



ORIGINAL PAPER

Politics of Multiculturalism in Post-communist Montenegro: Political Participation and Representation of National Minority Communities

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Abstract

In the Constitution of Montenegro, the political identity of Montenegro is defined as a civic identity, and Montenegro is grounded as a civic country. In a demographic sense, according to the results of the latest population census, Montenegro can be described as a multicultural country with significant ethno-cultural pluralism. In the normative-political sense, Montenegro adopted institutional and legal provisions with the intention to introduce equality between ethno-national communities, both in their political participation and at the level of preserving their ethno-cultural specificities. Accordingly, one of the most important fields that requires improving normative solutions and practical implementations is the field of political participation of national minorities. The current legal provisions, within the electoral legislation and within the field of protection of the minority collective's rights, provide a solid foundation for political representation, but are equally bound by limitations that must be solved.

Keywords: *Montenegro, post-communism, multiculturalism, political representation, political participation, authentic representation, proportional representation*

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Introduction

We have been witnessing *hyper-utilisation* of the term “multiculturalism” in the previous few decades. It has been profusely used by analytics in different disciplines, the media, as well as members of the political elite in developed, Western European countries, as well as developing countries. Apart from it being *ever-present* and *ever-utilised*, another important characteristic of the public discourse on the objectives, the nature, and the consequences of multiculturalism is *generalisation* (Kimlika, 2004: 21). Every form of generalisation indisputably leads to an unacceptable dose of simplification, as it obscures the complexity of the effects of a given concept, its reliance upon the specificities of the state-national context, as well as its weaknesses, strengths, and effects. Generalisation results in simplified evaluations of the present and future effects of the model of multiculturalism in the process of managing ethno-cultural pluralism. At the same time, representatives and advocates of the model of multiculturalism frequently ignore the weaknesses of the model’s *modus operandi*, as well as its ultimate effects. In the context of weaknesses, we are primarily referring to the fact that minority communities and their members predominantly focus on the interests of the community and their state-given rights, while their “obligations are reserved for the community” and the preservation of the community’s identity. The fall of authoritarian socialism, followed by the introduction of a multi-party system and the collapse of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia marked the beginning of a new era in the socio-economic and political development of the society of the Western Balkans¹.

Post-communist Montenegro and Multiculturalism

In the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its constituent multi-ethnic republics, the process of managing ethno-cultural pluralism was mainly based on the promotion of ideology as the predominant, unifying, homogenising factor. Identity based on ideology, carrying a component of Pan-Slavism, and manifested by the slogan “brotherhood and unity”, was expected to gain momentum, thus mitigating ethno-national segregation, and suppressing the forms of ethnic affiliation which were perceived as rival. Identification with the federal, Yugoslav identity was intended to overpower identification with individual, ethno-national identities, in line with the growth of socialism.² It is precisely because of the specificity of the aforementioned way of formation of national identities in the Balkans, where religion always intervened as a significant factor, that the communist regime was perceived as rather intolerant of religious communities.³ Therefore, it is important to bear in mind the following circumstance: “Popular politics was still walking on thin ice: on the one hand, it gave room to national, religious and cultural activities, and on the other, it aimed at strictly banishing all forms of intolerance and chauvinism (according to the views of the ruling political authorities at the time - *author’s comment*). Therefore, cultural organisations, associations, publishing houses and religious associations with exclusively ethnic approaches were disbanded” (Čalić, 2013: 226).

Following the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a multi-party system was introduced in Montenegro, which marked the initiation of the transition toward a liberal-democratic system. Additionally, in the context of Montenegro, the transition was executed in two phases (1989-1997 and 1997-2000) (Vukićević, Vujović,

2012: 55). The first phase of the so-called *arrested transition* or *competitive half-democracy* is characterised by the rule of a semi-authoritarian regime and, correspondingly, by semi-competitive elections. The change emerged from within the system, rather than anti-system lines of resistance, and the critical requests did not refer to the change of the communist regime and to the introduction of democratic processes, but to the withdrawal of the then-existing political structures (Darmanović, 2007:84). It is possible to assert that this period was also typical for its lack of a legal-political ambient which would meet the requirements of the development of the politics of multiculturalism toward national and ethnic minorities.⁴ A significant milestone in recent Montenegrin history is the referendum on its state-legal status, held in 2006, which resulted in the country regaining its independence. The majority of minority ethnic groups perceived the path of pro-independence and pro-Westernisation as a means of improving their own status. The voter turnout at the referendum was 86.5 percent; 55,5 percent of the voters were in favour of independence.

Following the renewal of independence, a new Constitution was adopted in 2007. It is the act of adoption of the Constitution that set the foundations for introducing and applying the mechanisms of the politics of multiculturalism. It also placed greater emphasis on the multi-cultural orientation of Montenegro, in comparison with the 1992 Constitution.⁵ The preamble of the 2007 Constitution describes multiculturalism as one of the most fundamental values that ought to be promoted and protected. The multi-cultural character of Montenegro is seen, acknowledged and presented as a significant value of the Montenegrin national-state and social context. At the time of the adoption of the new Constitution, one of the most important organic laws – the Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms – was enforced, which regulates matters related to minorities. The law introduced significant changes to the area of protection of minority rights, and their freedoms. First and foremost, the changes refer to the very meaning of the term ‘minority’. Instead of *national and ethnic minorities* (used ever since the introduction of a multi-party system in 1997) and *minority peoples* (used from 1997 to 2006), the Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms simply uses the term *minority*.

The results of the 2011 population census demonstrated that Montenegro can be classified as a country with marked ethno-cultural pluralism, or a country with a high level of heterogeneity among the population.⁶ According to the data from the said census, there are 278,865 or 44.98 percent of Montenegrins in the country, 175,110 or 22.73 percent of Serbs, 6,021 or 0.97 percent of Croats, 30,439 or 4.91 percent of Albanians, 20,537 or 3.31 percent of Muslims, 53,605 or 8.65 percent of Bosniaks, and 6,251 or 1.01 percent of Romani people. A total of 30,170 or 4.87 percent of the population remained undeclared.⁷ It is clear that the situation in Montenegro is “multi-cultural” in demographic-descriptive terms, which further indicates that the mechanisms of the politics of multiculturalism are imperative for the Montenegrin society to remain functional. The matter of effective participation of minority groups in the process of political decision-making at different levels of political governance is one of the most crucial topics in the context of EU integration of Montenegro, as a multi-national and multi-cultural country. It is multi-national or multi-ethnic in terms of the noticeable ethno-cultural pluralism and heterogeneity.

The Constitutional and Legal Framework of Political Participation of National Minority Communities in Montenegro

The rights to political participation cover a wide scope, but they mainly refer to obligatory representation of minorities in the organs of self-government at the local and the state level. Additionally, they may refer to granting special statuses to particular locations and their representatives.⁸ This paper will analyse the legal and institutional frameworks for the protection of minority rights in Montenegro, and their effective participation. It will aim at presenting the current situation with regards to the extent to which the rights to participation in public life are being exercised by minority groups, focusing on two areas of these rights: participation in decision-making processes, and self-governance, as formulated in the OSCE Recommendations of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, better known as the Lund Recommendations. In terms of participation in decision-making processes, countries are advised to secure representation of minority communities in the legislative bodies, organs of state administration, the government, and the ministries. They ought to partake in the alterations of electoral legislation in the context of introducing various forms of preferential voting (Jelić, 2012:58). The aforementioned recommendations are particularly important in the context of political representation of minority communities in the legislative bodies at the state level. Having the possibility to form various types of national minority consultative bodies that facilitate the dialogue between minority communities and the state institutions is an additional form of support to the process of political participation of national minorities.

