

Khaldoun Sinno Held a Lecture on BiH Progress toward the EU

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At the invitation of Burch Diplomacy Club, Khaldoun Sinno, the deputy head of the Delegation of the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina, visited International Burch University on Wednesday, April 24 to hold a lecture on the topic of "Bosnia and Herzegovina's Progress towards the European Union."

This visit and lecture is the most recent one in a multiyear serial of lectures on topics of contemporary relevance to our students, organized by Burch Diplomacy Club and the Department of International Relations and European Students. Previous prominent guest lecturers included Haris Silajdžić, Jonathan Moore, Jakub Finci, Dervo Sejdic, Bruce Berton, and Rohan Maxwell.

In light of the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina recently submitted all answers to the European Commission's questionnaire and is now waiting for the European Commission's recommendation to the European Council, an overview of Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress thus far towards the European Union is an appropriate topic to be considered.

Sinno emphasized that the EU considers and feels that BiH is a part of Europe and belongs to the European Union, considering their common geography, history, and culture, as well as the links that bind the two together, i.e. the facts that most BiH people have relatives in the EU and travel to the EU.

He also noted, however, that Bosnia and Herzegovina has a long list of reforms it needs to adopt and implement in order to become a member state of the European Union, which are catalogued each year in the European Commission's Progress Reports and made public.

This process of reforms, he added, is a process that Bosnia and Herzegovina must conduct itself and that there is no one that can do that for it. Although the European Union and other states have helped, are helping, and will continue to help Bosnia and Herzegovina reform, the ultimate responsibility belongs to BiH.

What is most important, he highlighted, is the existence of political will and broad agreement for reforms. Although the system in BiH is very complex, it is not impossible to reach agreements and reform. "If 28 EU member-states can agree, so can you," Sinno added.

This process of reforms, as well as the process of becoming a member-state, is a complex and long one so "you shouldn't be discouraged if you aren't granted candidate status immediately and if negotiations don't start right away," according to Sinno. "The EU wants you, but you have to come there yourself."

After the lecture, Sinno answered questions from the audience. One question was regarding the

refugee crisis, which he described as a BiH-EU joint problem requiring such an approach. The EU provided nine million Euros and is providing another 30 million Euros for the refugee crisis, but BiH governments need to be more proactive.

At the end, he met with Prof. dr. Damir Marjanovic, the rector of International Burch University, and Prof. dr. Adis Maksic, the head of the Department of International Relations and European Studies, as well as Melisa H. Mehmedovic, the president of Burch Diplomacy Club. The current situation in the country was discussed.