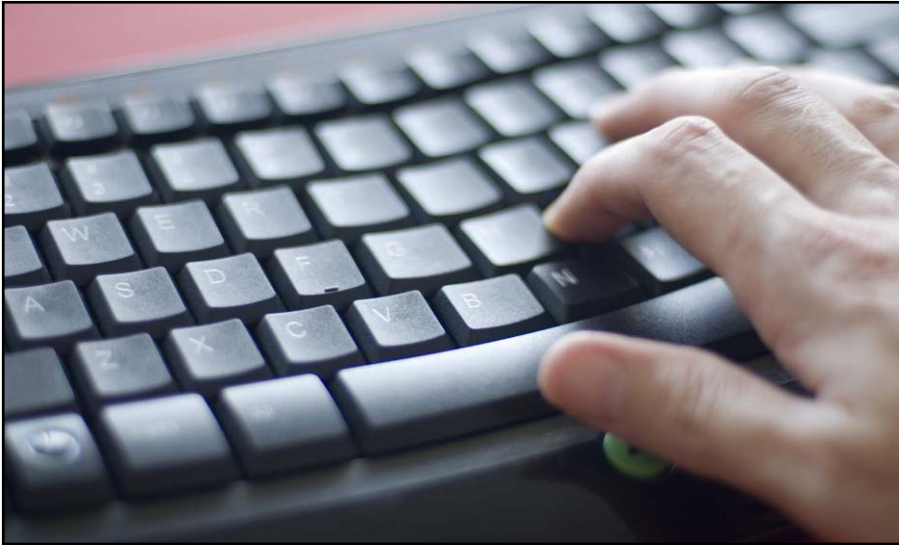


# DPC Did Not "Reject" the EU Initiative



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Dear Bosnia Daily readers,

On March 25, Bosnia Daily published a letter by Mr. Don Picard of the law firm Picard, Kentz, and Rowe to which we would like to respond.

In his letter, originally published by EUObserver, Mr. Picard reacts to an analysis written by DPC co-founder and Senior Associate Toby Vogel, which had also initially run by EUObserver.

Mr. Picard then goes on to criticize the Democratization Policy Council's Bosnia work, claiming that DPC "rejects the (EU) initiative (for BiH), urging, instead, radical constitutional change and a return to the radical interventionist policies associated with Paddy Ashdown, backed by a massive increase in the EUFOR military force in BiH."

DPC has strongly criticized the EU initiative in its current outline, but has not "rejected" it; since the initiative itself remains quite undefined, it is potentially open to calibration. While DPC has consistently argued that constitutional change is needed to enable functional and accountable governance for all BiH citizens (as has the Council of Europe's own legal and constitutional advisory body, the Venice Commission), the implication that this be imposed has never been made by DPC; we invite Mr. Picard to provide evidence to the contrary. DPC, rather, believes that any durable and legitimate constitutional system needs popular buy-in by all self-

defined communities and a preponderance of individual citizens. And finally, while DPC has also repeatedly argued that the EU beef up of EUFOR from its anemic troop strength now (approximately 600) to fulfill the mandate it eagerly took on from NATO, an effective deterrent would not require "massive" increases.

DPC can only conclude that this misrepresentation of its positions is in fact aimed at discrediting our organization's Bosnia work. Mr. Picard presents his letter's arguments, including support of RS efforts to eliminate state governance bodies, as mere analytical observations. But his firm has been representing the Republika Srpska Government since May 2009 (registration number 5939) - and has been remunerated for this work (the present rate is \$90,000/month; it had been higher in the past) - a fact that can be confirmed thanks to the US Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA): <http://www.fara.gov/docs/5939-Exhibit-AB-20150210-6.pdf>

The RS Government also has secured the services of other lawyers and lobbyists in the US. Unfortunately, neither the EU nor any of its large member states have a similar system to make efforts made on behalf of representatives of foreign governments to affect government policy transparent to their citizens.

Respectfully,

DPC

## Project of Support to Witnesses and Victims of War Presented

Association "Vive Zene" (Vive Women) Tuzla, in cooperation with the OSCE Mission, office in Tuzla, organized a work meeting in Lukavac on the occasion of the presentation of the project "Securing access to justice for witnesses/victims through the strengthening of existing and establishing new networks of support to witnesses in BiH".

This refers to the project implemented by "Vive Zene" in partnership with three NGOs - Association "Medica" Zenica, Foundation "United Women" Banja Luka and the Agency for Cooperation, Education and Development "ACED" Banja Luka.

The project is being implemented from January 1, 2015 to December 31 2017 with the financial support of the European Union.

"The goal of the project is to establish an institutional network for the support of witnesses since we have 20 years of experience working with victims of war and war trauma. There are six networks for now, including one in the Tuzla Canton and we want to transfer this experience to other areas of BiH," President of "Vive Zene" Jasna Zecevic stressed.

According to her, training for psychosocial support will be provided within the project. Amra Hamidovic, Legal Adviser in the OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, said that OSCE in BiH has long monitored the trial for war crimes, both at the state and entity levels in BiH. "One of the key observations through all our monitoring and reports is inadequate assistance to witnesses / victims in war crimes cases. For this reason, and in accordance with the strategy for the prosecution of war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE has recognized the importance of this topic. In this way, we want to support all organizations, primarily 'Vive Zene', since they are implementing the project and they are establishing networks that are comprised of professionals, prosecutors, judges, professional staff from social welfare institutions," said Hamidovic.