

RECOM Initiative's Public Advocacy

Report, July 7, 2011

The Parliament of Montenegro was the first to offer political support to RECOM Initiative. In the consultation with members of the Parliament of Montenegro, President of the Parliament, Ranko Krivokapić, and other members of parliament gave their full support to the civil initiative for establishing the Regional Commission for Facts About Victims and War Crimes. Subsequently, President of Croatia, Ivo Josipović and the President of the Republic of Serbia, Boris Tadić gave signatures in support of the initiative on August 31, 2010 and September 1, 2010 respectively.

Then, the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights offered full support to the civil initiative for establishing RECOM in the session held on September 30th, 2010 in Strasbourg. Director of the Delegation for Relations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo, Mr Eduard Kukan, called the European Parliament and the European Commission to give long-lasting support for this "unique initiative". On this occasion, Director for Western Balkans in the Directorate General for Enlargement in the European Commission, Pierre Mirel, stated: "RECOM represents a necessary supplement to judicial procedures and we have to win full support of governments and parliaments for it". President of the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the European Parliament, Ms Heidi Hautala assessed "that this is the first time that one initiative, which is so important, comes from the bottom to us".

During the fourth inter-parliamentary meeting between the Republic of Serbia National Assembly and the European Parliament held on October 5th, 2010 in Belgrade, President of the Serbia National Assembly Committee for European Integrations, Laslo Varga, and the President of the European Parliament Delegation for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo, Eduardo Kukan, expressed their support for the regional initiative for establishing RECOM.

In the Resolution adopted on January 19th, 2011, the European Parliament supported RECOM Initiative, as a process for raising awareness and reaching reconciliation in the Western Balkans and called for authorities in Serbia and other countries to support this initiative.

The Parliamentary Assembly adopted the report of the Council of Europe Committee on Foreign Affairs Rapporteur, Mr Pietro Marcenaro on January 26th, 2011, who called for "all countries in the region of the former Yugoslavia to participate in the establishing of RECOM, regardless of their status, so that this commission would be able to implement its function of full reconciliation and recognition of victims". Parliamentary Assembly adopted Resolution 1786 (2011), which emphasized support to the initiative for establishing Regional Commission for Facts About War Crimes on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia (RECOM), which has an objective to pay respect and recognize all victims.

1.1. Public Advocacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

President of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), Sulejman Tihić, met with representatives of the RECOM Coalition on February 15th, 2011 in Sarajevo. In his support statement to the RECOM Initiative, President Tihić pointed to the regional approach stating that it has potential to contribute to clarification of events in wars and prevent recurrence of crimes in the future.

Coalition for RECOM had a meeting on March 28th, 2011 with the President of Peoples Party Work for Betterment, Mladen Ivanković Lijanović, who supported the establishing of RECOM, stressing the significance of regional approach to establishing facts, which should represent legacy for future generations.

Several ministers at the level of the Federation of BiH from the Social Democratic Party (SDP) also supported the establishing of RECOM. President of the Party, Zlatko Lagumdžija, stated his general support for the Initiative for establishing RECOM in the meeting with representatives of the RECOM Coalition held on February 15th, 2011.

In the meeting with members of the RECOM Coalition on May 10th, 2011, President and Vice-President of the Federation BiH, Mr Živko Budimir and Mr Svetozar Pudarić, welcomed the task of RECOM, to help clarify fates of the missing. They also stressed that political elites in the region may represent a danger because they are interested in keeping things the way they are now. The second Vice President of the Federation BiH, Mirsad Kebo, had supported RECOM Initiative earlier by signing the petition for establishing RECOM.

Leadership of the Croat Democratic Union (HDZ) in BiH, with whom representatives of the RECOM Coalition met on May 23rd, 2011, plans to hold consultation with members of the party and Croat victims' associations regarding possible support to RECOM Initiative. Vice President of HDZ 1990, Martin Raguž, supported RECOM Initiative, on behalf of the party, and expressed willingness to lobby in the BiH Parliament for the adoption of a decision on establishing Regional Commission.

"Our Party" and a great number of municipal presidents and mayors in municipalities of the Federation of BiH have supported the establishing of RECOM.

Mayor of Prijedor and the President of the Democratic Party, Marko Pavić, from the Republic of Srpska reacted. Upon the RECOM Coalition's invitation for a meeting, he sent a reply message on May 30th, 2011 stating that facts about war crimes need to be established by a court and only history is the one invited to establish facts that RECOM deals with.

RECOM Coalition submitted the Initiative and the Petition with 500,000 signatures of support for the establishing of RECOM, and the Draft RECOM Statute to a member of the BiH Presidency, Željko Komšić, on June 23rd, 2011.

1.2. Public Advocacy in Montenegro

Prime Minister of Montenegro, Igor Lukšić, supported the establishing of RECOM, in a meeting with representatives of the RECOM Coalition on April 29th, 2011.

President of Montenegro, Filip Vujanović, sent a support letter to the Coalition for RECOM on May 11th, 2011.

The establishing of RECOM was supported by associations of members of parliament from the Social Democratic Party, Bosniak Party, Socialist Peoples Party, New Serb Democracy, Socialist Democratic Party, and Albanian parties.

The Government of Montenegro informed the Coalition for RECOM in June 2011 that it created a task force for the discussion on RECOM Initiative.

1.3. Public Advocacy in Croatia

President of the Republic of Croatia, Ivo Josipović, reiterated his support to the RECOM Initiative on May 16th, 2011. In a meeting with members of the RECOM Coalition President Josipović highlighted that every attempt to clarify fates of the missing, mark each victim, and punish each crime, is important for victims, their families, and a society as a whole.

Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia Slobodan Uzelac, Independent Democratic Serb Party, and the former President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić have also supported RECOM Initiative.

