



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
PRIME MINISTER

Ljubljana, 8 July 2022

Dear President of the European Council, *Dear Charles*

Dear President of the European Commission, *Dear Ursula*

Discussion on the Western Balkans at June European Council showed once again that enlargement of the European Union is the crucial geopolitical choice for Europe. It also showed that due to the Russian aggression on Ukraine and its consequences, enlargement to Western Balkans is now more important than ever.

We have agreed to revert to Bosnia and Herzegovina following the Commission's report on the implementation of the key priorities set out in its opinion with special attention to those, which constitute a substantial set of reforms.

As mentioned by many of us during our June discussion, it is high time the EU seriously reflects on its current approach to BiH, taking into account also the following realities:

- 1. BiH went through a period of war that permanently divided the BiH politics, administrative setup and its society as a whole. But one thing is clear: we would insert a positive momentum into the currently divisive political agenda by granting BiH the EU candidate status, thus strengthening progressive, forward-looking behaviour.*

H.E.

Mr. Charles Michel

President of the European Council

BRUSSELS

H.E.

Mrs Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

BRUSSELS

2. *While the primary reason for the country's stagnation is a consequence of the BiH political elites' conflicting visions of BiH and same elites' unwillingness to achieve the necessary compromises to move the country forward, international community, including the EU, is a stakeholder in BiH. International community has been heavily active in the country since the war, but regardless its numerous efforts the country has failed to implement the conditions for the EU candidate status.*
3. *The war in Ukraine is not a game changer for the Western Balkans. It must be an eye-opener. Malign influences have been infiltrating our Western Balkans backyard for years. It is now high time to mark the space by opening EU doors to BiH via granting the country the EU candidate status.*

The EU candidate status should be given to BiH based on the fulfilment of realistic conditions. The EU must take into account the afore-mentioned complexities in the country, EU's co-responsibility for the situation in BiH and the new, changed geopolitical reality in Europe, including its potential influence on BiH.

Concretely, we believe that prior to granting the EU candidate status, BiH must adopt the following legislations, as listed in the Political agreement from June 12, 2022:

- a) *Law on BiH High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council,*
- b) *Public Procurement law.*

Furthermore, it would be important that BiH adopts Public Administration Reform Strategy and Action Plan and Public Finance Management Strategy, thus showing its commitment to improving its public administration/governance.

The above mentioned and the conduct of free and fair October 2022 elections in BiH would indicate a sufficient BiH commitment to the EU, thus representing a basis for granting the country the EU candidate status by the end of this year, at the December 2022 European Council at the latest.


Robert Golob

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