

2338th Meeting of the General Affairs, Council Conclusions on Western Balkans

Excerpts relating to Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Council discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It strongly supported the efforts of High Representative Wolfgang PETRITSCH to ensure the implementation of the Dayton/Paris Agreements. The European Union is determined to sustain its long-term commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council welcomed the establishment of the new state government and the appointment of Mr. Bozidar Matic as chairman of the Council of Ministers. The new BiH government will have full EU support in fulfilling commitments undertaken in Dayton/Paris, notably as elaborated at the ministerial Peace Implementation Council on 25 May 2000. It also stressed the urgent need to implement the steps set out in the EU Road Map in order to allow a move to the next stage of the Stabilisation and Association Process, namely a Feasibility Study.

The Council recalled that the citizens and peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina can only move towards Europe in the framework of a unified state. In this context the Council condemned recent unilateral moves by the so-called Croat National Congress of Bosnia and Herzegovina to place themselves outside of the provisions of the Dayton/Paris accords. The Council called on the Croats of Bosnia and Herzegovina to work within the legal institutions of their country at all levels to promote their interests. It also stressed the crucial role of the neighbouring countries in promoting a stable and multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Council recalled the role of the Stability Pact and the instruments it put in place in order to achieve regional stability.

The Council reiterated the support of the EU for the decision of the High Representative for Bosnia to remove the Croat member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr Ante Jelavic, and others from their publicly-held offices and their positions within the HDZ.

The Council encouraged High Representative Petritsch to review current international civil implementation structures in BiH and to make proposals as to their streamlining with a view to ensuring the most effective co-ordination of all international actors.

The Commission took good note of the Council's wish to make sure that Community assistance continues to contribute to an open and modern economy and to marginalise the nationalist elements obstructing economic reforms as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina's rapprochement towards the EU.

The Council welcomed the progress which is being made across the region in bringing individuals to account for abuses of power and criminal offences which were committed under the cover of previous undemocratic regimes. Living up to the Union's political and economic conditionality is essential for every country of the region. This includes full co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

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