

Decision imposing the Law on the Flag of BiH

Members of the Presidency

Speakers of the Parliamentary Assembly

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dear Presidents, dear Speakers,

Following the discussions at the sixth session of the Parliamentary Assembly today I regretfully have to inform that the Delegates have shown themselves lacking in the courage to take a binding decision on the important and sensitive issue of a common flag for Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, I acknowledge the constructive approach all parties have shown at today's session and the general consent expressed for the approach I have taken on a common flag for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

During the discussions at today's session all parties expressed an approval of the approach I have taken to reach a solution. It became evident that without the formation of an independent commission acceptable proposals were unlikely.

Following their statements made in the Parliamentary Assembly the abstention of the SDS and the HDZ Delegates can clearly not be seen as an expression of opposition to the flag proposals submitted.

In the House of Representatives Alternative 1 for the flag secured 16 votes, 16 abstentions and only one vote against.

On the basis of this I have decided that there is sufficient legitimacy for me to take a decision now. In accordance with my authority under Annex 10 of the Peace Agreement and Article XI of the Bonn Document, I hereby decide that the Law on the Flag of Bosnia and Herzegovina with alternative one shall enter into force with immediate effect. However, the blue and yellow colours used in the flag have been amended and shall be the blue and yellow of the flag of the Council of Europe.

The Law on the Flag of Bosnia and Herzegovina represents a basic law for the establishment and use of the flag of Bosnia and Herzegovina and will need to be supplemented by amendments. The Delegates of the Parliamentary Assembly today tabled a series of amendments, primarily regulating the use of the flag. I recommend that the relevant working committees of both Houses should discuss these amendments and make a recommendation for amendments for one of the next sessions of the Parliamentary Assembly. I further expect the Parliamentary Assembly to adopt this Law at its next session.

My Office will take necessary steps for the new flag to be hoisted at the Nagano Winter Olympic Games and delivered to the United Nations in New York.

Yours sincerely,

Carlos Westendorp
High Representative

Office of the High Representative