

RSNA decision stalls BiH progress to EU

Last night, the RSNA was given the keys to the gates to Europe, but threw them away. The consequences of this decision are clear. This means that BiH has missed the chance of starting SAA negotiations – the 1st step towards joining the European Union – by the 10th Anniversary of Dayton.

Instead of this anniversary being marked as a celebration of progress, it will be seen as a marker of how one part of BiH held the rest of the country back.

The SDS as the main party of the RS government, as well as other parties who voted in favour of all three RSNA conclusions, including the PDP, bear the chief responsibility for this. They have rejected not just the three EC principles on police reform, but the RS and BiH's whole EU future. By doing so, they have isolated the Serbs in BiH from their neighbours in Belgrade who are on course to start SAA negotiations in three weeks.

BiH, and the RS, could have been in that same position.

The RS Government has been fully involved in the police reform process and all its meetings from the very beginning. They know that no police reform means no Europe. Yet for over a year, and despite clear and repeated explanations from the International Community and European Commission (EC), RS Government members have repeatedly come forward with proposals that do not meet the three EC principles. The EC, and EU member states, have made it abundantly clear that the RSNA's conclusions of 30 May do not meet the EC's three conditions. Since the RS delegation is not offering any proposals that will meet the EC's conditions, there is no

basis for continuing Institutional Talks.

We regret this: the International Community and other BiH parties involved made very considerable concessions to the RS delegation throughout the negotiating process in a genuine effort to accommodate their concerns. The final proposal put before the RSNA included a number of concessions: such as a continued role for the RS MOI in State-level policy decisions for the next few years and an extended implementation period of up to 5 years, even longer than for defence reform. Commissioner Rehn also made it clear that this proposal presented to the RSNA yesterday would meet the EC's criteria.

We are ready to talk when the RS Government can accept this. But all sides must be very clear that there is no point in returning to the talks unless the RS Government is prepared to meet the EC's conditions. The situation could not be clearer. They know who to contact when they are ready.