

Skopje, 3 January 2011

Subject: Ethnic discrimination against a member of our civil society organization

Your Excellency,

We are contacting you regarding the case of Mr. Mile Yovanoski, a citizen of both the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Bulgaria. Mr. Yovanoski is of Bulgarian ethnicity and has been an active member of our civil society organization – “Bulgarian Cultural Club” – Skopje (BCCS) since its foundation in 2008.

Mr. Yovanoski was employed as a social worker in the Daycare Centre for Children with Special Needs in the city of Prilep, which was opened in 2002 with the help of UNICEF. He recently complained to BCCS of the malicious discrimination, offensive attitude and intimidation he was subjected to, because of his Bulgarian descent and citizenship.

Officials of the Prilep’s local administration (who are also political functionaries of the ruling party DPMNE) have told him that *“there is no room for those who betray their nation”*. Similar harassment was also done by the Director of the Daycare Centre and, as a result of this, Mr. Yovanoski has been fired from work, regardless that he is amongst the very few employees whose educational background matches perfectly the Centre activities and the professional requirements for the position of a social worker.

Realizing that his job as a social worker was going to be lost, Mr. Yovanoski even attempted to apply for the lower position of an “operator”. This attempt was rejected by a local clerk of DPMNE in Prilep, who said that this position *“belongs to DUI according to the Ohrid Framework Agreement”* (DUI is a coalition party in the DPMNE-led government). As a result of this rude political intervention and nepotism, incompetent employees with irrelevant backgrounds (e.g. in carpentry and hairdressing) have been appointed to the Daycare Centre, instead of Mr. Yovanoski, only because they are close relatives and friends of local politicians.

It is totally unacceptable that in the 21st Century, in a country that aspires for EU membership, such a highly skilled expert with many years of proven professional experience can be fired from work only because of his Bulgarian ethnicity. We strongly disapprove the ethnic discrimination and harassment practiced by the public administration, which severely violate the Constitution and Laws of the Republic of Macedonia and all relevant international conventions for protecting civil rights and combating discrimination.

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Dismissal from work is known to be one of the most heinous practices of the Tito's communist regime and its "*nation engineering exercises*" in the former Yugoslavia, which sought to erase the national feelings of Macedonian citizens who are strongly attached to their Bulgarian descent and heritage.

Consequently, we respectfully ask you to use all available means at your disposal, along with your moral influence, to find a positive solution for Mr. Yovanoski's case. We call on the international community to vigorously take all necessary measures to cease such medieval practices against the Bulgarians in the Republic of Macedonia.

Sincerely yours,



Lazar Mladenov
President of BCCS