

Prime Minister Duško Marković  
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**Open letter: unjustified removal of anti-corruption activist from government working group**

Dear Prime Minister Marković,

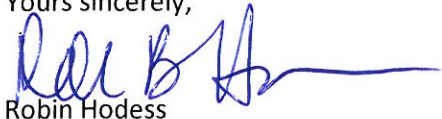
Transparency International, the global anti-corruption movement, is concerned about the removal of Vuk Maraš of MANS from the government anti-corruption working group focussing on Chapter 23 of Montenegro's European Union accession. MANS is Transparency International's partner in Montenegro. This is unacceptable and appears to show that the government is not taking the fight against corruption seriously.

The decision at the end of April to exclude Mr. Maraš from the working group sends the wrong message about your government's attitude to fighting corruption, which should be a key priority for Montenegro in the EU integration process. MANS is the strongest independent anti-corruption organisation in Montenegro and thus should be represented in the working group if that group is to be effective and credible. The working group is the responsibility of Minister of European Affairs Aleksandar Andrija Pejović who must take responsibility for the removal of Mr. Maras and thus should take immediate measures to reinstate him.

Chapter 23, as you know, deals with judiciary, anti-corruption, fundamental rights and the rights of citizens in the European Union accession process. Montenegro has developed a detailed action plan to address these issues, which is important and to be commended. This working group was created to monitor and support the implementation of the action plan. It requires the kind of technical expertise and independence that comes from observers with the experience that MANS can provide.

Transparency International is calling on you to reinstate Mr. Maraš and MANS on the working group. This will demonstrate a clear commitment by your government that civil society plays an important role in monitoring the implementation of the Chapter 23 action plan and that your government is serious in its fight against corruption.

Yours sincerely,



Robin Hodess

Internal Managing Director