

Conclusions of the International Review Conference on the progress made in the implementation of the results of the Brussels Donors' Conference for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia after the floods

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In May 2014, devastating floods hit large regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, resulting in several dozens of casualties in both countries, causing the destruction of public and private infrastructure, and affected mostly vulnerable groups.

The International Community demonstrated solidarity, providing Emergency and Humanitarian assistance and organizing Donors' Conference "Rebuilding together" in July 2014. Delegations from over 60 countries and 23 international organizations, as well as representatives from the civil society and private sector mobilized pledges for Bosnia and Herzegovina (€810.5 mil), for Serbia (€995.2 mil) as well as for cross-border activities (€41.4 mil), to respond to the consequences of severe weather and devastating floods.

One year later, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Serbia and European Commission had organized the *Review Conference on the progress made in the implementation of the results of the Brussels Donors' Conference for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia after the floods*.

Conclusions of the Morning Session

In previous one year period, Republic of Serbia mostly finalized rehabilitation process in the floods affected areas and had implemented conclusions from Brussels Conference to a great degree.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has achieved certain level of progress in the floods recovery process and in the implementation of Brussels Conference conclusions as well as in the mobilization of pledged and budgetary funding. However, disproportion between the size and scope of the total pledged funds at the Brussels Conference and total disbursed funds indicates that it is necessary to speed up the process of funds realization, including grants and loans.

Both countries are now in the phase of reconstruction, which is aimed at the prevention of future threats from natural disasters, as well as mitigating the negative effects that floods have left on the state of their economies.

Bosnia and Herzegovina highlighted the aspects of prevention and implementation of measures for disaster risk reduction as the priority for future activities in both countries, whereby both countries can count on the support from international partners.

Besides the realized activities, in the forthcoming period, both countries should continue improvements within the flood prevention and flood risk management, through further improvement of their disaster risk reduction capacities, mechanisms and infrastructure, development of integrated flood risk mapping and developing of early warning systems at all levels and to intensify their efforts to fully align with the cornerstone Floods Directive of the EU.

Further development of efficient Regional Cooperation is needed, particularly since Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia share the same river basin, and rivers do not recognize borders. In order to effectively fight possible future floods, the two countries should strive to enhance coordination especially in the area of prediction and early warning. Also, both countries should continue to work on developing improved standards in river infrastructure maintenance, in line with the ongoing work within the Danube and Sava river commissions.

In line with the above mentioned aims, Republic of Serbia proposed at the Conference that establishing of Regional Disaster Center should be considered.

Private sector, as a driving engine of economic development, in both countries requires further strong support from international financial institutions and other donors, to offset the governments' revenue losses, and foster job creation and prosperity, in particular to small and medium-sized enterprises. Although, financial and administrative procedures were facilitated by both national authorities, there is still lot to be done in this area.

Taking into account the social dimension of recovery and reconstruction, it could be noted that the most vulnerable groups of population such as displaced, children, women, senior citizens, Roma population and disabled persons were in the focus of efforts, in order to avoid further aggravation of their situation. It was pointed out that both countries have shown a high degree of organization within the framework of reconstruction of housing, whereby in addition to the pledges from the Donors' conference, they managed to mobilize other donors as well as budgetary resources. Further improvements in rehabilitation of housing units damaged by floods and landslides as well as ensuring the access of most vulnerable groups to health and education remain the priority in the future.

In regard to transparency, efficiency and accountability, both countries have established systems for transparent monitoring of mobilization and realization of international financial resources for floods recovery activities, through the publicly available websites.

Finally, both countries have achieved high level of cooperation and coordination with and among donors, through regular exchange of information and reporting of flood recovery activities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina this cooperation is conducted through regular meetings of the Donor Coordination Forum (DCF).