

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

SECOND SECTION

DECISION

Application no. 60957/12
Budimka and Ivana ŠUKOVIĆ
against Montenegro

The European Court of Human Rights (Second Section), sitting on 22 November 2016 as a Committee composed of:

Valeriu Griţco, *President,*
Nebojša Vučinić,
Stéphanie Mourou-Vikström, *judges,*
and Hasan Bakırcı, *Deputy Section Registrar,*

Having regard to the above application lodged on 12 September 2012,

Having regard to the declaration submitted by the respondent Government on 24 June 2016 requesting the Court to strike the application out of the list of cases and the applicants' reply to that declaration,

Having deliberated, decides as follows:

FACTS AND PROCEDURE

The applicants, Ms Budimka Šuković and Ms Ivana Šuković, are Montenegrin nationals, who were born in 1954 and 1979 respectively and live in Podgorica. They were represented before the Court by Mr R. Šuković and Mr B. Minić, lawyers practising in Bijelo Polje and Kolašin.

The Montenegrin Government ("the Government") were represented by their Agent, Ms Valentina Pavličić.

The applicants complained under Article 6 of the Convention about the length of their civil proceedings.

The application had been communicated to the Government on 3 December 2014.

THE LAW

The applicants complained about the length of civil proceedings. They relied on Article 6 of the Convention.

After the failure of attempts to reach a friendly settlement, by a letter of 24 June 2016 the Government informed the Court that they proposed to make a unilateral declaration with a view to resolving the issue raised by the application. They further requested the Court to strike out the application in accordance with Article 37 of the Convention.

The declaration provided as follows:

> "I declare that the Government of Montenegro herby wishes to express acknowledgement of the unreasonable duration of the domestic proceedings in which the applicants were involved and is ready to accept that there had been a violation of the [applicants'] right[s] under Article 6 paragraph 1 and Article 13 of the Convention.
>
> Consequently, the Government is ready to pay to Ms Budimka Šuković and Ms Ivana Šuković, the amount of EUR 3,600 (three thousand six hundred euros) jointly, which it considers to be reasonable in the light of the Court's case-law, less any amounts which may have already been paid in that regard at the domestic level in order to cover any non-pecuniary damage as well as [the] amount of EUR 500 (five hundred euros) jointly to cover any and all costs and expenses, plus any tax that may be chargeable to the applicant[s] in respect of the application registered under no. 60957/12 before the European Court of Human Rights.
>
> This sum shall be payable within three months from the date of the delivery of the decision of the Court to strike the case out of its list of cases, as referred to in Article 37 § 1 (c) of the Convention.
>
> These payments will constitute the final resolution of the actions which have led to the bringing of the present application.
>
> The Government wishes to express regret for the occurrence of the actions which have led to the bringing of the present application."

The applicants did not comment on the terms of the unilateral declaration.

The Court reiterates that Article 37 of the Convention provides that it may at any stage of the proceedings decide to strike an application out of its list of cases where the circumstances lead to one of the conclusions specified, under (a), (b) or (c) of paragraph 1 of that Article. Article 37 § 1 (c) enables the Court in particular to strike a case out of its list if:

> "for any other reason established by the Court, it is no longer justified to continue the examination of the application".

It also reiterates that in certain circumstances, it may strike out an application under Article 37 § 1 (c) on the basis of a unilateral declaration

by a respondent Government even if the applicants wish the examination of the case to be continued.

To this end, the Court has examined the declaration in the light of the principles emerging from its case-law, in particular the *Tahsin Acar* judgment (*Tahsin Acar v. Turkey* (preliminary objections) [GC], no. 26307/95, §§ 75-77, ECHR 2003-VI; *WAZA Sp. z o.o. v. Poland* (dec.), no. 11602/02, 26 June 2007; and *Sulwińska v. Poland* (dec.), no. 28953/03, 18 September 2007).

The Court has established in a number of cases, including those brought against Montenegro, its practice concerning complaints about the violation of one's right to a hearing within a reasonable time (see, for example, *Frydlender v. France* [GC], no. 30979/96, § 43, ECHR 2000-VII; *Cocchiarella v. Italy* [GC], no. 64886/01, §§ 69-98, ECHR 2006- V; *Majewski v. Poland*, no. 52690/99, 11 October 2005; and *Wende and Kukówka v. Poland*, no. 56026/00, 10 May 2007).

Having regard to the nature of the admissions contained in the Government's declaration, as well as the amount of compensation proposed – which is consistent with the amounts awarded in similar cases – the Court considers that it is no longer justified to continue the examination of the application (Article 37 § 1 (c)).

Moreover, in light of the above considerations, and in particular given the clear and extensive case-law on the topic, the Court is satisfied that respect for human rights as defined in the Convention and the Protocols thereto does not require it to continue the examination of the application (Article 37 § 1 *in fine*).

Finally, the Court emphasises that, should the Government fail to comply with the terms of their unilateral declaration, the application could be restored to the list in accordance with Article 37 § 2 of the Convention (*Josipović v. Serbia* (dec.), no. 18369/07, 4 March 2008).

In view of the above, it is appropriate to strike the case out of the list.

For these reasons, the Court, unanimously,

Takes note of the terms of the respondent Government's declaration under Article 6 of the Convention and of the modalities for ensuring compliance with the undertakings referred to therein;

Decides to strike the application out of its list of cases in accordance with Article 37 § 1 (c) of the Convention.

Done in English and notified in writing on 15 December 2016.

Hasan Bakırcı
Deputy Registrar

Valeriu Griţco
President