

## Record breaking bridge jump in the name of subsidiarity

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A campaign to raise the awareness of the principle of subsidiarity took a record-breaking turn on Sunday.

Richard Medic, spokesman for the Assembly of European Regions (AER), which is leading the campaign, took a dramatic jump off Mostar bridge in Bosnia-Herzegovina, accompanied by thousands of onlookers chanting 'subsidiarnost' – a stunt which could well qualify it for a mention in the Guinness Book of Records.

The AER's Subsidiarity is a word campaign kicked off in May when Medic was arrested in Brussels before attempting to climb an office block near the European commission to call for greater recognition of the word subsidiarity.

AER wants dictionaries across Europe to recognise the word, which is one of the key principles outlined in the Lisbon treaty, and for Microsoft Word's spell-checker to also recognise the word.

A little over two months since the launch of the movement, dictionaries covering languages including French, Danish, Turkish, Spanish, and Greek have responded to AER's open letters of demand.

While some dictionaries have already included the word, others have promised to do so in upcoming editions, the organisation said, although acting AER president Michèle Sabban said that Microsoft had so far ignored the calls.

"It's rather ironic that a centralised corporation such as Microsoft is refusing to recognise a word based upon the principle of decentralised, ground-up

decision-making," she said.

"Is Microsoft so out of touch with the evolution of language that it refuses to recognise a word that has been referred to in national constitutions and international treaties for decades, a word mentioned no less than 30 times in the EU's Lisbon treaty alone?"

Medic, who knows the Balkans well as he was OSCE spokesman in the region before joining the AER, said that Mostar was an ideal setting for the next phase of the campaign – taking the movement out of Brussels and into the regions and local communities of wider Europe.

"This second phase of our movement aims not only to secure the word's inclusion in dictionaries, but also to ensure that citizens make the connection between an unfamiliar word and a familiar principle."

The word 'subsidiarnost' is especially unknown in the western Balkans, and most Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian dictionaries had not recognised the word until AER's open letter drew their attention to it.

"For the western Balkan countries on the path to EU accession, their dictionaries' recognition of the word takes on a special significance," said Medic.

"In the future, when Croatia and later BiH, Montenegro and Serbia ratify the Lisbon treaty as part of the accession process, their translators will not have to scramble to invent a local language version of the word 'subsidiarity', as was the predicament for translators when Poland ratified the EU treaties upon accession."