

*Council of Europe*  
*The Secretary General*

Strasbourg, 3 October 2011

Dear President,

Serbia is a very important and highly respected member of the Council of Europe.

Your authorities have been making steady and significant progress towards full compliance with the obligations resulting from the membership in our organisation. This was clearly reflected in a number of successive reports to the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly, as well as in reports of specific Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms.

The attitude of your authorities before and during the Belgrade Pride in 2010 was a very clear and much appreciated illustration of the resolve of your authorities to uphold the standards and values of the Council of Europe.

This is why I was surprised to learn about the decision of the National Security Council to ban all public gatherings on 2 October 2011, including the Pride Parade which had been planned and authorised well in advance.

I should like to recall that, as a party to European Convention on Human Rights, Serbia has a positive obligation to do everything within its power to protect and enforce the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Convention. While it is true that Article 11, which guarantees the freedom of assembly and association, allows for some restrictions, the relevant jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights clearly shows that such restrictions cannot be imposed arbitrarily.

Mr Boris Tadić  
President of the Republic of Serbia

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I should therefore be grateful if you could provide me with information on what measures the Serbian authorities have taken in order to allow the Parade to take place, for what specific reasons they subsequently considered that it could not take place and what measures the authorities are planning to undertake in order to guarantee the freedom of assembly and association for all groups and associations in full compliance with the letter of the European Convention on Human Rights and the relevant jurisprudence of the Court.

I am looking forward to receiving information which will, without doubt, dispel any concerns about commitment of your authorities to respect, promote, and effectively enforce the high standards of human rights and fundamental treatments.



Thorbjørn Jagland