

## Adopted resolution

### on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) is presently suffering from the deepest political crisis since the end of the war in 1995. The current 5 party coalition in BiH has ruled since 2006 on a very divisive nationalist platform. The political rhetoric has become extremely nationalist. Bosnian citizens now harbour greater fear of conflict than at any point since Dayton.

The Dayton Peace Accords have stopped the war, but at the same time created a complicated and hardly functional state structure which not only institutionalizes ethnic divisions, but also creates ample opportunity for abuse by the ruling nationalist parties.

On October 9<sup>th</sup>, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt as representative of the EU presidency, EU enlargement commissioner Olli Rehn and James Steinberg, US Deputy Foreign Minister, have initiated a negotiation process with BiH political leaders about the future of this country.

***The EGP council demands that the following recommendations should be taken into account in this ongoing process:***

- So far, the EU policy towards BiH seemed to have been focused solely on fulfilling the conditions necessary to close down the Office of High Representative (OHR) and replace it with the EU Special Representative. Equally important as this end result is the transformation process itself which will have to be based on a **well-considered strategy** and not just on the wish to disengage from the present role.
- The debate about the necessity of carrying out a **constitutional reform** within the process of integrating BiH into the European Union has to be expanded to a **serious expert and political debate and opening this process also to the civil society**. The EU should help by offering meaningful incentives, technical assistance and broad support, particularly when it comes to overcome discriminatory elements of the current constitution. The constitutional reform should not be of a "cosmetic nature" but should provide real reforms which will make BiH a more functional and sustainable state able to fulfill all conditions necessary for the EU integration process.

The EU Commission has fuelled tensions by proposing a change of visa regime for the West Balkan countries that discriminates BiH citizens without double passports by not granting free travel to EU to BiH citizens, but solely to those of F.Y.R.O.Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia by 1.1.2010. Thus, a part of the population (that has suffered most from the war 1992-95) will be left in isolation. Such decisions strengthen ethno-politics instead of bringing BiH closer towards EU integration.

***The EGP therefore calls upon the EU Commission and the European Parliament that all Western Balkan countries be granted visa liberalization for the EU countries as soon as the technical requirements are fulfilled – preferably by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010.***

***The EGP calls upon the EU member states, the Commission and the EP to concentrate their efforts for BiH in a "Campaign of Attention". This campaign should develop strategies for direct communication with the public in BiH and challenge the existing (dis)information monopolies by direct dialogue with society. A considerable personal presence and visibility of European representatives is necessary for maintaining such a dialogue with the general public and in all parts of the country.***

***The EGP supports all efforts of civil society and of multi-ethnic political forces (like "Naša Stranka", a party founded in 2008) for promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and peace initiatives to prevent an acceleration of tensions and further isolation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.***