

Emne: Serbian Opposition Association Letter – modtaget den 13/8-2020

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Emne: Serbian Opposition Association Letter

Your Excellency,

On behalf of Serbian Opposition Association, I am forwarding to you our letter regarding the alarming state of affairs in Serbia.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Vuk Jeremic

Belgrade, August 13th, 2020

Dear Sir,

Democratic and human rights conditions in Serbia are at a historic low point, unquestionably unbecoming of an EU candidate country. We no longer have a legitimate parliament, as there is no genuine opposition representation in the current composition of our highest national legislative body.

We have entered into an advanced stage of state capture in virtually all areas of society, notably including rule of law, democratic parliamentary practices, implementation of international recommendations on the conduct of free and fair elections (including those enumerated by OSCE/ODIHR), the fight against corruption and organized crime, and the establishment of an enabling environment in which freedom of expression (including media freedom) can be exercised without hindrance.

As you may be aware, our parliamentary and local “elections” were originally scheduled for April 26th, 2020. These were postponed due to the declaration of a state of emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. During this state of emergency, the political situation continued to deteriorate. Further offences were committed against Serbia’s Constitution and the European values that undergird it, which reconfirmed the veracity of our decision to boycott these “elections.” We assure you that this decision was not taken lightly.

Notwithstanding the manifest absence of a sustainable environment for the conduct of free and fair elections, which included repeated denials of severe epidemiological dangers to public health caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vučić Government made a conscious choice to undertake these “elections,” which took place on June 21st, 2020. At the start of the campaign, victory over the virus was pompously declared, which led to sporting events and concerts being held with tens of thousands of participants without the enforcement of social distancing measures. These fatally irresponsible actions shocked the conscience of Europe, as did the falsification of official data regarding the resultant increase in the number of new COVID-19 cases and resulting deaths, as documented by independent investigative media reports.

Serbia’s democratic opposition has made it clear that we consider both the process and the result of these “elections” to be illegitimate.

The egregious irregularities perpetrated by the Vučić Government explain why no official post-“election” statement by any EU body or government of an EU member-state indicated that the events of June 21st, 2020, could be certified to have been “free and fair.” Irregularities included: lop-sided and biased mainstream media coverage and the lack of virtually any opposition access to the same; abuse of the official positions of state officeholders for campaigning purposes; misuse of state resources; a pattern of unresponsiveness by electoral regulatory agencies; exertion of pressure on voters by organized gangs of thugs and party officials; vote buying; allowing individuals to vote without proper identification and UV light verification; ballot substitution; and ballot-box stuffing. As a consequence, the official results indicate at present that together with incumbent coalition partners, Aleksandar Vučić will directly control around 230 of the 250 seats in the National Assembly. At the local level, the makeup of virtually all municipal assemblies is similar, or worse. In Europe, on both these scores, Serbia is surpassed in notoriety only by Belarus.

Serbia is today ruled solely by Aleksandar Vučić, whose control is absolute. The fact that he has indicated the new “government” may take months to be established, as if somehow difficult coalition talks needed to be undertaken, is simply the latest farcical instance of his brand of pretend-democracy.

Without exception, Serbia’s democratic opposition today operates outside of parliament. We are acutely aware of the difficulties inherent in such circumstances, yet we remain steadfast in our struggle to overcome Vučić’s burgeoning dictatorship.

To that end, we have chosen to come together under a loose umbrella organization called the Serbian Opposition Association. Typical ideological differences notwithstanding, we stand united in support of a free and just society in our country, built upon the rule of law and fundamental respect for democracy and human rights, in accordance with contemporary European values, standards, and best practices. We also stand united in our firm conviction that the Vučić regime is incapable and unwilling to achieve these strategic goals. For all intents and purposes, this has effectively stalled any forward movement on Serbia’s European perspective.

We have sincerely welcomed the heightened attention of MEPs to the deepening crisis in

Serbia, and avail ourselves of the opportunity to underscore that we would likewise welcome your engagement. We are thus open to discuss the political situation in Serbia with you and your colleagues via video conference or alternative means of communication. To that end, we would respectfully ask that you circulate this letter to the heads of the parliamentary committees in your country responsible for foreign relations, European affairs, and human rights, as well as to inform all your members of parliament of this letter.

We look forward to working constructively with you on this and other critical issues conducive to enhancing solidarity with the people of Serbia and helping our country return to its European path.

We thank you in advance for your kind consideration.

Yours truly,

Jovan Jovanovic, Civil Platform

Zoran Lutovac, Democratic Party

Aron Conka, Democratic Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians

Slobodan Samardzic, Statehood Movement of Serbia

Vuk Jeremic, People's Party

Slavisa Ristic, People's Movement of Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija - "Fatherland"

Janko Veselinovic, Turnaround Movement

Lidija Martinovic, Free Serbia Movement

Zeljko Veselinovic, United Trade Unions of Serbia "Sloga"

Dragan Djilas, Party of Freedom and Justice

Ana Santrac, Sumadija Region

Djordje Vukadinovic