

Lajčák: Europe Must Re-Focus Attention on Bosnia and Herzegovina



The European Union must refocus its attention on Bosnia and Herzegovina, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Miroslav Lajčák, said in London today. The HR/EUSR was speaking during a meeting with British Minister for Europe Caroline Flint.

The HR/EUSR stressed that the International Community will have to address the damage done to Bosnia and Herzegovina's post-war recovery and its prospects for integration in the European Union as a result of irresponsible statements and tactics adopted by politicians in both Entities.

The HR/EUSR briefed Ms Flint on the progress that has been made on meeting the five objectives and two conditions laid down by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council in February. He noted that agreement has not yet been reached among the domestic parties that would allow them to meet two of the conditions: the fair and orderly allocation of state property and resolving the constitutional status of Brčko. At the same time, the chances of meeting the second condition – so that the PIC is in a position to make a positive assessment of the situation based on full compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement – appear to be increasingly remote.

The HR/EUSR will expand on this theme in a speech, which he

will deliver at the London School of Economics this evening. He will say that BiH is widely and rightly regarded as a successful example of international post-conflict intervention, but will call on the International Community to stay fully engaged because BiH and the wider region “will not be wholly secure until they are all integrated in the European Union and NATO.”

Lajčák will warn that the lack of progress on constitutional reform means that EU membership may be postponed since, “as Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn has often remarked, Bosnia cannot aspire to membership with a constitution in place that denies the state the ability to enact or enforce EU legislation – or which violates European human rights standards in several respects.”

In his speech, the HR/EUSR will say that when the OHR is finally shut down the mandate of the EUSR must be strengthened “consonant with Bosnia’s unique (and uniquely difficult) circumstances.”

“Bosnia deserves and requires special treatment,” he will say. “It is not a normal candidate country and cannot fulfil the normal EU conditionality and accession criteria on its own.”

The HR/EUSR is in London as part of a series of consultations ahead of this month’s meeting of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, which will consider how to deal with political obstacles that have halted progress in BiH’s postwar recovery and Euro-Atlantic integration.