

OHR Bulletin 65 - 06 February 1998

No. 65, issued 06 February 1998

Table of Contents

Introduction - Bonn

Summary of conclusions of the PIC Steering Board in Bonn

The RS Government

Milorad Dodik heads new elected RS Government

PIC Steering Board

Meeting of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board on 29 January

BiH Institutions

Overview of BiH Presidency and Council of Ministers Sessions

BiH Symbols

Solutions on joint passport, law defining citizenship, unified currency, and flag.

Municipalities

Border questions solved through arbitration of Senior Deputy Hanns Schumacher.

Return of Refugees

Overview of RRTF activities and the Sarajevo Return Conference

Brcko

Brcko arbitration to start on 5 February. Opinions remain divided.

Human Rights

Re-trial granted to three members of the 'Zvornik Seven'

Sarajevo City Council

Sarajevo gets a Mayor (Rasim Gacanovic) and a City Council

Diary

Calendar of Scheduled Meetings and Events.

Please consult our [Bulletin Category List](#) for related information

Welcome to the new, revamped version of the Bulletin, which will be issued on a fortnightly basis from now on.

The Bulletin last appeared at the end of November 1997. Since then, several events of high importance have taken place - ranging from the Bonn Summit of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) in the second week of December, to the momentous events surrounding the change of government in the Republika Srpska (RS).

The Bonn Conclusions

A short summary of the Bonn conference conclusions may help to set the scene for this issue:

The PIC noted that positive developments had taken place: the holding of the BiH municipal elections, and the parliamentary elections in the RS; arms control and confidence building measures; police restructuring and reforms; the start of minority returns; economic revival in the Federation, the growth of independent, non-partisan media; and the increase in the number of indictees now in custody of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

However, a number of issues were highlighted as matters for concern. In particular, the following were identified as priorities, instant action recommended, and early deadlines for implementation set:

- A legal definition of BiH citizenship
- A BiH passport and uniform vehicle registration system
- A common currency and customs tariff
- Comprehensive plans to facilitate return
- Demining legislation
- The further implementation of the municipal elections results, and of the parliamentary elections in the RS.

The council re-emphasised the charge given to the High Representative at Sintra: to pursue deadlines on the above issues set by the Steering Board, and to recommend and to take measures in cases of non-compliance.

New Government in the RS

On Sunday, 18 January, the RS Parliament elected a new Government for the Entity. This received instant acknowledgement, and warm recognition – among the first to pledge support were the governments of Germany and the US, with the European Commission and the US promptly undertaking to help the new Government with much-needed immediate financial assistance. In addition, congratulations swiftly arrived from the Federation of BiH, and from Slobodan Milosevic's cabinet in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

The new cabinet will consist of moderates from three former RS opposition parties; the Independent Social Democrats, the Serb National Association, and the Socialist party. It is headed by Milorad Dodik of the Independent Social Democrats, as Prime Minister.

The first parliamentary session was organised for 12 January. Twenty per cent of its seats were occupied by the main Federation-based party, the Coalition for a United and Democratic BiH. This was of high significance, being the first time the members of Federation parties have felt able to take their seats in the RS Parliament. There was a strong international presence at the Assembly, which included the ambassadors of all the Contact Group countries, High Representative (HR) Carlos Westendorp, and officials from the OSCE, IPTF, and the European Community Monitor Mission (ECMM).

However, because of filibustering and delay on the part of the hard-liners, the only business the Parliament managed to pass was the re-election of Assembly President Dragan Kalinic, and two deputy speakers. The first candidate Plavsic proposed as Prime Minister designate to form a government, Mladen Ivanic, had been rejected by the hard-liners.

The HR warned the Assembly of the impatience of the International Community to see a new government in place, and his concern that none of the Assembly officials chosen were from the Federation parties. A new session was set for 17 January. Despite vigorous attempts by the hard-liners to distract the Assembly, using every means possible including a walk-out, a decision was finally passed. Supported by the Federation-based parties, Milorad Dodik, was elected Prime Minister, and given the mandate to form a government.

