

Belgrade, May 26th, 2025

Attacks on Civil Society – Resistance to Reforms and Serbia’s European Path

The National Convention on the European Union strongly condemns the renewed campaign against civil society organizations, including members of the NCEU, spearheaded by the pro-government tabloid Informer. In this campaign, organizations and individuals are being labeled as “foreign agents” and alleged organizers of “future violent actions” merely for participating in the international POINT conference held in Sarajevo.

We are particularly alarmed by the call for the Security Intelligence Agency (BIA) to become involved in this campaign. We demand that BIA urgently and unambiguously clarify its position and any potential involvement. Silence in this case further undermines public trust in institutions and contributes to an atmosphere of fear.

We remind the public that in recent months there has been a series of similar actions — including surveillance, physical tracking, and unlawful break-ins into the offices of certain organizations — all with the same goal: to intimidate, discredit, and exclude civil society from the public sphere.

We emphasize that civil society has a legitimate role to play as both a corrective to government and a constructive partner in reforms. However, this role can only be fulfilled if there are conditions that allow for its free and unhindered operation. Without this, reform processes lose credibility, and Serbia’s European path remains purely rhetorical.

Therefore, once again, we call on all relevant state institutions to ensure the full protection and freedom of action for civil society.

At a time when the European Union is sending a clear message that progress in negotiations is impossible without improvements in the rule of law, freedom of expression, and dialogue with civil society, campaigns that spread hate speech and incite violence against dissenting voices, highlight the urgent need for a fundamental overhaul of Serbia’s media landscape. This cannot be achieved through superficial amendments to media laws or by simply ticking off formal obligations in the EU accession process.

We also urge EU actors to take an unequivocal stance on such actions. Failure to do so risks creating the perception that they are endorsing policies and practices that stand in direct contradiction to the values and standards upheld within the Union.