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Press release

Joint Statement by Delara Burkhardt, MEP and Adis Ahmetović, MP on the Unconstitutional National Day of Republika Srpska (RS) - "Attacks on democratic, free Bosnia and Herzegovina must be stopped"

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Joint Statement by Delara Burkhardt, MEP and Adis Ahmetović, MP on the Unconstitutional National Day of Republika Srpska (RS) - "Attacks on democratic, free Bosnia and Herzegovina must be stopped"

"The unconstitutional 'holiday' marking the establishment of Republika Srpska (RS) is an attack by political officials on free, democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and once again proof of their dangerous, recurring game with the past. Despite the 2015 decision of the Constitutional Court, the day is used by Milorad Dodik and other actors to ethno-nationalize the entity and instrumentalized to maintain the narrative of the threatened RS.

This ignorant approach triggers bitter memories, especially among displaced persons and survivors of the Bosnian war, and is perceived as a sharp provocation. This is one of the reasons why we demand from the OHR, respectively from the High Representative Christian Schmidt, to act consistently here and to use all available measures.

As Europeans, we must not allow history to repeat itself in the Western Balkans and must always be aware of our historical responsibility. Only recently BiH became a candidate for EU accession. With hope for democracy and European values. Now the country is once again shaken by nationalist excesses: Those who want to support the rule of law and democracy and thus a European perspective BiH, must not remain passive here. We therefore also call on the EU Commission to work preventively with the relevant authorities and those responsible to prevent this from happening. If necessary, sanctions against involved institutions of Republika Srpska and central actors must be enforced and further EU funds must be frozen. EU Enlargement Commissioner Várhelyi in particular must act decisively now.



Germany and the EU will continue to work together this year to drive forward the turning point in German and European policy towards the Balkans. We are committed not only to the goal of EU membership for the six Western Balkan countries of Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, northern Macedonia and Serbia, but also to the creation of new prospects for young people, greater cooperation in the field of climate and energy policy and the intensification of economic promotion. To this end, we will work together with the countries to fight corruption and promote the rule of law.

Finally, we would like to appeal to all people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the diaspora: No matter what ethnic group and religion you belong to, do not be unsettled by such displayed nationalism. The best response to these attempts at division and the hatred shown is a sign of empathy and respect. Hang flags of sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina throughout BiH - whether in Mostar, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Banja Luka, etc. - and raise the flags of the EU. Let us light up the country in the colors of blue, yellow and white."