One of the first issues for Dodik's government is implementing the motion (passed by the Parliament, and strongly advocated by the HR), to select a third deputy parliament president from the ranks of the Coalition for a United and Democratic BiH. The HR publicly insisted that the Federation of BiH's strong presence in the RS Parliament should be reflected in this way. Dodik has openly committed himself to the selection of a third deputy, who is to be a Bosniak.

The HR stressed in particular, in communication with the members of the outgoing cabinet, that the transition of power from the old Government to the new should proceed smoothly and with the full cooperation of all concerned. The new Government is based in Banja Luka, the largest RS city, while the Parliament, with no fixed base will sit in locations throughout the RS. By 31 January, when a third parliamentary session was held and the Government members sworn in, the handover of power to the incoming Government (including the police force) was complete.

In his speech to the Parliament which elected him, Prime Minister Dodik prioritised reunification of the RS, thorough implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, and cooperation with the international community. Economic reconstruction of the Entity, was stressed, with emphasis on restoring trade-links between the RS and Croatia. He

pledged himself to 'transparency and responsibility', and an end to policies of media censorship and control.

The Contact Group

In a statement of support for Dodik's Government, the members of the Contact Group welcomed the new Premier's plans for a cabinet, and noted the positive role played by the leadership of the FRY in helping establish a pro-Dayton democratic government in the RS. The statement described the election of the new government as the culmination of the democratic process which found expression in the elections of November '97, and an acknowledgement of the strong desire of the citizens of the RS for a new beginning.

Srpska Radio-Television

The new RS Ministry of Information, now headed by Rajko Vasic, a former journalist widely respected in both Entities for his adherence to professional standards of journalism during the war, issued the following statement on 31 January (summarised):

"The Government of Republika Srpska is committed to the development of a professional and responsible media that follows internationally accepted standards for journalism. In the past, so-called 'state media' have been used to mislead the people of Republika Srpska and broadcast offensive and irresponsible material that goes against the spirit of the peace process."

"Action has already been taken by the new Government to resolve the situation. SRT will be restructured in accordance with the requirements of the OHR and in full cooperation with the newly appointed International Supervisor, allowing it to develop into an professional, independent and responsible network open for everybody."

"The Government can only express regret for what has happened in the past with SRT, and undertake to ensure that it is never repeated. A new General Director will soon be appointed heralding a new era for SRT, an era where documentaries like 'Drang Nach Balkan' will have no place and will be unacceptable."

** Note: 'Drang Nach Balkan' was the name of a highly inflammatory documentary, smearing both Croats and Bosniaks, broadcast by SRT on 25 December.*

Meeting of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board

At its meeting on 29 January, this body re-emphasised its support for the new RS Government, and welcomed the financial assistance which is being injected into new cabinet by the European Commission and other donors. It was agreed that the OHR should coordinate the donations, which must be made contingent on cooperation with Dayton.

The HR acquainted the SB with progress on the points of the Bonn conference conclusions. Positive steps included: the finalisation of the citizenship law and the currency, the adoption of the law on New and Split Municipalities by the Federation Parliament, the adoption by the CoM of unified licence plates and the permanent tariff schedule, and the advances in the work of the flag commission. Negative points were the failure of the Federation Parliament to adopt appropriate housing legislation, delays over legislation for the work of the CoM, and on the law of foreign investment. The SB welcomed developments in the establishment of a multi-ethnic administration in Brcko.

Concerning implementation of the local election results, the SB also welcomed the news from OSCE that 45 municipalities have been certified. It is expected that this total will rise to 97 in the next two weeks.

