

Regarding the text published in today's "Blic" daily, titled "President's mother-in-law holds a diplomatic passport", under the front page headline: "Scandalous decision of Serbian Foreign Minister Ivan Mrkic", the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia stated that the information was unverified and untrue.

The letter addressed to "Blic" Editor-in-Chief Mr. Simonovic reads:

"Concerning the article published in 'Blic' daily (28 March 2014, Ref. No. 6151, titled "President's mother-in-law holds a diplomatic passport", under the headline "Minister of Foreign Affairs issued passports galore", by Ivana Mastilovic-Jasnic, highlighted as the top story on the front page "A diplomatic passport for Nikolic's mother-in-law" under the heading "Scandalous decision of Serbian Foreign Minister Ivan Mrkic", the Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicates that the information contained in that text is unverified and untrue.

The above article says that Foreign Minister Ivan Mrkic provided a diplomatic passport to Milka Ninkovic, mother of Mrs. Dragica Nikolic, the wife of President Nikolic. The said allegations are not true. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not issue a diplomatic passport to Mrs. Ninkovic.

The text further alleges that the holders of diplomatic passports also include a considerable number of businessmen, which is also untrue.

The provisions of the Law on Travel Documents regulating the area of data records and the use of important data from these records require the Ministry of Foreign Affairs not to disclose information from these records to the public, whereas such data may be made available solely to authorized state authorities.

Issuance of diplomatic and official passports, which falls in the competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the use of data contained in the records is carried out in accordance with all the relevant legal regulations and decrees, particularly the Government Decree on Issuance of Diplomatic and Official Passports whose provisions the Ministry of Foreign Affairs strictly abides by.

It is necessary to underline in particular the importance of keeping the public abreast of the facts, because matters in the domain of work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are frequently related to the reputation of the highest state officials and to the prestige of the Republic of Serbia itself. The release of false and unverified information, as has been the case with this article, undermines in public the reputation not only of the highest state officials, but of the state as well. We believe that by publishing such articles, your newspaper is doing harm to everyone, including itself.

We expect that this text will be published in extenso on the front page of your newspaper and that it will be devoted equal attention and space as the tabloid text published on 28 March 2014."