August 10, 2022

The Right Honorable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.

Prime Minister of Canada

Office of the Prime Minister

80, rue Wellington Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Cc:

The Honourable Mélanie Joly

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Global Affairs Canada

125 Sussex Drive Ottawa ON K1A 0G2

Dear Prime Minister:

The Bosnian community in Canada, as well as the competent State authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, have repeatedly requested the reopening of the Canadian embassy in Sarajevo.

The Bosnian community in Canada, the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also many prominent Canadians believe that the reopening would mean a lot to the much-needed democratization of Bosnian society and the State, the process of Euro-Atlantic integration, better diplomatic, economic, cultural and scientific connection between the two States.

In the current geopolitical conditions, it is especially important to reopen the Canadian embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thirty years after the armed conflict, Bosnia and Herzegovina is faced with instabilities, ethnic divisions, religious rivalries, genocide denial and painful memories, but also influence from Moscow.

There is a fear among many in Canada and Bosnia and Herzegovina that Russia is looking for new locations to foment unrest, to divert attention from what is happening in Ukraine and avoid the expansion of the European unity. In this way Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its divisions and instability, might be seen like a perfect candidate. Bearing this in mind, Canada, which has done so much for the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, should consider reopening its embassy in Sarajevo.

The Canadian Embassy in Sarajevo was officially closed on August 1, 2009, and the Government of Canada justified this sudden decision by reviewing the economic justification of diplomatic missions around the world.

The Embassy of Canada in Sarajevo was closed in the midst of the struggle of the citizens and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina for a better future for their country and society. The sudden closure of the embassy came despite the fact that at that time there were still Canadian peacekeeping forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the most successful peacekeeping force in Canadian history.

The first official request for the reopening of the Canadian embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina was proposed, this letter reminds, during the official visit to Canada of the delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, led by Minister Igor Crnatak, who met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Stephane Dion on July 16, 2016.

The Canadian minister promised that Canada, in accordance with the new governing liberal policy of opening Canada to the world, will seriously reconsider the issue of reopening the Canadian embassy in Sarajevo.

Moreover, Minister Dion promised that soon Canada will open an honorary consulate in Sarajevo. Unfortunately, since then, nothing serious has been done in terms of improving Canada's diplomatic profile in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Through the parliamentary electronic petition e1455 on the official website of the Parliament of Canada, sponsored by the member of the Parliament of Canada Bob Bratina, several hundred Canadians demanded the reopening of the Canadian embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The signatories of the petition believe that opening the embassy would establish a direct link with Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as communication with governmental organizations and departments within Bosnia Herzegovina, and with non-governmental organizations. Moreover, a significant contribution would be made to promoting Bosnia and Herzegovina’s tourism potential, social and administrative protocols and activities would be improved. In addition, investor communication and the exchange process of students and professional staff at higher education institutions, companies, sports associations would be facilitated. Finally, it is an opportunity for the Canadian government to involve its diplomatic talents in improving democratic processes in Bosnia and Hercegovina.

Canada is still a member of the Board of Directors of the Council for the Implementation of Peace in Bosnia and Hercegovina. More than 100,000 citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina live in Canada, and most of them are recognized members of the Canadian community, who are concerned about the fact that Canada does not have its own diplomatic representation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Canadian Embassy in Sarajevo could directly influence and prevent political and ethnic tensions on the ground in accordance with Canadian experiences and political tradition.

Partly in view of the geopolitical developments, but also because of the developments in the Balkans, we hereby ask, in the name of the Bosnian community, both in Canada as well as in Bosnia Herzegovina itself, to the Canadian government to take as soon as possible into consideration the reopening of the embassy in Sarajevo.

Sincerely,

Dr. Emir Ramić

Bosnian Canadian Community