The BiH State Institutions

The BiH Presidency met on 14 and 19 January. The most important issues discussed were: the finalisation of the list of new ambassadors to represent BiH, and the design of the new BiH currency – the Convertible Mark. The first

issue was disposed of with reasonable success – only the name of the ambassador to the US, to be chosen by Bosnian Serb member of the Presidency Momcilo Krajsnik, remains to be decided. A training programme for the new ambassadors is scheduled, in which the ambassadors of the Contact Group countries and the OHR will participate.

Newly appointed Bosniak Ambassadors and Heads of Mission are:

- Hasan Muratovic (Zagreb)
- Bisera Turkovic (OSCE Mission Vienna)
- Senahid Bristic (Ryad)
- Besim Spahic (Ankara)
- Faik Uzunovic (Islamabad)
- Edib Bukvic (Djakarta)
- Amira Kapetanovic (Budapest)
- Muhamed Sacirbegovic (UN Mission NY)
- Osman Topgagic (London)
- Osman Music (Kuala Lumpur)
- Izet Serdarevic (Stockholm)
- Ahmet Halilovic (Teheran)
- Emina Keco – Isakovic (Vienna)

Bosnian Croat Ambassadors and Heads of Mission are:

- Anton Balkovic (Bonn)
- Miroslav Palameta (Rome)
- Miles Raguz (Brussels)
- Branimir Hutener (Buenos Aires)
- Ilija Kozul (Madrid)
- Vlatko Kralijevic (The Holy See)
- Mile Akmadzic (Belgrade)
- Krunoslav Vasilij (Ottawa)
- Benjamin Markin (Tokyo)

Bosnian Serb Ambassadors and Heads of Mission:

- Nebojsa Ivastanin (Moscow)
- Miodrag Jankovic (Paris)
- Svetozar Mudrenovic (Peking)
- Liubomir Zukovic (Athens)
- Dragan Jovanovic (Tel Aviv)
- Todor Dutina (UN Mission Geneva)
- Branko Petric (Ljubljana)
- Novak Todorovic (New Delhi)
- Srecko Bogunovic (Camberra)
- Dejan Lukic (Cairo)

At its next session the Presidency will choose the Ambassador to Washington. It will also consider the proposal for delegating respective competencies of the BiH Presidency to the Council of Ministers in the field of concluding international agreements. It will discuss the Commission for inter-Entity judicial cooperation., the organisation of BiH Consulates, the first report of the Working Group on the Presidency budget, and the appointment of BH military inspection. It will also try to reach an agreement on dual citizenship between BiH and FRY, and on the basic principles of BiH foreign policy.

The Council of Ministers

The CoM met on 24 December and 28 January. The December session endorsed the Decisions on the establishment of the BiH Commission for Demining, and the BiH Mine Action Centre. The final signing of the documents on the establishment of these bodies took place in Ottawa, with Federation President Vladimir Soljic as the signatory.

The CoM resolved two key issues at its 28 January sitting: the adoption of the Law on Travel documents, and the finalisation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Vehicle Registration Plates. CoM Co-chairman Boro Bosic also announced the adoption of the Draft Proposal on Customs Tariffs, which will be forwarded to the 3 February BiH Parliament session for adoption. The CoM also confirmed the nomination of the members of the Mine Clearing Commission.

Also at this session, CoM members were informed about the implementation of the Law on Passports. It was determined to prepare the contracts for the printing of the passports by 15 February.

BiH State Symbols

Several main issues of BiH statehood were identified by the Peace Implementation Council as requiring instant solution, and deadlines were set. These were: a joint passport, a law defining citizenship, a unified currency, and a flag.

Citizenship

With a mid-December deadline, this was the first issue on which the HR was required to use his Bonn-confirmed mandate to arbitrate in cases where the relevant parties are unable to reach agreement. The draft law on citizenship went before the BiH Parliament on 15 December, and encountered obstruction from both the SDS and the SDA. The parliament session was extended to 16 December, but with no result. The HR announced that he would be forced to order a temporary solution, to be accepted and implemented without any amendment.

