

Petition of Non-governmental Organizations, Public Figures and Intellectuals about the events in Vojvodina

The representatives of non-governmental organizations, public figures and intellectuals from Vojvodina at the meeting “Talks about Vojvodina”, held April 18, 2013, at Novi Sad, have harmonized their views on the actual political moment in Vojvodina and agreed to send their statement in the form of petition to domestic and foreign public.

About 100 participants at the talks, the representatives of civil organizations, public figures and intellectuals from all parts of Vojvodina together came to the following conclusions, which are supported by numerous non-governmental organizations and prominent individuals from other parts of Serbia too (in the extension there are all signatories to the petition):

- The representatives of political parties in the Republic government in cooperation with other nationalist parties and extreme organizations including those officially banned continue with their policy of exerting pressure on Vojvodina and its people, which is in disagreement with the democratic principles and procedure in the legitimate struggle for power;
- The content of the draft Declaration on protection of constitutional and legal rights of the AP Vojvodina could not be the reason for organization of the rally “Stop disintegrating Serbia” and the media harangue against the representatives of legitimately selected provincial government for their alleged secessionism. Therefore, we believe that the intention of organizers was something else: the struggle for power and the struggle against the autonomous Vojvodina and its specific characteristics and also to divert attention of the public from the grave economic situation and the current negotiations about Kosovo.
- However, the truth is that rights of AP Vojvodina are being abolished for years and that the provincial government in the previous period lacked an active approach to secure rights and interests of AP Vojvodina. We nevertheless think that the provincial government should not succumb to the political and media pressures and that it should stay unified and adopt this Declaration regardless of its symbolic character;
- Actual events also show that the current Constitution is generating many problems not only in Vojvodina but also Serbia proper and that it is necessary to urgently initiate the procedure for a new Constitution. The supreme legal act should be the issue of the broad public debate and during its adoption it is necessary to respect democratic procedure and not, like in the case of current Constitution, allow and tolerate behind-the-scene political deals. The new Constitution should secure and clearly define the constitutional-legal position of Vojvodina in agreement with wishes and demands of its citizens and its European

spirit. This position should protect specific society of Vojvodina and enable its free development and political subjectivity;

- The rally “Stop disintegrating Serbia” was a total fiasco, which confirms the political maturity of citizens of Vojvodina and Novi Sad. They rejected the arguments of organizers and refused to participate in re-enacting the so-called ‘yogurt revolution’, which was an introduction into bloody criminal wars on the territory of former Yugoslavia; at the same time, the organizers of the rally actually granted legitimacy to the extreme organizations among which are also those officially banned, thus encouraging their anti-constitutional activities;
- The Republic government and political parties with similar organizations should immediately stop generating crisis in Vojvodina. Otherwise, they will be fully responsible for destabilization of political situation and security in the AP Vojvodina and for its consequences. Resolving political disagreement should be urgently returned to the institutions of state;
- We appeal to the representatives of the European Union, European Council, international organizations and the Serbian public to take a constructive attitude toward the current events in Vojvodina in order to prevent possible deep crisis that may result in unpredicted consequences;
- We ask from the relevant state organs to urgently uncover and reveal to the public the names of those who created poster calling for the death of president of the Vojvodina government, Bojan Pajtic and “his minions”;
- We protest against unprofessional reporting of the majority of media from the rally “Stop disintegrating Serbia” and its accompanying events. The majority of media was in function of nationalist propaganda, production of crisis and creating enemies through lies and fabrications. This confirms that the media in Serbia are controlled by the government with its coalition partners in realization of their common interests. The media and journalists should be aware of their own responsibility when reporting and especially they should keep in mind the horrible consequences which unprofessional and warmongering journalism had produced in the nineties. However, the media freedom in Serbia is being violated for many years and all previous governments are responsible for the current situation;
- We protest against the latest attacks on the media freedom in Vojvodina organized by the representatives of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), with special accent on situation in the daily ‘Dnevnik’ and the weekly ‘Pancevac.’

Novi Sad, April 23, 2013

The meeting “Talks about Vojvodina” was held on Tuesday, April 18, at 18.00 hrs. in the Media Center Vojvodina in Novi Sad. The meeting gathered about 100

representatives of non-governmental sector, public figures and intellectuals. It was organized by the non-governmental coalition “Civil Vojvodina”.

Following non-governmental organizations and prominent individuals sent their support to the petition:

*Centre for Development of Civil Society (CDCS), Zrenjanin
Independent Journalists’ Association of Vojvodina, Novi Sad*

Center for Regionalism, Novi Sad

Green Network of Vojvodina

Charity Association "Panonija", Novi Sad

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Beograd-Novi Sad

Open Licej, Sombor

Political Association of Vojvodina

Civic Action Pančevo

Policy Center, Beograd

Lawyers’ Committee for Human Rights YUCOM, Belgrade

Autonomous Women Center, Belgrade

Education Association, Novi Sad

Vojvodina Club, Novi Sad

Centre for Human Rights, Niš

Citizens Association “Napon”, Novi Sad

Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Belgrade

Women in Black, Belgrade

Association for Tolerance, Bačka Palanka

Sandzak Committee for Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms, Novi Pazar

