

Address by HR / EUSR Miroslav Lajčák on behalf of Dr. Javier Solana, at the ceremony to mark the initialling of BiH's Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union



I am very happy to witness real progress on BiH's road to the European Union.

Initialling may sound technical but it is of great symbolic importance after months of political paralysis.

Agreement on a better functioning Council of Ministers, streamlined procedures for the Parliament, and an agreed Action Plan on Police Reform show that BiH is capable of solving its problems and overcoming difficulties.

This bodes well for the future, but there is still much work to be done. It is not the beginning of the end. Rather it is the end of the beginning. Today's event shows however that you are able and ready to tackle the difficulties ahead.

In the same spirit, I am confident that you will implement the Action Plan without delay and will soon fulfil the conditions for conclusion of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

BiH therefore has a good chance of catching up with its neighbours.

This is the real priority for Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is your responsibility, your opportunity and our shared objective.

Our presence here in BiH – political, through the EU Special Representative and High Representative, military through EUFOR ALTHEA, and civilian through EUPM, EUMM and of course the European Commission – is gradually transforming according to progress you make. What is not changing is the European Union's strong commitment to stand by BiH and your European future.

Let me conclude by congratulating you for this success today. I hope that you will soon have further successes to celebrate with us. This, however, will depend on you.