

## **Anti-European Move by the RS Government**

The Office of the High Representative (OHR) and EU Special Representative (EUSR) has come into possession of a letter from the Secretary-General of the Government of Republika Srpska (RS) to the BiH Prosecutors Office stating that RS institutions have no obligation to submit information to the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA).

After investigation it is now clear that the RS Government, at its 90th session, held on 11 September, instructed the Republika Srpska Tax Administration and other RS institutions not to provide SIPA or the BiH Prosecutor with copies of the tax returns of two companies; D.O.O *Integral inženjering*, Laktaši and D.O.O *Integra Inženjering*, Banja Luka. Tax returns from the Republika Srpska Government and several of its Ministries have also been withheld.

The RS Government's conclusion constitutes explicit political interference with the independence of the judiciary and in operational policing. This is a perversion of justice and turns the rule of law on its head.

The conclusion violates the Law on SIPA, it violates the Law on Criminal Procedure of Bosnia and Herzegovina and it violates the Law on the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Rule of Law is universally recognized as being one of the key pillars of a functioning democracy, and it is one of the founding pillars of the European Union.

The High Representative/EU Special Representative today sent a letter to the Republika Srpska's Prime Minister requesting that the RS Government rectify the situation at its session tomorrow. The High Representative has called for the conclusion to be brought in line with laws of BiH and for all RS institutions to be instructed to cooperate fully with law enforcement agencies in BiH.

"I expect them to react as seriously as the situation requires," said High Representative and EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajčák "This is about the rule of law and about separation of politics from judicial matters. These are the fundamentals of a European democracy", he said.

The HR/EUSR has already informed the Peace Implementation Council's Steering Board of the RS Government conclusion and the RS Government's reply will set the tone for the discussion at the meeting of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board Ambassadors on Friday.