The legal framework for the protection of minority rights in Montenegro has been developed through the Constitution and through legislation. Article 79 of the Constitution of Montenegro is particularly significant in the context of minority rights, and the aspect of effective participation of minority communities.⁹ Although the 2007 Constitution defines Montenegro as a civic country, and its political identity as primarily civic, as a result of pressure by minority national communities and their political parties, the Constitution currently contains regulations addressing the matter of protection of minority rights. Article 79 (Point 9) of the Constitution refers to national minorities, and guarantees the right to authentic representation in the Parliament of Montenegro and in the assemblies of the local self-government units in which they represent a significant share in the population, according to the principle of affirmative action. Additionally, Point 10 of the same Article guarantees the right to proportionate representation in public services, state authorities and local self-government bodies.¹⁰ The phrase “authentic representation according to the principle of affirmative action” is one of the most disputable points in terms of interpretation. Mijat Šuković provided significant contribution to clarifying the meaning of the phrase by explaining that: “The principle of affirmative action dictates that the *provisions that aim at securing authentic representation of the members of national minorities, or a single national minority, do not exceed, in time or scope, what is necessary for accomplishing the goal of affirmative action: ensuring that the members of minority groups have the same rights as the representatives of majority groups in the Parliament of Montenegro, and in the local self-governing parliaments – the right to represent and express their genuine / authentic interests, and to provide arguments that support those interests*” (Šuković, 2010:280). The matter of interpretation of “authentic representation” and “proportional representation” caused some turmoil among the political actors and the expert public in Montenegro. Certain national political parties advocated the view that the

phrase “authentic representation” ought to be interpreted as proportional representation in the Parliament of Montenegro. This view was mostly voiced by the parties representing the national communities that comprise a significant share in the structure of the total population. Following this line of thought, the Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms, adopted in 2006, Articles 23 and 24, provide an interpretation of authentic representation as proportional, and state that minority communities ought to be represented in the parliament, at the local and state level, with a number of mandates that correspond to the percentage of the members of minorities in the total population of the country, based on the results of the population census in 2003.¹¹ However, the Constitutional Court of Montenegro provided an assessment of the constitutionality of these Articles, concluded that the said regulations introduce demographic, rather than political representation, and determined that the said Articles were unconstitutional. Exercising this right depends on the assessment of particular circumstances, and the evaluation of all potential consequences. If the circumstances are such that particular measures of affirmative action result in effects that are opposite from the intended effect, they ought to be suspended, and an alternative solution must be provided. Further escalation of ethnic and national tensions, increase of ethnic distance, and the tendency to “shut off” minority communities through isolationism are some of the negative consequences that must be taken into consideration. The fact that ethno-national communities are not homogenous entities is frequently disregarded. “Finally, we need to keep in mind that the ethnic minority in any country is itself highly heterogeneous. There may be an over-representation of some groups and an under-representation of others, making broad, cross-national comparison of ethnic minority representation less meaningful“ (Bird, 2003: 9).

Montenegrin Electoral Legislation and Political Participation of Minorities

We will first deal with the area of electoral legislation and the pivotal changes that secured a higher degree of political participation of minority groups. In terms of political representation of minority groups in Montenegro, it is advisable to draw a distinction between two periods of time: the first period stretches from the point when a multi-party system was introduced in Montenegro, to 1998, and the second period started in 1998. It is important to note that the first period was marked by a lack of adequate conditions, both political and social, for matters regarding participation of minority communities and for regulating the status of minority communities in general. Therefore, this period, the so-called negative (first) transition (Vukićević, Vujović, 2012:55) is marked by an oligarchic type of rule, a semi-authoritarian regime, and a radical relationship with the opposition. Since the introduction of a multi-party system in 1998, parliamentary elections were held four times. Accordingly, the number of electoral units, the type of the electoral system, the number of the members of the parliament, and the election threshold, have also been subject to changes four times.

