

## Appearance on Naglas show - RTCG

March 21, 2022

The responsibility for the recent fatalities at construction sites in Montenegro, the level of protection for employees in Montenegro, the failure to comply with legally prescribed obligations, and why the construction sector is one of the riskiest in the country were the topics of discussion on the Naglas show, hosted by Marija Marković on Mondays at 8 PM. The guests of the show were:

- Zlatko Popović - Occupational Safety Inspector, UIP
- Dragan Žarković - President of the Independent Association of Judicial Experts of Montenegro
- Vukas Radonjić - State Prosecutor at the Basic State Prosecutor's Office in Podgorica
- Đina Janković - Project Coordinator at the Safety at Work Association of Montenegro
- Nenad Marković - President of the Union of Construction and Building Materials Industry of Montenegro

With three workers killed and two severely injured in less than three months in 2022, highlighting the seriousness of the situation in the field of occupational safety and health, the participants openly discussed the most common shortcomings observed at construction sites. These include employers failing to provide collective safety measures and employees not using personal protective equipment, safety harnesses, and everything necessary for safe work.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BekYGix0vjA>



It was once again emphasized that the problem does not lie in "paperwork," that is, the legal regulations, which are fully aligned with EU laws, but in their implementation. The question arises as to the purpose of blindly transposing directives and copying legal solutions applicable in developed Western European countries when it is evident that this is not the case in Montenegro.

The participants also reminded the Montenegrin public about the significant problem of underreporting injuries, most often in cases where workers were not employed under employment contracts but worked informally. There are also cases where agreements are reached between employers and employees, resulting in injuries not being recorded. This led to the conclusion that the issue could only be addressed through the development of a unified recording system.

Attention was drawn to the effectiveness of inspectors, which is not at a satisfactory level due to the very small number of people carrying out these tasks. One inspector for every 22,000 employees falls below EU standards.

The fact that stakeholders and the wider public do not receive feedback from the prosecution regarding processed cases or information on court outcomes complicates a realistic assessment of the situation and the state of occupational safety and health in Montenegro. Vukas Radonjić, the state prosecutor and spokesperson at the Basic State Prosecutor's Office (ODT) in Podgorica, promised that all interested parties, in accordance with legal procedures, would be able to obtain the requested information and be informed about the results of processed cases.

Attention was also drawn to the issue of mandatory medical examination costs, as well as examples of abuses in this aspect of providing healthcare for employees.