

# Association Bosnia and Herzegovina 2005

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## Press release

### Prospects for the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Sarajevo, 5-6 May 2004**

Around sixty scholars, diplomats, and civil society representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad met in Sarajevo on May 5-6 to debate the future of the country in the areas of constitutional law, security, education and culture, and the economy. The seminar—organized with funding from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, represented by its Division for Human Security and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)—tasked the Association Bosnia and Herzegovina 2005 to proceed with drafting concrete proposals for amending the Bosnian constitution, which is part of the Dayton peace accords of 1995, and with a comprehensive research program that will culminate in an international conference to mark the tenth anniversary of Dayton. The Association's program is driven by concern for the country's future; most members are citizens of BiH who wish to transcend a legacy of division and stagnation and build a better future.

Participants agreed that Dayton has burdened the country with ineffective government, but they also agreed on the need to go beyond stating the obvious to develop concrete improvements to the current situation. The proceedings were very focused on overcoming the Dayton legacy of overbearing but ineffective government by articulating a vision for the country and mechanisms to implement it.

The first step in the Association's research and advocacy program is the publication of seminar papers in English and local language in the fall of 2004, to carry the debate to a wider audience. Policy-oriented activities will then be conducted throughout the fall by small research teams, which include a new generation of scholars and professionals, and vigorous lobbying with international and domestic policy-makers. Meetings in Banja Luka (and of May) and Sarajevo (June or late August) will aim to mobilize society to rally around a possible reform program. Finally, the Association will, with the help of outside experts and political representatives, draft a platform focusing on constitutional issues.

Prominent members who participated in the seminar include Wolfgang Petritsch (Geneva), John Allcock (Bradford, UK), Sonja Biserko (Belgrade), Jovan Divjak (Sarajevo), Jakob Finci (Sarajevo), Vladimir Gligorov (Vienna), Ivo Komsic (Sarajevo), Bozidar Matic (Sarajevo), Manfred Nowak (Vienna); Zarko Papic (Sarajevo), Rajko Tomas (Banja Luka) and Miodrag Zivanovic (Banja Luka).

A seminar report will be made available on the Association's website ([www.bosnia2005.org](http://www.bosnia2005.org)) within the next two weeks, after review and consultation by Association members and seminar participants.

Sarajevo & Geneva, 20 May 2004