The electoral system in Montenegro is based on proportional representation with closed lists. Montenegro is treated as a single electoral unit, and the award of mandates follows D'Hondt's method (Pavićević, 2012:150). Stimulation of greater political representation entails making exceptions from equal constituencies with the aim of facilitating the process of awarding mandates to members of the parliament and councillors who represent minority ethno-national communities. Improving the status of political representation of minorities in conditions of inadequate representation and promotion of their interests is prerequisite for the establishment of political equality. One of the arguments against the regulations prescribed by the Law on Election of Councillors

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and Members of Parliament from 1998 refers to the fact that the affirmative action measures applied only to the Albanian minority national community. The said measures were a product of negotiations and attempts by a portion of the ruling party to secure the support of the members of this particular national community, following an internal split that occurred in the party in 1997. Consequently, these measures were criticised by representatives of other minority communities, as well as the international community. Amendments of the Law on Election of Councillors and Members of Parliament from 2011 define measures of affirmative action that apply to all other minority national communities. The amendments of the said Law define the exceptions from the general electoral election threshold for the parties whose name and agenda are directly and explicitly tied to national minorities. The threshold for the allocation of seats in the Parliament of Montenegro is 3 percent of the total number of valid votes for those political parties that participate in the elections. If the parties and electoral lists of minority communities can prove, either with their name or their agenda, to the Electoral Board that they exclusively represent the interests of a particular minority national community, they automatically qualify for the allocation of seats in line with the defined measures of affirmative action in the area of electoral legislation. In that case, the said political parties and electoral lists of national minority communities have a special threshold, which amounts to 0.7 percent of the total number of valid votes. Special measures of affirmative action are defined for the Croatian minority community. The Croatian Civil Initiative has one secured seat in the parliament if it crosses the threshold of 0.35 percent of the total number of valid votes. The special measures of affirmative action that apply to the Croatian minority group are supported by the fact that the Croatian national community is one of the smallest minority groups in the country, and by the need to involve the community in the political decision making processes at the state level.

Affirmative Action and the Problem of Political Representation of the Romani Ethnic Community

Bearing in mind the small percentage of the Romani population in the total population in Montenegro, alongside their notably unfavourable position in economic, social and political terms, the question of why there are no measures of affirmative action defined for the Romani ethnic community logically emerges. The Romani ethnic community is not mentioned in the Constitution of Montenegro, nor is the Romani language one of the officially used languages. The 2007 Constitution relied upon the data gathered during the 2003 population census, which registered a total of 0.42 percent of Romani population in the total population of the country.¹² However, the 2011 census registered 1.01 percent, or 1.34 percent if we take into account the percentage of the Egyptian ethnic community – 0.33 percent – which is a significant increase.

The currently existing provisions in the area of electoral legislation that aim at securing political representation and participation of minority ethno-national communities are deficient, particularly in reference to the Romani ethnic community, i.e. in terms of the consequences that such provisions cause to the aforementioned community. It is safe to say that it is precisely the Romani minority community that faces the greatest challenges in securing and exercising the right to political representation and participation. A lack of measures of affirmative action that would secure political representation and participation of the Romani population further complicates their social position, characterised by marginalisation, extreme poverty, visible discrimination, and a low degree of integration in the socio-economic and legal-political sense. The (non)existence of adequate authentic

representation of the Romani ethnic community in Montenegro is a source of a great deal of frustration, which fuels criticism by the representatives of the community – activists from the NGO sector, and the members of the Romani National Council. They describe the current situation as a “missing link”, asserting that democratic processes in Montenegro cannot be fully established until the link is made. (Uković, 2015:16).

The current provisions, which distinguish between members of national minority ethnic communities in the sense of defining measures of affirmative actions for some communities, and denies such measures for others, renders the meaning of the principle of affirmative aspect questionable, particularly from the aspect of the effect that the application of the principle has or may have on the quality of inter-ethnic relations. The right to authentic representation of minority peoples and other minority national communities at the local self-government level is guaranteed by the Constitution. However, no significant results are visible thus far. This issue is among the most critical weaknesses in the way the multi-cultural model functions, or the way in which political participation of national minority communities functions. The second major issue is related to the lack of implementation of the right to proportional representation.

