

High Representative Delivers Final Report to UN, Addresses Srebrenica Donors' Conference

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, in the course of a two-day working visit to New York, has presented his final report to the United Nations, addressed a Donors' Conference on Srebrenica, and held talks with senior UN officials.

On Monday, the High Representative delivered a report to the Secretary General of the UN outlining the progress which has been achieved during his nearly three years in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also had extensive talks with UN Under-Secretary for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guehenno,

In his report, the High Representative noted that the first year and a half of his tenure was marked by robust, intensive and direct engagement in all aspects of political life. In this period, he was obliged to remove around 70 politicians for obstruction of the peace implementation process. He also imposed a broad spectrum of laws aimed at promoting refugee return, economic reform and the development of state institutions.

The second part of the High Representative's tenure was characterised by efforts to establish partnership with the non-nationalists who came to power after the November 2000 elections. The High Representative noted that during this period, there was a progressive transfer of responsibilities from the IC to the citizens and institutions of BiH, aimed at a complete ownership. In this respect, he drew attention to the passage of the Election Law in August 2001, and the conclusion of the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement in March 2002.

The High Representative praised the passage of the five CIPS laws and the Council of Minister's conclusion of a commercial

agreement to implement the CIPS system. He said the CIPS project would help in the international fight against terrorism, enhance the integrity of the BiH state, and give practical benefits to citizens, including, it is hoped, persuading foreign governments to ease visa requirements for BiH travelers.

The High Representative pointed to the huge increase in the numbers of registered so-called minority returns and a corresponding rise in property-law implementation as evidence of an acceleration in the returns process, which today has the prospect of being completed within four years.

Noting that the Council of Ministers and the Presidency have started to promote and support key State-building legislation, the High Representative said that BiH institutions had begun to serve citizens' interests, reversing the destructive paradigm of "too much bureaucracy and too little service". He noted that this process has been extended through the work of other institutions established in the last three years, including the State Border Service, the Communications Regulatory Agency and the Public Broadcasting Service.

In the economic field, the High Representative pointed to progress in banking, privatisation, infrastructural development and the establishment of a single economic space.

Underpinning all of these developments has been a systematic effort to foster the Rule of Law; thorough reform of the judicial system is now underway. He insisted on the need for all levels of authority – especially in the RS – to cooperate fully with ICTY.

Also on Monday, the High Representative addressed a UN conference organised to raise the US\$12.5 million which it is estimated will be needed in order to implement the UN-UNDP Srebrenica Regional Recovery Programme (SRRP). The High Representative noted that the SRRP is a crucial element in the

combined effort of the international community to offer practical and substantial assistance to the people of the Srebrenica Region. The SRRP explicitly builds on the Srebrenica Action Plan, which has been implemented by OHR, along with SFOR, the OSCE, UNMIBH, the UNHCR, and other international agencies. He also briefed the conference on progress in establishing the Potocari Memorial and Cemetery on land designated by the High Representative for this purpose in the autumn of 2000, and he described the DNA-based work that the International Commission on Missing Persons is now doing in order to identify the victims of the Srebrenica Massacre.

“The Srebrenica Regional Recovery Programme, the Potocari Memorial Foundation and the work of the ICMP represent a collective effort by the international community and its local partners to address the past and prepare for the future,” the High Representative said.

During his two-day visit, the High Representative briefed UN Under-Secretary for Peace Political Affairs Kieran Prendergast on the main events of his tenure in BiH, in particular the agreement on a constitutional settlement. He also held talks with Aryeh Neier, President of the Open Society Institute.