

Address by President Of Serbia And Montenegro, H.E. Mr. Svetozar Marovic At The 11th Session of the Igman Initiative

Distinguished Messers Presidents,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to address you at this session of the Igman Initiative that has, with its benevolence and vision of the European future, made the importance of these gatherings go beyond the frameworks of our region. I would like to thank representatives of the non-governmental sectors of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro for creating an opportunity for us to once again talk, in a frank and responsible manner, about important issues of our common European prospects.

We have heard a lot of good news about Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro since our last meeting in Belgrade four months ago. I am delighted to be able to remind you here of the decisions made by the European Union on the opening of negotiations with Croatia on its full membership with the EU, also on the beginning of negotiations with Serbia and Montenegro on the Stabilization and Association Agreement, as well as on the recent recommendation of the European Commission to also start negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Stabilization and Association Agreement.

These important decisions have opened up new stages in the process of association with the European institutions and new opportunities have been created for achieving a new quality in the relations between our countries and for the attainment of our common European priorities. Delighted at the success of its neighbours in their association with the European Union, Serbia and Montenegro also sees these decisions as proof and confirmation of its own success achieved so far on its European path, but also as an obligation to continue to undertake all necessary steps in order to make the best of this historic opportunity as soon as possible.

Serbia and Montenegro and the European Union have started today in Belgrade the negotiations on Stabilization and Association, with the full determination on our part to solve all the remaining cases within the shortest period possible, primarily the case of Ratko Mladic, so that the negotiations with the European Union should proceed quickly and smoothly. That is the absolute priority of Serbia and Montenegro. It goes without saying that fulfilling all remaining commitments towards the Hague is not just part of fulfilling our obligations towards the international community. It is, above all, our obligation towards victims, the truth and justice, towards all citizens of Serbia and Montenegro and our region.

In two weeks' time there will be the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Accord in the Preamble of which the High Contracting Parties have pointed out their desire to promote durable peace and stability. The Dayton Accord meant the victory of peace and it put an end to hostility and devastation. The Dayton marked the beginning of the building up of the European progress and prospects. Today, ten years later, in spite of dissatisfaction expressed by some and more or less founded objections to the achievements of the Dayton Accord, we are witnessing gradual implementation of values that it had been founded upon. The Dayton Peace Agreement was a victory of reason over the logic of war and violence, the victory of coming to an understanding over might and arrogance, the victory of compromise over one-sidedness and stubbornness.

These civilizational values are actual winners in the process that started ten years ago.

This lesson is important today as well, especially after reviewing the scope, justifiability and historic role of the Dayton Accord. Citizens and institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as those of

its entities are the most relevant in deciding about the problems put forward to them. It is upon us, being closest to the peoples and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and wishing them peace, progress, satisfaction and happiness, to support any Agreement of constituent peoples and citizens conducive to an authentic, rational, modern and efficient organization of life in Bosnia and Herzegovina where nobody will feel deprived of its acquired rights, nor will anyone be prevented from fulfilling their European needs. Not a single decision or a process should endanger, or even slow down, the European and Euro-Atlantic integrations of this region. Full membership in the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions is the common goal of Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The European Union, that we all are aspiring to, the European values and rules that we are adopting and implementing are the best framework for the solutions needed in our region. I hope that you share my opinion that the constant progress in the relations between Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia is mostly the result of recognizing and promoting the very European values. I call upon you to adhere to these principles in future as well, for it is the only way for us to ensure the European future of our citizens, the European model of relations between our countries.

Thank you