

Bulgarian citizens "firing" the Socialist-led Government

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A symbolic sample "Letter of dismissal" of the Bulgarian Socialist-led government, to be signed by the citizens in the period 6-21 September, is the key element of a nationwide protest campaign, launched by the Bulgarian rightwing parties, belonging to the European People's Party format.

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Bulgaria's three leading right-wing parties – Sofia mayor's formation Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (abbreviated as GERB in Bulgarian), the Democrats for Strong Bulgaria (DSB) and the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) – are disseminating copies of the dismissal letter samples across the country. They expect for thousands of citizens of the EU's poorest Member State, to support the initiative, dismissing the government over vicious corruption practices and incompetence. Those, who want to put their signatures on the forms, could do it at special stands located on public places in the major Bulgarian towns and cities, as well as online. A special website is created for the campaign – <http://www.azsumevropeec.eu>. To download the original Letter of dismissal in pdf format - [click HERE](#). The subscription is scheduled to conclude by 21 September, when the Bulgarian EPP member-parties are planning to run a broad-based public discussion on the alternative of the present government. The campaign was launched September 6 - a symbolic national holiday in Bulgaria - the Unification Day; and will conclude in its first stage on Independence Day (September 22).

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Background:

The Bulgarian three-party coalition government of PM Sergei Stanishev is composed by the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), the National Movement for Stability and Progress (NMSP) and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). More than 800 million euros of farming, road and regional development EU-aid for Bulgaria, which only joined the EU last year has been frozen over the government's much-criticized record fighting corruption and alleged frauds with EU taxpayers' money. In addition, the current authorities are unable to cope with organized crime, a wave of unsolved contract killings and allegations of official collusion in mafia networks. The opposition-led "I am a European" campaign aims at expressing the widespread public discontent with the government's failure to bring Bulgaria closer to the European standards, its incompetence to curb corruption and crime and tolerating frauds with EU funds.

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On August 12 the three Bulgarian political parties in opposition, members of the EPP family – GERB, DSB and UDF – decided to initiate a national campaign that illustrates the European self-consciousness and concern of Bulgarian citizens at the present situation in our country. "We hope that with this initiative those who oppose the governing coalition will unite to create a pro-European political alternative... We believe that the inadequate reforms in sectors like internal security, judicial system, energy and the absolute lack of reforms in areas like healthcare and education, reduce the country into an unreliable member of the EU and NATO", the three parties declared. *Petar Moskov, deputy-chairman of DSB:* "The motto of the nationwide protest campaign 'I am a European' is not merely a logo, but the core of Bulgaria's reformist behavior over the recent years. To be a European means not to accept that the Government misuses billions while people receive a monthly salary of 120 EUR. When someone is caught stealing your money, you must fire him and look to replace him."

Tsvetan Tsvetanov, chairman of GERB: "Our protest will not use sticks and rods, it is not through street pressure; it will use pens – a pen to sign the letter of dismissal. This means that we are counting on the educated Bulgarian people who will express their dissatisfaction with the government's cynicism in an intelligent way."

Lubov Panayotova, deputy-chairman of UDF: "This petition will deprive the government of its legitimacy. For us the most important is to make the citizens believe that there exists an alternative of

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the present government – a government of rule of law, as in the other Member States. People are starting to realize that Bulgaria needs to develop in line with the European standards.”

Useful links:

<http://www.azsumevropeec.eu> (campaign’s site)

www.gerb-bg.com (Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria, abbreviated as GERB)

www.dsb.bg (Democrats for Strong Bulgaria, DSB)

www.sds.bg (Union of Democratic Forces, UDF)