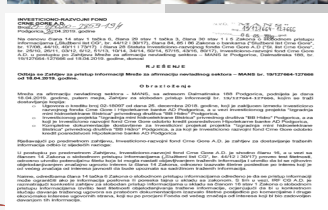


03



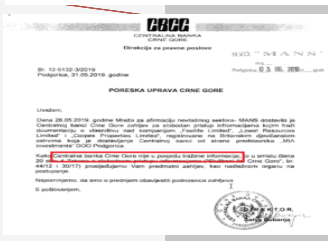
MANS disclosed that the management of the "Port of Bar" refused to submit documentation and warehouse lease agreements in a free duty free zone with the explanation that it was a document that was declared "trade secret". For years, the European Commission has been warning in its reports that an organized smuggling of cigarettes is being realized through the free zone of the Port of Bar. MANS believes that such practice is absolutely unacceptable and that state institutions must immediately stop the abuse of the existing Law on Free Access to Information in order to protect someone's private interests to the detriment of the public interest.

06



State-owned Investment and Development Fund (IDF) has refused to provide the Network for Affirmation of NGO Sector (MANS) with a contract worth € 1million given to the company "BB hidro", whose co-owner is **Blažo Đukanović**, son of the president of the state and DPS **Milo Đukanović**. In rejecting the request, IDF referred to an Article of the Law on Free Access to Information and a provision that prescribes trade secret. IDF approved the loan to BB hidro through *Hipotekarna banka*.

07



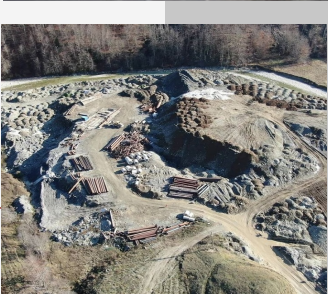
After MANS questioned the fact that the President of the Municipality of Budva signed a donation protocol for a kindergarten with a company that does not have a transparent ownership structure, company Mia Investment explained that the Central Bank of Montenegro (CBCG) knows who owns the shores from the British Virgin Islands. However, CBCG does not have any information on who is behind the aforementioned companies from the British Virgin Islands, which was confirmed to the MANS Investigative Centre from that institution.

09



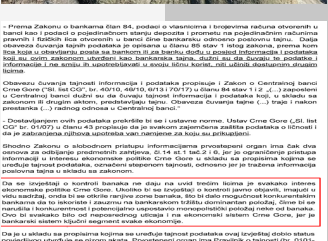
For a long time, MANS has been warning that state authorities are increasingly hiding behind the "trade secret" institute in order to conceal possible evidence of corruption from the public, which is a practice that must stop. Thus, in response to MANS' request, the Electric Transmission System of Montenegro (CGES), which is majority-owned by the state, declared its budget for 2017 and 2018 trade secret because, as they stated, they contain confidential information that could negatively affect the entire electricity system, as well as investing in the stock market.

10



In cooperation with environmental organizations, MANS has been urging the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism for months to stop ignoring the problem that exists on the Tara River, which is a direct consequence of the construction of the priority section of the Bar-Boljare highway. More than half a year has passed since the first footage of devastation and filing of criminal charges, and so far, nobody has responded to what has been recognized from all relevant international addresses as an obvious violation of not only domestic regulations, but also internationally accepted obligations to protect the Tara River. UNESCO report also confirmed the allegations of a part of the professional public and NGOs, while the line Minister did not find it appropriate to respond and publicly present his view of the discouraging assessments from the report.

15



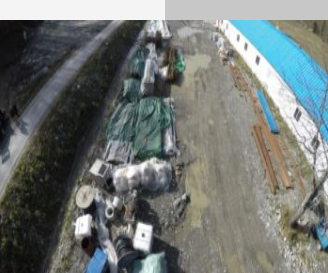
Through the Law on Free Access to Information (FAI), MANS requested from CBCG reports on the controls of *Prva Banka* in 2008 and 2009, which is in majority ownership of Aco Đukanović, brother of the President of the State, Milo Đukanović. However, these data were declared trade secret ten years after the control was carried out, arguing that this could affect the country's economic system as well as the growth of cybercrime. It is a bank control that revealed numerous abuses, including the laundering of money acquired by narcotics smuggling.

