

# New Phase of Cooperation betw. UNWTO and Bosnia and Herzegovina



UNWTO secretary-general, Taleb Rifai, met with the chairman of the presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Haris Silajdzic, to discuss tourism development in the country during an official visit (July 12-14, 2010), described as the start of a new phase of cooperation between UNWTO and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mr. Rifai encouraged the country to make the utmost use of the organization in the development of its tourism industry.

**Meeting with the chairman of the presidency, Mr. Rifai outlined how tourism can be one of the driving industries of the country and expressed the willingness of UNWTO to provide relevant support and know-how.** “UNWTO stands ready to assist the country in developing a sustainable tourism industry and further position Bosnia and Herzegovina on the global tourism map,” he said. “The country has immense opportunities for tourism development given its rich natural and cultural heritage, its unique mix of cultures and religions, as well as its strategic location close to major European source markets,” he added.

**The visit presented an important opportunity to assess the tourism opportunities and needs of the country, as well as the potential for regional tourism cooperation across the Western Balkans.** In meetings with government ministers in charge of tourism, including the minister of foreign trade and economic relations, Mr. Mladen Zirojevic, the secretary-general stressed the importance of harnessing the enormous tourism growth potential of Bosnia and Herzegovina in a sustainable manner.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a member of UNWTO since 1993. The country has seen its tourism growth expand rapidly with international tourist arrivals growing 7 percent a year between 2000 and 2009. More importantly, export earnings (receipts) have doubled in less than 10 years from €250 million in 2000 to €500 million in 2009.

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