

# New Year Message from the High Representative

## 2012 Can be Better than 2011

The news that Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders have finally agreed to form a new state government and take action on specific EU related issues gives hope that although 2011 was a lost year 2012 will be a better one for the country.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress in 2011 fell short of the expectations of the country's citizens. Long-standing problems were not tackled, while neighbouring countries moved forward on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration.

The world is battling a terrible financial crisis – and the word “battling” is appropriate, because governments are putting every resource they have into the fight for economic survival and recovery. This means focused and coordinated initiatives to boost investment and create jobs, to protect workers and pensioners and families, to maintain social services and welfare systems.

In 2011 BiH citizens fought this battle on their own while their political representatives focused on other things.

Instead of tackling the real challenges facing this country, much needed energy and time have been consumed on political conflicts.

2012 can and must be better.

And it *will* be a lot better if the political representatives build on the momentum of their agreement, recognize the urgency of the situation and work together in earnest.

The new leadership will need to urgently adopt a global fiscal

framework and a 2012 state budget that will ensure the full functioning of the state-level institutions and the fulfillment of BiH's international obligations; take urgent measures to promote economic growth and stimulate employment; meet the requirements that will ensure progress towards EU integration; and complete the steps necessary to enable the start of the country's NATO Membership Action Plan. In this context the nomination of Vjekoslav Bevanda as Prime Minister designate is a welcome one. In his first public statement he has stressed that the economy and EU integration will be his top priorities.

In 2012 that energy of the country's leadership needs to be channelled into making Bosnia and Herzegovina work so that it serves all its citizens in the way they are entitled to be served – so that citizens are safe, so that they have access to decent jobs, so that they can live in freedom and dignity.

There is not a single problem which cannot be solved in 2012 if there is political will!

Positive thinking and political will have delivered progress in the past and they can deliver progress in the future.