



Belgrade 30 March 2007

Your Excellency,

Serbia is again on the political agenda of both the EU and the international community and its institutions. This time because of the Kosovo Status.

The international community is in a process of searching for the mechanism that could bring Serbia to constrictive attitude within this process and to open an avenue for her integration in the European processes, including the resumption of the talks on SAA between the EU and Serbia, even before Serbia has fulfilled its obligations towards the ICTY.

However, bringing Serbia closer to the EU and the continuation of the talks on the SAA is not a prime interest or a paramount political goal of all the parties which are considered as a part of the "democratic block". First of all this relates to the DSS of the present Prime Minister Kostunica which will participate in the future government as well, and the remaining parts of the old regime that still decisively influence the internal developments.

If the talks on the SAA are resumed it does not necessarily mean that the full cooperation with the ICTY will indeed be the first priority of the future Government.

- Resuming talks on the SAA before Serbia has extradited war criminals to the ICTY, which had been the reason for breaking them up last May, is likely to destroy the political credibility of the EU and its representatives in Serbia. A less respected EU will be less efficient in requesting from Serbia cooperation with the ICTY as was the case during the first round of negotiations.
- Such a move may also have repercussions in neighbouring countries. It is likely that many in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be offended, especially after the unexpected decision of the ICJ. It might even contribute to a further deterioration of political situation in B&H. Moreover, Croatia and its population may feel again betrayed by the EU and the international community as it for years had been exposed to a much harder international pressure to cooperate with the ICTY, than Serbia has ever been.

It is difficult to imagine how the regional cooperation the EU wished to see can come to being in such circumstances.

- The EU's objectives in other parts of the world where it uses conditionality and in support of the International Criminal Court might be undermined. How credible will the EU and its principled stance be perceived if the EU acquires a reputation

of using conditionality as a political instrument and then shifting political approaches even before the conditions have been fulfilled?

- Once the SAA talks are resumed the EU's future efforts to bring Serbia to the full cooperation with the ICTY might be thwarted by an external factor. Russia's more active position as regards the Kosovo status discussion risks neutralizing Russia's actions are likely to be understood by many in Serbia as a sign of wider support to "Serbia's cause" and will thus encourage those opposing Serbia's full cooperation with the ICTY.

In light of these concerns, we call on the EU to engage in a new form of dialogue with the Serbian society and officials.

- The EU should enlarge the context beyond the technical issues that prevail in the SAA negotiations. Only Serbia that is profoundly changed can insure full cooperation with the ICTY.
- This dialogue should particularly insist on matters that relate to Serbian compliance with the democratic dimension and political criteria of the process of Europeanization. This is the only way to further advance the reform processes that are presently at halt, empower and democratize the institutions.
- Also, the range of those participating in such a dialogue between the EU and Serbia should be enlarged by including civil society, youth, small and medium business, pro-European political parties (including those which recently joined the Parliament) professional associations.

This will enhance the internal pressure for the Europeanization and limit the monopoly of the Government to communicate with the EU and to (mis) interpret its messages and intentions. It will also contribute to the wider embracing of the European values in Serbia and their understanding as the vehicle for fulfilling the interests of each and every individual citizen.

Yours sincerely,

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