

Protocol from 20.10.2019, citizens initiative committee gathering „Future for Kresna“ for initiating a citizen initiative „Saving the town and municipality of Kresna“ on the grounds of and after Chapter 3 from the Direct Citizen Participation in State and Local Government Act

To Prime Minister of Republic of Bulgaria
Deputy chair of the European Commission Mr. Timmermans
Environment and Regional Policy Commissioners to the European Commission

Reminding Resolution A5-0258/2001 of the European Parliament regarding the Bulgarian application for European Community membership and Chapter “Economic criteria”, para. 14 from the Resolution for Bulgaria, where Parliament calls specifically EC and the Bulgarian authorities to guarantee that every construction in the Kresna gorge region of the planned motorway has to be carried out with the execution of the strict ecological requirements.

We, the undersigned adult citizens and inhabitants of Kresna municipality, Republic of Bulgaria, insist:

- That you protect Kresna town and municipality as you do not allow that the town of Kresna is left without a local/alternative road of the motorway at the development of the trans-european motorway from Sofia to Thessaloniki (*Struma* motorway).
- Strict following of 98/2002 Bern Convention Recommendation for designing and development of the motorway in a way that the existing E-79 road through the Kresna gorge remains local/alternative to the local inhabitants.
- We object the Bulgarian Government Decision from 19.10.2017 allowing the development of the *Struma* motorway section which would leave the town and municipality of Kresna without a local road, consists a threat for the life and health of people and would jeopardise the future of the whole region.

Our demands are motivated by the following circumstances and facts:

- With the Decision from October 19th 2017 (an EIA Decision) the Government had chosen the motorway construction version that will be using for one direction the existing two-lane international road E79 through the Kresna gorge for one lane of the motorway. This road presently serves as a local road as well and is the only existing and the only possible local connection of Kresna town with its nearby villages (*Stara Kresna, Oshtava, Senokos, Mechkul*), the sites for accommodation and servicing of Kresna gorge visitors (Kresna Inn – *Kresnensko Hanche*), the agricultural lands and estates of the local people as well as with the regional center Blagoevgrad. **With this Decision the people of Kresna are left without a local road!**
- Bulgarian government has violated Art. 3 and 4 of 2008/96/EC Road safety Directive. We are not aware of any information received neither in the Municipality of Kresna, nor by its citizens on any assessments made about the impact of all motorway alternatives throughout the town of Kresna and through the Kresna gorge. The alternative chosen is dangerous and would cause heavy road accidents. The movement and traffic on the motorway without a local road is dangerous for the people and for the local slow traffic. The number of the dangerous road accidents will not decrease

but will grow and victims will be the local people as well as those traveling on the motorway. The possibility for the local people to get from Kresna town to the villages of the gorge, to work their vineyards and lands and to reach their estates placed in the Kresna gorge region will be hindered because there will be no access (or it will become dangerous) for the slow moving cars, automobiles and agricultural machines.

- The town of Kresna and the municipality would be transport-isolated from the existing bus transport that links the towns. The so chosen lane would force all transport bus companies to not pass through Kresna and avoid making special drop-by to the town.
- The planned ring road of the town of Kresna itself through the *Melo* hill affects the most valuable agricultural lands and vineyards of the town.
- The local trade in the town around the existing road would be directly killed and there are no guarantees for an alternative for all local traders.
- The development of tourism as an alternative livelihood for the local people would be impossible for the town of Kresna, for the municipality and for the Kresna gorge region. The already existing tourism developed thanks to the rafting would disappear.

Therefore we insist that the Prime minister of the Republic of Bulgaria and the European Commission Chair take all necessary steps for realisation and execution of our demands.

We request Mr. Timmermans, the Heads of DG Environment and Regional Development or their representatives to visit Kresna as soon as possible – and meet us, the people living here. Not with the politicians – with us, the people from the town.

Europe invests hundreds of millions in *Struma* motorway, but, breaching the basic principles of democracy – our voice is not heard. Despite the public discussions of this project in September 2017 – our voice was not heard. These discussions were carried out by the government in a completely non-democratic way.

We elect Chair and members of the Initiative Committee from the participants in the meeting, as follows:

Chair:

[Redacted]

Members:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

[Redacted]

We define a deadline for gathering signatures for the petition - 20.12.2019, and place – Kresna municipality. The organisation for the collection of signatures is to be carried out by the members of the Initiative Committee who take the decisions with consensus and protocol all decisions.

We approve the following correspondence address (the Chair of the Initiative): for [Redacted], [Redacted], “Vlahi Nature school”, Vlahi village, Kresna municipality, Postal code 2840, Blagoevgrad district, Bulgaria. [Redacted]