

Parliaments Must Be the Driving Force of BiH's Integration into the European Union



“EU integration has been delayed because politicians have failed to forge a new consensus on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s future,” said the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Miroslav Lajčák today.

Lajčák was addressing BiH parliamentarians at the opening session of the ‘Parliament for Europe’, a forum that brings together EU officials and members of state and entity parliaments, and the Assembly of Brcko District, to share the experiences of EU member states and discuss the best way forward in BiH’s process of EU integration.

Today’s conference was the first in a series of seven events that will bring members of the BiH Parliament and the Brcko and Entity assemblies together with senior EU officials.

The event also follows up on public debates organised earlier this year to spread popular awareness about Bosnia and Herzegovina’s EU integration process and get more citizens actively involved in the process.

“The job of parliamentarians is to resolve the issue of what sort of country this should be, while giving the electorate what the electorate very clearly wants, and that is faster and

more comprehensive integration in Europe,” the HR/EUSR said. The experience of the countries that joined the EU five years ago has shown that “a high level of popular engagement was indispensable in the accession path.”

‘Parliament for Europe’ participants heard presentations from Pierre Mirel the Director for the Western Balkans in the European Commission’s Directorate General for Enlargement, and Eduard Kukan Slovak parliamentarian, and former Foreign Minister during Slovakia’s accession to the European Union.

Speaking at today’s conference the HR/EUSR described the priorities that emerged from the town-hall across the country. “There was a clear focus on employment, housing, schools and medical and welfare provision,” he said.

“Every single one of these priorities can be addressed through the EU integration process,” said Lajčák. Noting the threat of global economic crisis the HR/EUSR said the country cannot “tread water economically,” and called on parliamentarians to “act with urgency.”