18



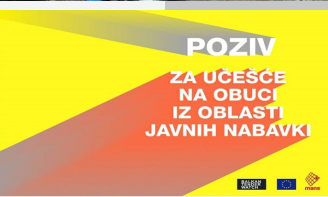
In the eve of the announced amendments to the Law on Free Access to Information, MANS organized a round table "PUBLIC INFORMATION MUST NOT BE SECRET", with the support of the EU Delegation to Montenegro and Access Info Europe. Two thematic panels discussed the challenges in the implementation of the said Law as well as recommendations for its amendments. Apart from domestic experts, experiences from these areas were shared by Spanish experts as well. Amendments to this Law provide that access to data may be restricted in order to protect trade secrets. You can find MANS' publication on this topic at the following link: <http://www.mans.co.me/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/TradeSecretsOverPublicInterest.pdf>

20



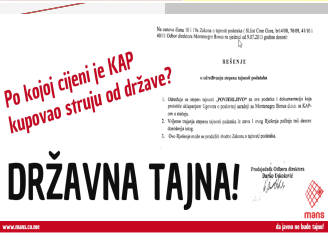
A group of NGOs informed the Directorate General of the European Commission of the continuing worrying attitude by the Government of Montenegro towards the impact of the construction of the highway on the Tara River. Latest footage made by the MANS Investigative Centre show that DRBC has opened another illegal landfill for disposal of the material formed by the drilling of tunnels, and that there are no protection measures on which the EU continuously insists, while the Government of Montenegro continuously tolerates the apparent devastation of the Tara River basin and ignores concrete recommendations of the European institutions. On this occasion, MANS filed another criminal complaint against the line ministers of Sustainable Development and Tourism and Transport and Maritime Affairs.

26



The Network for Affirmation of NGO Sector (MANS), as part of the regional project Balkan Tender Watch, announced a call to civil society organizations to participate in training in the area of public procurement. Upon trainings, all trained organizations will be invited to submit their project proposals and participate in sub-granting. Organizations that receive funds will realize their projects for a maximum period of 12 months.

27



For five years, the state-owned company Montenegro Bonus has been hiding the cost of power supply of the Aluminium Plant Podgorica (KAP) because this information was declared secret. MANS' efforts to obtain information about the total debt for the company Uniprom KAP, owned by the businessman Veselin Pejović, to Montenegro Bonus, last just as long. Moreover, the Government is preparing the Law on Classified Information that will legalize the practice of state institutions to arbitrarily declare secret the information they want to hide from the public, and this is just an example of the way in which this law is abused.

28



Together with MANS, its Montenegrin chapter, Transparency International reiterates its opposition to unconstitutional amendments to the Law on Classified Information in Montenegro, which would undermine the country's freedom of information laws and anti-corruption efforts. The draft law was already withdrawn once by the government in March this year, after a coalition of 25 Montenegrin NGOs spoke out against it. The government is now proposing a 'public debate' over the draft law, without changing the previously withdrawn draft.

28



MANS requested from the Ministry of Finance data on all payments in 2017 for paying the instalments and interests of Montenegro Airlines, but the request was rejected because, as explained, "the requested information is marked with degree of secrecy internal". This case of hiding data from the public is important bearing in mind that the Government of Montenegro continuously allocates significant funds for the survival of the national airlines and continues to provide aid to it, in spite of the European Commission's warnings that it violates the Stabilization and Association Agreement in the part that refers to state aid.

28



Ten organizations, including the Network for Affirmation of NGO Sector, urged the Ministry of Finance to organize a public debate on the Draft Law on Public Procurement in order to enable the participation of all stakeholders in development of a document that will regulate multi-million dollar spending from the state budget. Instead of the call for a public hearing, the Ministry announced a Call for public consultations on the text of the Draft Law on Public Procurement, which is innovated in relation to the version on which the public debate was held last year.

30



Amendments to the Law on Classified Information that encountered harsh criticism from the domestic and international public for the apparent intention to limit free access to information was returned to the public debate in an unchanged form. MANS reminded the Ministry of Defence and the Government that the right to access information was recognized as a fundamental human right, and urged them to withdraw the proposed amendments to the Law that limit this right unfoundedly and unconstitutionally.

## June in photos

