



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Press Statement by the
President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy
following the meeting with
the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
Mr. Bakir Izetbegović**

It is my pleasure to again meet Mr. Bakir Izetbegović, the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

His visit to Brussels comes at an important and encouraging moment. Bosnia and Herzegovina has overcome a long political stalemate, which followed the October 2010 elections. A new state level government was established last month and many other important developments have taken place.

The European Union welcomes this positive momentum. We encourage the Bosnian leaders to remain united and continue economic and political reforms. Such reforms will not only increase political stability, strengthen democratic institutions and improve economy, they will also speed up progress towards the European Union. I am pleased that President Izetbegović has reaffirmed to me, at the highest political level, his country's commitment to the European agenda and his enthusiasm for further progress.

Regarding the next steps, it is important to enable the entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, which all EU Member States have already ratified. We expect a credible effort from Bosnia and Herzegovina in bringing the Constitution in line with the European Convention on Human Rights. The EU stands ready to complete the ratification process as soon as this has been achieved. At the same time, we strongly encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to fully implement the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the Sejdic – Finci case, and thus open the door for its further European integration.

P R E S S

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Once again, I would like to underline my strong support to the European perspective of the Western Balkans, which I have identified as one of the priorities during my second mandate. The European Council has recently taken important decisions on Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo, and further steps will follow once the right conditions have been met. I have had the privilege to meet with a number of leaders from the region in recent months to encourage them to keep the pace of reforms.

Following my recent meeting with Prime Minister Bevanđa and today's discussions with President Izetbegović, I feel reassured that the positive momentum of the past few months will be transformed into the continuous and persistent progress. It is my belief that also Bosnia and Herzegovina has all the possibilities to reach its European goal, if determined efforts continue.
