



Emina Bužinkić
President
Croatia Youth Network
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CROATIA

Brussels, 5th October 2009

Dear Emina,

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) would like to thank you for informing us about the current situation regarding one of your full members, Zelena akcija / Friends of the Earth Croatia. We were very surprised to hear that a lawsuit has been filed against Friends of the Earth Croatia by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction, following the public action that the NGO undertook on 12th March 2009.

In our understanding, Friends of the Earth Croatia carried out on that day a peaceful public action, with the intention of raising awareness on a potentially dangerous environmental issue (the non-disposal of dangerous waste). To the best of our knowledge, the NGO closely followed the expected procedure and also paid for the materials used for the public action to be adequately disposed of. For the Ministry to have then charged the NGO and its President Tomislav Tomičević for illegal waste disposal would appear to be an unfair and discriminatory measure to penalise the NGO's public action. The lawsuit seems quite paradoxical, especially as the Ministry has now implemented a new legal way of disposing toxic waste, which was not the case before Friends of the Earth's action.

By this letter, we would like to extend our support to Croatia Youth Network and all your members (particularly, in this case, to Friends of the Earth Croatia) to be able to continue carrying out your work in an environment where freedom of expression and action is fully upheld. European NGOs, as do any civil society organisations, have the right to work openly and to express their concerns through public actions, without fear of reprisal. The European Youth Forum sincerely hopes that the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction takes the time to reflect upon this and to retract its complaint towards Friends of the Earth Croatia.

Yours sincerely,

Tine RADINJA
President