

BiH Dayton Project



“Let us build a better future together. The time is now!” says Ambassador Soreca in video message following his first visit to Banja Luka

 October 18, 2024

The EU Delegation to BiH posted a [press release](#) about Ambassador Luigi Soreca's visit to Banja Luka. The full text of the press release is below.

17.10.2024

Banja Luka, BiH

Press and information team of the Delegation to BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA

The Head of the EU Delegation and the EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina Ambassador Luigi Soreca visited Banja Luka for the first time on 16 and 17 October 2024 where he met with political stakeholders in Republika Srpska, the Director of the Directorate for Indirect Taxation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and with representatives of civil society organizations.

Following his meetings, ambassador Soreca delivered a video message noting that it is essential for all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to make their contribution to the EU path, and calling on political leaders in Republika Srpska and across Bosnia and Herzegovina to take action in the coming weeks to ensure progress.

Ambassador Soreca video message Banja Luka

- Greetings from the historic Kastel in beautiful Banja Luka. It is a pleasure to visit this city for the very first time.
- It is essential that all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina make their contribution to the EU path. Here in Banja Luka, I have had meetings with representatives of the RS authorities and opposition, as well as civil society and the media.
- I look forward to further discussions in Republika Srpska, as well as across BiH, about how we can accelerate progress towards EU accession.
- EU membership remains the best certainty of a better future for BiH. Indeed, a majority of BiH citizens, including in Republika Srpska, wish for an EU future.
- The path to EU accession brings with it many benefits, including increased economic opportunities, a stronger fight against corruption and rule of law, higher environmental standards, and most importantly of all, greater security and stability.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina already enjoys many of the benefits of close cooperation with the EU, including participation in EU programmes, for example Erasmus+ for educational exchange, Horizon Europe for research and innovation, Creative Europe for arts and culture, Digital Europe and EU4Health.
- As we were reminded recently during the tragic floods, Bosnia and Herzegovina also is a member of the EU's mechanism for solidarity in times of crisis – the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

- We aim to deepen our cooperation, including through the Growth Plan, which will strengthen the economic integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the European Single Market and the Common Regional Market.
- But for our relationship to grow further we need political will from all stakeholders.
- I am standing in Kastel, which was refurbished with an investment from the EU of €3.6 million. The EU and its member states are consistently loyal friends to citizens here. By a large margin we are the largest partner of this country, including in the areas of entrepreneurship, infrastructure, digitalisation, energy transition, agriculture, water quality, education, healthcare and more.
- The next few weeks will be crucial in getting Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU path back on track. I call on political leaders in Republika Srpska as well as across Bosnia and Herzegovina to use the opportunity available, as well as citizens to make their voice heard.
- Together, we want to move forward, not backwards. The EU will be at your side to support a positive political environment, dialogue and compromise, but we will also decisively oppose backsliding and divisive moves.
- Let us build a better future together. The time is now!

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