Gregorian: Rejecting Police Reform is Rejecting European Integration

Rejecting police reform is actually rejecting European integration, the Principal Deputy High Representative,Raffi Gregorian, wrote in an article that appeared in *Euroblic* today.

“Rhetorically at least, many political leaders in Republika Srpska appear to believe that they can both support Bosnia and Herzegovina’s European integration and reject police reform,” Dr Gregorian wrote. “The problem with this position is that without police reform, Bosnia and Herzegovina has no prospect of European integration.”

The Principal Deputy High Representative pointed out that the European Union agreed to launch talks on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina only after it had been assured through the Police Reform Agreement on 5 October 2005 that the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and both entities were serious about police restructuring based on the three EU principles.

“Lest we forget, it was Milorad Dodik and Dragan Cavic who proposed the text of the Police Reform Agreement that was subsequently accepted by Federation-based parties, the international community and the European Union,” Dr Gregorian continued.

The Principal Deputy High Representative also pointed out that the Police Reform Directorate has produced a good report based on the Police Reform Agreement. “Solutions are on the table for resolving remaining outstanding issues in a way that everyone gets what they need, if not all that they want. And

we have already come extremely close to a deal," he wrote.

And he concluded by warning that: "Starting the same process over again, as some politicians claim is inevitable, will set Bosnia and Herzegovina back several years but will have no impact on the eventual outcome of police reform. The issues remain the same; the EU principles remain the same; and the areas for compromise remain the same."

The text of the Principal Deputy High Representative's article can be accessed at www.ohr.int.