

Mostar, December 13, 2020

## **United World College in Mostar represented at the Conference on Dayton Peace Agreement**

Signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina marks the 25th anniversary this week. United World College in Mostar is immensely proud to announce that UWC Mostar student Marija Lucija Babić will participate as a panelist in a distinguished Conference, Dayton at 25: The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina organised by the European Council on Foreign Relations.

The 15-year history of United World College in Mostar with over 1,000 graduates and a center for professional development of teachers from the entire region, is intertwined with the Dayton Peace Agreement and its legacy. The very idea of establishing a United World College in Bosnia and Herzegovina came from the firm belief that education is a fundamental element of sustainable peace. The United World Colleges, founded in the aftermath of World War II, aimed to address the divisions between young people by bringing them together to study since 1961. Now it was time to become relevant within a society whose education system was a major victim of the war.

In the first phase, the United World College of the Adriatic, located close to Trieste in Italy, accepted many refugee students from all parts of former Yugoslavia through the 1990s and worked together with schools in the region. In 2000, the idea to start developing a special United World College in Bosnia and Herzegovina was born.

David Sutcliffe was a founding staff member of the very first UWC school in Wales in 1961 and headmaster in UWC in Italy until 2001 after which he devoted himself to help the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was the Co-Founder of the United World College in Mostar.

His vision helped lay the foundation of United World College in Mostar which opened its doors for students in 2006 after several years of development work. The aim was clear: to “equip the next generations of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the knowledge, skills, leadership qualities and international values, necessary to bridge the still existing ethnic divisions and move their country into the 21st century.”

The link between the Dayton Peace Agreement and UWC Mostar is also substantiated through the participation of Former Minister of Defense of Finland Elisabeth Rehn, a key patron of UWC Mostar since 2005. Rehn served as UN’s Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the region 1995-1998 and Head of UN Mission in BiH 1998-1999. Elisabeth Rehn also reported the Dayton peace negotiations in her UN human rights special rapporteur capacity in 1995.

### **UWC MOSTAR**

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“To be able to get the people closer through education to the young students with no regard to nationality, religion or ethnicity is the main reason I have found the UWC so important and attractive. UWC Mostar is not only about education, it is about working for peace, human rights and respect for others” Elisabeth Rehn has stated.

Marking the 25th Anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement organised by European Council on Foreign Relations, Conference Dayton at 25: The Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina is taking place on December 14th and 15th, 2020.

This two-day conference gathers a distinguished line-up of speakers to discuss the challenges facing the country and to explore options for transatlantic cooperation in the Western Balkans. The distinguished guests include:

Christiane Amanpour, Chief International Anchor, CNN, Bill Clinton, 42nd President of the United States, Carl Bildt, Former Prime Minister and former Foreign Minister of Sweden, EU representative at Dayton negotiations of BiH, Sabina Ćudić, Member of Parliament, Federation of BiH.

UWC Mostar student Marija Lucija Babić will be a part of the panel discussion moderated by Aleksandra Tomanić, Executive Director, European Fund for the Balkans - “Despite Politics: Citizen Potential in Bosnia and Herzegovina” together with Jasminko Halilović, Founder and Director, War Childhood Museum, Sarajevo, Ivana Korajlić, Executive Director, Transparency International, Banja Luka and Jasmin Mujanović, Author of Hunger and Fury: The Crisis of Democracy in the Balkans

"UWC Mostar has managed to live up to its mission in most difficult circumstances bringing young people together and strengthening the post-war community around it. This recognition - to have our student invited - is very valuable for us" - says Pilvi Torsti, Finnish scholar on Bosnia and co-founder of UWC Mostar who currently serves as the Chair of the Board of the Foundation Education in Action in charge of UWC Mostar.

Live stream of the conference will be available at the official European Council on Foreign Relations page [www.ecfr.eu](http://www.ecfr.eu).

About [United World College in Mostar](http://www.uwcim.org)