

Interview: Miroslav Lajčák, High Representative/EU Special Representative in BiH: “Lajčák: Kosovo and BiH are not linked”



High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) Miroslav Lajčák said today that Kosovo and BiH were not linked in any way and reiterated that no entity had the right to secede from BiH.

«BiH has its priorities and tasks that it needs to do. They can in no way be linked to Kosovo. I understand the psychological impact that the situation in Kosovo has had in the whole region, but, at the same time, I believe that it is in no one's interest to destabilise the situation in BiH», Lajčák said in an interview to the Beta Agency.

Assessing the political situation in BiH, Lajčák said in an interview to Beta's Sarajevo correspondent, Merima Spahić, that «things in BiH are moving forward, in a good direction, but this progress rests on very fragile foundations».

He said that the progress BiH has achieved so far was insufficiently fast, unstable and worrying.

«Once again we have been witnesses of media bickering and accusation trading that led to increased tensions. Political

parties must show more responsibility, because it is them that will take the credit for the success of BiH, or, in the contrary case, for its failure on the European road», High Representative said.

Lajčak believes that political leaders and representatives of their parties in BiH institutions must take clear positions with regard to the priorities of this state and find a consensus about what needs to be done.

The High Representative emphasised that no entity had the right to secede from Bosnia-Herzegovina and that any challenges posed against the Dayton Agreement were unacceptable.

He assessed that the OHR needed to stay on in BiH with its mandate because recently we have seen some serious crises and attempts of weakening the institutions and legitimacy of the state of BiH.

To the question whether BiH could soon expect the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU if it were to continue in this pace, Lajčak said that «everything depends on Bosnia-Herzegovina», but that that Agreement had to be signed before the transition of the OHR into the EUSR Office could take place.

He expressed hope that the laws on police reform would soon be adopted. He stressed that the BiH Council of Ministers had to continue implementing the reform programme, adopt the Action Plan in line with the European Partnership, and reminded that BiH was the only country in the region that still lacked such a plan.

Commenting on the recent statement by BiH Presidency Chairman Zeljko Komsic, who called Lajčak “a disappointment” because he did not use Bonn powers and allowed the use of anti-Dayton rhetoric, Lajčak said that he believed that it was “more useful to reach an agreement instead of lobbying in the

international community and then go on accusing it for not doing the work that should be done by local politicians”.

“I do not see the role of the High Representative as an instrument for imposing political positions of any political option in issues where dialogue and agreement are needed. Whenever I make decisions, I am guided by what is good and needed for BiH, and not individual politicians. The same goes for when I use Bonn powers,” Lajcak said.

The High Representative stressed that his mandate was to preserve the Dayton Peace Agreement, but that the politicians in BiH must do their job and find solutions.

The High Representative said that his future work would be devoted to strengthening reforms and ensuring that BiH meets its obligations related to Euro-Atlantic integrations.

I have the full support of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) to take all steps necessary for full compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement. Bonn powers are my right and my responsibility. Only I will decide when to use them. That will certainly always be for the benefit of BiH,” Lajcak concluded.