

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on an " Agreement on Free Transit through the Territory
of Croatia to and from the Port of Ploce and
Through the Territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina at Neum"**

The EU welcomes the recent initialling of an "Agreement on Free Transit through the Territory of Croatia to and from the Port of Ploce and through the Territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina at Neum" which represents a commendable effort by Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to move to a new stage of political and economic co-operation.

The Agreement, reached after protracted negotiations, will be mutually beneficial in economic terms not only for both countries but also for the wider region. In political terms, it will contribute to the implementation of the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords, to the improvement of the relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia and thereby to the reinforcement of peace and stability in the region.

The EU would also like to express its gratitude to the efforts of the Office of the High Representative in assisting in the negotiations and securing the Agreement. The EU is pleased that the European Commission Customs and Fiscal Assistance Office will play a useful role in the implementation of the Agreement.

The EU looks forward to an early signature and entry into force of the Agreement as a further sign of the resolve of both sides in implementing the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords.

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