



MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Women in Black - Belgrade
Jug Bogdanova
Belgrade
Serbia
11 000

1 September 2006

Dear Ms Zajović,

I am writing to inform you that I have nominated your organisation "Women in Black - Belgrade" for the European Parliament Sakharov Prize 2006.

Since 1988, in the spirit of Andrei Sakharov, the European Parliament has awarded the annual Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in order to honour individuals or organisations for their efforts on behalf of human rights and fundamental freedoms and against oppression and injustice.

I have nominated your organisation in recognition of your important work over the past 15 years. I am particularly impressed by your campaigns calling on the Serbian public to recognise responsibility for crimes committed by the Serbian military and paramilitary during the recent wars, your commemoration each year of the Srebrenica massacre in 1995, and your consistent demands that the Serbian government extradite all indicted war criminals to The Hague Tribunal. I am convinced that your efforts can do much to reconcile nations and ethnicities across the former Yugoslavia.

The coming months will see tough negotiations over the future status of Kosovo. Without recognition of the uncomfortable and painful truth that Serbia is partly responsible for the recent war and current malaise in Kosovo, Serbia risks isolating itself in a vacuum of nationalism, self-pity, and denial. This sense of isolation, already compounded by the suspension of negotiations on an EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Agreement, risks leading to the radicalisation of society.

It is time that the Parliament recognised the brave efforts of the Women in Black and their tireless pursuit of important political goals for the past 15 years. Recognition by the EU would do much to boost democracy and freedom in a corner of Europe still recovering from the destruction wrought by recent wars.

The European Parliament awards the human rights prize, endowed with EUR 50 000, at a formal sitting in Strasbourg in December, the day on which the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948.

On Tuesday 12th September an extraordinary joint meeting will take place at the European Parliament in Brussels of the Committees on Foreign Affairs, Development and the Subcommittee on Human Rights to consider the nominations for the 2006 Sakharov Prize.

My Parliamentary Assistant, Anica Brooks, will keep you updated with any developments. For the moment I would request of photograph (preferably free of rights) which the Parliament requires for the purpose of your candidature.

Further information about the Sakharov Prize can be found at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/comparl/afet/droi/sakharov/default.htm>

Yours sincerely,

Jelko Kacin

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'J' followed by a series of loops and a wavy line extending to the right.