

Statement by the High Representative and EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajčák



Today is a day for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A long road and much hard work and compromise lies ahead of Bosnia and Herzegovina but today we can all; BiH citizens, the political leadership and the International Community, allow ourselves a moment congratulations.

Though many challenges lie ahead we must never forget how far we have come in the thirteen years since the country lay broken by years of bloody and divisive war. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina take the credit for this.

The political leadership has shown they are capable of finding the common language necessary to set the country on the road to EU membership – a road that once embarked upon, no country has ever veered off.

This is a moment in which all the countries that invested so massively to rebuild BiH can feel a sense of satisfaction. A moment too for all those who left their own home countries to come to work for Bosnia and Herzegovina

The achievement that we are marking today is domestically owned, just as the challenges that lie ahead are Bosnia and

Herzegovina's challenges.

Today's event is also a clear confirmation of the EU's commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina, to help make the goal of EU accession a success, to guarantee that that the country will never again slide back into bloody conflict.

Making conflict impossible was one of the goals that drove the creation of the EU fifty years ago, and today it is one of the reasons why support for the EU in BiH is huge and growing; the most recent polls say that support across BiH for the EU has reached 85%. This considerable support is also a reflection of our EU campaign, when I visited 16 cities and met several thousands of people across BiH and debated with them on BiH's integration into the EU.

This support is an encouragement for the EU, and the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina have a duty not to fail their citizens' expectations.

When today's agreement enters into force in two weeks' time, Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leadership and institutions must be ready – we, the EU, will be there to help.