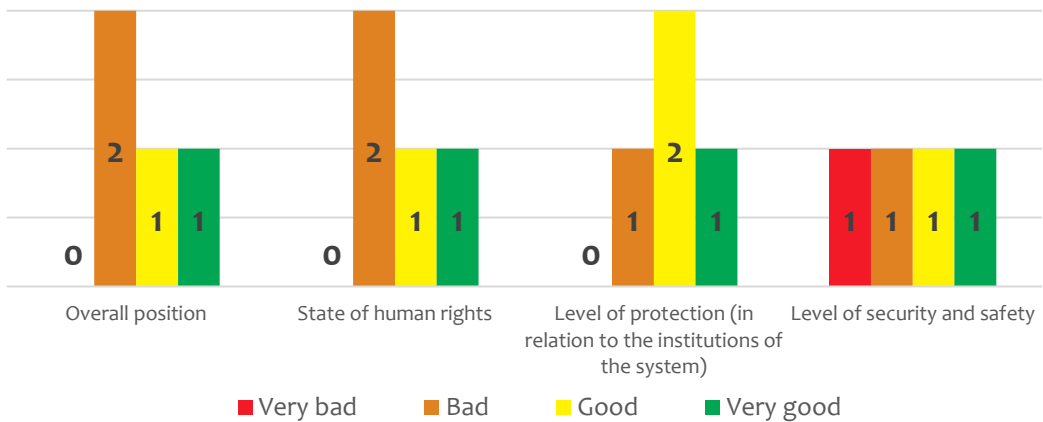
Are you prepared to publicly support, as President of Montenegro, events, manifestations and gatherings that are relevant for the process of accepting and respecting the human rights of LGBTIQ people?



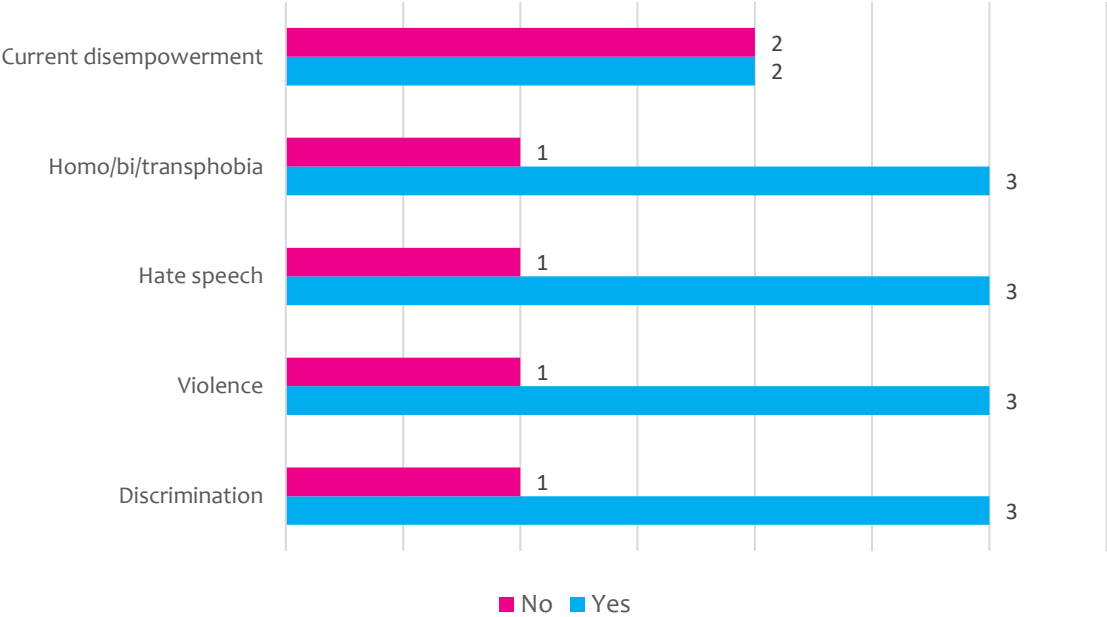
Are you ready to take specific steps, as President of Montenegro, with the goal of achieving a higher level of equality, protection and acceptance of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro?



How do you view the following areas of relevance for the life of LGBTIQ persons in Montenegro?



Do you consider the following matters to be a significant problem facing the LGBTIQ community in Montenegro?



CONCLUSION

Based on the conducted analysis of presidential campaigns, as well as the programmes of political parties and the structures represented by the presidential candidates, the research team came to a number of specific conclusions.

Despite the fact that LGBTIQ related topics can be found in the programme documents of the parties, that is in the programmes of presidential candidates, both in positive and negative way, it has been noted that all presidential candidates, in their public speeches, at the conventions, when making statements to different media, in political debates and other forms of communication with the public refrained from directly referring to LGBTIQ persons or LGBTIQ themes.

During their public addresses, certain candidates called for respect for human rights, including and encumbering most minority and vulnerable groups, while completely ignoring the LGBTIQ population.

This restraint is a clear indication that presidential candidates not only do not recognize LGBTIQ persons as a potential voting body but, on the contrary, see them as a potential obstacle and believe they can produce losses with certain segments of the voting body. This fear of presidential candidates leads to political calculations, so they use the line of least resistance, that is, the exclusion of LGBTIQ persons from public discourse.

An additional component that is recognized in the analysis of presidential campaigns is the openness of certain candidates to represent the idea of limiting the rights of the LGBTIQ community, including rights to free assembly, organized action, the right to regulate same-sex communities, and certain issues that are still not open among the Montenegrin LGBTIQ movement, such as the adoption of children or foster care.

When discussing the contents of the programmes of the presidential candidates, it was noticed that no presidential candidate recognized the importance of education as a proactive way of reducing the social marginalization of minority groups, including the LGBTIQ community. In addition, it is noteworthy that no presidential candidate, as part of their programme or public presentation, has addressed the issue of peer violence, which is particularly impacting young LGBTIQ persons.

During the campaign analysis, the research team noted that there were no open and publicly out LGBTIQ persons in the campaigns, either directly, through promotional videos, or in any other form of engagement in campaigns. This also confirms the still present, already mentioned wish of political parties, structures and association to disable the direct participation of LGBTIQ people in politics. The mere fact that three out of seven candidates did not submit their answers at all points to the unwillingness of political leaders to involve LGBTIQ people, both in political discourse and public life in Montenegro.

Out of all the analysed programmes, LGBTIQ persons are directly referenced in only one case in a positive sense, while in the programme of one political candidate LGBTIQ related topics are mentioned in a negative context, that is, in the context of the prohibition or limitation of the rights of the LGBTIQ community. In an additional media address of one presidential candidates LGBTIQ related topics and people are also mentioned in a negative context. As part of the analysis of other candidates, there are no references to LGBTIQ persons in a direct context.

Realizing that the first step in resolving the problem is its recognition, we hope that this research and the overall report will not only be a useful tool for all LGBTIQ people in Montenegro in their selection of candidates in the elections, but also a reminder that an inclusive society cannot be built without the full participation of all citizens.

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