The new law is similar to European standard citizenship laws, in its definition of BiH citizenship. However, it also defines BiH citizenship as applicable to all those who were residing in either Entity until 6 April 1992, and establishes a commission to resolve cases of persons who became resident between 1992 and 1995.

The Currency

Currency design was the second of these four issues on which the HR was compelled to use his mandate to arbitrate. The Bonn Conclusions identified the issuing of a standard BiH currency as a priority. At neither Presidency session this month could any agreement be reached on whether nationalist symbols should be used to differentiate between the currencies of the Federation and the RS.

The Presidency members were warned by the IC that the deadline of 20 January set by PIC in Bonn, must be met; if an agreement was not reached, the HR would be compelled to use his mandate for arbitration. HR Westendorp and the Governor of the Central Bank of BiH, Peter Nicholl consulted with the Presidency as much as possible, and when it was clear no consensus was forthcoming, came to a decision.

The design chosen for the currency coupons is the same in general appearance for both Entities. It features poets and novelists of all three different nationalities. Novelist Mesa Selimovic will figure on the currencies of both Entities. Both BiH alphabets, Latin and Cyrillic, are used.

The designs were launched at a presentation ceremony on 21 January by Central Bank Governor for BiH, Peter Nicholl, the HR, and Principal Deputy to the HR, Jacques-Paul Klein. Governor Nicholl stated that this first manifestation of a joint currency will be instrumental in helping resolve the trading difficulties between the Entities, and will contribute to a mutual strengthening of their economies. The coupons will start being used this April.

Licence Plates

The current licence plate system, which identifies not only the Entity the driver belongs to, but also their home town, is one of the biggest obstacles to freedom of movement in this country.

Reaching an agreed design on these has proved less contentious than resolving the other national BiH symbols. It was clear from an early stage – as early as the Open Broadcast Network's phone-in programme on passports, flags and licence-plates in early December 1997, – that the majority of people in both Entities strongly favoured a licence-plate which would not instantly reveal the driver's nationality.

On 23 January a meeting was held in Sarajevo between representatives of the Interior Ministries for both Entities and from ten cantons. Agreement was reached in principle on all aspects of design, production and issuance. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed at the 28 January session of the Council of Ministers. Promotion of the licence plates took place on 2 February in both Sarajevo and Banja Luka.

3,000 plates are to be issued free of charge in districts which are seen as key for the return of refugees: Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Bijelina, and the Central Bosnia canton. By 21 April, the new plate will be compulsory for travel abroad; by 31 June, it will be illegal for residents to use any other plate for travel within BiH.

The design is similar to plates used in the UK, Belgium, Finland, Sweden and Israel – it guarantees anonymity. It consists only of numerals in combinations with the eight letters of the Bosnian alphabet that are identical in both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets: A, E, K, M, T, J.

With the issuance of the new plates, cross-entity differences will be superseded, and travel to Croatia and the FRY will be facilitated. Trade will be a main beneficiary. Additionally, the bulk of the plate production will be by local firms.

The New Flag

Newspaper polls and phone-in programmes on local media during December and January revealed that more and more Bosnians were prepared to publicly state their opinion that a flag without any nationalist symbols of any kind, or even colours with national significance, would be the best way forward for all peoples of BiH. As the issue aroused a range of emotional reactions its deadline was extended to early February, 1998, to enable a special flag commission, comprising members of local cultural associations, to address the issue. This deadline will enable the new BiH flag to fly at the Winter Olympics in Nagano this year.

The commission's three proposals were all for a neutral flag: a gold triangle on a blue background, or two different combinations of gold and blue stripes, one of which also incorporated a triangle.

These solutions were revealed by the HR on 26 January. They went before the BiH Parliament at its sitting on 3 February, for a final decision. The HR warned that he would be forced to arbitrate if no consensus was reached.

Although the blue flag with a gold triangle and a row of stars had the most favourable reception, the Parliament did not accept any of the solutions.

