

Joint statement by Co-Chairs Nebojša Radmanović (Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Romeo Franz (European Parliament)

17 June 2021

Following the 2nd meeting of the EU-BiH Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee on 17 June 2021 Co-Chairs Nebojša Radmanović (Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Romeo Franz (European Parliament) stated:

It is with a sense of deep satisfaction that we concluded the second meeting of the EU-Bosnia and Herzegovina Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee, long after it first convened in Sarajevo in November 2015. At the time, we were unable to adopt the Rules of Procedure governing our meetings. However, in the end the hurdles were overcome and we were able to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution. Today's adoption of the Rules of Procedure not only paves the way for holding regular meetings but is also a decisive step towards fully meeting one of the 14 key priorities set with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for EU membership.

We also engaged in a constructive debate on EU-Bosnia and Herzegovina relations and the overall situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our exchanges mainly focused on issues related to the implementation of the aforementioned 14 key priorities. We acknowledge that these priorities are non-negotiable and therefore a *conditio sine qua non* for Bosnia and Herzegovina to further advance on its EU integration path, obtain candidate country status and open accession negotiations.

We concur that progress in meeting the 14 key priorities has so far remained limited and that the year ahead provides a unique window of opportunity to decisively move forward, as no elections will take place in Bosnia and Herzegovina within that timeframe. The tasks ahead are challenging. We therefore call on all parties to act with determination and without delay, to refrain from divisive discourse and to be guided by the European Union motto 'United in diversity'.

While we welcome the EU's assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, including post-pandemic recovery aid measures, we strongly believe that the EU could and should do more, in particular in terms of providing meaningful quantities of vaccines to its immediate neighbours.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as it has in other countries. More than ever parliaments should be able to fully exercise their powers of oversight of the executive. In that sense the resumption of our inter-parliamentary cooperation is also very timely. We look forward to holding the next SAPC meeting during the second half of 2021, thus breathing new life into the parliamentary dimension of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, which constitutes the legal basis for the relationship between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina.