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## **STIER: EU AGREES IT MUST STEP UP ENGAGEMENT IN BOSNIA**

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European Union foreign ministers agree the EU should step up its engagement in Southeast Europe and have supported Croatia's position that it is necessary to encourage those responsible in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to agree election law changes by June, Croatian Foreign Minister Davor Ivo Stier said on Monday, cited by EBLNews.

"I think the joint conclusion is that the EU must step up its engagement in that region and that the enlargement policy, once all conditions have been met, remains an instrument to encourage stability in Southeast Europe," Stier told reporters in Brussels after a meeting of EU foreign ministers.

One of the topics of the meeting was the situation in the Southeast European countries which are once again facing instability. EU Foreign Affairs and Security Policy High Representative Federica Mogherini briefed them about her visit last week to Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Macedonia.

Stier said he briefed his colleagues about his visit to Sarajevo with Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto last week, about an informal South-East European Cooperation Process meeting in Zagreb, and the Adriatic Trilateral initiative in support of Albania's and Montenegro's European journeys.

"I put the emphasis on Bosnia and Herzegovina and am pleased to say that my colleagues supported our position that it's necessary to additionally encourage our colleagues in BiH to agree by June amendments to the election law in accordance with last December's decision of the BiH Constitutional Court," Stier said.

He added that Mogherini too mentioned the issue of the Bosnian election law, saying "that was indeed recognised as an important topic for the stability of BiH."

In December 2016, the Bosnian Constitutional Court, ruling on the constitutionality of electoral law provisions on the election of deputies to the upper house of the Federation entity's parliament, found that those provisions were in contravention of the Constitution at the expense of Croats and Serbs living in that entity.

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Photo: Croatia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Davor Ivo Stier is seen in the parliament before the government is approved in Zagreb, Croatia, October 19, 2016. REUTERS/Antonio Bronic

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