HR Westendorp accordingly chose the flag with triangle and stars. The triangle represents the three constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the gold colour represents the sun, as a symbol of hope; the blue and the stars stand for Europe.

BiH Municipalities

A crucial issue identified by the Peace Implementation Council at the Bonn Conference was the resolution of territorial issues: the borders of the Usora Canton in Central Bosnia had yet to be drawn, and a total of 49 municipalities in the BiH Federation, situated on the Inter-Entity Boundary Line, were without agreed borders. This was finally resolved by the arbitration of Senior Deputy Hanns Schumacher. With the agreement of all parties that he should arbitrate, Schumacher drew the boundary line for the Usora canton, resolving the formation of ten more municipalities, and enabling the Draft Law on Split and New Municipalities to pass through the Federation Parliament's House of Representatives at its session on 22 January. Presidents Izetbegovic and Zubak jointly supported the arbitration decision.

Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons

The Reconstruction and Return Task Force (RRTF)

As of the end of 1997, two new members joined this body: the United States Government, and the German Federal Commission for Refugee Return and Related Reconstruction. Other members are the UNHCR, the European Commission, including the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees, the World Bank, the International Management Group, and the OHR.

In its report Outlook for 1998, the Taskforce stated:

- Overall returns must accelerate in 1998; each year delayed is a victory for segregation. International assistance will peak this year, and thereafter be scaled back, as will, it seems probable, the international police and military presence. This puts the onus on the parties to optimise returns while resources are present to support them.
- A strict focus must be maintained on key political and economic determinants of return.
- Targeted political interventions need to be used more frequently and strategically to broker minority returns.
- An economic pull effect must be created to entice refugees residing abroad to go home and take a chance of making a future there.

The strategy outlined in the report was echoed in several of the conclusions of the Bonn Conference. The conclusions are intended to give the OHR, UNHCR, and other RRTF member institutions the support required to carry out these tasks effectively. The key conclusions are:

- The appointment of a Deputy High Representative for RRTF matters, and the creation of a specific support department within the OHR.

The post of third deputy is now held by Andy Bearpark. Andy, who formerly headed the Overseas Development Agency's emergency mission to BiH during the war, has extensive knowledge of economic reconstruction, and is widely known among the Donor Community.

Other points raised by the RRTF report were:

- The recommendation that a donor conference be held early in 1998, enabling RRTF recommendations to be factored into source allocations for the coming year.
- The emphasis on the need for minority return to Sarajevo. This reflects Sarajevo's special position, because of its historic legacy and capital status, its return potential, and its designation as an RRTF 'cluster area' – as being suitable for concentrated return effort.

Other areas given this designation include Banja Luka, Central Bosnia, Brcko, and cities which have been declared 'Open Cities' under the UNHCR return programme.

The Sarajevo Return Conference

In December 1997 at the Bonn Peace Implementation Council the following statement was made as part of the final text

"Ensuring a multi-ethnic Sarajevo is essential to the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The Council expresses disappointment at the failure of the authorities in the Sarajevo Canton to encourage and facilitate the safe return of former inhabitants. The commitments are long overdue and must be translated into action immediately. So long as Sarajevo remains largely mono-ethnic, its position as the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina will remain impaired. The Council endorses the efforts of the High Representative and UNHCR to develop a Sarajevo return strategy. It calls on the competent authorities to agree on that strategy prior to the conference on return to Sarajevo proposed by the High Representative which should be held in

early 1998.”

The date set for the Sarajevo return conference was Tuesday 3 February 1998. It took place in the Holiday Inn in Sarajevo.

The conference was chaired by the High Representative, Carlos Westendorp, US Presidential Envoy, Robert Gelbard, and Herman de Lange, Director of the European Commission. Further support came from UNHCR as the lead return agency in BiH.

