

## **APPLICATION FOR DEBT REDUCTION OF MLADI LDP SERBIA**

Mladi LDP, a youth branch of Liberal Democratic Party from Serbia, is applying for reduction of its debt within a European Liberal Youth (LYMEC) on a Spring Congress in Stockholm from 12th to 14th of May, which up to today amounts 2648,88 euros. Reason for such a high debt which was collected over last few years and also a reason due to which Mladi LDP were inactive during that time is mainly connected with a complicated political situation which is surrounding LDP from 2014. Parliamentary elections that year, turns out to be the first one on which LDP didn't manage to pass the census and enter parliament. From that point on LDP had a really hard time, regarding possibilities to reach mainstream media, send its political messages, fight for liberal values and most importantly reach to our voters who will understand all of that. Not only that we were struggling with those issues, but also our voters were under „hunt“ from other new, populist, political parties which were emerging all over Europe. Therefore, we use all our efforts to deal with those problems and put liberal policies back on track in Serbia. This resulted with re-entering in the parliament by LDP in 2016, but this time with 4 MPs. One would argue that 4 out of 250 is not much, which if you look only the numbers can seem like that, but for us and Serbian politics was much more. LDP since then is in a constant, but slow, rise in support (last surveys conducted before presidential elections campaign in 2017 recorded average support of around 4% for LDP) and more importantly LDP managed to put questions of European future of Serbia high on political agenda, again. Mladi LDP were integral part of every single step LDP made, which can be illustrated the best by a fact that members of Mladi LDP took many of the most important positions in the mother party in 2014, like more members in the party presidency, deputy director of LDP, PR office of LDP, managers of many city councils of LDP, among others.

If you take a look on a current political situation in Serbia, you'll see that there are no political parties or movements which will openly stand for liberal values and European perspective of Serbia like LDP always did and always will. Since its establishment in 2005, Liberal Democratic Party stands for idea of accession of Serbia to the European Union, and with the work on promotion of that idea highly contribute to the fact that Serbia remained on European way, despite numerous pressures we've been faced as a society and as a political party. Also, LDP has never been populist oriented political party and that we paid high price for this approach, in a country which is difficult to recover from a war conflicts that we had in our recent past and from continuously present nationalism which always return in different forms. LDP is one of the rare political parties in Serbia which never calculate with their attitudes, never give up on them and fight for their own beliefs in accordance with European principles and in the European spirit. Our politics – which promotes European integration process, necessity of change of the relations between countries in the Western Balkan region, resolving of the Kosovo issue, struggle for transformation into society which respect and promotes all types of diversity – has never been a political platform of our country, however, it never deterred us from our intentions.

Most recent presidential elections showed us that this European way is still in a big danger in Serbia. None of the opposition candidates, who won more than 5% of votes, advocated openly for EU integration of Serbia, and all of them were against NATO integration and for better relations with Russia and Republic of Srpska (ethnically Serbian populated part of Bosnia and Herzegovina). Many of democratic forces in the country see suspension of EU integration of Serbia as a solution, not seeing that suspension will end up slow, but still positive transformation of Serbia from a society we were in the 90s during Milosevic dictatorship and two wars under his regime. Once again, Liberal Democratic Party is the only one political party in Serbia who stand for EU and NATO integration of Serbia, true peaceful conflict resolution with all neighboring countries, and promotion of liberal, democratic and European values in our society. Maybe that is not popular at the moment, but we will not allow, as long as we exist, these topics to become irrelevant.

We need help in our fight. European family of liberal political parties and its youth branches were always there for us, supporting us and empowering our activists. Thus, to be a part of LYMEC means a lot to us, and to liberalism in Serbia. Autumn congress decision to do not invoice Mladi LDP for 2017, was also a push forward which we appreciate a lot. Our political situation was followed by a complicated financial situation since we lost all our resources in 2014. Today, we're still recovering from it. According to our estimation, we will be able to pay around 1300 euros this year (before Autumn congress), so we're applying for a reduction of debt from 2648,88 euros to 1300 euros. In this way we will be able to be on a zero at the end of 2017, and most importantly be equal members of European Liberal Youth and be in a possibility to even further empower struggle for liberalism in Serbia and Europe. We hope that you'll meet our possibilities and help us in our mission.

Thank you in advance!

Ivan Despotović

President of Mladi LDP Serbia