Members of Croatian Parliament, Damir Kajin (Istra Democratic Forum) and Ratko Gajica (independent member of the parliament), and representatives of the Social-Democratic Party of Croatia, Ingrid Antičević-Marinović, Šime Lučin, Mirela Holy, Josip Leko, and Davorko Vidović, also supported the Initiative for RECOM. Mayor of Vukovar and a member of SDP, Željko Sabo, also supported the establishing of RECOM.

Social-Democratic Party of Croatia did not support the establishing of RECOM. Its President Zoran Milanović believes that the list of victims and establishing facts about war crimes is an obligation of states and it must not be transferred at the regional level or at some regional body.

The petition for establishing RECOM and the Draft RECOM Statute were delivered to the President of the Republic of Croatia, Ivo Josipović, on June 21st, 2011. On this occasion, he stated that he would promote the Initiative for RECOM within his regional activities and in the communication with the Government of the Republic of Croatia and parliamentary political parties.

1.4. Public advocacy in Kosovo

Members of the Coalition for RECOM presented the Initiative for RECOM to the president of the Democratic league of Kosovo, Isa Mustafi, on March 16th, 2011, who supported the idea and expressed willingness on behalf of his party to vote for the decision on establishing RECOM in the Kosovo Parliament. The Coalition for RECOM had a meeting on March 18th, 2011 with the Vice President of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, Ardijan Gjini, who gave his full support to the Initiative for RECOM. Rada Trajković, leader of the United Serb list, also supported the Initiative for RECOM. On May 16th, 2011 she gave a press statement saying that RECOM must not be ignored, that this commission is a unique chance to clarify fates of the missing and establish facts about war crimes.

Kosovo Minister of Health, Ferid Agani, stated in the meeting with members of RECOM Coalition on June 7th, 2011 that RECOM is the only path towards the truth about crimes, which is concealed by political interests.

The Coalition for RECOM failed to deliver the Initiative for establishing RECOM, the petition with 500,000 citizens' signatures, and the Draft RECOM Statute to the President of Kosovo, Atifete Jahjaga.

Her office has informed the Coalition for RECOM for the second time that she is not authorized to receive the Initiative for Establishing RECOM.

1.5. Public Advocacy in Macedonia

Members of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia (Собрание на Република Македонија), Zymreta Jakupi (Democratic Union for Integration) and Stojan Andov (Liberal Party), Vice President of the liberal Party, Ivan Veličkovski, member of the Social-Democratic Union of Macedonia Executive Board, Dane Taleski, and the *Dostoinstvo* Party, have supported RECOM Initiative.

RECOM Coalition did not manage to appoint a meeting with the President of Macedonia, Gjorge Ivanov, due to his obligations regarding the creation of the Government in the Republic of Macedonia.

1.6. Public Advocacy in Slovenia

President of the Republic of Slovenia, Danilo Türk, President of the Parliament, Pavel Gantar, members of Parliament, Anton Anderlič (Liberal Democracy of Slovenia) and Eva Irgl (Slovenian Democratic Party), Ombudsman Zdenka Čebašek Travnik, and members of the European Parliament, Jelko Kacin and Tanja Fajon, have supported the Initiative for establishing RECOM.

President Türk welcomed the fact that the Initiative for establishing RECOM comes from civil society, highlighting that, as such, it can contribute to the establishing of facts and the reconciliation process.

Members of the Coalition for RECOM had information meetings with the Advisor to the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Ladislav Lipič and the Chief of Human Rights Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Eva Tomič on June 1st, 2011 and June 7th, 2011 respectively, in order to schedule a lecture on the Initiative for RECOM.

RECOM Coalition delivered the Initiative, the Petition for Establishing RECOM, and the Draft RECOM Statute to the State Secretary Jožef Školč in the Cabinet of the President of Slovenia on June 22nd, 2011.

1.6. Public advocacy in Serbia

The initiative for RECOM has won public support of the President of the Republic of Serbia National Assembly, Slavica Đukić Dejanović, President of the Vojvodina Government, Bojan Pajtić, and the President of the Vojvodina Assembly, Šandor Egereši. The Initiative has also won the support of associations of members of parliament from the Democratic Party, Social-Democratic Party of Serbia, Party of United Retirees of Serbia, and national minorities groups. Furthermore, Democratic Party, United Regions of Serbia, Veterans Movement, Serb Renewal Movement, League of Social-Democrats of Vojvodina, and Liberal-Democratic Party, have also supported the initiative.

In her statement of support for RECOM Initiative, President of the National Assembly Slavica Đukić Dejanović emphasized the list of victims in wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia as a very important element.

President and members of the Vojvodina Parliament supported the Initiative for RECOM on June 1st, 2011 by publicly signing the petition for establishing RECOM and statements of support for the establishing of RECOM.

President of the Vojvodina Government, Bojan Pajtić, said in his press statement that he gives his support because he believes that RECOM can contribute to the process of building peace and stability in the region. He emphasized that “each victim deserves to have a full name, every perpetrator deserves punishment, and every citizen deserves truth and justice”.

In the press conference with representatives of the RECOM Coalition held on May 17th, 2011, Democratic Party announced that it offers political and operational support for the establishing of RECOM. It is in the interest of Serbia to have facts about what happened in wars established because it is the only path leading towards reconciliation in the region, the Vice President of the Party, Jelena Trivan stated.

Representatives of RECOM Coalition talked with the President of the Republic of Serbia, Boris Tadić, on June 16th, 2011 about the following phases in the RECOM process. He reiterated his support for the establishing of RECOM.

RECOM Coalition has not yet managed to deliver the Initiative, the Petition with 500,000 citizens' signatures, and the Draft RECOM Statute to the President of Serbia due to his busy schedule.