Proportional Representation of Minority Communities in the Public Administration, Organs of State Administration, and Local Self-government Units

The Constitution of Montenegro, adopted in 2007 guaranteed the right to proportional representation in public services, organs of state authority, and the public administration to members of minority communities. Although the matter of authentic representation in the Parliament of Montenegro was met with conflicting views regarding its meaning, the Constitution was far more specific in its definition of the right to proportional representation. Additionally, the Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms, Article 25, states that minorities have the right to proportional representation in the public services and local self-government bodies, and that the relevant bodies in charge of human resources, in cooperation with the councils for national minorities and other minority communities, are in charge of looking after the implementation of this law.¹³ Article 45 of the Law on Civil Servants and State Employees states that, the head of the state authority shall take into consideration the right to proportional representation of members of minority nations or other minority ethnic communities in making the decision on the selection of candidates.¹⁴

There are no precise data on the national and ethnic structure of employees in the public services, the state administration, and the local self-government bodies in Montenegro. Certain recent reports, such as the Report of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights on work and the situation in the administrative areas for 2015 present data on proportional representation of national minorities in the state bodies, state administration bodies, local self-governing units, the courts, and the state prosecution. Out of the 13,900 employees in the sample, there were (in terms of nationality): 8,650 Montenegrins (74.76 percent), 1,301 Serbs (11.24 percent), 291 Albanians (2.51 percent), 650 Bosniaks (5.62 percent), 285 Muslims (2.46 percent), 2 Romani people (0.02 percent), 88 Croatians (0.76 percent), and 49 people who declared as belonging to “other” national minority communities (0.49 percent). The data presented here clearly indicate that proportional representation of minority peoples and other national minority communities is still not established. Although certain communities do mark an increase in proportional representation of their members, they remain insufficiently represented in the organs of the state administration. An equal approach to the right to employment, and proportional

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representation of all ethno-national communities in state administration bodies, the public administration, and local self-government bodies is prerequisite for democratic processes, and serve as a clear indicator of the degree of democratisation of the society. Any form of exclusion of the members of minority ethnonational communities from the decision making processes at various levels directly challenges the legitimacy of democratic processes.

Concluding Remarks

The implementation of effective political participation and representation of minority peoples and other national minority communities is one of the most significant issues in the context of securing equality, and the rule of law in Montenegro. From the normative perspective on having rights to authentic representation in the Parliament of Montenegro, the current legal provisions in the area of electoral legislation enable the application of measures of affirmative action in a manner that facilitates the process of allocation of seats to national minority communities. These provisions represent visible progress from the starting point – the Law on the Election of Councillors and Members of Parliament from 1998, which secured authentic representation in the state parliament solely to members of the Albanian community, which caused discontent among other national minority communities that were excluded from any such measures. Additionally, such a provision, selective as it was, called into question the objectives of the principle of affirmative action, and those objectives must always be prioritised in any given circumstance. Primarily, we are referring to the objective of solidifying international trust, and preventing inter-ethnic and international antagonism, and inhibiting the increase of inter-ethnic distance. Therefore, it is necessary to commit to a removal of all normative hindrances on the path to fully exercising the right to authentic representation in line with the principle of affirmative action for all ethnonational minority communities, whose share in the total population of the country does not exceed 15 percent, as evidenced by the results of the most recent population census.

In the particular case of the Romani population, the same measures of affirmative action that the electoral legislation defines for the Croatian national minority ought to apply to the ethnic community that is in the most vulnerable position, in the socio-economic and political sense. The position of the Romani ethnic community in Montenegro is marked by extreme poverty, a high degree of unemployment, poor knowledge of the official language, bad living conditions, extremely bad education, lack of health and social insurance, and a complete lack of political participation. Montenegro is the only country from the former Yugoslav block that does not have a single national party representing the Romani ethnic community. Changes in the electoral legislation would enable political representation of this community in the electoral body (which is the first activity proposed by the Strategy on Improving the Position of Romani People and Egyptians 2012-2016 in the area of participation in the political and public life), intensify political activism, and increase the level of overall engagement within the community.

