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- PRESS RELEASE -

Russian influence on the foreign policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Frequent allegations of Western officials about Russian interference in political processes in the Balkans can be found in how Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy is conducted. During the past year, our country has continued its practice of supporting the Russian interests in relation to those of the European Union. Thus, our diplomacy, in 14 cases (in the period January 2018 - January 2019), did not align with any foreign policy or EU declaration directed against Russia's activities in endangering the territorial sovereignty and integrity of Ukraine and Georgia, as well as investigations and findings on the occasion of the taking down the Malaysian MH17 aircraft in July 2014.¹

We remind that all countries aspiring to become EU members are obliged to gradually align their positions with the foreign policy of the EU, manifested through the adoption of foreign policy declarations and eventual application of measures that may follow from them. Candidate countries or potential candidates, through aligning the positions of the EU declarations, send a clear message that the country's foreign policy is based on the same principles and values as the EU's foreign policy, that is, the agreed policy of its members in the domain of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU.

We should not ignore the fact that in the period of adoption of analysed EU declarations, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the document Foreign Policy Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2023 in March 2018 in which it is indicated that BiH will additionally improve the system of aligning foreign policy statements and restrictive measures of the European Union towards third countries and entities. It is necessary to emphasize that in 2018 there was a somewhat higher percentage of compliance with EU declarations which was about 72% (out of 73 agreed with 53), unlike 2017, when this percentage was 60% (out of 43 agreed with 26).² However, the analysis of compliance with EU declarations in the period since the adoption of the new Strategy clearly shows a

¹ <http://www.predsjednistvobih.ba/vanj/default.aspx?id=79555&langTag=bs-BA>

² <http://www.predsjednistvobih.ba/vanj/default.aspx?id=79555&langTag=bs-BA>



prorussian stance of our officials in charge of implementing the foreign policy (primarily the Presidency of BiH, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH that implements the agreed policy).

The question is whether it is a coincidence that the multi-annual positions of bh diplomacy fully coincide with the views of the Republic of Serbia in the part of EU declarations that were at the expense of Russian interests.³ Our other neighbor, Montenegro, has given its consent to all EU declarations while Croatia is an active actor in defining the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy as its full member.

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³ for the analysis of compliance in the period 2014-17: <http://css.ba/press-release-where-is-the-foreign-policy-of-bosnia-and-herzegovina-shaped/>