



САВЕЗ СРБА ИЗ РЕГИОНА **THE ASSOCIATION OF SERBS FROM THE REGION**

THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
David-Maria Sassoli, The President

Subject: Systematic violation of the human rights of expelled Serbs and a small number of Serb returnees in Croatia and part of Bosnia and Herzegovina called the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dear Mr. Sassoli,

I am addressing you on behalf of the citizens' association The Association of Serbs from the region with its headquarters in Belgrade, as its president and as a member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. Since you are at the head of one of the main institutions that creates and represents the general interests and principles of the European Union, I am convinced that I am addressing the right person. It is generally known that the European Union, as well as its member states, are among the greatest advocates of human rights in world politics. Unfortunately, this is not the case in some countries that are members of the European Union or want to become members. Namely, in Croatia and a part of Bosnia and Herzegovina called Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the human rights of about a million expelled Serbs and a small number of Serb returnees have been systematically violated since the end of the war. I believe that you agree with me that respect for human rights is one of the important preconditions for strengthening good neighborly relations and building a better future in the former Yugoslavia and the region.

I appeal to you for the European Parliament to put pressure on the authorities in Zagreb and Sarajevo to finally start respecting the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms and the Agreement on Succession Issues signed by the official representatives of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia in Vienna in 2001. The Agreement on Succession Issues is an interstate agreement that was ratified in the parliaments of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia and entered into force in 2004. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and international law, it has stronger legal force than domestic laws. The succession agreement consists of 7 annexes or appendices. Since the entry into force of the agreement in June 2004, Croatia has systematically obstructed and blocked the implementation of Annex Seven or G entitled "Private Property and Acquired Rights". It states that all citizens and legal entities must be protected and the rights they had on December 31, 1990, must be restored, and all contracts concluded under pressure and threats must be declared null and void.

I would like to acquaint you with the fact that the Association of Serbs from the region in the previous period conducted a survey related to the registration of seized, destroyed, damaged, inadequately restored, inadequately exchanged and inadequately sold property of expelled Serbs and other damaged citizens located in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia. A total of 10,322 refugee families completed the Record Form. According to the report, the average family has three members, which means that this record includes slightly more than 30,000 expelled Serbs and other damaged citizens, which is why this record can be considered a very representative survey. The analysis of the collected material and a comprehensive 87-page report with precise data on the systematic violation

of human rights of expelled Serbs and other damaged citizens was done in 2019 by a professor from the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, Vladimir Vuletic and his associates. We enclose the report with high hopes that you will find time to read it carefully and understand the reason for my address to you.

A total of 10,322 families responded to our invitation to participate in the survey, and this report refers to those individuals. Out of a total of 10,322 families that participated in this survey, the most, 7,763 or three quarters (75.2%), reported material damage in Croatia. One quarter (23.9%), or 2,472 reports, refers to damage in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only 87 applications or less than 1% refer to Slovenia. The report arguably shows the enormous scale of the material damage suffered by the expelled Serbs in the area of today's Croatia and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The report provides data on destroyed, damaged and seized real estate (apartments, houses, cottages, business and auxiliary facilities, fruit and vine plantations, forests, meadows, pastures, arable land, etc.), destroyed and seized movable property. funds, agricultural and other machinery, livestock and other animals, furniture, household appliances, etc.), arrears and unpaid pensions, unpaid dinar and foreign currency savings and securities, unpaid shareholders, unrecognized length of service, etc. Special parts of the report refer to the inadequate reconstruction of demolished houses on the one hand and the sale and exchange of houses and flats under pressure and threats, as well as information on real estate lawsuits. I believe that our report will be useful and at least in part help you better understand the extent of the enormous material and other damage suffered by the expelled Serbs.

The remaining Serbs in Croatia are in a tragic position because they are discriminated in a number of areas (employment in the public sector, education, use of the Serbian language and Cyrillic, renewal, etc.). Serbs in Croatia, displaced Serbs and other damaged citizens are demanding the return of 40,000 stolen tenancy rights, payment of due and unpaid pensions for 57,500 pensioners and their descendants, compensation for damage to more than 10,000 mined Serb houses and shops in Croatian cities; resolving the issue of more than 20,000 inadequately sold and replaced Serb houses under pressure and threats in Croatian cities during the war, repossession of one million stolen cadastral parcels of agricultural land, recognition of part or all of the pre-war length of service, payment of shares and dinar and foreign currency savings, reconstruction of destroyed houses, business and auxiliary facilities in the war-torn area (Krajina area).

One of the many open and unresolved problems of expelled Serbs is the issue of payment of due and unpaid pensions (Annex "E" of the Agreement on Succession Issues). The suspension of pensions in Croatia, which was under the protection of the United Nations (UNPROFOR), followed in September 1991. The renewal of the payment started on 1997, but from the submission of the request onwards. There were 57,500 pensioners in the war-torn area (Krajina area). Now a small number of them are alive. The pension is an acquired right, which is why the descendants of the deceased pensioners justifiably demand the payment of unpaid pensions.

The remaining Serbs in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are also in a tragic situation because they are discriminated against in employment in the public sector, education in Serbian and Cyrillic, distribution of funds in the budgets of municipalities, cities, cantons and the federation, reconstruction of demolished houses and communal infrastructure. the right to a pension. Serbs in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, expelled Serbs and other aggrieved citizens are demanding, among other things, the return of more than 1,000 taken apartments bought by members of the former JNA before the war, the return of more than 20,000 apartments taken away from Serbs during the war or sold under pressure. threats of miserable money to save their lives; reconstruction of destroyed houses, return of seized houses, business facilities, land and solving many other problems.

I also appeal to you for the European Parliament to put pressure on the authorities in Zagreb and Sarajevo to finally start respecting the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms and the Agreement on Succession Issues. I hope that you will understand my address in the most positive sense, because the expelled Serbs and the small number of Serb returnees to Croatia and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been waiting for 25 years since the end of the war for high moral principles to guide the EU institutions. In this way, the European Union will deny the belief that Croatia can behave like a country that is allowed to violate the human rights of its Serb citizens, whom it expelled during the war 1991-1995, without consequences and punishment, systematically and for a long period of time. The same is the case with the part of Bosnia and Herzegovina called the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I expect you to respond to our letter so that we can acquaint the refugees and exiles of Serbia and other damaged citizens who reported their stolen and destroyed property that they have in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina with it.

Sincerely,

Belgrade, December 21, 2020

President of the Association of Serbs of the region
and a Member of the Serbian Parliament



M. Linta
Miodrag Linta

ATTACHMENT:

Report on the results of the survey on stolen and destroyed property of displaced and dispossessed Serbs and other damaged citizens in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia, conducted by the Association of Serbs from the Region, Belgrade, in 2019.

For additional information you can contact:

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