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## **Secretary General Jagland welcomes progress on Sejdic and Finci**

Strasbourg, 02.10.2013 – Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland today issued the following statement :

"I welcome the progress achieved yesterday among the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina on how to implement the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Sejdic and Finci and provide every citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the right to stand for election to the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Presidency and House of Peoples. The leaders pledged to finalise electoral modalities that will meet the legitimate concerns of the constituent peoples and 'Others', while meeting international standards by 10 October.

"I strongly appreciate the very close consultation on this issue throughout the process, which was also reflected in the invitation to Council of Europe representatives to take part in yesterday's meeting.

"I am fully aware that compliance with Sejdic and Finci is opening some very complex and sensitive questions. There are genuine and legitimate concerns which must be taken into account. But the only way of doing so is by moving forward, not by staying in the past. The citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be able to protect their interest and secure their well-being with each other, not against each other. The execution of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights will not solve all of the problems or bring miraculous solutions, but it will be perhaps the most important step towards a truly European, modern, democratic and functioning Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"There is no doubt that this will eventually happen. But any further delay would be very costly.

"I expect that the political leaders will meet their responsibility towards the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and clarify the remaining open issues by the deadline of 10 October."

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