

Speech by High Representative and EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajčák at the Public Debate “Together With Europe” – City of Sarajevo



Your Excellencies, Ladies, Gentlemen,

Today, the representatives of the City of Sarajevo joined many others from across Bosnia and Herzegovina in signing the Declaration on the European Future of BiH. They have expressed their support for the European integration process and BiH's progress towards the EU.

The success of this campaign, which is the result of a joint effort of the Delegation of the European Commission, BiH's Directorate for European Integration and the EU Info Centers, once again corroborates that the European path offers the best and only strategy for BiH's development.

The majority of citizens support the European integration process, as they are aware that only this way there will be positive and constructive progress for everyone in this country.

All the citizens, NGOs, local administration, political leaders and members of the media must realize the need for

active participation in this process, because integration with the EU is about your future and the future of your children.

Moreover, participation is not merely voting every four years; dialog has to remain open at all times if issues concerning individuals and the entire communities are to be resolved.

The integration of a country into the EU requires constant engagement, dedication, commitment and courage. We are all responsible for the pace of the EU integration process.

Consensus amongst stakeholders will enable faster progress for Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is why I support every event that promotes pro-European forces in this country. I am also supporting this process through my own work; right now we too have an EUSR campaign promoting European integration. The active participation of the citizens at the public debates and through the reci.ba web site confirms the enormous importance of the European perspective for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The EU integration process is a strategic challenge for this country. BiH is a country of strategic significance, located in the very heart of an area that is of primary importance to the EU.

In the coming weeks BiH will sign the SAA with EU. Now is the time to think ahead to consider how some of your local problems can be resolved through the EU integration process. BiH has to be ready to implement the SAA efficiently. This is something we should all be thinking and talking about in the coming days.

Once on the EU path, no country stepped off it. It is therefore an honour to congratulate BiH citizens on 9 May – Europe day because the message coming from BiH is clear; BiH is committed to joining the European Union.