



Herzegovina's lack of progress is creating for Europe at a time of gigantic economic hardship. While Europe still has to pay too much attention to this region many years after the wars, other – potentially far more dangerous – situations remain unattended to: the fate of the Palestinians in Gaza; the random killings in sub-Saharan Africa; Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran; and challenges of global proportions like climate change and the growing conflict for scarce natural resources, as Europe experienced only recently with regard to Russian gas supplies.

Against this backdrop of mounting global challenges, the urgency of renewed and serious efforts to quickly arrive at a common agenda and create a new partnership between Europe and Bosnia and Herzegovina is patently clear.

### Framing a partnership

What we suggest is for Europe and Bosnia and Herzegovina to embark on a joint search for a decidedly more successful state-building process. What are the essential elements of a viable Bosnia and Herzegovina in an enlarged Europe? It has been stated time and again that the present administrative structures are unsustainable and that the many layers of governance are wasting the money of everyone concerned. Let us thus together change the country's constitutional set-up and get money and resources to where they are urgently needed.

Once agreed on these – extremely well-known – necessary changes, decisions on a realistic timeframe, on a budget, on the monitoring mechanism and possible sanctions could be fixed. After broad consultations with Bosnian stakeholders – government and civil society alike – about the profile of the next international representative, the EU could then decide on the person to lead this effort.

We are convinced that – if taken seriously in both Brussels and Sarajevo – this novel partnership among all parties involved would finally put Bosnia and Herzegovina on the road to local ownership and political responsibility. It would in turn enhance the responsibility and accountability of the international community – especially the EU – as well.

The international community must take a position and be actively involved in discussions on such a partnership. The purpose of the proposed new partnership agenda of joint responsibility between the EU (backed by the US) and Bosnia and Herzegovina could give a new impetus for the long overdue reforms. A new wind is blowing in Washington. Change is also possible in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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