

CEE Bankwatch Network
Na Rozcesti 1434/6
190 00 Praha 9 – Liben
Czech Republic
Email: main@bankwatch.org
http://www.bankwatch.org

Bulgaria:

Centre for Environmental
Information and Education
(CEIE)

Za Zemiata, For the Earth

Croatia:

Green Action

Czech Republic:

Centrum pro dopravu a
energetiku (CDE)

Hnutí DUHA

Estonia:

Estonian Green Movement–FoE

Georgia:

Green Alternative

Hungary:

National Society of
Conservationists – Friends of
the Earth Hungary (MTVSZ)

Latvia:

Latvian Green Movement

Lithuania:

Atgaja

Macedonia:

Eko–svest

Poland:

Polish Green Network (PGN)

Russia:

Sakhalin Environmental Watch

Serbia:

Center for Ecology and
Sustainable Development
(CEKOR)

Slovakia:

Friends of the Earth – Center
for Environmental Public
Advocacy (FoE–CEPA)

Ukraine:

National Ecological Centre of
Ukraine (NECU)

CEE Bankwatch Network's
mission is to prevent
environmentally and socially
harmful impacts of
international development
finance, and to promote
alternative solutions and public
participation.

Open Letter to Mr. Igor Lukšić Prime Minister of the Republic of Montenegro

Dear Prime Minister Igor Lukšić,

I am writing you on behalf of **CEE Bankwatch Network**. CEE Bankwatch Network is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) with member organisations from countries across central and eastern Europe. Our organisation also works closely with MANS on the EBRD financing of projects in Montenegro.

We stand in solidarity with our partner organisation and were accordingly extremely concerned to hear of the recent statements by Prime Minister Igor Lukšić, following the peaceful civic protests in Montenegro. These statements were testament to a fundamental lack of understanding about the role of civil society.

Politics cannot be simply separated from economic and social questions. Nor can it be regarded as something that is exclusively carried out by political parties. Every democratic society has a number of legitimate instruments for citizen participation from official consultations, to referenda, and protests.

Civil society organisations play a vital role in ensuring that governments work in the interest of the wider population, and it is not only normal for NGOs to use the instruments available for citizen participation to ensure that their voice is heard, but it is indeed also very much expected.

Civil society watchdog organisations play a key role in monitoring whatever government happens to be in power: they are driven by their intention to ensure that environmental, social or other civic interests are represented and not by a desire to win elections. In this they are different from political parties. In an era when public scepticism about political processes is high and few members of the public have time to seriously immerse themselves in detailed and complicated political developments, well-functioning civil society organisations, as well as, an independent media provide a much-needed independent standpoint and a window between the government and the public.

We therefore call on the Government to desist from attempting to undermine and discredit organisations which are simply fulfilling a watchdog function that exists in every healthy democratic society.

Budapest, March 8, 2012.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Fodor
Executive Director
CEE Bankwatch Network