



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

D - Western Balkans
D.4 - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo

Brussels

Dear Mr Ramić, dear Mr Draganović,

Thank you for your message of 13 January addressed to Commission President von der Leyen, in which expressing your concern on the current political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and transmit the list of signatories of your letter. The President has asked me to reply to you.

Allow me to congratulate you on the success of the initiative you organised on 10 January in Brussels and in many other cities. At that very moment, my colleagues were discussing the situation in your country with representatives of EU Member States in the EU Council.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a future in the EU only as a single, united and sovereign country. President von der Leyen reiterated this message during her visit to your country in September 2021, and made it clear in particular that it is crucial for the country to unblock State institutions and start working on much needed reforms.

The EU deeply regrets the prolonged political crisis, which has held back progress on reforms, and condemns the blockage of the State institutions. The path currently taken by Republika Srpska (RS) may only lead to isolation. Initiatives aimed at withdrawing from State institutions are unacceptable and endanger the country's EU accession path. The EU also firmly condemns the rhetoric and actions by RS leaders during the unconstitutional celebrations of 9 January, which have further heightened tensions. The RS leadership should put an end to a worrying trend of hatred and intolerance. There is no place in the European Union for minimisation and denial of war crimes and genocide, nor for the glorification of war criminals.

The EU expects Republika Srpska entity representatives to urgently return in full capacity to the work of State institutions and ensure they function properly; this is key for Bosnia and Herzegovina to fully benefit from EU programmes and funds and foster socio economic recovery from the pandemic. Without fully functioning State institutions, Bosnia and Herzegovina is at risk of losing significant financial assistance, as Commissioner Várhelyi clearly stated during his visit to the country in November 2021.

Mr Emir Ramić, on behalf of Organization Committee of the protests: 'the World for Bosnia and Herzegovina'

Mr Hamdija Draganović, 'Platform BiH', the Netherlands

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Together with the United States, and in close cooperation with the Council of Europe's Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR, the EU is also committed to facilitate a dialogue on constitutional and electoral reforms to make it possible for all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to compete for the Presidency and House of Peoples without discrimination, thus complying with the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights.

These and other reforms in the areas of democracy and functionality, rule of law, fundamental rights and public administration reform are key for Bosnia and Herzegovina to fulfil the 14 key priorities from the Commission Opinion on the EU membership application of the country, and advance on its EU path.

Bosnia and Herzegovina belongs in the European Union. We expect all political leaders to focus on this European agenda, and we thank you and the rest of civil society for raising their attention to these vital matters for a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future for every citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I would like to thank you once more for your letter and for your commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU accession perspective.

Yours sincerely,

[E-signed]

Vassilis Maragos
Head of Unit