

**Federal Ministry of Justice**  
**Attn. Mr. Zoran Mikulić, Minister**  
**Valtera Perića 15**  
**71000 Sarajevo**

**Brussels, 13 March 2015**

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which represents the bars and law societies of 32 member countries and 13 further associate and observer countries, and through them more than 1 million European lawyers. One of the CCBE objectives is to actively monitor the defence of the rule of law, the protection of the fundamental and human rights and freedoms, including the right of access to justice and protection of the client, and the protection of the democratic values inextricably associated with such rights.

The Bosnian and Herzegovinian Bar Association, which is an observer member of the CCBE, has drawn our attention to recent intolerable and reprehensible cases of explosions in law firms in The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We understand that a lawyer Jasmina Koričić has been killed in the explosion in the city of Bihać and that the suspect has been arrested. We also understand there was another explosion in Tuzla at the law office of Faruk Balijagić, fortunately no one was hurt, but nevertheless the law firm's property has been damaged. The CCBE is gravely concerned by these dramatic developments and we condemn such a criminal act, they are inadmissible and extremely dangerous, not only to the legal profession but to the whole judiciary and to the development of the democracy in The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this respect, I would like to express our solidarity and sympathy with the Bosnian and Herzegovinian lawyers.

The CCBE would like to stress that states have a positive obligation to guarantee the functioning of lawyers, including by safeguarding their security. The state's duties constitute an important part of the guarantees for the functioning of lawyers, which are set out in the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990) (hereafter, The Basic Principles).

Particularly, Point 16 of The Basic Principles states:

*Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.*

Furthermore, Point 17 states:

*Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.*

In view of the above, the CCBE urges you to investigate the attacks on lawyers and to prosecute all perpetrators of these intolerable criminal offences.

Dear Minister, I would like to kindly ask you whether you would inform me of the state of play in each of the cases. The CCBE will consider appointing an observer in the court proceedings of each case.

The CCBE also asks you to take all necessary measures in order to prevent violence against lawyers in the future, and in order to ensure that Bosnian and Herzegovinian lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference. All actions and threats against lawyers in the legitimate exercise of their professional duties should be immediately and effectively stopped.

We thank you for taking note of our concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria ŚLAZAK', written in a cursive style.

Maria ŚLAZAK  
President