

Campaign against the HJPCs is irresponsible

The Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, comprising the Ambassadors of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Turkey, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Delegation of the European Commission and the Netherlands (representing the Presidency of the European Union) today issued the following statement:

“An independent and professional judiciary is a fundamental principle for any modern democracy. It is the foundation upon which the rule of law is built, and the ultimate guarantee that every citizen is equal before the law and that nobody is above the law. There can therefore be no compromise on this principle if Bosnia and Herzegovina wishes to meet the standards necessary to join Euroatlantic institutions.

So while we fully respect the right of people to demonstrate peacefully in accordance with the law, we will not waver in our support for the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils. The HJPCs are responsible for ending the decades of politicization in the judiciary, and establishing European standards of competence and probity. They are also doing what they can to rebuild the multiethnic character of the judiciary. They have made more progress towards these goals in the last year than BiH has made in all the years previously since the war.

We therefore fully support the HJPC process as the best chance this country has of establishing a modern independent and multi-ethnic judiciary and meeting European standards in this area. We call on all those who want to see BiH take its rightful place in Europe not to support the irresponsible campaign that is being waged against the HJPCs. We also remind the BiH authorities that they have committed themselves to establish the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH by the end of this month.”