Participants included the principals of the main Dayton implementing agencies, Presidents and Ministers from both Republika Srpska and the Federation. Principals from the Sarajevo City and Cantonal authorities, representatives of the EU and USAID, the Deputy High Representatives and representatives of the US, UK and German governments, also attended.

The key objective of the Conference was establishing the BiH capital of Sarajevo as a model of multi-ethnicity, tolerance and coexistence, in accordance with the goals set by the Dayton Peace Agreement and subsequent decisions.

The 40-point Declaration issued by the Conference sets minimum return requirements to Sarajevo for 1998, as well as full cantonal commitment to ensuring this. These include issues of reintegration and accommodation.

During the Conference, the International Community (IC) examined ways to intensify fund raising for housing reconstruction; however, members of the IC stated they would consider suspending essential aid in the event of failure to fulfil these objectives.

Employment, education and public security issues were also addressed. Specific mechanisms were established for implementation of measures agreed at the Conference. Specifically, a Sarajevo Return Committee comprising state, Entity and international officials was appointed. This will oversee implementation and work in conjunction with UNHCR, the Office of the High Representative and the Canton.

Brcko

With the arbitration hearing scheduled to begin in Vienna on 5 February, Brcko is increasingly a political focal-point, as all sides in the arbitration process stake out their positions. RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik has announced that his Government will pay for new housing for DPs in Brcko. However, his cabinet is as resolute as its predecessors in maintaining that Brcko must remain within the RS.

Croat and Bosniak leaders are stating they are ready to accept solutions which create a special district for Brcko, or give the town to the Federation but impose special access conditions. But they continue completely opposed to its remaining in the RS, on the grounds that the local government has shown no sign of serious commitment to multi-ethnicity.

Brcko's Multi-Ethnic Police Force

Officially inaugurated by IPTF on 3 January, the reconstructed Brcko police force numbers 230: with 120 Bosnian Serbs, 90 Bosniaks, and 20 Bosnian Croats. Through IPTF the Japanese Government donated 22 patrol cars, and equipment totalling \$250,000. So far, the new police have worked successfully, receiving praise from the Federation press for the manner in which they handled their first joint operation: an investigation of a robbery in the Zone of Separation in early January.

Three new police substations, ensuring 24-hour coverage, have been established in the areas of return. These are manned by the Brcko police, supervised by IPTF.

Multi-Ethnic Administration

The Multi-Ethnic Administration in Brcko continues to develop at a slow but steady pace. The constituent Assembly took place on 7 and 13 November and resulted in the election of executive positions in accordance with the

Supervisor's Order. While obstruction on the part of the Serb parties slowed the process to a pace which only allowed minimum compliance with the orders and regulations, the second session of the Assembly on 30 December nevertheless resulted in the election of a multi-ethnic Executive board. As well as acceptance of the new Rules of Procedure, all criteria required by the OSCE for certification were achieved. This work has now been carried out and is expected to be passed at the next session of the Assembly on 3 February 1998.

While the development of the Municipal Government has been rather slow and has required a considerable amount of mediation by OHR, the appointment of the eleven departmental heads is to be made and a detailed staffing plan delivered on 2 February 1998 at the next meeting of the Executive Board. This staffing plan must be implemented by 1 March 1998.

Multi-Ethnic Judiciary

The first phase of implementation of the 10 October Supervisory Order on the Judiciary involved the appointment of the seven key judicial posts to the Basic Court, Magistrate's Court, and the Public Prosecutor's Office in Brcko. These were to be appointed by the RS President in consultation with the RS Prime Minister and the Supervisor within 30 days of the election results.

This deadline expired on 8 November. On 5 December, in an addendum to the original order, the Supervisor had to make six of the seven appointments (the seventh was made subsequently). This addendum also provided for three working groups, of which that for the Basic Court (comprising the Court's President and Vice-president with OSCE, UNCvA and OHR as chair) convened on 11 December with the primary task of elaborating a staffing plan. This plan includes the appointment of judges for the Basic Court. These judges were appointed by a second addendum, issued on 31 December, following consultation with the RS President and Prime Minister. Brcko's new multi-ethnic judiciary take up their posts 2 February and the appointed officers will participate in an official ceremony at the Republika Srpska National Assembly in the near future.

