

Lajčák and Rehn call for quick return to EU agenda



Welcoming the willingness of party leaders in BiH to return to the European agenda, Miroslav Lajčák and Olli Rehn today stressed the need to normalize the political situation in the country and get back to work. The High Representative and EU Special Representative met with the European Commissioner for Enlargement as part of a one-day visit to the EU capital, where he also addressed the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament.

The Action Plan agreed by party leaders in Sarajevo on 23 November builds on the Mostar declaration and is a further step in the right direction, but it is too early to provide an assessment of the process. "The objective must be to improve the political situation and focus on the reform agenda. Discussion, agreement and compromise is the European way", Lajčák said following his meeting with Commissioner Rehn.

In his address to EU parliamentarians, the High Representative and EU Special Representative provided an assessment of the economic and political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, arguing that the European integration process is the best way to reform the country's systems of administration and government.

By failing to reach an agreement on police reform in September, political leaders in effect rejected a commitment they made to the EU two years ago. It is in this context that

the High Representative acted on 19 October to enhance the efficiency of the Council of Ministers and Parliament. "If there is no European process to improve the functionality of the state, this can and must be addressed through the existing framework of the Dayton Peace Agreement," Lajčák said.

The measures will enable the government and the legislature to tackle the huge backlog of business that must be dispatched to address Bosnia and Herzegovina's pressing social and economic needs, as well as the massive legislative agenda that accompanies EU integration, Lajčák said.

He also made clear that, as soon as the BiH political leadership starts to resolve issues of dysfunctionality and political gridlock on their own, it will no longer be necessary for interventions by the High Representative.

The International Community is not a well-meaning bystander in the politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina; it has invested enormous financial and political capital in the post-war rebuilding of the country and its institutions; it is a guarantor of the settlement that has maintained peace in the country for more than a decade, and it must show that it continues to take this duty seriously, the High Representative and EU Special Representative concluded.