

## Online Discussion

### Media Freedom in Serbia under Pressure



Protestors in Belgrade with signs saying "We want elections!"

Date: Wednesday, 15 July 2026, 18:00 (CEST)

Place: online via Zoom

#### Speakers:

**Igor Božić**, Former News Director of N1, Serbia / 2026 Laureate of the SOG Solidarity Award

**Dinko Gruhonjić**, Journalist / Professor of Journalism, University of Novi Sad, Serbia

**Vladimir Prebilič**, MEP, Group of the Greens / European Free Alliance, Slovenia

#### Moderation:

**Aleksandra Tomanić**, Member of SOG Managing Board

#### On the topic

For 20 months now, student-led protests are being organized across Serbia. The event that triggered the protests was the collapse of a train station canopy in Novi Sad in November 2024, which killed 16 people. The protesters' request for accountability and responsibility for these deaths eventually transformed into a call for new elections.

Since then, threats, smear campaigns, physical assaults, arrests, and legal proceedings against students, journalists and citizens have dramatically increased in the country. The police are responding with increasing violence to protests, and polarization of the public discourse in the country is surging, fanned through statements by the authorities, which often label the protesters and their supporters as traitors. In this context, the independent media landscape in Serbia is also increasingly under threat. The independent TV station N1 is currently facing internal restructuring with an abrupt leadership change and limitations in cable and satellite services, which could endanger the very existence of the media outlet. While these changes and a potential sale of the outlet are publicly framed as purely economical, given the current context, this certainly raises concerns about media freedom and independence in Serbia. Furthermore, individual journalists, and sometimes even their family members, are increasingly being attacked, illegally filmed and pursued, or even physically assaulted.

At the same time, Serbia is an official candidate country for EU membership with accession negotiations in progress. In a recent letter to Ursula von der Leyen, more than 30 Members of the European Parliament raised serious concerns over the rapidly deteriorating situation of the rule of law, democratic standards, and fundamental rights in Serbia, calling on the European Commission to respond with urgency and clarity.

We will discuss the current state of democracy and media freedom in Serbia with our distinguished panel, consisting of MEP Vladimir Prebilič, one of the initiators of the open letter to the EU Commission, Igor Božić, former director of N1 and 2026 laureate of the SOG's Solidarity Award, and Dinko Gruhonjić, journalist and university professor in Novi Sad.



### Registration

This event will take place online via Zoom. Please register at the following link:  
<https://www.sogde.org/de/formulare/online-discussion-serbia-democracy/>

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