



ADDRESS

**by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dr Dimitrij Rupel
at the Conference "Dayton Ten Years After"
Sarajevo, 29 November 2005**

“New times for Bosnia and Herzegovina”

Dear Minister(s),

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Guests,

Dear Friends!

- It is a pleasure to be present here today on such a memorable occasion, and to share my thoughts with and listen to old friends, people who have made a great contribution to shaping modern Bosnia-and-Herzegovina.
- The recent agreement reached in Washington to review the Constitution of Bosnia-and-Herzegovina is a step in the right direction, and it comes at the right time. As much as I'm optimistic about the future of this country, I wish to caution that we must be careful when adjusting the Dayton framework so as not to reduce the rights of the three ethnicities which make up BiH. This would not bring about greater efficiency; I'm afraid quite to the contrary, it could provoke destructive reactions.
- I say this because I believe Bosnia-and-Herzegovina has made remarkable progress in the years since Dayton. We know from other examples in history that post-war integration is a very long and bumpy process; and in fact, few post-war societies have been able to achieve the level of re-integration we're now seeing in this country.
- Dayton came three years after my visit to Sarajevo in 1992, and three years after my report to President Bush Senior during a visit of the Central European Initiative delegation in the White House. It is a question what took the international community so long to deal with the problem of BiH.

- The EU signed the SAA agreement with BiH last week, and I hope this effectively marks a new beginning for this country: What many refer to now as the beginning of the Brussels Era.
- Bosnia-and-Herzegovina belongs in the European Union, but the EU integration process is a lengthy road, and many difficult political decisions will have to be made. Now is the time for vision and strong leadership. Certain sacrifices or concessions are inevitable in order to complete this next step of reunification of Bosnia-and-Herzegovina.
- From our own experience in Slovenia I can say that the EU integration process is a lengthy road which requires major adjustments in terms of reforms. To integrate itself progressively with the EU, Bosnia needs stronger and more efficient state institutions. I mean institutions that are serving all their citizens, independently of their ethnicity. To deliver the benefits that its citizens deserve, Bosnia needs to reduce the cost of government. No country can win the loyalty of its people as long as it spends more than 60 % of their taxes on government and the rest on services!

Ladies and gentlemen,

- The international community has experimented with at least three different models of state formation subsequent to the dissolution of Yugoslavia. One of them is Dayton, which given the political circumstances and balance of power on the ground at the time, was a big achievement. Another is the Ohrid agreement. The latter succeeded in turning the Albanians and Macedonians into political stake-holders of a shared constituent body—the Macedonian state. Recently, the European Commission has recommended to the EU Member states to grant candidate status to Macedonia.
- Still the third model is Kosovo, which remains an unfinished story. I have certain ideas about what could be a stable final outcome, but the process is now in the hands of Martti Ahtisaari, the UN Special Envoy for Kosovo status. A solution for Kosovo will be found.
- The only message that should be repeated at this point is that the future of Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and of course Bosnia-Herzegovina is in the context of the European Union. The only addition that I have is that this future should come soon.

- The 21st century is about variety, multicultural coexistence and understanding. Let us be realists and let us advocate stability. This means that we should dedicate as much attention to Serbia as we are dedicating to Kosovo.
- As we enter this crucial period of renegotiating the BiH Constitution, I wish to discourage those who think a territorial swap — Kosovo for Republika Srpska — is somehow on the table for discussion. Far from it.
- This would mean the end of Bosnia, the end of regional stability, and a further delay in bringing this region closer to the EU. We cannot afford further delaying as far as reforms and governance adjustments are concerned. To the contrary, the opportunity cost of not being inside the EU will only keep growing for the Western Balkan countries. Second, there are no grounds upon which we can compare Kosovo to Republika Srpska.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- The political stage in Bosnia-and-Herzegovina must be united in its quest towards an EU future, and I would think that efficient democratic governance is a precondition for successful EU integration.
- A number of Dayton objectives remain unfinished, however. Refugee and IDP resettlements must continue, and in fact, conditions should be improved for refugee returns. Second, the arrests of the indicted war criminals are not negotiable.
- This condition must be met in Bosnia-and-Herzegovina and elsewhere in the territories of the former Yugoslavia. Respect for the rule of law is a cardinal principle of modern Europe, and we cannot negotiate on this.

Dear friends,

- Although the OSCE played no part in the making of the Dayton peace, it was entrusted at Dayton with the responsibility for organising and running the elections that were then regarded as the principal element in civilian peace implementation.

- The OSCE has since yielded control over elections to the domestic authorities, and has assumed a co-ordinating role in such matters as defence and education reform. It is clear that the nature of the OSCE mission in BiH is changing, which only goes to show that BiH is moving forward and becoming a viable state.
- Let me conclude by saying that our big next challenge is to figure out how to best prepare Bosnia-and-Herzegovina for its integration into the EU.
- I look forward to the upcoming discussions, and I certainly hope we will generate some new ideas at this conference, which the OSCE is proud to sponsor.

Thank you!