Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton

at the press point with President Izetbegović and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton after the meeting with BiH Presidency

Thank you very much President Izetbegović, Secretary Hillary and everybody. It is great honour to be in this fabulous city of Sarajevo I am here today to underline our strong joint commitment for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We want to see a united, stable, prosperous, multi-ethnic country taking its rightful place in European and Transatlantic structures.

I want to be clear that there is no doubt among the 27 Member States of the European Union that your future is in the European Union. Today, I want to underline that the EU perspective is real and has our unanimous support.

I am also here to say that action is required from the country's political leaders. To make its EU future real, to achieve what the overwhelming majority of citizens here want, it is important to look beyond domestic divisions, political rivalries and vested interests. Otherwise, this country, risks being left behind by other countries in the region, who are making progress towards the EU.

I believe people here want the real, pressing challenges – such as the economy, jobs, the rule of law – to be addressed. There is no time to waste on unproductive debates, such as those which question the statehood of this country.

Today, I've encouraged the Presidency to work together with all political forces to achieve quick and concrete progress on the EU agenda.

I believe the first priority is to put into effect the European Court of Human Rights ruling in the Sejdic – Finci case. That will allow the EU to put into force our Stabilisation and Association Agreement and BiH to take further steps in EU integration, including a credible membership application.
In June 2012, political leaders agreed a Road Map to implement the key requirements and move this country towards Europe. This Road Map remains key to show commitment to EU integration, and we want to see effective and determined action from the authorities.

The European Union is ready to provide the necessary help. You will have our continued support and advice to help your country in its European Union aspirations.

We want to see Bosnia and Herzegovina to succeed. We know it can.