Integration of the members of this community into the Montenegrin society cannot be complete until the rights to authentic representation at the state, and the self-government level in those self-government units where minorities comprise a significant part of the population are being exercised. Since the process of exercising this right is still not normatively structured at the level of local self-government units, this task is due to be completed in the foreseeable future. With regards to the constitutionally given right to

proportional representation in public services, the organs of the state, the judicial system and in self-government units, certain progress has already been made. However, given the visible disproportion between the percentage of minority communities in the total population of Montenegro, and the proportional representation of national minority communities, it is possible to infer that real progress is yet to be made.

¹ The term “Western Balkans” is in itself quite controversial, as it has been used to convey different meanings, which was met with different reactions. It is frequently used by EU subjects when referring to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia, and Croatia (since 1 July 2013, when the country joined the EU). Therefore, it is a regional denomination used to refer to countries that are still not EU members (with the exception of Croatia), situated in the Balkan peninsula. See: <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/regions/western-balkans/> (28.11.2016). In line with the current global tendencies to establish cooperation networks at the regional level, this term is frequently used to indicate the need for intensive cooperation between the aforementioned countries linked by the strategic, political, and socio-economic objective of joining the EU.

² The term “Yugoslav” was first used as a national identity designation during the 1961 population census. The population of the People Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was 18,549,291. A total of 317,124 people declared as Yugoslav – 1.7 percent of the total population of the country. According to the results of the census, the population of Montenegro was 471,894, with 1,559 people declaring as Yugoslav, i.e. 0.3 percent of the population (Grabeljšek, Damnjanović, Jovanović, Kosić-Kovačević, 1994: 11,12).

³ Apart from the fact that national identity based on religion inhibited the consolidation of supra-state and supra-national Yugoslav identity, Mari-Žanin Čalić provides two additional arguments for such a relationship with religious communities. First and foremost, religion was seen as retrograde, detrimental, and unnecessary, while the members of the clergy were perceived, primarily, as opposed to the communist order (Čalić, 2013: 232).

⁴ The first multi-party elections in Montenegro, held in 1990, resulted in an absolute victory by the League of Communists. This scenario was unique in former communist countries. The League of Communists later on transformed in the currently ruling Democratic Party of Socialists.

⁵ The 1992 Constitution guaranteed certain special rights to members of national and ethnic minority groups: protection of national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity; the right to use their mother tongue, the right to education and the right to access information in their mother tongue; the right to use and present national symbols; the right to use their mother tongue in procedures conducted by the organs of the state; the right to proportional representation in public services, the organs of state authority and local self-governing units; the right to establish and cultivate communication with non-Montenegrin people with whom they share national and ethnic origin, cultural and historical heritage, as well as religious persuasions; the right to be active in regional and international NGOs; and the right to seek help from international institutions for the sake of protecting their freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Montenegro, adopted in 1992, available at: http://www.uniset.ca/microstates/montenegro_1055251939.pdf (15.12.2017.).

⁶ There are numerous classifications of countries based on pluralism in the ethno-cultural sense of the word. Normally, a country in which one ethnic community comprises 90 percent of the total population is seen as monolithic; if that community comprises 80-89 percent, it is seen as homogenous; if it comprises 70-79 percent, it is characterized by low homogeneity, and if it comprises 60-69 percent, it is characterized by high heterogeneity. Very high heterogeneity is typical of societies where one ethnic community comprises 50-59 percent of the population (Raduški, 2003: 427).

⁷ 2011 Population census in Montenegro, Statistical Office of Montenegro, Release no. 83, Podgorica, 12/07/2011, pages 6-9. Retrieved from: <http://www.monstat.org/userfiles/file/popis2011/saopstenje/saopstenje%281%29.pdf> (20.05.2016).

