

Announcement of the Coalition for Free Access to Information

in regard to the International Day of Democracy on September 15th 2008 and the Coalition's civic legislative initiative in the Parliament of Serbia

On September 15th, the International Day of Democracy, the Coalition for Free Access to Information wishes to divert the public attention to the lack of observance of one of democracy's basic principles – the right to civic initiatives.

In democratic societies, citizens are given the right to start initiatives on their own, independent of the will of political parties and state institutions. This right is also guaranteed by the Constitution of Serbia. On December 7th 2007, the Coalition for Free Access to Information has submitted a petition with around 72,000 registered voters' signatures for the adoption of the draft law to amend the *Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance* and draft *Law on Classification of Information*. According to the Parliament's Rules of Procedure, a petition like this was supposed to be delivered to the Government, committees and deputies by the Speaker of the National Assembly *immediately upon receiving it*.

However, today, more than nine months after the draft laws were submitted in accordance with the law, they are not on the official list of documents in procedure and it remains unknown whether they were distributed according to the Rules of Procedure at all. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case of neglect of civic initiatives and obstruction of citizens who wish to fulfill their constitutional rights.

We ask the Parliament to overcome these omissions and in this way properly mark the International Day of Democracy and after that to adopt the submitted draft laws and support the citizens' participation in democratic processes.

Coalition for Free Access to Information

www.spikoalicija.fosserbia.org

www.spikoalicija.org

Belgrade, September 15th 2008

