

Skopje, 31 August 2010

**Subject: *Unjust case against a member of our civil society organization***

Your Excellency,

We are deeply concerned and worried about the fate of our dear and respected colleague Mr. Miroslav Rizinski – one of the leaders of the Bulgarian Cultural Club – Skopje (BCCS). In his societal activities, Mr. Rizinski has always demonstrated an uncompromising struggle for establishing of democracy in the Republic of Macedonia, after the collapse of Tito's Yugoslavia, and for speeding up the Euro-Atlantic integration of the country. He is one of the most active promoters of the objective understanding of the Macedonia's history and good neighbourly relations on the Balkans (e.g. by celebrating common historical events and figures with neighbouring countries).

Unfortunately, with this noble public activity Mr. Rizinski has always been a thorn in the eyes of the enemies of democracy in the Republic of Macedonia, who often subjected him to harassment and personal attacks. Mr. Rizinski was among our activists innocently injured by the hooligan attack, which took place during the commemoration of Mara Buneva in January 2007 – a crime whose authors remain unpunished until now. Instead, Mr. Rizinski himself became an innocent victim of malicious provocation, thereby sentenced to imprisonment in a non-transparent and politicized court trial, whose conformity to the international standards is rather controversial to deserve any comments.

BCCS shares the opinions of the U.S. State Department and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on the human rights' violations in the Republic of Macedonia and their serious criticism against the political interference in the judicial system. The actions against our colleague Mr. Rizinski and other civil society activists badly damage the image of the Republic of Macedonia to the European Union and NATO because such practices are in a drastic contradiction with the Copenhagen political criteria for EU membership.

We express our full solidarity with the just cause of Mr. Rizinski whose honesty and credibility are well known to us and our international partners. BCCS wholeheartedly believes in his complete innocence and justness and grants him our full support. We demand that the authorities of the Republic of Macedonia entirely dismiss the unjust accusation against Mr. Rizinski and restore his reputation as a citizen, professional and public figure. We call on European diplomatic missions in Skopje to take vigorous action in his defense.

Sincerely yours,

**Lazar Mladenov**  
President of BCCS