The key problems that still hinder the effective functioning of the new judiciary remain practical: lack of funds for heating, for a legal library, the need for office space and reconstruction of the court building. OHR North is urgently seeking assistance from donors to address these needs, including.

Human Rights

After nearly a year of campaigns on their behalf, the three members of the 'Zvornik Seven' who were sentenced to prison for twenty years last April, are finally to be allowed a retrial.

The three, Nedžad Hasić, Ahmo Harbas and Behudin Husić, belong to the so-called Zvornik Seven – seven Bosniaks handed over to Serb police in May 1996 by US army troops to whom they had surrendered. They came to trial last April, charged with killing four Serb woodcutters, and illegal possession of arms. The seven were all fugitives from Srebrenica, who had survived in the surrounding forest after the town's fall in 1995, until an encounter with the Serb police leading to a firefight, resulted in their surrender. The trial, which lasted only two days and heard short testimonies from just three witnesses – all for the prosecution – had been consistently and vigorously condemned by the OHR, and other international organisations, including the UN, the OSCE, and human rights groups, as a "farce", a "travesty" and "fundamentally flawed".

The three men, considered the ringleaders of the seven, were found guilty and each given sentences of 20 years in prison. The other four in the case were released following the trial, after being found guilty on lesser charges and having already served one year in prison.

The UN mission in Bosnia, the OSCE and HR Westendorp issued a joint statement on 26 January. All said they welcomed the decision of the Bijelina District Court to accept the appeal by the defendants in the Zvornik Seven case for a new trial, and the decision to annul the original verdict by the basic court in Zvornik. The retrial will follow soon.

Sarajevo gets a Mayor and a City Council

The municipal elections of 1997 were the basis for the long-delayed formation of the Sarajevo City Council. 17 of the 28 council seats were won by the SDA-led Coalition for a United and Democratic BiH; 6 places by the Social Democrat Party (SDP), 3 by the Joint List '97, and 3 by the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ).

With these results on which to form a multi-ethnic administration for the capital, talks went ahead on which parties would take the places of Mayor, Deputy Mayors, Council President, and Vice-President.

At the beginning of January Rasim Gacanovic (then Federation Minister of Communications and representing the Coalition, but non-party – was chosen as Mayor. Ante Zelic, a Bosnian Croat from HDZ, was chosen as Deputy, in acknowledgement of this party's status in the Federation, and to reflect the fact that Bosnian Croats are constituent peoples of the Federation.

However, all parties were unable to reach any consensus on who should be President of the City Council. Total deadlock was finally resolved by a suggestion from OHR made on 16 January that the President should be a member of the SDP, but should be a Croat and should be selected by the other parties. Zeljko Komsic of the SDP was accordingly elected on 20 January. The OHR supports the initiative to give the remaining posts (of second Deputy Mayor, and Council Vice-President) to non-constituent peoples of the Federation, who include Bosnian Serbs.

The OHR welcomed the final formation of the multi-ethnic City Council, and expects that control of issues crucial for refugee return, such as housing and education – will soon devolve to this body. The Council has already held several sittings, addressing issues of infrastructure in the light of Sarajevo's role as pilot city in the 'year of return'.

Diary

5 February:

Brcko Arbitration Hearing in Vienna

7 February:

Ceremony of signing the MoU on the functioning of the BiH railway, Sarajevo

11 February:

session of the Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM)

11 February:

Media Round Table

25-28 February:

Banja Luka Trade Fair in Sarajevo

See our [Chronology](#) for a full list of activities

The OHR Bulletin is produced by the Public Affairs Department of the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo and aims to give an overview of what is happening on the ground in the civilian implementation of the Dayton Agreement.

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