Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Olli Rehn, EU Enlargement Commissioner, welcomed today's decision by the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, to extend the mandates for international judges and prosecutors in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"We fully support today's decision by the High Representative to extend the mandate of international judges and prosecutors in the area of war crimes until 31 December 2012. This is the right decision at the right time. However, we regret that the local authorities failed to act in time themselves. It is now essential that the necessary conditions are put in place as soon as possible so that Bosnia and Herzegovina can fulfil its international obligations with regards to bringing war crimes to trial.

We fully share the view of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Serge Brammertz, that the continued presence of international judges and prosecutors is essential to pursuit of justice for the victims and to the work of the ICTY.

It is also of utmost importance that Bosnia and Herzegovina acts effectively against corruption and organised crime. The Rule of Law is an essential requirement for a functioning democracy and a pre-condition for any country that wishes to join the European Union.

The EU continues to stand ready to support the judicial system in Bosnia and Herzegovina and remains committed to strengthen the capacity of judges and prosecutors in the fight against organised crime and corruption."

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