



Hrvatski sveučilišni sindikat

Borongajska cesta 83i
10000 Zagreb, Croatia

Zagreb, 9th March 2021

Nr. VV-13/2021

Press release

The Croatian University Union demands an urgent resignation or dismissal of Dean Pavo Barišić

The Croatian University Union addresses University bodies and the academic and general public on behalf of 70 of its members who are employees of the University of Zagreb, the Faculty of Croatian Studies. The Union is obliged to protect their safe and quality working conditions as well as to warn of irregularities in the implementation of labour rights. Unfortunately, the manner of managing the Faculty, inaugurated by Dean Prof Pavo Barišić, has been **disturbing the quality of the work environment and causing frustrations and legal uncertainty** among Faculty staff **for a longer period of time** up to a point when, due to his recklessness sabotaging of the process of electing the dean, it led to a complete blockade in the functioning of the Faculty bodies and services. This is in stark contrast to the task he has been temporarily appointed to, namely, to establish the proper functioning of the new Faculty and to ensure that prescribed election procedures are conducted.

The Faculty Council of the Faculty of Croatian Studies on 8th February 2021, without a single vote „against“, passed a Decree on Initiating and Implementing the Dean's Election Procedure. Ever since the initiation of the dean's election procedure at the Faculty of Croatian Studies, we are faced with a series of destructive actions undertaken by the Interim Dean Pavo Barišić who obstructs and delays the implementation of this procedure. Because of his arbitrary conduct, the vast majority of four-fifths of the members of the Faculty Council at the session of 24th February 2021 requested him to resign immediately from the office of the Dean. Not only did Dean Barišić turn a deaf ear to the said distrust vote, but his actions continued to further drastically impair the quality of the work environment and labour rights of the Faculty staff which ultimately negatively reflects on the teaching process quality.

Arbitrarily and contrary to Article 33 paragraph 2 of the Statute of the Faculty, Dean Barišić passed on 25th February 2021 the decision on the suspension of the Decree on Initiating and Implementing the Dean's Election Procedure. He did so without prior monition to the Faculty Council, without opinion of the Dean's College, and without consultations with the professional services of the Faculty and the University.

Arbitrarily, without the opinion of the Dean's College and without consulting with representatives of the workers, Dean Barišić passed a Decision on Appointing a Person for the Protection the Employees Dignity, which was published on 4th March 2021.

Arbitrarily and contrary to Art. 31 paragraph 4 of the Statute of the Faculty, Dean Barišić has avoided convening and holding sessions of the Dean's College since 19th February 2021. At the same, without any communication and explanation, three members of the Dean's College are excluded from the composition of that body, contrary to the Decree of the Senate of the University of Zagreb on establishing of the Faculty of Croatian Studies, contrary to the

Decision of the Rector appointing the coordinator of the status change and Art. 66 paragraph 1 of the Statute of the Faculty.

The attitude of Dean Barišić towards the administrative and teaching staff is of a particular concern. The Union has received several complaints from the Faculty staff about verbal outbursts from the Dean. The abuse of employees culminated on 4th March 2021, when Dean Barišić handed a written warning before termination of employment to the Head of the IT-Service of the Faculty for publishing, per decrees of the Faculty Council and the Board for the Procedure of the Election of the Dean, the Report of the Board on the received candidacies for the Dean on the website of the Faculty, as well as the Work Programme and Curriculum Vitae of the accepted nominee.

The Dean's arbitrariness reached its peak on Sunday, 7th March 2021 at 11:37 PM, when Dean Barišić sent a notice cancelling the session of the Faculty Council, which, by the decision of the same Council, was scheduled for Monday, 8th March 2021. At the said session, the nominees for the dean were to present their work programmes orally, and the Council should have voted on the approval of their programmes. Dean Barišić attempted to justify the cancellation of the session by claiming that his previous suspension of the Decree of the Faculty Council on Initiating and Implementing the Dean's Election Procedure was "binding", that by his decision he *annulled the appointment of the Board for the implementation of the procedure for the election of the dean*, and that the decrees of the Faculty bodies have *no legal significance*. Such a harsh intervention from the position of the **usurped power** against the original powers of Faculty Council is unprecedented in the academic history. Dean Barišić finds a stronghold for the implementation of **violence against the bodies of the institution** he was appointed (not elected) to temporarily lead in political factors outside the University and he involves himself in current operations at the University of Zagreb led by those political factors outside the University. That is evident from the fact that he addressed his nightly notice to the Minister of Science and the University Council, appointed by the Government. At the same time, with a great deal of impudence, he depreciated the authority of the University bodies, because in the said notice, in which he states that he *adhered to the interpretation of the Ministry*, he does not mention the unanimous instruction from the joint session of the Rector's College and the College of the Faculty of Croatian Studies held on 5th March 2021, that as the Dean of the Faculty of Croatian Studies he is obliged to obey decisions of the Faculty Council and to convene a session of the Faculty Council for Monday, 8th March 2021 as well as continue the process of electing the Dean.

With this incomprehensible **act of autocracy**, Dean Barišić brought the functioning of the Faculty bodies (the Faculty Council, the Dean's College, and the Board for the implementation of the dean's election procedure) into a complete blockade. He also brought all employees of the Faculty in a state of legal uncertainty and dependence on the **arbitrariness and whims of a head of an institution who is out of democratic control**. Finally, he leads the teaching process into a state of improvisation in the delicate pandemic conditions.

Due to all the above, the Croatian University Union demands the **immediate resignation or dismissal** of professor Pavo Barišić from the position of the Dean of the Faculty of Croatian Studies and the appointment of a responsible person who will duly carry out the procedure of electing the Dean and restore the Faculty to a normal state.

Chairman of the Croatian University Union
Assist. prof. Vlatka Vukelić, PhD