

Ambassadors' Statement on the Renaming of BiH's Main International Airport

The Steering Board Ambassadors are fully aware and respect of Alija Izetbegovic's contribution to shaping the country that Bosnia and Herzegovina is today.

However, some key Steering Board ambassadors – today noted their deep concern about the recent decision to rename Bosnia and Herzegovina's main international airport and the airport that serves its capital. In a multi-ethnic country like Bosnia and Herzegovina that has been through a tragic war, this decision will not contribute to the reconciliation process, but rather will undermine it. It will not contribute to the growth of Sarajevo airport as the country's major international hub, it will diminish it. And it will not contribute to the international reputation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but in fact it will erode it.

The main airport of a country, in particular when it serves the capital city has a unique significance. Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, regardless of where they reside in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their ethnicity, have a right to land in their capital, at an airport, which represents a consensus and which makes them feel proud and pleased to come home.

For these reasons, ambassadors at today's meeting of the Steering Board called for the decision to rename Sarajevo international airport to be revised, in a transparent manner and after consultation with representatives of all Constituent Peoples and Others.

Note: Representatives from the following countries agreed to this statement: France, US, UK, Germany, Russian Federation,

Canada, Netherlands, Italy, Japan, European Commission.