

**To: Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission**

**Strasbourg, 13 March 2025**

Dear President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, write to you regarding the ongoing protests in Serbia, where citizens are demanding transparency, accountability, and the rule of law while receiving barely any principled or even symbolic support from the highest representative from the EU. Demands from protesters reflect the very values that the European Union is founded upon, and as Serbia progresses on its EU accession path, the Commission has a responsibility to stand firmly for democratic freedoms and anti-corruption efforts it so proudly promotes, particularly when those values are being undermined.

We believe that situation in Serbia that led to protests is culmination of frustration, including over the too lenient and indulgent EU policy in recent years towards Serbia on fundamental values. We believe that the EU's engagement with Serbia should prioritize concrete measures to strengthen the rule of law. Under the Growth Plan Regulation, Serbia is required to uphold democratic mechanisms, including free and fair elections, an independent judiciary, pluralistic media, and the rule of law. The Commission must ensure these preconditions are met before releasing any EU funds and monitor them throughout the period. Additionally, extending the jurisdiction of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) to candidate countries and applying the EU Budget Conditionality Regulation for EU funds disbursed to accession countries could further safeguard accountability and transparency.

Serbia's response to these protests will be a decisive test of its commitment to EU standards. Civil society organizations and EU citizens of Serbian descent have raised alarms over repression, including police raids on NGOs and violence against peaceful protesters. Students and activists are leading demonstrations for accountability and transparency, in line with EU principles. The Commission must act swiftly to support these protesters' fundamental rights, particularly freedom of assembly, and ensure that the Serbian government respect these rights.

We urge you, as the president of the European Commission, to publicly warn the Serbian government before March 15 that any repression will directly impact Serbia's EU prospects. This includes addressing intimidation, violence, counter-protest mobilization, and heavy police presence. A clear statement now will send a strong message that the EU will not tolerate further erosion of democratic freedoms in Serbia.

The Serbian people deserve support from the European Union in their fight for democracy and justice. We stand ready to work with you to ensure the European parliament remains a steadfast ally in this struggle.

Sincerely,

Irena Joveva, Renew Europe  
Tineke Strik, Greens/EFA  
Sebastian Everding, The Left

Vladimir Prebilič, Greens/EFA  
Marjan Šarec, Renew Europe  
Romana Jerković, S&D  
Dan Barna, Renew Europe  
Urmaz Paet, Renew Europe  
Rima Hassan, The Left  
Raquel Garcia Hermida- van der Walle, Renew Europe  
Petras Auštrevičius, Renew Europe  
Sebastian Tynkkynen, ECR  
Matej Tonin, EPP  
Andreas Schieder, S&D  
Nikos Papandreou, S&D  
Matjaž Nemec, S&D  
Helmut Brandstätter, Renew Europe  
Anna Stürgkh, Renew Europe  
Per Clausen, The Left  
João Cotrim de Figueiredo, Renew Europe  
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Barry Andrews, Renew Europe