

Joint Statement on the Matter of Residence



EUROPEAN UNION
SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
DELEGATION TO BOSNIA
AND HERZEGOVINA

The European Union Special Representative/Delegation of the European Union, the Embassy of the United States and the Office of the High Representative are very concerned about the ongoing politicization of the matter of residence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Regulation of residency is a state-level issue and requires a political and legal solution at that level. It is important that BiH amend its existing legislation and bring it closer in line with European best practices, in order to address existing gaps. At the same time, the rights of returnees to return and the freedom of movement of all citizens of BiH must be respected. Standards must be uniform across the entire territory of BiH and authorities in all parts of the country should implement existing and future legislation equally among all citizens, without any form of discrimination, in a way that builds public confidence.

Existing state-level legislation regulating residency must be respected until it is amended. Unilateral attempts to regulate this matter at entity level, such as the RS's recent decision on "verifying the accuracy and truthfulness of data when applying for permanent residence", go beyond existing legislation and are not acceptable. It is equally unacceptable for other political actors to block the functioning of state institutions, such as the BiH House of Peoples, thus preventing the normal democratic interplay between various

interests that would enable compromises for potential amendments of the BiH law on residence to be found.

We call upon the authorities in BiH at all relevant levels to find a state-level solution to the issue of residence, to rescind regulations of the same at other levels of governance and thus end the unnecessary politicization of this important matter.