



## Dialogue between authorities and citizens key to address protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Strasbourg, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014

The Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) and the three Local Democracy Agencies based in Bosnia and Herzegovina are deeply worried about the on-going protests in the country. This situation is a direct consequence of the current economic, social and political difficulties, and at the same time of the lack of actions from the institutions.

We call for a non-violent resolution of the protests, and we condemn the exploitation of citizens' dissatisfaction and rage in the pursuit of political agendas, as well as to heighten ethnic divisions. We strongly encourage the start of a dialogue involving political institutions and the whole civil society.

Since their establishment, the Local Democracy Agencies based in Mostar, Prijedor, and Zavidovići have been supporting cooperation between local authorities and civil society, promoting local democracy, respect for human rights, and sustainable development.

Many say that this is the beginning of something new, but it is not clear how that will look like. We call upon national and local authorities to listen and address citizens' concerns. Citizens have the right to peacefully express their demands and wishes, and political leaders have to get engaged in a two-ways dialogue. We also call upon the European Union institutions to get actively involved in tackling the current problems, and accelerate the integration process of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We hope and work for the current situation to turn into an occasion for increased civic participation and democratic reforms, leading us closer to the European Union.

**Association of Local Democracy Agencies**

**LDA Mostar**

**LDA Prijedor**

**LDA Zavidovići**

**ALDA Working Group Balkans**