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PRESS RELEASE

of the National Convention on the European Union regarding the “Jadar” project

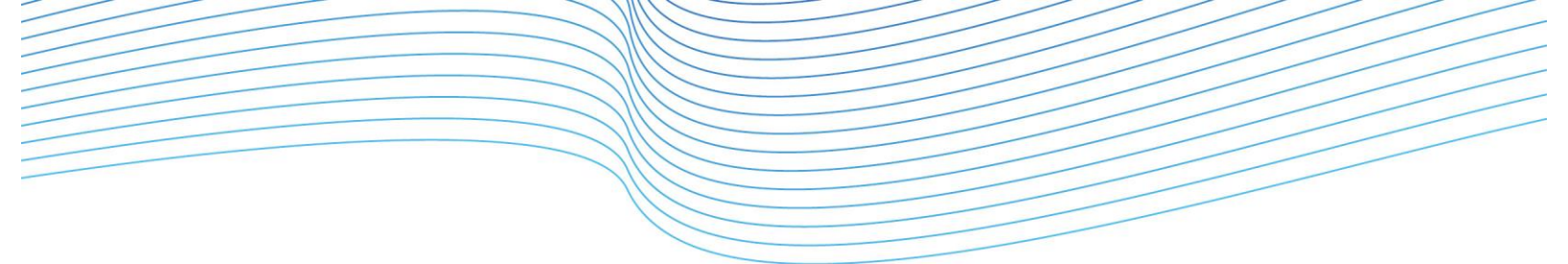
The Program Council of the National Convention on the European Union expresses serious concern over the European Commission’s decision to include the “Jadar” project on the list of strategic projects of the European Union under the Critical Raw Materials Act.

We have previously addressed EU decision-makers, clearly stating our position that this project should not be included on the strategic list, precisely due to a number of factors that significantly undermine public trust in Serbian institutions, as well as in the European integration process.

Public opposition to the “Jadar” project is neither impulsive nor emotional, it is a well-articulated expression of deep-seated distrust in the institutions of the Republic of Serbia and their capacity to safeguard the public interest in the context of a highly complex and potentially hazardous mining venture. Despite legal obligations, the Serbian state has failed for more than two decades to enforce even the basic provisions of its environmental protection laws, particularly those related to the prevention and control of industrial pollution, or to sanction existing polluters. Against this backdrop, expecting the same institutions to guarantee the highest ecological and social standards for a project of this magnitude, without first establishing the rule of law, is unfounded and deeply problematic.

Supporting this project without first aligning it with principles of environmental protection, public accountability, and democratic decision-making risks being perceived by the Serbian public as an act of ecological damage outsourcing, a transfer of the adverse effects of EU strategic policies to non-member countries. Such an approach may further deepen the ongoing societal crisis and provoke new waves of civic unrest, directed not only at national institutions but also at the European Union, especially in a country where two-thirds of citizens already oppose lithium mining in the Jadar Valley.

We fully acknowledge that inclusion on the list of strategic projects does not equate to automatic approval for implementation. However, we are deeply concerned by the absence of any reaction to the fact that Serbia has not conducted an inclusive and transparent public debate proportional to the scale and potential impact of the project. The National Convention has previously brought this issue to the attention of the European Commission, providing detailed information on the situation on the ground and the lack of democratic procedures.



We urge EU decision-makers to make further consideration of the project conditional upon demonstrable progress in the rule of law, the strengthening of administrative capacities, and a clearly articulated political will to ensure that all projects in Serbia are implemented in full accordance with the highest European standards of transparency, environmental protection, and public safety.

To preserve public trust in the European Union, especially at a time when various European actors are intensifying their efforts to secure even minimal progress in Serbia's reform process, we consider it essential that the European Commission publicly and unequivocally state that the "Jadar" project is not part of the accession negotiation framework, a political package, or any form of informal agreement related to Serbia's path toward EU membership. A clear distancing from such perceptions is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the European integration process, which must remain grounded in shared values rather than transactional arrangements.

The National Convention on the European Union remains firmly committed to Serbia's reform path and full membership in the EU, but under conditions that ensure the interests of Serbian citizens and the country's natural resources are protected equally to those of EU member states.