

**Milo Dukanović**  
Prime Minister of Montenegro  
**Raško Konjević**  
Minister of Internal Affairs of Montenegro

Brussels, 22 September 2015

Dear Prime Minister Dukanović and Minister Konjević,

ILGA-Europe is disappointed to learn that the LGBTI community's right to freedom of assembly has been repeatedly violated in Montenegro in 2015.

On 18 September, the Pride march in the city of Nikšić was banned for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time this year. According to information obtained from our national member organisation, the Pride originally scheduled for 24 April was banned by the police, without any alternative dates or routes being proposed. The march was deemed 'too risky' by the authorities and was rescheduled for 8 May, following complaints by prospective marchers. This march, in turn, was banned with similar explanations offered by the police. Finally, in September, the police again cited the security risks as a reason for the ban. It stated that "the gathering of group of members of the NGO LGBT Forum Progress Podgorica represents [an] increased security risk and the threat of violence and other forms of disturbance of public peace and order in a larger scale".

We would like to remind the authorities that protection of people's fundamental freedoms, such as the right to assemble peacefully, are not one-off privileges, granted to LGBTI advocates and allies as a 'favour'. This protection should be commonplace.

Montenegro currently occupies [19th place on ILGA-Europe's Rainbow Europe Index](#) and will move down the ranking if events, such as pride walks and public protest initiatives, continue to be banned. In a year which saw Montenegro host the 2015 European IDAHOT Forum, it is particularly important for the government to demonstrate its commitment to promoting the human rights of LGBTI people.

We urge you to use your leadership to ensure that all public gatherings of LGBTI people take place as planned, in a respectful, safe manner and without obstacles. We ask you to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of the Pride march, scheduled for 18 October in Podgorica. We trust that, with your cooperation, Montenegro Pride 2015 will be marked as a successful celebration of diversity and that Nikšić Pride will take place in the near future.

Yours sincerely,



Evelyne Paradis - Executive Director

