

Statement by
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic
H.E. Miroslav Lajčák

Seminar
The Impact of the EUPM in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2002-2012
Sarajevo, 8 June 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As always it is a great pleasure for me to be back again in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am therefore glad for having this opportunity today to share with you my thoughts on one of the success stories in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which the EUPM has undoubtedly been.

I think this is the right occasion to recall that the EUPM has been the first and the longest running EU-civilian crisis management mission. During almost a decade it went through challenging times. Over that period its mandate evolved from supporting the police reform to focusing on fight against organized crime and corruption. Thanks to this capacity the Mission and the EU have proven enough flexibility to respond adequately to the needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path to the EU. The EUPM thus became a clear success within the CSDP.

The EUPM's results are self-evident, and they need no artificial political embellishment. The mission has significantly contributed to the development of the local police environment - both functional and operational. The Mission did it with full involvement and under the leadership of domestic actors.

- The EUPM contributed to the transformation of the SIPA to an operational police agency with extended competences in the field of fight against organised crime and corruption;
- The EUPM positively influenced the successful development of state institutions, in particular, the Ministry of Security and the Border Police;
- The EUPM assisted in the difficult police reform process, which resulted in the creation of the Directorate for Police Coordination at the state level;
- The EUPM contributed through its activities to an increased number of major operations aimed at fight against organised crime under the leadership of the local police force and with an accent on cross-border and regional cooperation and coordination.

It is therefore no exaggeration to state that the Mission helped to create effective institutions on all levels in the fields of security and justice, that is in the fields which will face significant challenges in the EU integration process.

3

One of the most discussed aspects of the EUPM's work was coordination. In the difficult political system, that is so characteristic for Bosnia and Herzegovina, it could not be otherwise. We were lucky enough to have the mission that has brought together police experts from different European states. They possessed experience from different forms of police organization and thus had knowledge of different nuances of coordination activities. In Europe there are many decentralized models of police organization. If they work well and effectively, they can have also flawless coordination mechanisms.

Although sometimes it was not easy, we have to admit that the Mission was successful in helping to change Bosnian political mentalities and brought the institutions and practices in line with EU-standards. In the time of major political tensions concerning the shape of the police reform, when the part of the international community insisted on the monolithic police model for Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was the EUPM experts who represented the voice of wisdom and realism and who helped to de-politicise the question. Their approach, experience as well as the intimate knowledge of the local police environment helped to find a politically acceptable model of the reform. This is what, in the end, helped to sign the SAA.

The adoption of the police laws back in 2008 created a momentum for the Mission's central role in the following implementation of this legislation and maximizing its potential. I had the unique opportunity to follow very closely and co-produce this process in the capacity of the HR/EUSR. I remember the Mission's enormous efforts to overcome the fragmentation of the law enforcement agencies, to contribute to solid development of the Ministry of Security and Border Police, and to help establishing the Directorate for Police Coordination. All of these activities ran along with constant fight against organized crime and corruption as the biggest problems which Bosnia and Herzegovina is unfortunately still facing.

4

Special appreciation should be expressed to the EUPM – and its individual members – for remaining apolitical and strictly professional even during the toughest moments of its involvement. This has never been an easy task in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where every opinion and approach coming from outside is being evaluated through the prism of interests, opinions and fears of the respective national establishments. The mission managed to resist the temptation to participate in the political discourse on the legislation by supporting one or another political option, even though the politicians might have wished so. It has always followed a strictly expert and technical aspect of its mandate. This professional approach allowed the EUPM to maintain high credit in all political environments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has never been suspicious of being biased to particular interests. This was positively reflected both in political circles and in the wider public. High level of trust with regards to the Mission among the ordinary citizens proves it. At the same time, this approach allowed the mission to demonstrate a high level of trust towards the domestic institutions and their ability to tackle the challenges and the open questions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Being here today in capacity of a member of the Slovak government I am proud that - by actively deploying our experts in the Mission - Slovakia has also contributed to this success. I am sure their expertise can also be used in the future within the continued EU engagement, or through bilateral cooperation between Slovakia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are ready and willing to offer experience from our own integration and transition and forward our know-how through special programs and projects of Slovak Official Development Assistance.

5

Although the Mission will be closed down this summer it must be stressed that the EU is not reducing its commitment and support to Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in the field of the rule of law. On the contrary, the EU - following its own promises given in the Council Conclusions from March 2011 - will continue in this engagement with a new quality. This has resulted in the reinforced single presence represented by the EUSR and the strengthened EU delegation in the country. In the field of rule of law it means that the EU put its efforts and support under one roof. Firstly, the technical support will continue under the IPA (*Instrument for pre-accession*). Secondly, at the strategic level, strong support in the rule of law area will be driven by the newly established Law enforcement section (*both within the office of the EU Special Representative*). The body should build up strong relations with local authorities and fulfil the role of a strategic advisor in order to avoid any gaps or setbacks on what has already been achieved. Strong support of EU and its member states will be obvious.

The EU has much more to offer when it comes to assistance for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Here I would like to mention, especially, the structured dialogue led by the European Commission. Within this framework Bosnian leaders have good opportunity to move the country forward. Furthermore, in order to make sure that Bosnia and Herzegovina speaks with one voice when it comes to EU matters, the European Commission is preparing the High Level Dialogue on the Accession Process at the end of June this year, to encourage country's authorities to establish joint coordination mechanism, which is needed to remain on the path towards the EU integration (*which may prove particularly difficult in the rule of law area*).

After a period of stagnation (*2010-11*) the year 2012 could be crucial for the progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path towards the EU. Let me express my belief that politicians of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be responsible enough, so that more progress can be achieved soon. The implementation of the sentence in SEJDIĆ-FINCI case should be on the top priority list, just as the highly important agreement on the fiscal frame for 2012-14 and adoption of the state budget for 2012.

6

The EU still can and still wants to offer a lot to Bosnia and Herzegovina. But main responsibility for the country still lies on the shoulders of its politicians. Solutions have to be found, first of all, locally - by Bosnian representatives and by putting all necessary efforts needed to find the common ground through constructive dialogue.

EUPM did achieve a maximum of what was possible within its mandate of "technical assistance". The future will show how successful it was. It will be important to continue the cooperation in the regional framework and with the EU (EUROPOL). Only in this way it will be possible to face the growing threat of organised crime and terrorism. The work of the EUPM has laid the foundation for the cooperation with the EU, the goal of which will be to implement the "acquis communautaire" criteria. There are still areas that need further EU-support at political level, such as resumption of the police reform, sustainability of institutions and processes and accountability of police.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The mission is coming to an end, but the results of its work persist and will be further developed through deepening cooperation with European institutions and the Member States in the process of Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration. Already today, we know that this mission is one of the most concrete and most successful inputs of the EU in the post-conflict environment, creating a linkage with the integration environment. I am sure this seminar will be fruitful and will summarize the main lessons learned which could be used also in the future. I wish the seminar a success!

Thank You for Your attention and I look forward to a good discussion.