

Miroslav Lajčák meets Olli Rehn, briefs PSC in Brussels



“Notable progress has been made in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the last month, but important challenges lie ahead to enable a full transition from OHR to EUSR”, High Representative/EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajčák told EU Enlargement Commission Olli Rehn and the Political and Security Committee (PSC) – a key EU foreign policy body – in Brussels today.

The meeting with Olli Rehn focused on the results of this week’s meeting of the Peace Implementation Council and BiH’s process of EU integration and the need for a swift and efficient implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, which will come into force on 1st July.

In his briefing to the PSC, Lajčák stressed that the signing of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU was a major accomplishment and cause for celebration. “This was the first time that Bosnia and Herzegovina was united on any issue by the support of all its politicians and all of its constituent peoples. This day should continue to mark the dawn of a new era in Bosnian history and politics”, he said.

In the last month alone, there has been concrete progress on reaching an acceptable and sustainable resolution of defence property, entrenching the rule of law and completing the Brčko Final Award. “This is impressive by any standards, but it is not to say that we are on the home straight to finish the job – there are challenges ahead”, the High Representative and EU

Special Representative warned.

Speaking of his recent EU campaign visits to 16 towns and cities across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lajčák indicated that there is a great deal of unanimity, common concerns and interests amongst citizens, which are different from what politicians impose as the topics of daily political life. "The national question is never the number one issue: unemployment is, followed by crime and corruption, the future of youth, education, visa liberalisation."

Lajčák stressed that that the vast majority of the 3,000 citizens who took an active part in the campaign had told him that they want a European future for their country. This view has been confirmed by recent public opinion research, which has found that a record number of citizens – over 80% – want Bosnia and Herzegovina to become a member of the European Union.

PSC Ambassadors thanked the EUSR for his efforts in moving BiH closer to the EU, and expressed their full support for the bench-mark driven strategy for OHR-EUSR transition, as reflected in the last PIC communiqué.