Women’s Studies and Research, Novi Sad

Education Center, Leskovac

Labris - organization for lesbian human rights, Belgrade

Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, Belgrade

Serbian anti-fascist Alliance

Argus - Civil Association of Hungarians in Vojvodina for minority rights

ASTRA Team, Belgrade

Center for Sustainable Communities, Novi Sad

Cultural Center DamaD, Novi Pazar

Center of Modern Skills, Belgrade

Civic initiatives, Belgrade

Citizens Association “Esperanca”, Novi Sad

Vladimir Kekić,

Senka Jankov, professor

Jasmina Lazović, Youth Initiative for Human Rights

Mirko Miković,

Goran Veselinović,

Filip David, book writer

Dragan Popović, lawyer

Olivera Radovanović, art historian
Branislav Lučić, photo-reporter
Milan Antonijević, lawyer
Dragan Radovanović, artist
Sima Matić,
Aranka Matić,
Klara Oros, journalist
Branka Dragović Savić, journalist
Norbert Šinković, journalist
Vasa Timotijević,
Stevan Farkaš,
Lidija Stevanović,
Danica Vučenić, journalist
Semiha Kačar, activist
Ratko Filipović,
Zlatoje Martinov, chief editor of the "Republic"
Tamara Kaliterna, journalist
Mirjana Vladisavljev, journalist
Dr Veselin Lazić, agricultural expert
Svenka Savić, expert on gender equality
Branislav Sovilj,
Lubor Stupavsky
Đorđe Bugarin,
Jaroslava Labat,
Janko Drča,
Darnika Bolta,
Branislav Pomoriški,
Miroslav Keveždi, philosopher - religiologist
Zoran Bubanj
Živan Berisavljević, diplomat
Dragomir Jankov, lawyer
Goran Stanković, Niš
Branislava Opranović, journalist
Petar Petrović, journalist
Gordana Perunović Fijat, journalist
Jasminka Lukić, engineer of work organization
Roža Luko Stošić, journalist
Stanko Šušnjar, lawyer
Žužana Serenčeš, journalist
Vladislav Radaković, professor
Ljiljana Subotić, professor
Jelena Perković, journalist
Dinko Gruhonjić, journalist
Nedim Sejdinović, writer
Maja Leđena, journalist
Draško Bjelica,

Nemanja Stjepanović, journalist
Vladimir Marko, philosopher
Kristian Lukić, artist
Marijana Beader, officer
Pavel Domonji, political analyst
Ivan Krajcer
Ivana Radakov
Teofil Pančić, journalist
Mirko Đorđević, publicist
Bora Vesnić,
Dunja Popov, journalist
Miroslav Ilić, surgeon i publicist
Verica Grbić,
Smiljana Milinkov, journalist
Melanija Kolosnjai-Nenin, activist
Branislava Kostić, journalist
Filip Gantar
Ljiljana Gantar
Rastislav Durman, journalist
Mirna Laković, student
Miloš Đajić, Chairman of the Board of the Center of Modern Skills
Dusko Radosavljević, president of Vojvodina's Political Science Association
Lazar Tomanoski,
Janko Kubinjec, lawyer
Darinka Nikolić, journalist
Aleksandar Tadić, graphic artist
Aca Udicki, hydro geologist
Marija Vukosav,
Miljenko Dereta, civic activist
Sanja Kljajić, student
Daniela Cerović,
Ivan Milenković, philosopher
Laslo Tot, President of the Independent Union of Workers in the culture of Vojvodina
Goran Tomka,
Maja Sedlarević, director of Center for Education
Tomislav Cvetkov, Zrenjanin
Miloš Tešić, academician
Zorica Pedović,
Gordana Vukašinić, Kraljevci
Nada Maksimović,
Biljana Burić,
Balint Ištvan,
Sima Vukov,
Marina Grnja, civil society activist
Srećko Mihailović, sociologist
Vesna Rakić Vodinelić, lawyer

Aleksandar Sekulović, lawyer
Dušica Polovina,
Snežana Francuski,
Jan Klinko, engineer
Nikola Šanta,
Nenad Stevović, political analyst
Aleksandra Lung, artist
Romeo Mihajlović, activist
Csaba Pressburger, journalist
Lea Blaško, student
Slavko Žebić, journalist
Siniša Isakov, journalist
Marija Tešić, Professor of Medicine, retired
Danica Stefanović, activist
Tomislav Žigmanov, philosopher
Zoran Bošković,
Tamara Filipović Stevanović, journalist
Jelena Maksimović,
Duško Medić, ecologist
Radmila Tomić,
Gizela Štanjo-Tot, journalist
Lara Popić, University of Toronto
Vladimir Šerkov,
Marija Stanojčić-Sraka,
Ranko Kucalović,
Jasna Žugič, journalist
Nada Lazić,
Vladislav Radaković, political analyst
Šandor Šomodi
Vesna de Groot-Gerov,
Borislav Krivošija,
Vladan Filipčev, journalist
Dimitrije Boarov, economist
Gordana Francuski,
Miroslav Francuski,
Lazar Lazić,
Dragica Čurčić,
Đurđica Čazić, activist
Dušan Lončar,
Ratimir Svirčević,
Katica Bengin, activist
Kristina Koprivica, journalist
Ivana Kovljen,
Nada Dabić, activist
Dragiša Vasiljević,
Nada Vasiljević,

Ivana Vasiljević,
Željko Pakledinac, pravnik
Rajic Dragutin,
Zvonimir Pelajić,
Slavko Kulačin,
Katarina Vasiljevic, studentkinja
Branislav Unkovic, hemijski inženjer