

news



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"Hahn Resolution Establishing a US Special Envoy for Bosnia and the Balkans is Reintroduced in US Congress on 20th Anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords – H. Res. 477"

Washington, DC - The National Federation of Croatian Americans Cultural Foundation (NFCFA) highly commends US Representative **Janice Hahn** of California for her steadfastness on matters related to the economic and political stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the ongoing difficulties there for Croat Bosnians. Congresswoman Hahn has reintroduced a revised version of her earlier legislation regarding the establishment of a Special Envoy for the Balkans.

The full text of the new bill, H. Res. 477, is available at:
<https://www.congress.gov/114/bills/hres/477/BILLS-114hres477ih.pdf>

The NFCFA strongly believes that the political and economic fate of the Croat Bosnians is the glue that will help BiH remain united and a member of the transatlantic political community. Future international investments and desired economic growth in Bosnia are strongly dependent upon national stability. However, political solutions alone are insufficient.

Economic development is crucial and employment growth must evolve in parallel manner to cement the achievements of needed political security.

Additionally, US Secretary of State John Kerry should welcome the added assistance of the appointment by President Obama of a Special Envoy for the Balkans during these current tumultuous times in other parts of the world. Continued distractions from the Balkans will have serious future costs for Europe and the world.

These costs are strongly illustrated by last February's anti-government riots in six Bosnian cities and this month's violent anti-NATO protests – probably inspired by Moscow via Serbia – in Montenegro's capital. Congress would be due to receive the Special Envoy's timely report within twelve months of the appointment as outlined in H. Res. 477.

Zvonko Labas, NFCFA's Executive Vice President and Director for Bosnian Issues, noted: "Since the Resolution was first introduced during the last Congress by Rep. Hahn, who continues to Co-Chair the 40-member Congressional Croatian Caucus, we have learned it has provided further impetus to debate and action on these matters. This has included a renewed interest by the European Union and others in the difficulties related to the past and current implementation of the Dayton Accords. For all involved in these strategic matters, a close reading of the Hahn Resolution is recommended. It is important for the US to continue to work in concert with our European allies to bring stability and progress to Bosnia, which greatly affects neighboring Croatia and Southeastern Europe as a whole."

Late in September during the 70th United Nations General Assembly in New York, NFCFA leaders met with the newly elected Croatian member of the tri-partite BiH Presidency, President **Dragan Covic**. He was joined by his Chief of Staff in the Cabinet, Ms. Tonka Kresic, for lengthy discussions regarding the NFCFA's persistent work in the US and internationally in focusing attention on the continued marginalization of the political and economic rights of Croats in Bosnia.



The delegation was led by NFCFA Vice President Mr. John Kraljic and included Mr. Steve Rukavina, Mr. Zvonko Labas, and Mr. Joe Foley. President Covic was appreciative of NFCFA efforts regarding the future well-being of Croats in BiH and the success of his country.

NFCFA President Mijo Radocaj was pleased to see that Rep. Hahn continues her important leadership role on these issues in the new Congress, especially since November marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in Ohio. He also drew attention to the Congresswoman's expert staff in

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narudzba:info@ppr.hr

Washington - Chief of Staff Laurie Saroff and Legislative Director Justin Vogt - who have provided valuable support for the expressed concerns of the Congresswoman's many Croatian American constituents centered in San Pedro, California, as well as nationally.

"The NFCA has learned that the Presidency of BiH intends to shortly submit a formal request for European Union membership, hopefully, by the end of this year. The revision and reintroduction of the Hahn Resolution is timely and in step with the Bosnian leadership's efforts to modify Dayton and join the EU. The Croatian American community fully understands that stability in BiH is highly important for all involved. The NFCA will continue its advocacy for Croats in Bosnia which we believe will help thaw the 'frozen conflict' in that country. It is crucial for the US to remain involved, continue to provide necessary international leadership, and further promote economic and political liberalization in Bosnia and Herzegovina," added Mr. Radocaj.

The NFCA is the national umbrella organization established in 1993 for Croatian Americans, related professional associations, and the many fraternal lodges that collectively represent approximately 130,000 members. For individual membership and chapter information, recent newsletters, opportunities to donate to the NFCA, and for other Croatian American news please visit our web site: www.nfcacf.org.

Joe Foley /HIC

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