⁸ Commenting on the model of the European standard of minority participation, Ivana Jelić states that effective participation in this context takes more than one form: „Participation in the legislative process (through political parties, the benefits that the electoral system provides at the national, regional and local level; the places reserved for minorities in the legislative bodies; the administrative arrangements; and veto rights), participation in specialised government bodies, participation in consultancy mechanisms, availability of financial means for activities aimed at minority groups, media as a means of strengthening effective participation in public affairs, and participation of the members of national minorities in the

application and monitoring of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities” (Jelić, 2012:57).

⁹ The Constitution provides a list of the most significant minority rights, primarily referring to the protection of the identity of national communities: “Persons belonging to minority nations and other minority national communities shall be guaranteed the rights and liberties, which they can exercise individually or collectively with others, as follows: 1) the right to exercise, protect, develop and publicly express national, ethnic, cultural and religious particularities; 2) the right to choose, use and publicly post national symbols and to celebrate national holidays; 3) the right to use their own language and alphabet in private, public and official use; 4) the right to education in their own language and alphabet in public institutions and the right to have included in the curricula the history and culture of the persons belonging to minority nations and other minority national communities; 5) the right, in the areas with significant share in the total population, to have the local self-government authorities, state and court authorities carry out the proceedings also in the language of minority nations and other minority national communities; 6) the right to establish educational, cultural and religious associations, with the material support of the state; 18 7) the right to write and use their own name and surname in their own language and alphabet in the official documents; 8) the right, in the areas with significant share in total population, to have traditional local terms, names of streets and settlements, as well as topographic signs written also in the language of minority nations and other minority national communities; 9) the right to authentic representation in the Parliament of the Republic of Montenegro and in the assemblies of the local self-government units in which they represent a significant share in the population, according to the principle of affirmative action; 10) the right to proportionate representation in public services, state authorities and local self-government bodies; 11) the right to information in their own language; 12) the right to establish and maintain contacts with the citizens and associations outside of Montenegro, with whom they have common national and ethnic background, cultural and historic heritage, as well as religious beliefs; 13) the right to establish councils for the protection and improvement of special rights.” (The Constitution of Montenegro, 2007, page 14. Retrieved from: <http://sudovi.me/podaci/vrhs/dokumenta/614.pdf> (10.10.2015))

¹⁰ The Constitution of Montenegro, 2007, page 17. Retrieved from: <http://sudovi.me/podaci/vrhs/dokumenta/614.pdf> (10.10.2014).

¹¹ According to the 2003 population census, there were 267,669 Montenegrins living in Montenegro (43.16 percent), 198,414 Serbs (31.99 percent), 31,163 Albanians (5.03 percent), 48,184 Bosniaks (7.77 percent), 2,601 Muslims (3.97 percent), 2,601 Romanis (0.42 percent) 6,811 Croatians (1.10 percent), and 6,346 people who declared as “others” (1.02 percent). The 2003 Population Census, Statistical Office of Montenegro, Release No. 44, Podgorica, 21/09/2004. Available at: <http://monstat.org/userfiles/file/popis03/saopstenje44.pdf> (26.05.2016).

¹² 2003 Population Census of Montenegro, Statistical Office of Montenegro, Release No. 44, Podgorica, 21/09/2004. Retrieved from: <http://monstat.org/userfiles/file/popis03/saopstenje44.pdf> (24.05.2016)

¹³ Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms, “Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro, No. 31/2006”. Retrieved from: <http://www.sluzbenilist.me/PravniAktDetalji.aspx?tag=%7B9CA4613B-9871-47EF-A24A-DFEDA6E15F38%7D> (26.05.2016).

¹⁴ Law on Civil Servants and State Employees, „ Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro, No. 39/2011“. Retrieved from: <http://www.sluzbenilist.me/PravniAktDetalji.aspx?tag=%7B8B19A19E-1A3D-4008-89F8-30687A6B3AC0%7D> (28.05.2016).

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