

Vergaderjaar 2020–2021

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JBZ-Raad

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BRIEF VAN DE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION EXTERNAL ACTION

Aan de voorzitters van de vaste commissies voor Immigratie en Asiel/
JBZ-Raad en voor Justitie en Veiligheid

Brussels, 19 June 2020

Thank you for your letter of 23 October 2019 to Commissioner King. Please excuse the delay in our reply, which is due to the transition to the new Commission and a reshuffle in portfolios.

Your letter follows up on a previous communication in May 2019, to which Commissioner King had replied in July 2019¹, and to an earlier in February 2019, to which Commissioner King replied in April 2019². Previous inquiries on the same topic in February 2018 and November 2018 were addressed locally by the EU Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina via the Dutch Embassy in the country. The Commission also replied in April 2019³ to a parliamentary question by MEP Auke Zijlstra from December 2018 on this topic⁴.

The EU maintains open dialogue with all major faith-based and secular organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the Islamic Community in BiH (*Islamska zajednica BiH*), which has a long history of promoting tolerance and inter-faith dialogue. We will continue working together with the Islamic Community in BiH to pursue our common goals, including the European integration of a prosperous and peaceful Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This of course does not commit the EU to support every position of its partner organisations.

¹ Ares(2019)3565550, Ares(2019)4852872.

² Ares(2019)637600, Ares(2019)2902951.

³ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2018-006367-ASW_EN.html.

⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2018-006367_EN.html.

In 2019, the EU called on political leaders and authorities to help ensure that the Pride March in Sarajevo takes place in dignity and peace⁵, and later congratulated the organisers, participants and authorities on successfully holding the first Pride March in the country⁶.

As stated in our previous communication, the office of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) in BiH has followed the appropriate and correct contract management and reporting procedures when administering contracts for the projects undertaken together with the Islamic Community in BiH, including the project «My place in Europe» implemented in 2019 which you mention in your most recent letter⁷.

This project, implemented in cooperation with the Islamic Community, aimed to promote the EU integration process reaching out to students from Islamic high schools across the country. In this context, students attended seminars on EU policies as well as creative workshops allowing them to learn new tools (creative writing, photography, debate etc.) to express themselves and communicate how they see their place in Europe. The project concluded with an exhibition of selected works in the EEAS headquarters building⁸ in Brussels. You can find further information on this project at the following link: <https://mojemjestoeu.ba/>.

For any further documents and the latest information on the various projects the EU is funding in the country, I would encourage you to consult the website of the EU Office in BiH⁹, as well as those of our implementing partners.

CC: Ambassador Johann Sattler, EU Special Representative/ Head of the EU Delegation to BiH

Yours sincerely,

Enrique Mora

⁵ <http://europa.ba/?p=65247>.

⁶ <http://europa.ba/?p=65444>.

⁷ <https://europa.ba/?p=64569>.

⁸ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/65016/bih-youth-why-their-place-europe_en.

⁹ http://europa.ba/?page_id=558.