

From Dayton to Brussels: 30 Years of Peace, deadlock, and an EU path for Bosnia and Herzegovina

21 November 2025

Location: Clingendael Institute and online

As we mark the 30th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement, this conference seeks to reflect on the legacy of the agreement, its impact on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), and the challenges that lie ahead. While the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) successfully ended a devastating aggression on BiH, it also left behind a complex political framework that has, in many ways, frozen political divisions and hindered democratic progress.

Today, Bosnia and Herzegovina stands at a critical crossroads. On the one hand, the country's EU accession process has guided Bosnia's path from post-conflict stability to a functional democracy, aiming at a transformation of political culture, institutional resilience, and public trust. But at the same time, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to be governed along ethnic fault lines, with political actors questioning the basic premises of the Dayton agreement up to the point where continued stability and (regional) security is under question.

This conference explores the complex dynamics of peacebuilding, governance reform, and citizen engagement, examining the role of international actors, domestic elites, and civil society in shaping the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Through two focused panels, we aim to identify practical pathways for reform, build connections between political actors and civil society, and explore the potential for a renewed social contract - one that can redefine the relationship between the state and its citizens, fosters democratic resilience and supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's European Union accession path.

Preliminary programme

09.00: Doors open

09.30 – 10.00: Opening session

- Welcome by Wouter Zweers, Clingendael Institute
- Introduction by Alden Pervan, BiH-NL Thinktank
- Keynote by H.E. Almir Šahović, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Netherlands

10.00 – 11.15: Panel 1: 30 years of peace, 30 years of deadlock? What has Dayton delivered, and what comes next?

This panel delves into Bosnia's political and constitutional achievements and challenges, potential reforms and the influence of outside actors with a special focus on the European Union.

Speakers:

- Jasmin Mujanović, New Lines Institute's Western Balkans Center
- Tineke Strik, Member of European Parliament
- Maja Sahadžić, University of Utrecht
- Robert Gooren, Netherlands' Ministry of Defence

This session is moderated by Wouter Zweers, Clingendael Institute

11.15 – 11.45: Coffee break

11.45 – 13.00: Panel 2: Democracy in Action: EU integration, the rule of law and civic empowerment

This panel focuses on citizen engagement, community resilience, environmental activism as a unifying force, institutional reforms, and the role of the EU as a driver of democratic change.

Speakers:

- Srđan Blagovčanin, Transparency International BiH
- Azra Berbić, ACT BiH
- Sanja Ramić, BiH NL thinktank
- Marjolein Koster, independent journalist

This session is moderated by Laura Jasper, HCSS

13.00 Concluding keynote: H.E. Henk van den Dool, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Bosnia and Herzegovina

13.15 Lunch reception

14.15 End of event